

St Andrew's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100632
Local Authority	Lambeth
Inspection number	323320
Inspection date	6 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Margaret Coussins

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)	469
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Mark Hughes
Headteacher	Mrs Denise Assid
Date of previous school inspection	30 January 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Polworth Road Streatham London SW16 2ET

Age group	3–11
Inspection date	6 February 2009
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Telephone number
Fax number

020 8769 4980
020 8677 7643

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Introduction

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

- To what extent leaders and managers ensure that pupils achieve well and are well taught.
- How effectively the school is teaching pupils letters and sounds.
- The extent to which pupils' personal development and well-being have a positive impact on their achievement.

Evidence was gathered from performance data, school information and records, and pupils' work. Parents' questionnaires and discussion with pupils, staff and governors also contributed to the judgements. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included, where appropriate, in this report.

Description of the school

St Andrew's is much larger than most primary schools. The proportion from minority ethnic groups is much higher than average, as is the proportion who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. Their needs mainly relate to speech, language and communication difficulties, behavioural, emotional and social difficulties or autism. There are 110 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, with 51 attending the Nursery on a part-time basis and the rest taught in two Reception classes. There is an after school club on the premises which is managed by a private provider.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. They develop as very well-rounded individuals who are happy and confident. One parent wrote, 'My children have thrived socially and academically'. The strong links with the church, inclusive ethos and outstanding care, guidance and support all make a very positive contribution to pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils say they think their school is good. Attendance is above average. Parents are pleased with what the school offers their children. 'I'm very happy to feel and know that my child is safe and well cared for at school.' Pupils and their parents appreciate the wide range of clubs and extra activities on offer where pupils can develop their physical, musical and information and communication technology skills.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary and, along with their good attitudes, is a major factor in their good achievement. One pupil said, 'You want to do well so you can feel proud.' Pupils work and play well together very well and enjoy celebrating each other's achievements, both personal and academic, as seen in an excellent assembly. They also respond enthusiastically to healthy competition between classes that motivates them to achieve. They feel safe, secure and free from bullying. Relationships between children and adults are trusting and, as a result, pupils say they can always talk to an adult if there is anything they are worried about. Pupils have an excellent understanding of the need for regular exercise and a healthy, balanced diet to keep fit and well. They reported excitedly on the popularity of the lunchtime salad bar as an example of how they make healthy eating choices. There is a strong sense of community within the school. The school council is active and proud of their contribution to school life. One pupil said that as a member of the school council, 'You're the ears of the school.' They relish their responsibilities and take them very seriously.

Children's skills and abilities when they begin school vary considerably from year to year but are broadly in line with those expected for their ages. Nevertheless, standards in English, mathematics and science are considerably above average by the end of Year 6. Over recent years the school has improved the rate of progress pupils make. This is because the school keeps a very close check on where they are in their work and accurately identifies the next steps in their learning. As a result of this, as well as a good curriculum and good teaching, pupils achieve well. The purpose of each lesson is explained carefully and pupils know what they need to do to succeed. Teachers give pupils time to talk to each other, which helps to develop their speaking and listening skills. There are clear targets for pupils' learning. Pupils in general know their targets and many know how they can improve their work to achieve them because of effective marking and feedback. Pupils said that they learn most when they are allowed to find things out for themselves using problem-solving, enquiry and investigational skills. Pupils said they like learning in this way and gave examples of science lessons that inspired and motivated them. Sometimes teaching and planning in other subjects do not afford pupils these opportunities as effectively or regularly as they do in science lessons. Music and art are given high priority in school and pupils' skills in these areas are impressive.

Effective intervention and support are given to pupils to ensure that they all have the same opportunities, whatever their backgrounds or abilities. As a result, pupils with specific learning needs and those who are learning English as an additional language make at least similar progress to others. One parent commented, 'The school has always been supportive to my child who has always found school work challenging yet they never give up on him and continue to

give feedback, ideas and support to our child and us as parents.' Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning by supporting individuals and small groups.

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher, staff and governors constantly strive to improve things further. In the last year there has been an important focus on the teaching of letters and sounds (phonics) and a new approach has been implemented successfully. As a result, pupils' skills have improved and this is helping to raise standards in reading and particularly in writing. A considerable commitment was made in training and development to ensure consistently good quality teaching in this area. Staff feel valued and supported in developing their skills and expertise. The school promotes community cohesion well because the diversity of cultures and ethnicity of its pupils, parents and local community is respected and valued. Monitoring procedures enable staff to have a clear view of the school's strengths and of initiatives they wish to develop. The school's self-evaluation demonstrates its drive for improvement. The governing body provides good strategic leadership, supports the school well and holds it to account for its performance. This is an improvement since the last inspection when its work was satisfactory. There is good capacity to improve further as demonstrated by the successful drive to improve progress, raise standards and ensure that pupils' personal development is not overlooked. The issues from the last inspection have been dealt with well.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children join with abilities that vary from year to year but are broadly in line with those expected for three-year-olds except in communication and language, where skill levels are below average. This is because many speak English as an additional language and start school with little spoken English and limited understanding. They make good progress and, by the end of the Reception Year, almost all reach the goals expected for their age, and some exceed them. This is because of a well-planned curriculum and good teaching, which help them to achieve well. Children make good progress in their early skills of linking sounds and letters (phonics) because of a consistent approach and skilled teaching. This is having a positive impact on their reading, writing and communication skills. There is a good balance between activities directed by the staff and those where children make their own choices. Children benefit from a carefully planned induction process that helps them settle very well once they start school. They quickly learn to work together and develop independence. The outside area is used well to enhance children's learning. One parent commented, 'My son loves school and settled very well. I have never had any concerns about his safety or happiness as he always comes out smiling.' Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good and enable all staff to work well together to create an environment where children can thrive. There are effective systems to track progress in order to ensure that all children, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress. One parent of a child in the Nursery wrote, 'I am really happy with the progress my child is making. Before he went to the Nursery he did not speak English at all. Now he knows all the colours, shapes and simple words and I can hear him talking English with other children in the playground.'

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more opportunities in the curriculum for pupils to learn by working together through problem solving and investigation.

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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?	2
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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

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/or disabilities make progress	2

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	2
The attendance of learners	2
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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?	1

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

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

19 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Andrew's Catholic Primary School, London, SW16 2ET

I am writing to let you know how much my colleague and I enjoyed our visit to your school and what we found out. Thank you all for making us so welcome, for talking to us about your learning and telling us what you think about your school. We agree with you that yours is a good school and these are the reasons why.

- Your behaviour is excellent and this helps you learn well in your lessons.
- Your achievement in your English, mathematics and science work is good. Well done and keep it up.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes get off to a good start at school.
- You told us that you enjoy being at school and love all the different things you can do.
- Everyone in the school takes excellent care of you and helps you all to do your best.
- Your headteacher and senior teachers do a good job and know how to make the school even better in the future.
- Your teachers make sure that they know exactly how well you are learning and what you need to do to next.
- You are very good at choosing healthy food and doing lots of activities to keep you fit.

To make your good school even better, we have asked teachers to plan more lessons where you can work together on problem solving and investigations in different subjects. You told us that you learnt best in this way and so you should have more opportunities to do so.

We were very impressed with all the wonderful artwork displayed around the school.

Thank you again for all your help and for being so friendly, polite and interesting to talk to.

My very best wishes to you all for your future.

Yours faithfully

Margaret Coussins

Lead Inspector