



St James's Hatcham Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 100727
Local Authority Lewisham
Inspection number 285865
Inspection dates 28–29 September 2006
Reporting inspector Brian Evans

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary	School address	St James's
School category	Voluntary aided		New Cross
Age range of pupils	3–11		London SE14 6AD
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	020 8692 4937
Number on roll (school)	245	Fax number	020 8692 9774
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Malcolm Edwards
		Headteacher	Ms Sonia McFarlane
Date of previous school inspection	29 October 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is situated in a densely populated inner city area of high social and economic disadvantage. It provides a quiet haven for pupils near a very busy New Cross road. Most children start school with levels of skill, knowledge and understanding which are well below those expected for their age. Well over four-fifths of pupils are of Caribbean or Black African origin. The proportion of pupils with English as an additional language is above average, the most common languages being Yoruba, French, and Arabic. Few pupils are at an early stage of learning English. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is above average. There has been a high staff turnover in Years 3 to 6 over recent years.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

St James Hatcham accurately perceives itself as a satisfactory school and gives satisfactory value for money. It is clear that every child matters. Attendance is well above average, pupils behave well and make good progress in developing their personal and social skills. They respond well to opportunities provided by the school to develop their personal and social skills through a wide range of activities including clubs, musical performances and team sports. Parents praise the quality of provision. One parent stated 'I am delighted with the good broad Christian education my children receive. My eldest child is now doing very well in his secondary school because of this good start to his school career.'

Children are given a good start to their education in the Foundation stage. They settle in quickly and make good progress. Most achieve the expected standards by the time they start Year 1 because teaching is good and learning activities are planned to meet as far as possible the needs of individual children. Pupils continue to make good progress during Years 1 and 2 for the same reasons, and in 2006 standards in reading, writing and mathematics were at the national average. These results were the highest ever for the school, and confirm an overall upward trend in achievement. However, the rates of progress made by older pupils in Years 3 to 6 have fluctuated wildly over the last five years. For example, in 2003, national test results at the end of Year 6 for English, mathematics and science were above average but, in 2006, they were exceptionally low. The factors contributing to this situation include the increasingly high numbers of pupils moving into or out of the school, the high turnover of teachers, and unsatisfactory teaching in Years 3 to 6.

The situation improved quickly in early 2006 when, for the first time in five years, an experienced and former 'advanced-skills' teacher was appointed as deputy head. Subsequently, strong teamwork from the headteacher and her new deputy has led to major improvements over the past six months in teaching and learning. Older pupils and parents confirm these improvements. For example, work in Year 6 exercise books, in folders, and on display around the school, shows satisfactory progress in the development of basic skills. However, there is much still to do, especially in Years 4 and 5, to raise standards in all areas of work in English, mathematics and science. Good practice in using information from assessments to plan what pupils are to learn next is not shared between all teachers and so, in some classes, work is not always pitched at the right level to meet the needs of pupils. The school was effective when it was last inspected. Since then standards in the early years have risen, but until recently have declined in the upper school. Given its recent track record and the quality of work observed in Year 6, the school's capacity to improve is now satisfactory.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' achievement and raise standards in all aspects of English, mathematics and science in Years 3 to 6.
- Ensure that a higher proportion of teaching is of good quality and that teachers share good practice in assessment to improve lesson planning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory overall. By the end of the Reception year, most children meet the expected goals for their age. Standards by the end of Year 2 and, currently, in Year 6 are average. This represents good progress in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory progress in Years 3 to 6. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make satisfactory progress. There is no significant difference between the achievements of different groups of pupils. Currently most Year 6 pupils are on course to achieve average standards in English and mathematics. However, a number of older pupils make slower progress than they could because tasks are not accurately pitched to their attainment levels. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make satisfactory progress and receive sound support from teaching assistants.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good. The atmosphere around the school is happy and orderly. Pupils told inspectors they enjoy coming to school and spoke about St James Hatcham with pride. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They care about their own well being and are ready to contribute to that of others. Acting as 'peer mediators', older pupils are trained to help pupils in trouble. They take their responsibility seriously, for example, at break times. Occasionally there is some disruptive behaviour by a few pupils, especially when there are lengthy introductions to lessons. Pupils' spiritual development is promoted well in assemblies and through links with the local church. Pupils are knowledgeable about the multicultural society in which they live. They show an excellent understanding of what foods are good for them and have good awareness of how to stay safe and keep healthy. They enjoy the responsibilities they are given to help others both within their classes and in the wider school community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory and improving because the headteacher and her deputy have a rigorous schedule for monitoring classroom practice, supplemented by a well structured professional development programme for teaching and support staff. Pupils are keen to learn and many parents are confident that their children are making progress. New resources such as interactive whiteboards hold pupils' attention well and help to enliven teaching. In Years 1 and 2, teaching is good. The time spent listening to teachers is well balanced with opportunities for pupils to be actively involved in their learning. Teachers explain clearly to pupils what they have to do, and plan tasks to ensure learning objectives are met. In Years 3 to 6 teaching is satisfactory

overall, but varies from good to unsatisfactory. In a number of less effective lessons in Years 4 and 5, group work was either too difficult or too easy. This occurred because teachers did not use what they learned from the assessment and marking of pupils' work in their lesson planning. Teaching assistants generally work well with teachers, make an important contribution to learning, and support pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities effectively.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory, providing pupils with a broad and interesting range of work. An ongoing review of the curriculum is leading to improvements, especially in science. The school has increased the frequency with which computers are used to enhance learning in the classroom and is continuing to develop this further. A significant weakness is that work planned in Years 4 and 5 in particular does not always meet the needs of all learners. Pupils enjoy the opportunities the curriculum offers to take on responsibilities within the school. They participate enthusiastically in school clubs and activities and are successful in developing a wide range of interests and enjoyment. Good features include opportunities for older pupils to extend their skills by learning a musical instrument, educational visits and swimming for pupils in Year 6.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support given to the pupils are good. Child protection procedures are secure and all staff are aware of them. The school works well with outside agencies to involve them in helping pupils to make progress. The school has developed good procedures for monitoring pupils' progress and evaluating their work. However, teachers in Years 4 and 5 do not always make good use of the information provided by these procedures to challenge their pupils. Relationships between pupils and staff are good and pupils feel protected and well looked after. Pupils are confident that bullying is not an issue in the school. One pupil said, 'This school is safe, I like it here.' Another pupil told inspectors 'The staff know you and your family and they understand you.'

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory and ensure that the school has an accurate view of its performance. The headteacher is a good leader, and with the support of governors, has steered the school well through a very difficult period. She has succeeded in maintaining a stable environment for the care and support of all pupils. She has a clear vision for the school's future and, in close partnership with her deputy, is raising achievement by improving the quality of teaching and learning. The school is already able to demonstrate that, where it has put its maximum effort, for example

in Year 6, standards have risen significantly. Literacy, numeracy and science coordinators are enthusiastic and working closely with class teachers. They have made a satisfactory impact on standards during their relatively brief time in post and have established a good base for further improvement in classroom practice. Governors have a close working relationship with the school and their strengths are used effectively. School administration is very efficient. There are effective systems for tracking and controlling financial expenditure and the school no longer has a deficit budget.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and telling us about your work. We enjoyed our visit. There are things about your school that we like very much.

- You behave well and you are a pleasure to talk to.
- You feel safe and happy at school.
- Assemblies are fun and we enjoyed the music and singing.
- There are good examples of your work on display around the school.

These are things we asked the school to do to make it even better.

- Your teachers in Years 3 to 6 need to help you do better in all areas of your work in English, mathematics and science.
- We have asked your teachers to make really thorough checks on your progress. This will help them to plan work which is just right for you.

Thank you again and best wishes for the future to all of you.

Yours sincerely

Brian Evans

Lead inspector