



# Blessed Sacrament RC Primary School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 100451  
**Local Authority** Islington  
**Inspection number** 285798  
**Inspection dates** 28 February –1 March 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Ann Debono HMI

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

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|---|--------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Type of school</b>                     | Primary            | <b>School address</b>   | Boadicea Street   |
| <b>School category</b>                    | Voluntary aided    |                         | Kings Cross       |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                | 3–11               |                         | London N1 0UF     |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                   | Mixed              | <b>Telephone number</b> | 020 7278 2187     |
| <b>Number on roll (school)</b>            | 214                | <b>Fax number</b>       | 020 7278 0015     |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>              | The governing body | <b>Chair</b>            | Mr Robin Hradsky  |
|   |                    | <b>Headteacher</b>      | Mrs Norah Flatley |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b> | 11 November 2002   |                         |                   |

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|--------------------------|--|------------------------------------|
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

Blessed Sacrament is a Catholic primary school in the Kings Cross area. The local community is culturally diverse and has a high level of social and economic deprivation. A high percentage of pupils are entitled to free school meals. In addition, a high percentage of pupils speak English as an additional language. 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

Blessed Sacrament is a good school where pupils receive a good education. The school succeeds throughout in offering a caring and safe environment, based upon the Catholic faith and a strong commitment from all staff who want the best for pupils. The ethos and security that these create are the reasons why children thoroughly enjoy coming to school.

The leadership team, whilst only in place for two years, has a clear understanding of the challenges the school faces. The priorities in this time have been improving pupils' behaviour, assessment, attendance and staff well-being. The headteacher has worked hard to develop excellent partnerships with others to achieve these aims. Good progress has been achieved in these key areas and there are now elements of good practice on which further successful improvements can be built.

Most children begin school with lower than expected language and communication skills. They make good progress overall in the Nursery and Reception. In 2006 pupils attained broadly average standards at the end of Year 2 and at the end of Year 6.

Over time the achievement of pupils has been significantly above average. The school was very effective in addressing weak results in national tests at Year 6 in 2005. Results in 2006 show that pupils in Year 6 made good progress in the light of their standards when they were in Year 2. Pupils with English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties and disabilities make very good progress in school. The needs of higher ability pupils are also met effectively as they move through school and attain average results in mathematics and science and above average in English. Girls achieve results significantly higher than average overall but there is underachievement of some boys throughout the school.

There is a good range of provision and curriculum activities which enriches learning and enjoyment for pupils. An emphasis upon pupils' understanding of healthy lifestyles is outstanding. Teaching is good overall and classrooms are consistently well organised. Lessons are taught well to pupils who know what is expected of them and work well together. In the majority of lessons pupils behave well and want to learn. Assessment is not consistent and does not use information about pupils' performance to raise achievement significantly.

The school's self-evaluation is accurate. Monitoring involves all staff but it does not focus sharply enough upon specific school improvement outcomes.

The school has been rigorous in addressing absence and has no unauthorised absence. Authorised absence is above that found nationally. Parent questionnaires showed that most are very supportive of the school's work. One parent wrote 'Strong involvement with the priest and professional staff make Blessed Sacrament a great school.' The school has tackled the issues from the last inspection effectively. It has a good capacity to improve further. Governors make a strong contribution and ensure that statutory requirements are met. Safeguarding procedures are in place.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Develop a more rigorous assessment system to raise achievement further, and identify why girls do so much better than boys.
- Refine and improve strategic monitoring and evaluation of the school's priorities identified in the school improvement plan.
- Improve attendance.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good overall. Standards are broadly average. Some children join the Nursery with language and communication difficulties. Achievement is good in the Foundation Stage and most children last year exceeded the expected national standards in all areas by the end of Reception.

Achievement continues to be good at Key Stage 1. Standards at the end of Year 2 fluctuate from year to year because of the different abilities of different cohorts. Pupils achieved average standards overall in 2006.

Progress in Key Stage 2 is good. Overall standards in 2006 national tests were average in all subjects. This represents good progress in the light of these pupils' attainment when they were in Year 2. Results at level 5 for higher ability pupils in mathematics and science are at national averages whilst those in English are above. Girls do particularly well and attain results well above national average in all subjects.

Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those new to learning English make very good progress because they are identified early and receive very good support from teaching assistants, volunteers and specialist staff.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good because the rich cultural diversity within the community is reflected and celebrated in school. Pupils show respect for different cultures which are clearly reflected in displays and in the relationships they share with one another. All pupils take on board well the school's ethos of 'respect, responsibility and reverence'. As a result, behaviour is generally good.

Pupils are unanimous in expressing their enjoyment of what the school offers. 'It's the best and everyone should know it,' said a group of Year 4 pupils. They demonstrate responsibility through an effective school council. They have designed the 'peace garden' Year 6 analysed the results of an on-line anti-bullying survey which had been completed in Key Stage 2. Pupils develop an excellent understanding of how to lead healthy lifestyles. They have enjoyed decision making to ensure a balanced lunch menu. They participate in a wide range of sports and physical activities. The school runs a successful breakfast club.

Pupils are well prepared for their future lives because of their good progress in basic skills and their good understanding of citizenship. Group activities by trained volunteers from universities, the British library and a local law firm support this aim. Attendance in school needs to improve further, but as a result of recent expectations by the school, no holiday during term time is authorised.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good overall. Expectations for behaviour are good. Relationships between staff and children promote a positive ethos for learning. Clear explanations by teachers of what they want pupils to learn, along with very good support from the teaching assistants, motivate and help pupils to make good progress. There is a clear purpose for learning. Praise and feedback are given by adults and this encourages pupils to achieve their best. Lessons are well paced. Interactive whiteboards are used effectively to involve pupils in their learning. In one class there is excellent use of peer mentoring. Pupils know their learning targets and are given responsibility to evaluate their own and others' work. This is not yet widely practised throughout the school.

In other lessons, whilst teaching is satisfactory, there is sometimes insufficient challenge for some pupils, or too long is spent on a particular activity, such as whole class discussion. This means that some pupils become bored and do not complete their work. Planning does not always use assessment data or match work to pupils' abilities closely enough. Marking is satisfactory but does not tell pupils what they need to do to improve their work further.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is balanced and meets statutory requirements. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop a wide range of information communication and technology (ICT) skills. An award has been given for the creative use of technology. Pupils have participated in a local multimedia project with latest laser and hand-held technology. Specialist music teaching enables pupils to appreciate a range of musical instruments and singing. There is a good emphasis on personal, social and health education, which teaches pupils the value of healthy life choices and drugs awareness.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of visits and visitors, clubs and activities such as sports and dance. Understanding government was promoted by a visit from their Member of Parliament. The school has a positive learning environment, which is enhanced by displays of pupils' work. This celebrates their achievements and promotes good attitudes to learning. The curriculum is good in the Foundation Stage, where it enables children to make a good start to their education.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Care, guidance and support are good overall. The provision for pastoral care is outstanding. Pupils have a very good appreciation of the values of the Catholic faith. This is evident in the care and commitment shown by staff and pupils towards one another. There is a high priority on treating each child as an individual. The school has secured excellent links with volunteers and external agencies to support all children including those most at risk. Health and safety issues are addressed, risk assessments are in place and child protection procedures are well established. As a result pupils feel safe and secure.

Revised systems have improved behaviour throughout the school. Good conduct is publicly acknowledged. Incidents of poor behaviour are addressed consistently. In lessons where children are off task this is sometimes due to work not meeting pupils' abilities or interests. Assessment arrangements are improving and the school is making better use of test results to raise standards and increase pupils' involvement in lessons.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has identified the correct priorities in her first two years as head on which to build further success for pupils and staff. She has focused upon systems to improve staff well-being and training. This has been valued by them and resulted in better consistency and higher expectations in their teaching. Assessment procedures have been introduced which are understood by teachers. The school does not yet use performance data in a strategic way to plan improvements for a longer period of time. Subject leaders are knowledgeable of the school's strengths and weaknesses and they are involved in decision-making. They manage budgets and new resources to match school priorities. Teachers lead work with assistant staff to address weaknesses, for example in reading and mathematics. This is effective. Monitoring of the school's work occurs but it does not focus upon key actions to be taken as a result of the findings.

There are good procedures in place for the day-to-day management. Value for money is good. The headteacher and governors have placed an emphasis upon fund-raising to improve the school environment and used the additional funding from the Kings Cross Education Action Zone to improve facilities for ICT. The governing body ensures the school meets its statutory responsibilities. Safeguarding learners meets current government requirements.

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## Inspection judgements

|   |                       |
|---|-----------------------|
| Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate | <b>School Overall</b> |
|---|-----------------------|

### Overall effectiveness

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| <b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b> | 2   |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?  | 1   |
| 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

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>How well do learners achieve?</b>   | 2 |
| The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>                           | 2 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development                                     | 2 |
| The behaviour of learners   | 2 |
| The attendance of learners  | 3 |
| How well learners enjoy their education   | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices   | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles   | 1 |
| 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

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>          | 2 |
| <b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b> | 2 |
| <b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>   | 2 |

<sup>1</sup> 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

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| <b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>                                       | 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   | 3   |
| 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**

This letter is to tell you about the inspection visit we made to your school and to thank you for taking the time to talk to and welcome the inspectors. There are some things in this letter which will let you know how well the school is doing and other areas which we feel the school will need to work on. You will have an important part to play in this too.

The school is providing a good education for you. Your headteacher and her staff have made the school a very caring and safe place. You behave well and work well with all the staff and with one another. Overall the behaviour of most of you in lessons, in assemblies and at lunch time is very good. You are offered lots of good activities and visitors in school and volunteers help you with your work. You have helped decide about the 'Peace Garden' and carried out anti-bullying surveys with your new computer equipment.

We looked at your work and think that your school needs to improve these things:

- The school is getting satisfactory results but now needs to plan and check that it is improving standards further for all pupils but especially boys.
- The school needs to be clearer about ways to check how well it is doing so that it can become an even better place to help you do your best and improve further.
- You must attend school more regularly. Some of you are having too much time away which is affecting your learning.

We enjoyed being in your school. We hope that in the future it is successful in helping you to do as well as you possibly can.

Yours sincerely

Ann DebonoLead Inspector