



Our Lady of Grace Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 100168
Local Authority Greenwich
Inspection number 285733
Inspection dates 6–7 February 2007
Reporting inspector Abdul-Hayee Murshad HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	145 Charlton Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Charlton
Age range of pupils	4–11		London SE7 7EZ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	020 8858 2262
Number on roll (school)	196	Fax number	020 8853 4794
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr John Conroy
		Headteacher	Mr Sean Small
Date of previous school inspection	5 March 2001		

Age group 4–11	Inspection dates 6–7 February 2007	Inspection number 285733
--------------------------	--	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Situated in South London, this is a slightly smaller than average primary school serving an area with high deprivation. The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is close to the national average but until very recently has been twice as high. Over two fifths of pupils speak English as an additional language, a high proportion. Nearly two thirds of the pupils are from a minority ethnic background and this is almost four times higher than the national figure. The majority of these pupils are from an African heritage. The proportion of pupils identified as having learning difficulties or disabilities is very close to what is found nationally.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

'This is a lovely school - small and very community minded.'

This short statement from a parent is consistent with the inspection finding that Our Lady of Grace Catholic Primary is a good school. It is led and managed well by an effective headteacher who is ably supported by the other teachers in the school. The headteacher, in the relatively short time in which he has been in the school, has created a culture of shared responsibilities and very high expectations for all pupils. The enjoyment which the pupils experience by attending the school is outstanding and reflects the core values on which the school is founded. Another parent summarised this stating 'The school fosters a very caring environment...whilst insisting on good manners and behaviour'.

The pupils feel safe and secure in the happy and positive atmosphere in the school. They emulate the respect and care which staff have for them in their dealings with each other. They demonstrate a sense of pride in being a part of the school community in their attitudes and approach, and are always exceptionally well behaved. Older pupils help the younger ones in the playground and proudly accept responsibilities that are given to them. The pupils are eager to contribute to the local community and have done so by taking part in a number of local projects. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of extra-curricular activities and visits as well as specialist teaching. The pupils have a very good understanding of keeping healthy and fit. They understand the importance of a balanced diet and express this in the choices they make for snacks and lunch.

Achievement is good. Most pupils start school with skills that are exceptionally low for their age and leave with standards that are in line with the national average. Good teaching and a good curriculum help pupils make good progress. However, not enough pupils reach the higher levels because the work is not always closely matched to what they need to learn, particularly in mathematics. The teachers mark pupils' work regularly but not all marking clearly shows what the pupils can do to improve their work. The school has responded well to the increased diversity in its pupils and the locality. It has developed good systems and improved the quality of teaching and learning to support pupils who speak English as an additional language or have a learning difficulty or disability. All pupils develop good basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) which prepare them well for the next stage of their education and the world of work.

The school has good systems for consulting parents, pupils and staff. It enjoys strong support from the school community, particularly the parents, who are extremely appreciative of the work carried out by teachers and support staff. Stability amongst the staff is higher than is experienced locally and this contributes to the positive relationships which exist in the school. The school is effective at evaluating itself and has good capacity to secure further improvement. The school has excellent links with outside agencies and makes effective use of the services provided to support individuals and their families.

What the school should do to improve further

- Enable more pupils to reach higher levels by giving them work which is more closely matched to what they need to learn, particularly in mathematics.
- Ensure teachers' marking is consistent in helping pupils to know how to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. The pupils start school with knowledge and understanding that are exceptionally low but consistent with the average in the local authority. Pupils make good progress in the Foundation Stage, at the end of which two thirds of them reach the level expected of their age. The good progress continues in Key Stage 1, by the end of which standards are slightly below the national average and are improving rapidly. Pupils' attainment in reading and mathematics is better than it is in writing but the actions taken by the school are beginning to close the gap.

A decline in standards in Key Stage 2 since the last inspection has now been reversed. Standards have been stable in the last two years with an upward trend and are now in line with the national average. Considering the exceptionally low standards at the start, the overall progress that all pupils make is good. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels at both key stages remains low and actions to improve this are taking place. Pupils with English as an additional language or those with a learning difficulty or disability make the same good progress as the others.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. This is mirrored in their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils demonstrate an exceptionally positive attitude to learning and reflect this in their outstanding behaviour and enjoyment of school. Their mutual respect towards each other and staff is based on tolerance and respect. The school's values effectively support pupils' development of a strong sense of responsibility and community, and a clear understanding of right and wrong. A pupil succinctly encapsulated this stating 'If you do something wrong, they give you another chance'.

Attendance is good. Pupils feel safe and know that they have a say in what the school does through the school council. They are involved in the setting of class and school rules, identifying ways in which to improve the school grounds, and older pupils assist well in the development of younger children. They make a good contribution to the school community and participate in a range of sporting and fundraising activities.

The pupils are particularly good at adopting healthy life styles. They make good use of their knowledge and understanding of healthy food to choose a balanced diet from the lunch menu and in their choice of snacks during playtime. The standards pupils

reach in basic skills and their positive attitudes make a good contribution to their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. All adults have very good relationships with the pupils. This underpins the good learning; as one pupil put it, 'They make you feel special'. Another said 'Teachers make the learning fun.' Teachers make good use of questioning. In a Year 6 poetry lesson, the teacher's skilful enquiries made pupils reflect on how metaphors can give a much better idea than mere description. This resulted in pupils writing their own metaphors, such as, 'The wind was a swift beast, running through the trees', and, 'The wind was a mad dog let loose'.

Classroom organisation is good. Teachers give very clear explanations and keep lessons moving at a good pace. Teachers frequently give different work to pupils of different ability. However, this is not always focused sufficiently on what higher attaining pupils need to learn next. On some occasions, 'extension' work is given only when the pupils have completed tasks which they could already do. Some teachers do not always link the next steps of work closely enough to what pupils have already done.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good because it makes strong links between pupils' different skills and because it is made richer by experiences such as visits or working with artists. An example is the good cross-curricular use of art. Each class was asked to find out about a different artist. This involved history work, ICT skills and art work. Literacy skills were also called for when each class made a presentation in assembly. A good range of after-school activities are offered in response to pupils' views as to what they would like. This ensures that participation is high and pupils are well motivated to learn. Workshops and presentations are organised for parents so that they know what their children are learning at school and are better equipped to help with their education.

A good contribution is made to pupils' personal development through lessons on personal and social education. A group of pupils told an inspector about stories they had recently discussed. One pupil used this to illustrate what he had remembered as the moral of the story: 'It is important to be a good learner even if your talents don't show quickly.'

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils receive good care, guidance and support which are enabling them to develop into well-balanced, considerate young people. The good manners and exemplary

behaviour shown by pupils are a reflection of the care and concern which are the basis of the whole school and parish community. A wide range of physical activities coupled with support from external agencies make an effective contribution to pupils' sense of well-being. The school makes good use of available resources and expertise to support the needs of pupils learning English as an additional language or those with a learning difficulty or disability.

Procedures to ensure pupils' health and safety are thorough and meet statutory requirements. Teachers assess pupils' progress termly and make good use of the data they obtain to direct extra support to where it is needed. They mark pupils' work regularly but do not make consistent use of written comments to show pupils how they might improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher, who has been in post for just over a year, has been rewarded for his hard work with a developing culture of shared responsibility and ownership. Subject leaders have been provided with the necessary training to play an active role in the raising of standards across the school. They are involved in checking how good the standards are by observing lessons and scrutinising pupils' work. School leaders at all levels work as an effective team and this demonstrates good capacity to secure further improvement.

The school leadership has a shared vision grounded in the school's distinct ethos, particularly care for the individual and achievement. This has helped to raise the achievement of different groups of pupils, and to attend well to the issues raised in the last inspection report. The school is correctly pursuing ways in which it can further strengthen the role of the middle managers to ensure that they are an integral part of school improvement. The school's self-evaluation is good and teachers are highly reflective. The Foundation Stage benefits from effective leadership with clear direction which is grounded in good classroom practice and is one of the key strengths of the school.

Governors are active and contribute to the school by making good use of their particular experience and expertise. They are specifically skilled at providing support and challenging the school in areas of pastoral care and issues related to the finances and accommodation. They are increasing their responsibility for evaluating standards in the school.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	-----------------------

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	3
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	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
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.

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

Thank you very much for being so friendly and welcoming when we inspected your school a short while ago. We really enjoyed talking with you, your teachers, your parents and the Chair of Governors.

We think you go to a good school where your teachers are very caring and work really hard to make sure you learn in a happy environment. Your school provides you with a good education and helps you to make good progress. Your teachers always have the time to listen to you and your parents. Your headteacher is working very hard with the governors to improve the school but making sure that it remains friendly and approachable.

One of the best things about Our Lady of Grace is you. We were truly impressed by your outstanding behaviour and enjoyment of school. You work hard in your lessons and have a very positive attitude towards learning. You are extremely polite and courteous towards all adults and each other. You are proud to take on responsibilities and help others in any way you can. You have a good understanding of healthy living and staying safe. You understand and respect the differences in people and know quite a lot about different cultures and religions.

Below are two things that your school can do to make sure that you get an even better quality education.

- Help more of you reach the higher levels by giving you work that better matches what you need to learn, especially in maths.
- Make sure all teachers mark your work in the same way and tell you what you can do to improve.

I know you will be able to think of ways in which you can help your teachers achieve this. I hope you will continue to enjoy school and I am sure that it will help you to become happy, sensible and successful adults.

Abdul-Hayee MurshadLead inspector