

St John and St James CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	132137
Local Authority	Hackney
Inspection number	315933
Inspection dates	17–18 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Mary Summers

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	235
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Rose Hudson-Wilkin
Principal	S Davies (Executive) and Nicola Massey (Head of School)
Date of previous school inspection	4 November 2002
School address	Isabella Road Hackney London E9 6DX
Telephone number	020 8985 2045
Fax number	020 8985 5768

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors as part of a coordinated inspection.

Description of the school

St John and St James is an average sized primary school which is heavily over subscribed. It serves an ethnically and socially diverse area, with more than two thirds of pupils coming from minority ethnic groups. The largest groups are from Black African and Caribbean backgrounds. There is a significant number of Turkish pupils and most other ethnicities are represented in smaller numbers. Over a fifth of pupils have learning difficulties or disabilities(LDD) and a further fifth are in the early stages of learning English. These figures are higher than the national average. The proportion of pupils known to be entitled to free school meals is also well above the national average.

This school is federated with another primary school in the borough, which was inspected at the same time and is reported upon separately. The federation was formed three years ago and shares the same principal, senior leaders and governing body. Heads of School are responsible for the daily running of each school. The school day is longer than in most primary schools, running from 9am until 4pm Monday to Thursday. The school has gained a large number of awards, including Healthy Schools and Basic Skills Quality Mark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school where pupils achieve extremely well both academically and personally. The vast majority of parents are very happy with the school and feel confident that their children are well looked after and educated.

Senior staff have devised a clear plan to fulfil their vision of providing excellent care and education for all pupils. All staff and governors share this vision. The outstanding leadership of the executive principal has been key to this, in making the most of the valuable opportunity afforded by the federation with another local school. This enables expertise in many areas to be shared effectively, as demonstrated by the rigour with which pupils' progress is tracked in both schools. The information gained is invaluable in ensuring that pupils who are at risk of falling behind are supported effectively.

Personal development is given a high priority. Adults provide excellent role models for pupils, who quickly learn responsibility and respect for one another. By the time they leave the school, these young people show mature attitudes to learning and to their future education. Pupils enjoy coming to school and their attendance is good. They feel safe and secure because of the warm and trusting relationships they form with adults and the excellent levels of care they receive. Pupils know what they have to do to remain healthy. They are proud of their school and of the part they play in deciding its development.

Through rigorous self-evaluation, senior leaders have gained an accurate view of the school's performance. An excellent range of strategies has been introduced over the past few years to try to overcome the barriers to learning that some pupils face. The 'Success for All' literacy programme has been instrumental in raising literacy standards and pupils have responded with great enthusiasm to the opportunities offered in the 'Extended Day' classes. Exceptional support for LDD pupils including those with complex learning difficulties means that they achieve very well indeed and take a full part in school life. Activities in lessons meet the needs of all pupils very well. Teachers use a wide range of strategies to capture pupils' interest and help them concentrate. The school focus on 'active listening' helps pupils to be aware of how to learn effectively. 'Good listening means good learning!' noted one pupil.

From their low levels of attainment when they start in the Nursery, most pupils make outstanding progress by the end of Year 6. Standards at the end of Year 6 are generally above average, especially in reading and writing. Mathematics standards are not quite so high and the school has rightly introduced a new programme, which is already having a positive effect.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The vast majority of children enter the Nursery with skills and knowledge that are well below those expected for their age. They settle in quickly because of the warm welcome they receive. Adults get to know them quickly so they are able to provide the right sorts of experiences to make them feel comfortable and ready to approach new learning. Teachers keep an extremely careful check on children's achievements so they can quickly intervene if further challenge or extra support is required. The high emphasis placed on speaking and listening helps children to develop their language skills rapidly. Staff form excellent relationships with parents and provide support and advice if concerns arise. The Foundation Stage is led and managed extremely

well, and this results in sensitive and carefully organised teaching. By the time children move into Year 1, most have met the goals expected of them in all areas of their learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise pupils' achievement in mathematics to the same high levels as in reading and writing.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Most children who start in the Nursery have low levels of basic skills, particularly in language and in their personal and social development. By the end of Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are broadly average. This demonstrates very good progress in Years 1 and 2, especially in literacy, where standards are above average. Pupils continue to make excellent progress between Years 3 and 6. By the time they leave, standards are generally above average although they have been slightly lower over the last few years because of an unusually high percentage of LDD pupils. Achievement in English is particularly good because of a curriculum initiative introduced several years ago. Maths standards have been slightly lower than those in English and the school has introduced a new programme which is beginning to have a positive impact, especially in Years 1 and 2.

Pupils learning English as an additional language make excellent progress because of the emphasis placed on developing language throughout the school, particularly speaking and listening skills. Pupils with complex learning difficulties and those with gaps in their early literacy skills also achieve extremely well because of the high levels of support they receive. There is little difference in the achievement of pupils from different minority ethnic groups, although Black Caribbean children do particularly well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils talk enthusiastically about their work and about the experiences the school offers them. They watch out for one another and are quick to offer support if the need arises. A blog written by Year 4 pupils includes advice to younger pupils just beginning in the juniors. 'Don't get scared. Teachers will help you to do your best. You will get used to it and become a star and shine in all subjects!!' Pupils are proud of their school and play a considerable part in influencing its development. The school council takes an active role in evaluating the teaching and its impact on learning. The vast majority of pupils behave extremely well. They are very well prepared for the future.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Relationships are extremely positive and pupils are respectful of different cultures and beliefs. They enjoy sports and know what constitutes a good diet. They feel safe in school and know they can turn to an adult if they have problems. Through effective links with outside bodies, such as the Church, pupils are well aware of the wider community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teachers foster extremely positive relationships with pupils. They have a good knowledge of their personal development and their academic strengths as well as their weaknesses. Consequently, they are able to provide a wide range of experiences that are tailored specifically to their needs. A strength of much of the teaching is the emphasis placed upon speaking and listening to develop pupils' confidence and fluency in English. Teachers use a wide range of strategies to make lessons stimulating. Technology, practical investigations and group work all add to pupils' enjoyment of learning. In a Year 2 mathematics lesson, for example, pupils had to find different ways of counting the number of paper clips in a box. They worked in pairs to put them into groups of two or ten, which made it easier to find the total.

Teaching assistants play a vital role in ensuring pupils' successful learning. Teachers direct them well within class lessons but assistants also play a major part in delivering the school's successful literacy programme.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Pupils benefit greatly from a rich and interesting curriculum. The literacy programme has been especially successful in ensuring that pupils gain a firm grounding in basic literacy skills. These skills are strengthened by the opportunities they have to read and write in other subjects. The school provides excellent support for pupils' physical and personal development through their extended day programme, which covers topics such as 'healthy options' as well as gymnastics, dance and athletics. In addition, a wide range of clubs, visits and visitors to the school broaden pupils' horizons as well as their knowledge and personal skills. Pupils enjoy the links between subjects and the opportunities to work creatively in, for example, their topic about the rainforest.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school is a very caring community. Adults work together very effectively to provide exceptional care and support for each pupil. Child protection and welfare procedures are rigorous. Early identification of the many pupils with difficulties ensures that they receive high quality support quickly. There is an extensive range of support and individualised learning programmes for pupils who struggle with learning. These are carefully monitored and amended if necessary to ensure pupils meet their goals. Each pupil's progress is tracked carefully and the information shared so that everyone can work together to meet pupils' needs effectively. One parent commented, 'The staff team are very professional and supportive in their approach. The school strives to be a caring and nurturing environment.'

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

There is a very clear commitment towards preparing pupils as well as is possible to succeed in the next stage of their education. The school has an accurate view of its performance because

monitoring systems are rigorous and identify what is working well and where improvements are needed. Senior staff continuously evaluate and adapt curriculum programmes to meet pupils' different needs. This has been the main reason why standards in English have often been so good in recent years.

Challenging yet achievable targets are set for pupils and progress checked regularly at Raising Attainment Meetings to identify those pupils who need further support to reach their goals. The provision for pupils who experience difficulties with their learning, including those with emotional and behavioural problems, is led and managed extremely well. Resources are very well deployed, staff well trained and programmes carefully designed to meet pupils' individual needs. The newly federated governing body, particularly the chair, provides good support and governors are working hard to fulfil their roles and responsibilities.

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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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

Personal development and well-being

How good is 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
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the 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

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?	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 tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	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	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

30 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St John and St James CofE Primary School, London, E9 6DX

Thank you all very much for making us so welcome at your school. We really enjoyed watching you work in lessons and chatting to you in the dining hall and in the playground. Everything we saw and heard convinced us that you go to an outstanding school. We saw many strengths but the best thing about your school is YOU! Most of you are well behaved, polite, kind and considerate to one another and to adults.

Here are some of the other things we especially liked:

- You work extremely hard and achieve very well, especially in English.
- You come to school regularly and this means you don't miss important parts of your education.
- The teaching is very good and helps you to learn lots of new skills
- Teachers and other adults take great care of you and give you help if you need it.
- You know how to keep safe and healthy.
- Adults organise lots of exciting activities for you to enjoy, including all the clubs after school.
- The adults in charge know exactly what they have to do to make things even better.

We have asked the adults in charge to continue to work on the maths programme they have introduced recently to try to help you achieve as well as you do in reading and writing.

Thank you once again for your help during the inspection. Best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Mary Summers,

Lead Inspector