

St Clement Danes CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101127
Local Authority	Westminster
Inspection number	307594
Inspection date	11 December 2007
Reporting inspector	Christopher Gray

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	189
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs K Batchelor
Headteacher	Mr P Hadfield / Mrs S Taylor
Date of previous school inspection	7 June 2004
School address	Drury Lane London WC2B 5SU
Telephone number	020 7641 6586
Fax number	020 7641 6556

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated pupils' progress, teachers' use of assessment and the impact of leadership and management. Evidence was gathered from records of pupils' attainment and progress, samples of pupils' past work, observations in lessons and round the school, meetings with staff, governors and pupils and an analysis of 59 responses to the parents' questionnaire. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail.

Description of the school

The school is similar in size to most schools of its type. The proportion of pupils in receipt of free school meals is above average. More than two thirds of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and about half are at the early stage of learning English. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties is less than average. The substantive headteacher is currently absent and her role is being carried out by two acting headteachers from another school who share the job.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This school gives its pupils a satisfactory and improving education with some good features. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall and good in some instances, especially for those who arrive at the school with no English. However, pupils' progress is uneven because teaching is not consistently good in all classes. This inconsistency was more marked in previous years than presently, and resulted in below average national test results at the end of Year 6 in July 2007. The current Year 6 is expected to reach average standards in 2008, representing satisfactory progress on the average standards they reached when in Year 2. Standards by the end of Year 2 vary from year to year but are mostly average.

Pupils' personal development is a strength of the school. This is a result of their own good behaviour and attitudes to learning, but also stems from the very good pastoral support that the school offers them. This is enhanced by an outstanding partnership with parents, the local community and the church. The school builds strong relationships with parents through regular coffee mornings and the parents' forum. This enables the school to seek and act on parents' views, and translators are used for those families new to English. One parent wrote to say, 'There exists an active and healthy rapport between the staff and parents/carers'. Volunteers from local businesses work with pupils who need help with their literacy and numeracy skills. There are strong links with the two historic churches in the Strand, which pupils frequently visit. These visits add to pupils' enjoyment of learning, as did 'going to the top of the dome at St. Paul's', one of the best school experiences as described by one pupil.

Pupils have a good understanding of what contributes to a healthy lifestyle and why it is important. They say they feel very safe in school and are confident that the infrequent cases of bullying are well dealt with. Their parents agree. Pupils understand the need for respect for others' beliefs; as one older pupil put it, 'Every religion is different but there is no right or wrong way.' When asked what would be the most important thing they could learn before they leave, many replied, 'Manners'.

Teaching is satisfactory overall but is not consistent in all classes. In a good Year 6 English lesson, pupils over a number of days had been studying A Christmas Carol by Dickens. They had used the text in many ways, seeing a video, writing play scripts and planning a modern-day version with up-to-date selfish characters. Higher attaining pupils were reading the original at home and discussed the difficulties of following the nineteenth century text. However, teachers do not always match work appropriately to pupils' prior learning; sometimes it is too hard for lower attaining pupils and sometimes too easy for higher attainers, especially when worksheets are used. Marking gives pupils good pointers on how to improve in some classes but not in all.

The last inspection asked the school to introduce new systems of assessment in all subjects. The school made satisfactory progress on this issue, resulting in large amounts of data being collected throughout the curriculum. The result of such a widespread approach has been that the analysis of pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science has not been approached with sufficient rigour. The school recognised this and the brief given to the acting headteachers asked them to improve and computerise data collection and analysis. They have made good progress on this. There is now a thorough and established system for keeping a regular check on the progress of all pupils in reading, writing, mathematics and science. It is too soon, however, for this to have had an impact on ironing out inconsistencies in pupils' progress.

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall with strengths. The acting headteachers have a clear vision for the school. They provide very good direction and receive good support from the deputy headteacher. Governors have reorganised their committees to take greater responsibility for standards and they offer good challenge and support to the school. Staffing has been unstable in recent years with the result that many subject leaders have been only recently appointed. Their impact on pupils' standards has thus been limited, so that the effectiveness of self-evaluation is not as thorough as it ought to be. Improvement planning has highlighted the need to improve the effectiveness of coordinators' work and this means that the school's capacity to improve is currently satisfactory.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the school with skills that are below the expected level for their age and well below in terms of spoken English. They make a very good beginning in the Nursery, as one parent commented: 'My daughter has blossomed since starting in January 2007 and is so excited about moving up to Reception.' Although all the children in the current Nursery class had some English on starting, a number had limited speaking skills. During the inspection, the whole class was observed enthusiastically joining in the song Five Fat Sausages. All were joining in the words and actions with enormous enjoyment. The Nursery entry profile is used well to tailor the learning to meet pupils' needs. Children make good progress through Nursery and Reception and most begin Year 1 with skills that are close to expectations.

What the school should do to improve further

- Work for greater consistency in teachers' expectations of the standards pupils can reach and so improve their achievement.
- Complete the new systems of assessment in English, mathematics and science to enable teachers quickly to identify and remedy any underachievement.
- Give subjects leaders more accountability for standards in their areas.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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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?	3
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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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	3

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?	3

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.

Annex A

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	2
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

18 December 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Clement Danes CofE Primary School, London, WC2B 5SU

You may remember that I visited your school on a very sunny day just before Christmas. Many of you were getting ready for your carol service in St Mary-le-Strand on the next day. I hope it went well. You were very friendly and showed very good manners. I am always pleased to be greeted by name - it makes me feel so welcome, so thanks to you all.

Your behaviour is good and you told me that you enjoy school a lot. Two of your favourite aspects are your friends and the adults who help you. You are knowledgeable about keeping fit and healthy, but allow yourselves occasional treats of the things you love that might be less good for you.

You go to a satisfactory school and one that is getting better. Most of you make the progress expected of you, though there is room for some of you to reach higher standards in English, mathematics and science. I have asked your teachers to give you more challenge in some of your lessons. I saw examples of this on my visit, but your books show that this is not always so. You can do your bit by keeping your work neat and making sure that you always use joined-up writing, once you have learnt it.

One of the reasons that your school is such an orderly place is that the adults look after you very well. The school works excellently with your parents and the church to help you learn. You also benefit from the assistance of many people who work in offices close by. Adults keep track of your progress, but they have decided that there is a better way of doing this. I have asked them to finish the new system and use it to spot quickly those who might need extra help.

At the moment, the school is being run by two headteachers who share the job. They are very effective and are leading the improvements well. Other teachers are in charge of subjects, which some have only recently taken over. The final thing I have asked the school to do is to give them a greater part in leading some of the improvements being made.

With all good wishes for the new year.

Christopher Gray

Additional Inspector