

The Cathedral School of St Saviour and St Mary Overie

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100840
Local Authority	Southwark
Inspection number	307505
Inspection date	22 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Wendy Simmons

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	216
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	40
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Harris
Headteacher	Ms Sylvia Morris
Date of previous school inspection	20 June 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Redcross Way Southwark London SE1 1HG
Telephone number	020 7407 2600

Age group	3–11
Inspection date	22 October 2008
Inspection number	307505

Fax number

020 7089 4250

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. The inspectors evaluated the school's overall effectiveness and investigated the following issues.

- The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), especially the development of the children's writing skills.
- How well leaders are working to raise standards in mathematics, especially for the most able learners.
- The impact of the school's special art projects on pupils' all-round development.

The inspectors gained evidence from lessons and from the school's own evaluations of its work. Discussions were held with staff, pupils and two governors. A range of documentation was evaluated. Samples of pupils' work were scrutinised and the views of parents were gathered from questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified. These have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

The Cathedral School of St Saviour and St Mary Overie is an average-sized school situated in a culturally, socially and ethnically mixed community. The school has a nursery class, which with its Reception class, forms the EYFS. A third of all pupils come from White British backgrounds and another third come from Black African heritages. The rest of the school is made up of pupils from many other backgrounds. An extremely high proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language and a significant number of pupils are refugees or asylum seekers. Some pupils come from homes that are affluent. Overall, the proportion who receive free school meals remains higher than average. A very high proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and disabilities. These largely link to moderate learning difficulties and/or disabilities, emotional difficulties and problems with speech and communication. A few pupils have autistic spectrum disorders or sensory impairment. The proportion of pupils who join and leave the school at unusual times throughout the school year is often high. The school has gained many awards including Healthy Schools, Activemark, Artsmark Gold, Sportsmark and an Eco Silver Award. The school has established its own a special Arts Academy, known as Art Adventures and recently gained the International School Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

The Cathedral School of St Saviour and St Mary Overie is an outstanding school, which prepares pupils extremely well for the future. Pupils value and like their teachers because they, 'explain things so that you understand and they teach you in a fun way'. The headteacher is correct when saying, 'All learners receive teaching and learning of the highest standard.' This leads to pupils making excellent progress and achieving outstandingly well whatever their background or need.

The school's 300 year history is re-told in a recently published book, which notes that 'Education is a journey...the chances are that we shall be enriched.' Indeed, pupils are enriched at this school, as they receive a thoroughly rounded and exciting education. Pupils gain the important skills in English, mathematics and science. Beyond this, they do very well in other subjects such as art, music and sport. Their personal development is very impressive and pupils thoroughly enjoy their education. There is an excellent focus on health and fitness and pupils have a very well developed understanding about the dangers in the world around them. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. The strong Christian ethos, together with excellent assessment and support systems, ensures that all learners are very well cared for.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The forward thinking and dedicated leadership, especially by the headteacher and her deputy, results in very high standards and innovative practice. They show determination and rigour in all that they do. Many parents commented on the very strong leadership. As one parent put it, 'The headteacher's very impressive influence runs through the school.' Teamwork is excellent and focused on helping pupils to do as well as possible. Almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire spoke very highly of the school. However, a few parents noted that they would like their views and concerns to be listened to more sympathetically.

Staff are very knowledgeable and have high expectations for the pupils. Governors are insightful. As they say, 'We share the problems and joys of developing the school' and they do this in a most impressive way. The extensive links with different organisations, including the very close partnership with people from Southwark Cathedral, reading volunteers and business people contribute greatly to the pupils' achievement and the school makes an excellent contribution to community cohesion.

Pupils make outstanding overall progress between the Nursery and Year 2. By the end of Year 2, standards of work have been exceptionally high since 2003. As pupils move through Years 3 to 6 these high standards are maintained for those pupils who remain at the school. Often, new pupils join the school. They are very well supported and overall, almost all pupils reach at least average levels in their work and a high proportion are on track to gain the higher level 5. A few pupils confidently work at the levels more commonly found in secondary schools.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is interwoven into all that the school does. Pupils from many different religions are included in the school; racial harmony is very well promoted. As pupils commented, 'We understand there are many different religions and we respect them.' Spiritual development is superb and enlivened by exceptionally high quality singing. As one pupil commented, 'Singing makes my heart open.' A visit by the Watoto Choir, from Uganda and the recent visit to Southwark Cathedral, to see Alter piece exhibition- 'Keiskamma', helped pupils to explore their hopes and worries about the world and understand how some people have sad lives. Pupils confidently express their views because teachers work

hard to encourage them to do this. Pupils were praised by councillors when expressing their opinions to the local council about what it is like to be a child in the 21st Century. Their support of a school in South Africa and involvement in the Urban Forest Project are amongst the many examples of how pupils contribute to the community.

The school offers a superb curriculum. As the children so rightly say, 'You get loads of trips' and, 'These are fun, they give you a break from school and this helps you to learn new things.' Pupils thoroughly enjoy researching new things as evident in the Year 6 class book, 'Watch out Hybrids on the Loose'. This also demonstrates how teachers skilfully interlink so many different subjects to make learning meaningful.

Leaders have successfully worked to raise standards in science and mathematics by making them more interesting and exciting. Pupils commented that these subjects now have 'street cred' in the eyes of the pupils. The improvement in standards reflects rigorous checking of teaching and pupils' learning. Pupils are encouraged to think and share their ideas, record these very carefully and use accurate mathematical and scientific vocabulary. Lessons are challenging and run at a brisk pace. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are very well supported and do as well as others. Pupils adored the 'Happy Mathematics Day' when they confidently used their knowledge of angles to line up lasers using mirrors. Projects such as the 'Global Market Place' help pupils to design, make and sell their own products and skilfully apply their mathematical skills.

Art work contributes much to pupils' outstanding personal and cultural development. In particular, the Art Adventure work is stunningly impressive. Superb leadership has led to the special art project gaining charitable status. Pupils work regularly with many artists and professional artists also exhibit their work in school. Pupils are inspired artists who regularly exhibit work at a South London gallery. The school has an innovative business ventures club and pupils are currently working on a very exciting business project. They are arranging an art auction and have created their own website to advertise this. Teachers and pupils have made links with schools in almost all continents. Most evidently, this helped them to work on a theme entitled 'City Scapes' in art. Pupils spoke passionately about the work of Faith Ringgold and Stephen Wiltshire and noted, 'Art makes us very expressive', and, 'It is great it helps you to have skills for the future.'

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children get off to a good start in the EYFS, children settle quickly because adults form caring and happy relationships with them and with their parents and carers. Parents speak very highly about the way that their children settle. Children enjoy the good teaching and learning activities. They make good progress because teaching is good. As a result, by the end of the EYFS, standards rise to broadly average. This places them in a good position for their further development in Year 1.

Teachers skilfully help children to learn how to work and play well with others. In particular, they are encouraged to explore things for themselves and develop perseverance and concentration. Children's behaviour is outstanding and they are enthusiastic learners. They are helped to quickly develop self-confidence and a willingness to talk about what they are doing. Very good role-play activities help them to develop their imaginations and social skills. They also do very well in learning how to count, do simple calculations and recognise shapes. Adults work hard to help children widen their understanding and use of letters and sounds (Phonics)

to help them with their reading. The learning environment is especially well thought out in the Nursery to allow children to work inside and outside on many interesting activities. This is not quite as strong in the Reception class.

Leadership is strong and clearly focused on developing the provision. Particular strengths include the excellent welfare of children and the effective way that they have developed assessment systems. Leaders have accurately identified that writing is an important area for further development. Children often find it hard to control things in their fingers and thus develop a firm and skilful grip with pens and pencils. Leaders also correctly identified that opportunities are missed to link writing to different activities. Plans are in place to guide parents in how to support their children's writing development, which is a good initiative.

What the school should do to improve further

- Build on the work already started to develop the provision in the EYFS, especially by widening opportunities for writing.

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Annex A

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?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

06 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Cathedral School of St Saviour and St Mary Overie, London, SE1 1HG

You may remember that two school inspectors came to your school recently. Thank you for being so friendly. I am writing to let you know what we found out.

You go to an outstanding school. This means that many things are very impressive. Your headteacher, her deputy and all of the other adults are working very hard to make the school very special for you. Please remember to say thank you to them. Well done to you as well for being such hard working, respectful, well-behaved and polite children. We know that you like your school because the teachers are nice and they give you many exciting activities to do. Your teachers work very hard to help you learn many new things quickly and well. Your artwork and links with the community are especially impressive-congratulations for this and we hope that the art auction goes well!

You do very well in English, mathematics, and science, so keep up your fantastic work. We hope that you continue to have fun when working on your 'Global Market Place' projects. I was thrilled to hear your superb singing; it made me tingle with joy to hear you perform so well! There is not much to do to make your school even better but in particular, we have asked the adults to:

- help the younger ones in Nursery and Reception classes to have more chances to do writing activities.

Keep up the superb work and well done to you all.

Yours sincerely

Wendy Simmons

Lead Inspector