

Our Lady of Grace Catholic Junior School

Dollis Hill Lane, London, NW2 6HS

Inspection dates 23–24 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Pupils' attainment at Key Stage 2 has been well above average for the past three years.
- Pupils have made outstanding progress for the past three years and continue to do so, particularly in English, mathematics and science.
- Teachers have very high expectations of all pupils. Lessons are always exciting and interesting, and pupils love to learn.
- Work is planned at the right level for all pupils to make the best progress they can.
- Books are marked very thoroughly and pupils are always given tasks that help them to tackle their mistakes and move their learning forward.
- Pupils learn very well in groups, in partners and independently.
- Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils take their learning very seriously. They set themselves high standards for their own behaviour.
- All staff model the polite and courteous behaviour that the pupils demonstrate.
- Pupils and parents feel that the school is safe.
- Leaders, managers and governors are uncompromising in their drive for improvement. They always want the school to do better, and this is why achievement is so high.
- Leaders and managers have brought about rapid improvement in teaching over the last year. The amount of teaching that is outstanding has increased from a minority to a majority.
- The pupils' spiritual and moral development is impressive. The school demands that pupils constantly reflect on their actions and attitude to others, and think of ways to behave even better towards their family and friends.

Information about this inspection

- Twenty-six lessons or part lessons were observed, taught by six teachers. Seven lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff.
- Inspectors looked at a range of evidence, including the school's documents on self-evaluation and safeguarding. They observed the school's work, looked at pupils' books and the tracking system used to monitor their progress.
- An inspector met informally with parents and carers at the start of the school day. Inspectors considered the 57 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire.

Inspection team

Miranda Perry, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Colin Lower

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Our Lady of Grace is an average-sized junior school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and whose first language is not English is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below average; the proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the current floor standards, which set the government's minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve communication with parents and carers, through the development of the school website, so that it enables parents and carers to increase their involvement in their children's learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6 is well above average and this is as a result of pupils making outstanding progress from their starting points in Year 3.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics is outstanding because the school makes sure basic calculation skills are strong in the lower years. In the higher years, pupils are then in a position to successfully tackle ambitious problems.
- Pupils can work through mathematical processes independently. For example, in a Year 3 lesson, the teacher modelled how to sort shapes by drawing her fingers along the chart on an interactive whiteboard. A boy said, 'If I use my finger, I can put the shape in the right place. I couldn't do that yesterday.'
- Pupils make rapid progress in the development of literacy skills across all subjects. Pupils have writing targets that they keep with them at all times, and tick off when they are achieved. The pupils push themselves very hard to meet these targets. One Year 4 girl said in a geography lesson that she was going to use interesting adjectives to describe Spain, so that she could meet her target.
- Pupils progress well in reading because they love books. In the playground a group of Year 5 pupils asked an inspector if they could carry on talking about their favourite books at lunch because they had so much more to say.
- Pupils support each other to make progress when they work in groups. In a Year 4 lesson on poetry, a pupil was asked what he would grade his group for working together. Rather than answer directly, he asked his peers for opinions, and they decided to award themselves 99%
- If a pupil arrives in Year 3, or mid-year with reading difficulties, the school provides a reading programme for them which results in them making significant improvements.
- Pupils pay attention to detail in their writing, so their progress is not hindered by mistakes. In a Year 4 lesson on devising exciting beginnings, pupils systematically checked every word in a sentence for mistakes and for use of appropriate techniques before they went on to write the next sentence.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make outstanding progress. Teachers and other adults have very high expectations of them. Their books are marked so that problems with pupils' understanding are overcome, with teachers using different explanations and approaches as appropriate.
- Pupils from minority ethnic groups and those whose first language is not English make progress equal to that of their peers. This is because the school treats all learners as individuals with their own unique learning strengths and areas for development and responds accordingly. This is also the case for those supported through the pupil premium, with the school ensuring that these pupils are not disadvantaged in any way and that any barriers to learning are removed.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- In lessons, pupils and teachers are entirely focused on learning and they do not get distracted from this.
- Teachers give pupils experiences which immerse them in ideas and knowledge. For example, in a Year 5 history lesson pupils were acting out what it was like to be a child working in a Victorian coal mine and questioning each other in role. One pupil turned round excitedly to the inspector and said, 'This is really happening you know.'
- Pupils are responsible for their own learning. They are given opportunities to develop questions, devise activities and challenge what the teacher is saying. In a Year 5 science lesson on investigating how sounds are made, the pupils themselves came up with the

questions that needed to be tested. This resulted in them attaining highly.

- Pupils benefit from questions that require them to address any misunderstandings. Teachers' strong subject knowledge means that pupils of all abilities are questioned in a challenging way.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are taught very well. Other adults in the classroom have expertise which helps to overcome any obstacles they might have to making progress. If necessary, learning is broken down into small steps, but never over-simplified.
- Pupils take great pleasure in the materials they work with. For example, in a Year 5 lesson on performance poetry, one boy said to his group, 'This is such a brilliant poem. I am having real trouble not dancing to it.'

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are outstanding

- Pupils' behaviour in lessons is exemplary because they delight in learning. New ideas amaze them so they are absolutely engaged. In a Year 3 mathematics lesson, the teacher said, 'I'll let you into a secret. A diamond has four right angles', and the whole class cooed with excitement.
- Pupils celebrate challenge. They are encouraged not to give up and always see positives rather than negatives. They take this encouragement to heart and stay on task.
- Pupils take responsibility for the behaviour of their peers and they do not tolerate behaviour which might disrupt their learning. Some pupils asked fellow group members to come and practise their presentations because they had a deadline to meet. Their fellow group members respected this request and did as they were asked.
- Pupils are very proud of their school. They look after it, and behave well around it. Pupils are pleased with their environmental garden. When an inspector asked a girl who looked after it, she said, 'Well we do. Who else?'
- Pupils take assemblies seriously and maintain high standards of behaviour and contemplation. They leave the assembly in silence, without supervision.
- Pupils and parents and carers are very confident that the school is safe. Pupils are clear about what they can do to prevent bullying. They consider how to treat each other well, and discuss how certain behaviour can cause other people hurt, and therefore must be avoided. One girl in the playground said to a boy in her class who had made his friend sad, 'I think the way you talked to him was not how a best friend should talk.'
- Pupils are very excited about the rewards they get for good behaviour. The 'class of the week' gets extra time in the school's adventure playground. A group of Year 3 girls were discussing how to be class of the week but were worried by competition from Year 4 who they felt behaved so well in assembly.
- If pupils arrive at the school with behaviour difficulties, the school's work in partnership with other agencies helps them to improve their behaviour. The school works relentlessly to uncover the cause of any behavioural difficulties, and involves the right group or organisation to work successfully with the pupil.
- Pupils' attendance is well above average, has been for the last three years, and is consistently improving. Pupils attend well because they love school.

The leadership and management

are outstanding

- All leaders and managers are extremely ambitious for their school.
- Leaders have adopted a highly structured approach to bringing about improvements in teaching. After a review from an external professional, the school worked through obstacles to outstanding teaching with each teacher. Lessons were planned, trialled, revised and evaluated, with a focus on the progress of every pupil in the class. This process has brought about consistently outstanding teaching from a position where the majority of teaching was good, in less than a year.
- Pupils are currently making better progress this year than they did last year. This is because

leaders and managers respond very quickly and effectively to any emerging weaknesses. The school identified a possible weakness in writing for more-able pupils in Year 6. As a result, training was given to staff, targets were revised, teacher deployment reviewed, and achievement in writing for the targeted group has now increased.

- The management of teachers' performance helps to drive improvements in teaching. Teachers are given targets that are very demanding, and that hold them to account for the progress of individuals and groups of pupils. Teachers are rewarded with increases in pay according to their success in meeting their targets.
- The pupils experience subjects and ways of learning that mean they thrive at the school. They produce outstanding work in their topic areas. For example, a group of Year 6 pupils made a film about the Second World War that brought tears to the eyes of their audience in assembly.
- Pupils always consider the spiritual, moral, social and cultural implications of what they learn. In religious education in Year 6, they are set targets to consider what they believe, and how they act as a result. Pupils' responses to these targets are sophisticated, mature and impressive.
- Boys and girls get on very well together, as do pupils from different ethnic groups, because equality of opportunity is at the heart of the school. Discrimination is not tolerated, and there have been no racist incidents for at least three years.
- The school works closely with parents and carers. Parents and carers are very happy with their relationship with the school, and their children's achievement. However, parents and carers say that they would appreciate improved communication through the school's website so that they can become even more involved in their children's learning.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body prioritises the learning, progress and welfare of the pupils in every decision they make. Governors are experienced and appropriately trained. They know why the school is outstanding, and what to do to keep it that way. Governors share the headteacher's constant pursuit of excellence. They consider carefully their use of the pupil premium funding so that it has the maximum impact on improving the achievement of these pupils; for example, teaching assistants are paid to arrive early and carry out successful interventions for pupils who are falling behind. Governors monitor the interventions' success. Governors receive support from the local authority to manage the performance of the headteacher. They set highly challenging but achievable targets for the headteacher and ensure he does the same for his staff.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	101538
Local authority	Brent
Inspection number	402855

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	239
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Eamonn Doherty
Headteacher	Steve McGrath
Date of previous school inspection	4 June 2008
Telephone number	020 84506002
Fax number	020 82083430
Email address	head@ologjuniors.brent.sch.uk

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