

Our Lady of Grace RC Infant and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101547
Local Authority	London Borough of Brent
Inspection number	355022
Inspection dates	21–22 March 2011
Reporting inspector	John Paull

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	232
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ray Rowley
Headteacher	Maria A Shea
Date of previous school inspection	9 November 2007
School address	Dollis Hill Avenue Brent London NW2 6EU
Telephone number	0208 450 6757
Fax number	0208 450 1501
Email address	admin@ologinfants.brent.sch.uk

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M2 7LA

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed nine lessons which were taught by seven different teachers. Pupils' work in books, folders and on display was scrutinised. Meetings were held with the headteacher and other leaders and managers, members of the governing body and pupils. Parents and carers returned 110 questionnaires, which inspectors analysed. One inspector spoke with a small number of parents and carers face to face. Information in documents related to safeguarding, future plans and others that track pupils' progress through the school were also taken into account.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Pupils' achievement with a particular emphasis on how well different ethnic groups attain and whether opportunities and provision for all groups are equally well managed.
- The accuracy of senior leaders' self-evaluation of the promotion of community cohesion.
- How well individual needs of children entering the Early Years Foundation Stage are met.

Information about the school

Our Lady of Grace is an average-sized infant school. The proportion of pupils with minority ethnic backgrounds is well-above average. Most of these pupils are of White European heritage. The proportion who speak English as an additional language is also well-above average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is a little-above average, as is the number known to be eligible for free school meals. Governors are responsible for a before-school club, which caters for pupils who attend the school. Among other awards, the school holds a United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) accreditation and is recognised as an Investor in People.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

'I am delighted with the school. The dedication and hard work of all the staff is always apparent. The children are loved and cared for and everyone seems to have the opportunity to achieve.' These are the words of a parent whose comments sum up the views of the overwhelming majority. The inspection findings concur. This is, indeed, an outstanding school.

Consistently good teaching in all classes, coupled with pupils' interest in lessons and good behaviour from the Nursery onwards, results in good learning across the full range of ethnic and ability groups on roll. The sheer consistency of this good quality means that by the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment is significantly above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Furthermore, this has been the case for a number of years, and pupils' achievement is outstanding. All those asked felt that they enjoy school greatly. This high quality occurs because leadership is exceptionally careful in monitoring performance and in adapting and embedding policies and practices. Valuing staff and training are key factors in this, as recognised in an Investor in People award. New staff and new families alike are welcomed and valued immediately. They are enabled to understand, absorb and apply the school's routines and methods quickly. Thus, well-being and learning alike are paramount and morale is always high. In turn, this means that the capacity to maintain outcomes at high levels is outstanding and the school's track record indicates this success.

Teachers' good planning is based on an outstanding curriculum that is enhanced with a variety of themes and resources, including visits and visitors who add to the staff's own expertise. This is seen especially strongly in pupils' writing, which is emphasised from an early age as a means of recording their ideas in subjects as broadly spread as science and art. Personal, social, health and citizenship education is particularly well planned and enhanced by a programme supported by UNICEF. This initiative contributes much to pupils' understanding of social and cultural rights and responsibilities. It also adds much to their exceptional spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Attendance is average. Nevertheless, pupils' willingness to cooperate in groups and teams, set alongside their strongly developing literacy and numeracy skills coupled to good uses of information and communication technology that underpin good work and learning in situations across the curriculum, means that their future economic well-being is developing well.

Care, guidance and support are likewise outstanding. All elements of safeguarding, including staff vetting, are systematically observed and applied well. Pupils say that they feel completely safe and cared for and parents' responses are often highly complimentary when confirming this. The staff seek and carry out meticulously the advice of supporting agencies, so individuals' barriers to learning are identified and addressed thoroughly. The school's own support staff are trained effectively and are particularly conscientious in applying such training, which also contributes well to effective learning. Assessment is

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thorough and used flexibly to check and analyse pupils' progress. Nonetheless, senior leaders acknowledge that this process could be focused even more on the needs of individual pupils when lessons are planned.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Refine the use of assessment further, so lesson planning focuses even more sharply on the needs of individual pupils.
- Continue the drive to improve attendance by further encouraging parents to abide by school holiday dates.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

From broadly average starting points in Year 1, pupils reach levels of attainment in Year 2 that are significantly-above-average. In a mathematics lesson, for example, they demonstrated good understanding of arrays and knew how to create accurate number sentences from them. Learning and progress were very secure. Pupils' strong technical vocabulary, such as 'repeated addition' and understanding of how the phrases 'lots of' or 'groups of' are related to multiplication, was evident. The learning and progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities were also good. The support of these pupils was such that several demonstrated understanding at normally expected levels. Earlier in the same lesson, this class had greatly enjoyed a mental mathematics session in which they demonstrated their speed and prowess with '10s number bonds'. In another Year 2 class, pupils read non-fiction texts in groups. They were highly successful in seeking information by using contents pages and looking up what they wanted to find out. They also wrote clear, neat sentences, using good spelling for their age and expressing findings of interest. They greatly enjoyed sharing what emerged. This extended to pupils of all different ethnic groups present. The high quality of writing was also apparent in Year 1, where pupils made good progress, studying the history of toys. They worked independently, choosing appropriate adjectives carefully to describe the toys. This strength in attainment is confirmed in significantly above average performances in national assessments for the past four years. This underlines the finding that achievement is outstanding. Much drawing and artwork is also of good quality and pupils sang well in assembly.

One of the main reasons that pupils feel exceptionally safe is their belief that everyone in school is friendly. This is based on their great willingness to contribute their own time and effort in helping the school to run smoothly. Older pupils in Year 2 do indeed help younger ones in the playground. The school councillors are also very proud of their role and take seriously their responsibility to help make the school even better. Pupils know much about eating healthily and the importance of physical activity. Pupils also contribute exceptionally well to the community beyond school, raising funds for charity, visiting people in a local nursing home to sing and wish them well.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is consistently good. None of the teaching observed was less than this quality. Senior leaders' monitoring indicates a similar pattern. A few outstanding features are also evident. For example, relationships with pupils are trusting and very positive. As a result, they feel confident and are very willing to answer questions and to explain their ideas. This allows teachers and teaching assistants alike to spot misconceptions and to repeat essential learning whenever necessary. In a pacy Year 2 lesson, when some pupils did not see the point of a task, the teacher used the knowledge of those who had understood to support the learning of all.

Teachers' ongoing assessments, marking and knowledge of their pupils' strengths and weaknesses are good and the information is shared effectively with teaching assistants. As a result, support for pupils with different learning needs and starting points is a strong feature. These strengths result in good learning and consistent, strong progress over time, as pupils move through the school. This is confirmed in records of achievement and progress. That said, while planning shows how work is to be adapted to the needs of groups, it does not always contain detailed information about how best to meet the requirements of particular individuals. Nevertheless, allied as it is to a particularly strong curriculum, pupils' consistently good progress leads to above average attainment across all subjects, contributing to outstandingly strong achievement and outcomes.

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The curriculum contains all that it should, but is enhanced by a variety of visits, visitors, initiatives and cross-curricular themes and approaches, so learning is made easily memorable. A local academy further enhances teaching, providing expertise and richness, extending to sports, dance and opportunities to practise yoga. Pupils confirm that the staff respond to them with great care, kindness and effectiveness to ease worries or concerns that might raise. This approach further contributes to pupils' willingness to accept advice and correction, and has a particularly positive impact on the progress of pupils vulnerable due to their circumstances and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. A drive to raise attendance has successfully moved the school's rate from below average to average in the last year or so. Parents have responded well to senior leaders' approaches in reducing term-time holidays. A breakfast club provides a smooth start to the day for pupils using it and its staff manage it calmly. All procedures to ensure pupils' safety, including risk assessments, are meticulous. Transition arrangements to the junior school are managed very effectively with meetings for parents and meetings between class teachers and special needs coordinators. Similarly, transition from Reception classes to Year 1 is very carefully arranged and managed.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

A programme of very careful and accurate monitoring, evaluation and professional development has proved remarkably successful in ensuring that teaching is always good. Staff at all levels fully accept and appreciate these procedures and act on feedback, advice and training. Other improvement and developmental work has been particularly successful in providing a high quality curriculum and in involving parents very effectively to help in supporting their children's learning. Parents are highly supportive of this approach and are grateful for home visits for newcomers in all years and how the information that they give is used to the benefit of their children. Parents also speak highly of the value of workshops and progress meetings. The success of the partnership with parents is contributing much to pupils' outstanding achievement and outcomes. It also means that staff teamwork and morale are high, as those working in the school feel appreciated. As a result, everything is focused on tackling anything that might prevent pupils of different groups, ethnic backgrounds and abilities from making the best that they can of the opportunities provided.

Partnerships with agencies, other schools, the local Catholic parish and other organisations are extensive and highly fruitful in producing further support and advice. The school's governing body is strongly supportive and knows the school very well. Its members are also beginning to ask increasingly pertinent and helpful questions. Safeguarding

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procedures, including the safe recruitment of staff, child protection and appropriate qualification and knowledge of first-aiders, are in place and applied effectively. Features such as involvement in charitable giving, productions and links with local businesses have contributed to raising the school's profile as a cohesive element in the life of the community around it. A thorough audit and action plan shows how links further afield, including of a global nature, are ready to begin.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Highly effective leadership and coordination of available resources have been essential in maintaining good outcomes in all areas of learning, despite considerable changes in children's entry profiles since the last inspection. These different circumstances have required constant adaptations in provision to meet altering learning needs. It is of great credit to all adults in Nursery and Reception that this has been successfully achieved and that learning and development are good and improving.

Highly successful routines that settle children quickly when they first arrive are evident. These are built on particularly effective initial contact with families, including home visits. Later on, the staff provide meetings for parents about early learning. Just as in the main school, information that parents provide is used sensitively to ensure that children's progress begins as soon as they arrive in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Adults in the Nursery and Reception classes alike observe children's activities and use their ongoing notes and assessments meticulously to plan relevant activities across all areas of learning. This is equally the case indoors and outside, although a lack of suitable grassed and other types of surface limits some planned activities outside. The coordinator and headteacher are aware of this and already have plans to rectify it. Whenever a child experiences difficulties with their learning and progress, early identification of reasons is sought.

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Adaptations are then made to support learning effectively. This applies equally to children of different backgrounds, ethnicities and needs.

Children's behaviour is nearly always good and adults are skilful in resolving amicably any little squabbles that arise. Children enjoy the experiences that are provided and appear confident and happy, which is also the view of parents. By the time children enter Year 1, their good learning and development mean that nearly all reach expected age-related goals across all areas. ♦♦♦

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	2
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

Parents' and carers' views are exceptionally positive. All parents who returned a questionnaire believe that their children enjoy school and are pleased with the experiences provided. A striking feature is the large majority who are in strong agreement that the school does well in each of the categories. None of the disagreements indicated that there were common themes of concern that inspectors should investigate. ♦♦

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Our Lady of Grace Infant and Nursery School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 110 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 232 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	102	93	8	7	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	88	80	21	19	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	87	79	22	20	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	88	80	22	20	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	94	85	16	15	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	86	78	23	21	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	72	65	37	34	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	81	74	24	22	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	88	80	21	19	0	0	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	68	62	39	35	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	80	73	26	24	1	1	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	85	77	25	23	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	99	90	11	10	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



23 March 2011

Dear Children

**Inspection of Our Lady of Grace Roman Catholic Infant and Nursery School,
London NW2 6EU**

Thank you for being so helpful and willing to talk to the other inspectors and me when we visited your school. Your good behaviour and politeness helped to make the two days go smoothly. We also enjoyed coming to your lessons and seeing your work. It is great that so many of you say that you like your school. All the children we asked said that they feel totally safe and very well looked after. I agree with your school councillors who told me that they think your school is excellent.

You will see some of the other important things that we found out in this list.

- The staff look after you exceptionally well and care for you a lot.
- Your teachers in all the classes, including the Nursery and Reception, teach you well all the time and what they teach is full of exciting things to study and find out about.
- Your work is often very good compared with what is normally expected. Your writing is particularly good.
- You behave well and are nearly always kind and helpful to each other.
- Your headteacher and all the staff work together as an excellent team and have many ideas to make your school even better.
- We have asked the teachers to plan lessons even more thoroughly than they do already to help you make even faster progress.
- We have also asked that everyone works together to improve your attendance even more.

The other inspectors and I wish you the very best for your future. You can help your school to be even better by carrying on working and playing well together and by helping your teachers as much as you can. I hope that you will always enjoy learning as much as you do now.

Yours sincerely

John Paull

Lead inspector

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