



St Francis' Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 102770
Local Authority Newham
Inspection number 286488
Inspection dates 23–24 January 2007
Reporting inspector Brenda Iles

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Maryland Park Stratford London E15 1HB
School category	Voluntary aided	Telephone number	020 8534 0476
Age range of pupils	3–11	Fax number	020 8555 3068
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Chair	Ms R Erysthee
Number on roll (school)	439	Headteacher	Mr P Coleman
Appropriate authority	The governing body		
Date of previous school inspection	21 May 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by 3 Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This large church school serves a multi-cultural community in an area of social and economic disadvantage. A significant number of pupils are of African and Caribbean heritage. The proportion of pupils who join and leave the school at other than the usual times has increased recently and many newly admitted Eastern European pupils are at the early stages of learning English. Attainment on entry is significantly below average. The proportion of pupils who have free school meals is above average and a high proportion of pupils have learning difficulties.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This good school has high expectations, a strong Christian ethos and values the range of cultures in the community. Pupils achieve well. Standards rose consistently over a number of years but dipped in 2006. This was due to a larger than average number of pupils who joined the year group with little or no English and pupils with learning and behavioural difficulties. The leadership has successfully taken action to address the dip. Good teaching in English, mathematics and science is enabling pupils to make good progress, achieve well and attain above average standards. Some outstanding features of teaching, for example, very good questioning and marking in Year 6 enables pupils to reason and value different points of view. This prepares them well for their future.

The personal development and well being of pupils is good enabling them to achieve well. Pupils proudly represent their school, attend regularly, behave well and have positive attitudes to learning. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding, supported very effectively through their involvement in local events such as 'Black History month'. Good support for pupils with learning difficulties and those who are at the early stages of learning English enables them to achieve well. Parents are very supportive and believe their children make good progress. As one wrote, 'This school is going from strength to strength.' Children in the nursery receive a good start to their education. They make satisfactory progress during the reception year where the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. By the end of the Foundation Stage many have progressed well from their exceptionally low starting points but achievements remain below the expectations for their age group. More can be done to ensure consistently good teaching and learning, improve the quality of the indoor and outdoor learning environments and raise achievement.

The curriculum is good and provides a broad range of activities to enhance learning. Pupils have many opportunities to take part in music, sport and creative activities. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and stay safe. They receive good care, guidance and support and know what to do should any bullying occur.

Leadership and management are good. The leadership team effectively evaluates strengths and areas for improvement. They enable staff to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning in Years 1 to 6. This has led to the development of personal learning targets which enables all pupils to improve their work. A good range of data and information shows clear evaluation of the performance of all pupils. This information is used well and priorities in the school plan are accurately identified. The vision and commitment of the headteacher and staff ensure that the school has good capacity to improve. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning and develop the resources and environments in the Foundation Stage.
- Improve marking to achieve the outstanding standards seen in Year 6.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Attainment is significantly below the expectations for three year olds on entry to the nursery, particularly in communication language and literacy and personal, social and emotional development. Children make satisfactory progress but many do not achieve the expectations for their age on entry to Year 1.

Standards in English, mathematics and science are above average in Year 2 and Year 6. Following the dip in the Year 6 2006 tests, standards are rising again and the school is likely to meet its 2007 targets. Pupils' work and teacher assessments show rapid improvement. Individual needs are identified and supported well and there is no significant difference in the standards and achievements between boys and girls and those from different minority ethnic groups. Pupils who have recently joined the school also make good progress. This good achievement is the outcome of effective teaching, linking literacy and numeracy skills across subjects and involving pupils in setting targets and evaluating their personal progress. The action taken to restore the school's history of good achievement has been successful.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Relationships between different groups of pupils of all ages are very good. Pupils value one another and benefit from the rich range of cultures in their local community. They demonstrate tolerance and respect. In an outstanding literacy lesson in Year 3, pupils showed appreciation of African literature and compared prayers to those of their own faith. In all lessons pupils show good attitudes to learning and at break times they co-operate and play well together. These attributes, along with their good level of basic literacy, mathematics and computer skills, prepare them well for the future. Behaviour is consistently good and pupils listen respectfully to their teachers and each other. Pupils say they enjoy school, particularly opportunities to take part in sporting and musical activities. They have a good understanding of healthy life styles and say they feel safe. The Peer Mediators deal with playground issues very effectively and the School Council enjoy their responsibilities. They say it makes them 'feel part of the school'. Pupils also benefit from the roles they play in fundraising and contributing to local festivals and celebrations.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good in Years 1 to 6 with outstanding features and pupils make rapid gains in learning. In a small number of satisfactory lessons the pace of learning was not as fast. In the Foundation Stage teaching is satisfactory with good

features. Occasionally children are not engaged in purposeful activities to extend learning and as a result behaviour deteriorates.

All teachers plan work that meets pupils' individual needs, adapting the curriculum to target weaknesses. For example, teaching of mental arithmetic and problem solving in Years 1 to 6 is now a strength. Teachers use questioning very effectively encouraging pupils to explain their thinking and to give opinions. Teachers expect high standards of behaviour and attitudes to work and pupils respond with a strong desire to learn and achieve their best. The outstanding marking in Year 6 helps pupils to understand precisely how to improve. The written dialogue between teachers and pupils has been extended to include pupils in marking each other's work. Comments reflect praise, constructive criticism and personal responsibility with written responses such as 'I will check this through'.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and relevant to pupils' interests and backgrounds. It contributes well to their personal development and enjoyment of school. In the Foundation Stage the curriculum is satisfactory. More can be done to ensure consistent planning between classes.

Links between subjects and support strategies are well established enabling all pupils to use their skills across the curriculum. Provision for music and sport is very good because specialists are used very effectively. A substantial number of pupils are learning to play a musical instrument or belong to the school's choir and orchestra. There is a good range of popular extra-curricular activities that extend pupils' learning. Visits, visitors and special events, such as the International Week, Black History Achievement Project and the 'Tam Tam' story tellers, celebrate pupils' cultures and enliven learning. A residential visit for Year 6 provides added opportunities for pupils' social development. Visits from the emergency services and topics on healthy eating promote health and safety well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with pupils and parents that the school takes good care of its pupils. Staff rigorously apply all child protection procedures, risk assessments and health and safety measures. Pupils are given good advice about how to keep healthy and stay safe. Pupils in the early stages of learning English and those with learning difficulties or disabilities receive good support and new pupils are helped to settle in swiftly. Teaching assistants give good support. They are especially effective at enabling pupils with little English to participate fully in lessons.

Academic guidance is good, enabling pupils to achieve well. Pupils have group and class targets for improving English and mathematics as well as personal targets. Oral support in lessons is consistently good. As one pupil said, 'There is always someone to help you.' Written advice for the oldest pupils is outstanding, often giving pupils

the skills to evaluate their own and other pupils' work sensitively and accurately. However the quality of written feedback is not consistently outstanding with a small minority of teachers missing opportunities to extend learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school is well led and managed and has a good record of academic success. The leadership team has a clear vision for the future which is reflected in the school plan. They have already identified the need to include the Foundation Stage leader in monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning and improving the quality of the learning environments for this age group. The capacity to improve is good. Accurate self-evaluation is based on a good range of tracking and assessment data which is now being extended to include the achievements of children from 3 to 5. Governors give good support and provide good challenge. They fulfil their statutory duties well and ensure the views of parents and the community are sought and acted upon.

Subject leaders monitor teaching and learning and identify accurately areas of strength and those that need development. Their high expectations have skilfully extended the range and quality of teaching strategies in Years 1 to 6 to enable pupils to use their initiative and take responsibility for their learning.

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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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

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	1
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?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
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?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
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

Thank you for making us feel welcome and for helping us during your school inspection. We enjoyed talking to you, visiting lessons and seeing your work. We think you behave well in lessons and at playtimes and are pleased that so many of you like coming to school. We agree with your parents that your school takes good care of you and are pleased you feel happy and safe and know who to go to if you have a problem.

Your school provides a good quality of education. Your headteacher, teachers and governors know how to make your learning enjoyable and we think you have many exciting opportunities to take part in events such as the International Week. We particularly enjoyed looking at your English and mathematics work and seeing the good progress you are making. Your teachers help you to improve your work and their good marking enables you to understand what you need to do next. Many of you speak several languages well and are just beginning to learn English. We think you are making good progress and that the school has helped you to settle quickly.

We saw many good lessons, and some outstanding teaching. You enjoy answering questions, explaining your ideas and taking part in music and sports activities and clubs. We were impressed by the pride shown in your neat handwriting and the presentation of your work.

There are some ways in which we agree with your headteacher that learning can be improved even further. We have asked him to ensure that teaching in reception classes is always as good as in the rest of the school and to make the indoor and outdoor learning areas more exciting. We also think your teachers can develop the way they mark your work so you all receive the excellent advice we have seen in Year 6!

We enjoyed our time with you and hope you continue to support your school to improve even more!

Brenda Iles(Lead inspector)