

St Monica's Catholic Primary School

Hoxton Square, London, N1 6NT

Inspection dates 25–26 April 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well and in recent years have reached above-average levels in English and mathematics by the age of 11.
- Increasing proportions of pupils are making fast progress and are achieving better than pupils in 2012.
- Teaching over time is good because most activities are carefully planned to meet pupils' needs. Their work is very carefully marked, and teachers give very precise suggestions for improvement.
- Governors are well informed and understand how well the school is doing. They are prepared to challenge as well as support school leaders.
- The headteacher understands what needs to be done to further improve the school. Her priorities include raising the number of higher level scores at the end of Key Stage 2. Staff and governors share her vision and ambition.
- Pupils speak very positively about their school, behave well and have a very clear sense of right and wrong. Leaders promote pupils' reflections on behaviour as a high priority and as a result pupils are respectful and treat adults and each other with great courtesy.
- Provision in the school for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Teaching is not yet outstanding because pupils who are capable of making more progress are not always set hard enough work or asked questions that make them think deeply about topics.
- While many teaching assistants give good guidance in lessons, not all adults working with the youngest children are asking the right questions that help pupils to make maximum progress.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to assess their own work and set their own success criteria.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors spent a total of six hours observing 13 lessons or parts of lessons taught by eight teachers. Additional activities included observations during break times and two school assemblies as well as visits to small reading groups led by staff and volunteers.
- Two lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. Pupils' books were also reviewed to find out progress in science and also to see how well groups of pupils, particularly those who are capable of attaining at higher levels, are now progressing in a range of subjects.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, representatives of the governing body, school leaders and subject coordinators. A meeting was also held with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of a survey commissioned by the school in 2012 as well as views communicated during informal discussions with parents and carers because there were only five responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). They also took account of the views of the staff through meetings and responses to 21 staff questionnaires.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and examined the work in pupils' books.
- The school's own attainment records for the current as well as previous academic years were scrutinised in addition to published information on pupils' achievement. Inspectors examined planning and monitoring documents, records relating to pupils' safety and welfare, including the school's single central record of security checks on staff, the behaviour logs and attendance records.

Inspection team

Patricia MacLachlan, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Mirella Lombardo

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is an average sized primary school. The Early Years Foundation Stage is provided in a Nursery and a Reception class.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support from the pupil premium (extra money provided by the government for pupils including those eligible for free school meals) is twice the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is high. The largest group is of African heritage with the next largest groups having Caribbean and other ethnic heritages. The proportion of pupils speaking English as an additional language is also very much higher than the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported at school action is half the national average but the proportions supported at school action plus or with statements of special educational needs are higher than the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has, since the last inspection, made changes to the leadership team with new appointments this year to literacy and numeracy leadership roles.
- The school provides extended opportunities with breakfast and after-school clubs.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that more is outstanding by:
 - ensuring that pupils who are capable of making more rapid progress are given more challenging work
 - enabling and encouraging pupils to select their own success criteria and identify for themselves how to improve their attainment levels
 - training all the adults who work in classrooms to ask questions that are more precisely targeted and that stimulate pupils to think more deeply and extend their answers.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Attainment on entry to the Nursery is well below that expected of three year olds nationally. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils make good progress in linking sounds to letters and counting. By the time pupils leave the school at 11 there is a trend of attainment in mathematics and English that is in line with or above the national average because teaching is good and expectations are high.
- In English and mathematics last year, pupils' attainment and progress in Year 2 continued above the national average. Last year there was a slight decline in attainment in English and mathematics in Year 6. The reasons for this have been identified and addressed so that pupils currently in Key Stage 2 are making good progress. More ambitious targets have been set and tailored support is arranged if pupils fall behind their classmates. As a result, school records and scrutiny of English and mathematics books show that pupils are producing a higher standard of work than pupils of the same age last year.
- The school provides and evaluates customised support. It is well matched to individual needs and as a result, by the end of Year 6 there are no significant differences between the achievement of groups of pupils with disabilities and special educational needs and their peers. Similarly there is little difference in the progress made between those for whom English is an additional language and their classmates.
- The pupil premium grant is used effectively to pay for small-group activities in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result the majority of pupils in receipt of this funding are now making as good, or in some cases better, progress as their classmates and there is little difference between the attainment of pupils in English and mathematics achieved by both groups.
- Younger pupils recognise sounds and letters and link them (known as using phonics) to read accurately because they are very well taught in Reception. The proportion of pupils who attained the expected standard in the national phonics screening last summer was below average but the school has addressed this with additional phonics teaching groups that are producing good results.
- Pupils of all ages enjoy reading and receive good guidance to help improve their skills. They enjoy visiting the Shoreditch library, and the school library is visited frequently by classes.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good because strong and supportive relationships are established between all the adults and pupils in the classroom and pupils are consequently keen to learn. Planned tasks offer pupils good opportunities to make progress. For example, in a Year 4 mathematics lesson on division, pupils were able to apply techniques to realistic problems about allocating seats in a plane with the more able pupils given time to discuss solutions with partners and devise word problems to which their calculations could provide answers. As a result pupils were keen to make further progress.
- Pupils are adept at discussing whether their writing has met improvement targets because teachers mark English work clearly in a way that shows pupils how to revise their answers. Teachers, however, do not always help pupils to select their own success criteria or keep records of their own progress over longer periods in all subjects, and this makes it hard for pupils to understand the precise steps needed to improve their work in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- Capable subject leaders check books and ensure that sequences of lessons offer interesting tasks to help pupils to make progress. The best teachers reshape tasks quickly if pupils are not succeeding to help them to learn at their own pace. Skilled teaching assistants give detailed support to pupils who need additional help to understand tasks.
- Pupils, particularly those capable of making faster progress, are not always set open-ended

challenges or given targeted questions by staff which create deep and extended thinking.

- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, teaching is good because planning is thorough and some adults are accomplished at asking questions that enable the children to reflect upon their activities and extend their vocabulary by explaining their interesting and varied experiences.
- The majority of parents and carers who responded to a school survey believe that their children are well taught and receive appropriate homework. They also value the work of the family support worker, and the dedicated parent section of the school website that is helping them to understand how to support their children's learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. This is because pupils work very cooperatively with each other and are resilient in completing tasks. Behaviour is good rather than outstanding because pupils, particularly those who are capable of making faster progress, have sometimes been given activities that do not stretch their capabilities for independent working. This means that pupils are not always able to demonstrate exemplary attitudes to learning.
- Pupils feel well looked after by the adults around them. One summed it up as 'I could not wish for a better school.' The culture of promoting reflection on behaviour and a climate of mutual friendship lead to pupils acting considerately and respectfully towards each other and to adults.
- Pupils understand what bullying is and what to do should it occur. Bullying is very rare and dealt with effectively. Parents and carers have expressed satisfaction with the school's good management of behaviour. Pupils have a good awareness of personal safety including cyber safety and respond well to situations by avoiding unsafe behaviour.
- Attendance is above the national average because effective strategies, led by the home-school worker, are used to encourage good attendance. Parents and carers believe that the school provides a safe and caring environment and inspectors agree. Pupils enjoy coming to school and, as one parent or carer remarked, '[he] is no longer introverted and has raced ahead in confidence so that he loves to teach his little sister what he has learned when he gets home'.
- Pupils know right from wrong and many older pupils who act as prefects resolve difficulties among younger children in the playground and around the school. Lively assemblies, led very enthusiastically by the pupils themselves, encourage deeper reflection and kind actions. This reinforces moral development well and promotes social growth.

The leadership and management are good

- Good leadership and management have ensured that the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection have been successfully addressed. Information and communication technology is used regularly to enliven work in science and other subjects. School leaders check pupils' progress across all key subjects by looking at their books and grades regularly. Marking is now thorough and systematic and teachers use this assessment information to plan enjoyable tasks that interest the pupils.
- The headteacher and her deputy have developed a robust system for monitoring teaching, and this has improved classroom practice. The performance management system ensures that only those teachers who meet required standards move up the salary scale. The headteacher has not shied away from difficult conversations about teaching performance when these were necessary.
- Provision to encourage spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Pupils are knowledgeable about Christian values and are reverent in their practices. Their understanding of diversity is enhanced by celebrations led by staff members from different faiths and traditions. Opportunities to experience sports competitions, participate in musical performances, debating activities and learn Latin are relished and widen pupils' cultural horizons. A wide range of well-attended clubs further supports social and cultural development.

- Leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. Arrangements for transition from home, for assessment and for teaching are good and as a result good progress is made by the young children. Opportunities to use the outdoor environment to extend the experiences of children with more highly developed abilities to count or express themselves are as yet undeveloped.
- Effective safeguarding systems meet statutory requirements and policies are scrupulously applied. Leaders promote equal opportunities and are assiduous in tackling any discrimination that may arise.
- The local authority has provided light touch support to the school by sharing lesson observations and offering some professional development for a new scheme for teaching mathematics.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body knows the standards of achievement and teaching in the school because the headteacher provides regular summary reports under these headings. Governors use these to ask challenging questions, supplemented at their meetings with regular presentations from subject leaders and opportunities to sample pupils' work. Governors have an accurate understanding of how pupils are performing compared with national standards because they use the data dashboard reports and some have attended training in tracking pupils' progress in the school compared with national figures. Governors understand the link between teachers' pay progression and pupils' progress because they receive summaries of teachers' performance from the headteacher. Checks are made that the pupil premium funds are spent on the intended groups because the headteacher reports on the impact on attainment made by the funds. Oversight of safeguarding is systematic and the governing body takes a strategic role by checking and monitoring the school development plan.
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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	100268
Local authority	Hackney
Inspection number	412458

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	311
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	235
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christine Rodgers
Headteacher	Violet Richardson
Date of previous school inspection	13–14 October 2009
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