

Our Lady Roman Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100048
Local Authority	Camden
Inspection number	276244
Inspection dates	21–22 September 2006
Reporting inspector	Sue Vale

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 on roll	
School	185
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr J Sherran
Headteacher	Ms D Finan
Date of previous school inspection	8 November 1999
School address	Pratt Street Camden London NW1 0DP
Telephone number	02074857997
Fax number	02074289426

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Our Lady RC Primary School shares a building, a nursery and site with St Michael's Church of England primary school. It is situated in the London Borough of Camden, within a culturally diverse community. A very large percentage of pupils are entitled to free school meals and just under half are learning English as an additional language. A large proportion of pupils speak Portuguese. A high number of pupils start and leave the school other than the usual times. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is above average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Our Lady Primary is a good school and pupils receive a good education. As a result, standards have risen significantly in the last 3 years and are above average. Achievement is good. Central to this improvement is the leadership team's excellent, clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This is based on an accurate assessment and a real understanding of what it needs to do to improve further. The leadership team also have a thorough understanding of the challenges the school faces with regards to the movement of pupils in and out of the school and their previous learning experiences.

Most of the children begin school with lower than expected skills in spoken English. They make good progress in this area of learning in the Nursery and Reception class due to a well planned early year's curriculum. Most pupils build on this good start so that they achieve broadly average standards by the end of Year 2. Behaviour is satisfactory. A minority of pupils in Year 1 do not behave as well as they should and this holds back their learning. This does not occur in other classes. Skilful classroom management promotes a positive learning ethos in Years 2 to 6. Consistently good teaching and a good, varied curriculum mean that pupils continue to make good progress as they move through the older classes. They reach above average standards by the end of Year 6. Well planned lessons ensure that basic skills in literacy and numeracy are taught effectively. This gives pupils, especially those who start at the school at different time's a strong foundation for the next stage of their education.

In the majority of classes pupils generally behave well in lessons. Teachers, teaching assistants and learning mentors are significantly enhancing pupils' personal development. Good provision for care and guidance ensures that this is carefully monitored. Pupils' behaviour when moving around the school and at play times is not as good. The school has clearly identified behaviour of the pupils at playtime is not as good as it should be and is taking determined action to improve it. This is proving successful but there is still work to be done. As one member of school council commented, 'this school helps us to learn so that we can be a better person.'

The school has tackled the issues from the last inspection effectively. The provision for pupils leaning English as an additional language has improved considerably. Governors make a strong contribution and are fully supportive.

The capacity to improve further is good.

What the school should do to improve further

* Improve the behaviour of pupils as they move around the school and when they are at play so that they take responsibility for their own actions instead of always having to be told.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils do well irrespective of their background and ability because of the strong leadership and management team driving up standards. When they start in the Nursery, children have weaker language skills than might be expected for their age. Children make a good start in the Nursery and Reception class and they build on this to reach broadly average standards by Year 2 in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, and those who are new to learning English also make good progress. They receive good support from their teachers and teaching assistants through the setting of clear targets for pupils to

reach. This, together with good teaching, by learning mentors and teaching assistants in small groups, is why pupils achieve well. Effective classroom management and teaching of basic skills in literacy and numeracy is enabling pupils to enhance their rate of progress in Years 2 to 6. By the end of Year 6, standards are above average, with many pupils achieving at the higher levels of the national curriculum.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have a very good appreciation of the values of the Catholic faith and this pervades many aspects of school life. Regular opportunities are given for reflection and for pupils to apply their faith in everyday situations. This is helping them develop a sense of values, principles and beliefs that inform their perspective on life. The elected school council gives pupils a good say in how decisions are made. They appreciate this opportunity for involvement in decision making and have made suggestions of how to improve behaviour. The school places great store on pupils' development of healthy lifestyles so that they choose healthy options for lunch and they all learn to look after themselves well.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and, in the majority of lessons, behave well. A minority of pupils do not manage their own behaviour adequately outside the classroom. The leadership team has implemented a determined course of action to improve behaviour. It is too soon to see the full impact of this but early signs are that it is proving successful.

Pupils say that they feel safe and racial harmony is good. The school constantly works hard with parents and other agencies to improve attendance and punctuality, which are satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils are taught well. Clear explanations by teachers of what they want pupils to learn, along with good support from the teaching assistants, motivates and helps pupils to make good progress. Lessons are well planned and organised. Teachers ensure that the needs of different groups of pupils are catered for effectively and this also helps pupils especially those learning English as an additional language or learning difficulties to achieve well. Teachers use a variety of different teaching methods. This means that pupils' individual needs, such as those who are new to learning English, or the increasing number of pupils' with learning difficulties are catered for effectively. Regular checks by teachers on how pupils are progressing and the tracking of individual pupils as they move through the school, allow teachers to know what pupils need to learn next and to set them further challenges. As a result, an increasing number of pupils are achieving higher levels in their national test results.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good because the school provides pupils with opportunities for studying a wide variety of subjects including the arts. A good emphasis is placed on the teaching of basic skills in literacy and numeracy, which enhances progress. The arrangements and support for pupils with learning difficulties are good. Work is adapted effectively to meet pupils' emerging

needs. Individual education plans for pupils with learning difficulties are well focused. Tasks for those pupils who are at an early stage of learning English are prepared carefully to help them to achieve well.

Information and communication technology is used well to enrich learning across the curriculum. Provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship is very good. The curriculum is enriched through a good range of extra-curricular activities which pupils enjoy. Pupils have many and varied opportunities to take part in sporting, drama and musical activities and events. They recognise how their involvement in these activities gives them confidence and, above all else, great enjoyment.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides good care for all pupils. As a result, it is a happy and secure place where pupils thrive. Teachers know their pupils well and, because of this, the individual needs of pupils are quickly identified. One parent commented 'Teachers show a lot of love and care towards the children'.

The progress and personal development of each pupil is carefully tracked and monitored. Regular assessments ensure that teachers know what is needed for the pupils in their care to do next to improve. The targets are shared with parents and pupils alike. Pupils receive good feedback and know how to improve their work. Good support is provided for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Care is tailored to their needs. Vulnerable pupils and their families, and traveller children of Irish heritage, benefit from the school's close links with various agencies. Pupils who are at an early stage of learning English are helped to grow in confidence. Child protection procedures are robust and risk assessment and health and safety procedures are well established. The school is taking determined action to enable pupils to take responsibility for their own actions in and around the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. There is a strong sense of team work throughout the school. The headteacher leads her team very well, and there are good procedures in place for the day-to-day management. The school's evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses is accurate. A clear vision by the leadership team ensures that the school is rightly focused on the way forward for the best interests of the pupils. High expectations by staff of what pupils can achieve ensured that standards continued to rise rapidly in the last three years. Behaviour has been correctly identified as an issue that the school needs to address. The strategies introduced to achieve this are recent, but are being applied consistently and there are early indications that pupils, for example at playtime, are responding positively to this. The governing body is supportive of the drive to raise standards and are clear in their understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. As one governor commented, 'we are proud to be governors of Our Lady.'

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

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 disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
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 the 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?	2

¹ Grade 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.

Annex A

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 performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

It was lovely to meet some of you when I came to inspect your school.

I agree with you that Our Lady's is a good school.

There are lots of things which you do well;

- * You work hard in lessons and achieve good standards in your tests.
- * Your teachers plan good lessons for you and help you to make good progress in your learning. They are good teachers.
- * Your headteacher leads and manages your school very well.
- * The teachers and other staff look after you very well.
- * You follow a broad and interesting curriculum, which means you learn lots of interesting things.

In order to make your school even better;

- * Some of you need to behave better. You need to listen to what the teachers tell you when you move around the school and to be kinder to each other when you are outside at playtime.

Regards

Sue Vale

Lead Inspector