

Blessed Sacrament Catholic Primary School

Boadicea Street, Kings Cross, London, N1 0UF

Inspection dates 2–3 October 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leadership and management are good. Leaders, including governors, check the quality of provision regularly and thoroughly. Their actions have led to good teaching and rising achievement.
- The headteacher has tackled underperformance to bring about marked improvements in test results at the end of Key Stage 2.
- The curriculum develops pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness well and prepares them effectively for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils are friendly, polite and respectful to each other and adults. They behave well and play well with each other.
- Pupils know that adults care about them and feel very safe.
- Attendance is now above average and improving further.
- Pupils achieve well because of good teaching over time. Teachers are confident, explain new learning clearly and use questioning well to check that all pupils fully understand ideas.
- The early years provision is good. Children develop good personal and social skills, become confident learners and make good progress.
- Pupils' understanding of letters and the sounds they make has improved significantly. Pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy have also risen rapidly.
- Pupils eligible for additional funding receive support that enables them to achieve as well as classmates.
- From generally below average starting points on entry to the Nursery class, pupils make good progress, achieve well and reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 6.
- Parents are very enthusiastic about the work of the school. They work closely with staff, who give them good advice about how to help their children with their work.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' achievement in writing at Key Stage 1 and in the early years is not as good as it is in mathematics and reading. A small proportion of pupils, especially more able boys, are not always fully helped to make as much progress as they could.
- Middle leaders new to their roles are not yet fully effective in using information about pupils' progress to ensure teaching meets all pupils' needs and secures the very best levels of achievement.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 17 lessons or parts of lessons. Some lessons were seen together with members of the school leadership.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and other staff. Additional meetings were also held with the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke to three groups of pupils about their experiences at the school.
- The inspection team listened to pupils read and looked at an extensive range of other evidence about their achievement, including pupils' past and present workbooks.
- The inspection team considered 31 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). The findings of a recent school survey of the views of parents were also taken into account. Inspectors also noted the 21 responses to the staff survey.
- Inspectors examined various school documents, including the school improvement plan and systems for checking pupils' progress. Documents relating to safeguarding and behaviour were also reviewed.

Inspection team

Rob Ridout, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Fatiha Maitland

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Blessed Sacrament Roman Catholic Primary School is an average-sized primary school.
- The school's pupils come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. Almost half of the pupils are of Black British, Black African or Black Caribbean heritage. One fifth are from White British backgrounds. A higher-than-average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and for whom the school receives additional government funding, known as the pupil premium, is well above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported through school action is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who receive extra support through school action plus or a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- There are breakfast and after-school clubs run by the school on the site which are managed by the governing body.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' achievement further by giving more able boys in Key Stage 1 and children in the early years classes greater opportunities to improve their writing skills.
- Ensure that all middle leaders use information about pupils' progress to improve the quality of teaching, in order to enable pupils to make consistently rapid and sustained progress.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders are strongly committed to improving the school. The headteacher communicates high expectations of staff and all pupils. Her ambition for the school is clear and staff are fully supportive of her aims. As a result there is a calm and purposeful atmosphere, and staff and pupils want to achieve their best.
- Leaders know the school well, assess its performance accurately and have identified clearly its strengths and the next steps needed to raise achievement still further. The development plan is detailed and includes actions required to bring about improvement. The timings of actions and how their success will be judged are defined precisely so that their impact can be measured.
- Teachers' work is checked and monitored carefully. Effective action is taken by senior and experienced middle leaders to ensure weaknesses are improved quickly. Staff who have recently been given responsibility for literacy and numeracy are not yet fully effective in raising pupils' achievement.
- Processes are in place to ensure that teaching continues to be consistently good and to improve it still further. Leaders routinely visit lessons to check the quality of teaching and have an accurate view of how good it is. Training and advice are given to address any weaknesses.
- The school has good systems for setting targets for teachers, and training and support are closely linked to individuals' needs. Teachers only gain promotion or receive more pay if their teaching is at least good and their pupils achieve well.
- The school has embraced the new curriculum for primary schools and teachers are working successfully to implement it. The curriculum promotes spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well. Thought-provoking assemblies, as well as meditation sessions, make a good contribution to this. Pupils develop a good understanding of different faiths and of their place within the local community and modern Britain. This results from the school's close links with the Catholic Church, as well as with local faith groups.
- A wide range of extra-curricular activities add much to pupils' enjoyment of school. Pupils talk excitedly about their links with the local professional football club and recall the moment they were able to touch the trophies it had won. The coaching provided by the club promotes better health, a love of football and an enjoyment of reading.
- Pupils are given equal opportunities to succeed and there is no evidence of any discrimination. Extra money to provide support for disadvantaged pupils and to promote sport is used wisely. Gaps in the achievement of different groups have narrowed. Training for staff, specialist coaching and additional equipment in physical education allow pupils to take part in more sports and competitions. As a result, pupils adopt healthier lifestyles and are more successful in sporting activities than before.
- The school's website provides a good range of information which keeps parents well informed about the school's work.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet government requirements and staff receive the appropriate training in safeguarding and child protection.
- Parents are very supportive of the school and many comment on its good work and how happy their children are. The majority of responses to Parent View are positive and all those who responded would recommend the school to other families.
- The local authority provides light-touch support to help further improve this already good school.

The governance of the school:

- The governing body is skilled and knowledgeable, and members attend training to improve their ability to hold school leaders to account and to help raise standards further. Governors check how well the school is doing in comparison to other schools nationally. They visit the school regularly to look at the quality of teaching and the standard of work done by pupils. Governors know how well the school is performing and what still needs improving. Governors have a good knowledge of the national Teaching Standards. They use them effectively in setting targets for teachers and only good performance is rewarded. Governors know where teaching is strong and how all staff are helped to improve. They support the headteacher to act quickly to tackle successfully any underperformance. Governors ensure that all resources are used well to meet the needs of the school. They track the range of the support given to pupils who are eligible for additional government funding and the good effect this has on their achievement. Governors ensure that safeguarding procedures meet requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They wear their uniform with pride and come properly equipped ready to work. Around the school they are polite and friendly to all members of the school.
- Adults and pupils enjoy warm, caring relationships and get on well together. A culture of mutual trust and respect exists within the school. This underpins the good atmosphere that exists in classrooms and corridors, and in the playground, where pupils of different ages enjoy playing together.
- Pupils' good attitudes to learning help them achieve well. Pupils are keen to please their teachers and respond quickly to requests. As a result most pupils are engaged and produce work of a good quality and standard of presentation. Teachers occasionally, however, have to remind some pupils to focus on their work.
- Pupils say that behaviour is good and think the few small incidents that occur are dealt with quickly and fairly. They know the differences between right and wrong. Pupils like the new rewards system, which has also further improved the already good communications that exist with parents.
- Attendance is above average and rising. This is because the pupils like coming to school and enjoy their learning.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils, parents and teachers agree that the school is a very safe place in which to learn.
- Pupils know what bullying is. They are happy to talk with staff about anything they find worrying. Pupils can describe different types of bullying, including racist and homophobic bullying. They say that bullying does happen occasionally but report that teachers deal with it quickly. School records show that the number of bullying incidents is very small.
- Work in class raises the awareness of pupils of road safety and of the risks of substance abuse. Pupils are well equipped to make safe choices and avoid possible dangers, both in and out of school. Reminders about e-safety enable pupils to keep themselves and others safe, particularly when using their mobile phones or the internet at home.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is consistently good and results in pupils making good progress from their below-average starting points and achieving well.
- Teachers are knowledgeable, enthusiastic and establish very good relationships with their pupils. They make lessons interesting so pupils are happy and can enjoy learning. Good quality displays celebrate pupils' successes and motivate them to do well.
- The range of well-adapted activities and tasks linked to a good use of resources encourage pupils to work conscientiously. As a result they produce well-presented, high quality work.
- Pupils' work is marked thoroughly. Teachers' high quality feedback enables pupils to know how to improve their work. Pupils' comments and corrections show that they read, understand and clearly know and understand what they are expected to do.
- Homework is set weekly. Year 5 pupils said they enjoy the chance to take work home and share it with parents. Parents confirm they like to see what their children are doing.
- All groups of pupils, including disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress. This is because teachers and teaching assistants work closely with individuals and groups of pupils on appropriate tasks to help them quickly to improve their literacy and numeracy skills.
- The pace of learning is generally rapid as teachers usually have high expectations and set challenging work. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, pupils moved swiftly from one task to another without hesitation. Where work is not challenging enough, as is occasionally the case in writing in Key Stage 1, the pace of learning for the most-able pupils is slower.
- Questioning is skilfully used by adults. They constantly check up on how well individual and groups of pupils are doing. Teachers use this assessment information well most of the time to provide good challenge. However, teachers do not always take full account of what pupils already know and this results in work being too easy for a small minority.
- Parents are very pleased with the quality of teaching in the school. The school successfully encourages

them to support their children's learning by helping them with homework and hearing them read.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils achieve well throughout the school. Children start in the Nursery class with skills generally below those typical of their age. They make good progress to reach broadly average standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6. As a result, they are well prepared to succeed in the next stages in their learning.
- Work displayed on walls, seen in lessons and in books confirms the school's own assessment that pupils are making good progress.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the sounds that letters make and usually use their skills well when reading and writing.
- Progress throughout the school is consistently good and is increasingly more rapid. However, the school has rightly identified that achievement in writing could be further improved in order to match the high levels seen in both mathematics and reading. Leaders have already increased the opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills.
- The progress of disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those from minority ethnic backgrounds is at least as good as that of other pupils. This is because pupils receive effective and well-focused help from teachers and teaching assistants as and when it is needed.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make rapid progress. They are given high quality support both in and out of lessons that results in pupils achieving at least as well as their classmates.
- The school's work to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils is increasingly effective. The gap between their performance and that of other pupils within the school and nationally is closing. They outperform their classmates in mathematics, but remain behind them by about half a term in reading and one term in writing. Compared to similar pupils nationally the gap is about one term behind in mathematics, reading and writing.
- Achievement of the most-able pupils is good, especially in mathematics and reading. The proportion reaching higher levels at the end of Years 2 and 6 is in line with national averages.

The early years provision

is good

- The majority of children join the Nursery class with skills that are below those typical for their age. Teachers work with parents to ensure that children make a good start to school. Children settle quickly into routines, learn to take turns, share, listen and act on instructions. By the end of the first term many children have developed good personal and social skills.
- Good leadership and management ensure that staff and resources are deployed well and help children to make good progress. Information about children's attainment is used well by the school to enable them to identify and address any potential underachievement.
- Children develop good relationships with all their adult workers. As a result they play with confidence and are kept very safe. Parents staying on with their children to help them settle in confirmed this. One, whose views were typical, summed it up, saying, 'we are really happy with the teachers and pleased how well our child has settled into the school'.
- The children behave well and are confident learners because of good teaching and enjoyable activities. Children, for example, developed their social skills as well as their speech and language skills as they bathed their baby dolls. Children who are in the very early stages of learning to speak English as an additional language are given good support by teachers and teaching assistants. Adults model new words well and work closely with individual children to help them improve their language skills quickly.
- All children make at least the progress expected of them and most make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes. By the time the children leave the Early Years Foundation Stage most reach standards close to the average and are ready for the next steps in their education. However, for a small number of children their writing is not as well developed as their numeracy or reading skills. This is because they are not always given activities that stretch them sufficiently.

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	100451
Local authority	Islington
Inspection number	444235

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	215
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Barbara Smith
Headteacher	Norah Flatley
Date of previous school inspection	18–19 May 2010
Telephone number	020 72782187
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