

Our Lady of Victories Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101037
Local Authority	Wandsworth
Inspection number	285950
Inspection date	15 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Lynn Bappa

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	196
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr P F Delahunty
Headteacher	Mrs M Ryall
Date of previous school inspection	16 April 2002
School address	1 Clarendon Drive London SW15 1AW
Telephone number	020 8788 7957
Fax number	020 8785 0450

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Our Lady of Victories is a small school, situated in a generally advantaged area. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. About a third of the pupils come from minority ethnic communities, which is a higher proportion than is typically found in similar schools. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is just above average with the main languages spoken being French, Spanish, Portuguese and Polish. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is lower than average. The school is housed on a restricted site with a small play space.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. Most parents share this view and many wrote to praise its work. 'A fantastic school with wonderful teachers', and, 'an excellent school with a wonderful ethos', are just two of a large number of very positive views. At the heart of the school lies a commitment to its Christian values. Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils feel safe, welcomed and cared for from the start. They thoroughly enjoy school. This is reflected in their high standards, above average attendance, excellent behaviour and positive attitudes to work.

The school provides a stimulating learning environment in which pupils are able to blossom. Teachers make the best use of the small accommodation, with a well-maintained playground and bright and cheerful classrooms. The atmosphere is calm but vibrant and the sounds of pupils playing music or enjoying their lessons can be heard throughout the building. As one pupil commented, 'This is a very peaceful and friendly school.'

Secure foundations for learning are laid in the Reception class, when a significant number of pupils are still learning English. Their achievements in personal and emotional development are particularly good. These good foundations enable pupils to make excellent progress overall during their time in the school. By Year 6, standards are high in English, mathematics and science. The school has put into place strategies to raise standards in writing and mathematics, with a particular focus on higher attaining pupils in Years 1 and 2. These are already bearing fruit, with significantly high proportions of pupils currently in these year groups producing work at the higher levels.

Teaching and learning are outstanding. Pupils experience a very good range of interesting activities to help them to learn, including good use of local places of interest. As a result, they enjoy their lessons, are highly motivated and work hard. The excellent curriculum makes very good provision for music and art, as well as for basic skills.

The headteacher provides first-rate leadership. One parent summed up the opinion of many by describing her leadership as 'deeply committed with strong values and high standards'. Senior leaders are very well supported by all staff and teamwork is excellent with everyone playing a full part in moving the school forward.

What the school should do to improve further

Although there are no substantial weaknesses, the inspector agrees with the school that in order to build on its success it should concentrate on:

- Accelerating the progress of higher attaining pupils in Years 1 and 2 to raise standards in writing and mathematics

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Standards are high and achievement is outstanding. Children begin in Reception with broadly average skills and, by the time they begin Year 1, most have reached and many have exceeded the goals expected of them. By the end of Year 2, standards are well above average. Pupils do particularly well in reading, with a very high proportion reaching the higher levels. Last year's teacher assessments, however, showed that higher attaining pupils did not achieve as well in

writing and mathematics as they did in reading. The school has acted swiftly to tackle this concern. These actions have accelerated pupils' progress in lessons and current Year 2 pupils are consistently producing work at the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils continue to make excellent progress throughout the junior classes and they reach high standards by the end of Year 6. All pupils gain at least the expected levels in English, mathematics and science and a high proportion exceed the standards expected for their age. Pupils also achieve extremely well in other areas of the curriculum, such as music, art, history, Latin and information and communication technology (ICT). The school is on its way to meeting its challenging targets for this year and prepares its pupils very well for the next stage of their education.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils are very proud of their school. Their attitudes and behaviour are exemplary. Pupils value one another, reflect on life and participate enthusiastically in assemblies and other religious occasions. Pupils welcome opportunities to learn about the wider world. This can be seen in a Year 3 collage on how to be a good neighbour in multi-cultural London. They know the difference between right and wrong and have an excellent appreciation of music and art. Pupils have excellent relationships with each other and with staff, and contribute very effectively to the school and wider community. Through the school council, the pupils have a strong voice in influencing the school's work. They say very firmly that their views are listened to. They say that they feel safe in school and that any bullying is dealt with well by adults. Despite the very small size of the playground, for example, break times are very sociable occasions where older and younger pupils play together very well.

Pupils participate enthusiastically in sports and show a good understanding of why it is important to take part in them. They can explain which foods are good for you and enjoy the tasty and nutritious dinners they eat at lunchtime.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Highly effective teaching means that pupils learn extremely well and achieve high standards. Relationships are very good and teachers' expectations of work and behaviour are high. Teachers try very hard to make tasks interesting and pupils thoroughly enjoy lessons, work hard and take pride in their accomplishments. This was seen in a Year 3 lesson where pupils were learning a complicated and beautiful Hindu dance. When the teacher asked if they would like to try it again from the beginning, pupils shouted 'yes!' with enormous enthusiasm and pride. Marking is regular and consistent and gives very good guidance to pupils on how to improve their work. Although both indoor and outdoor accommodation in the Reception class is small, staff make very good use of all available space, enabling the children to learn clear routines and extend their knowledge and understanding of the world around them through a good range of interesting activities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding because it encourages pupils to think for themselves. The impressive quality of pupils' work on display throughout the school is evidence of this. There are excellent opportunities for creative activities, such as music, drama and dance. Pupils throughout the school learn French. Year 6 pupils have Latin lessons and are about to begin Spanish. Personal, social and health education is central to the ethos of the school, and pupils have very good opportunities to learn how to be responsible and tolerant citizens. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is good and is improving, with a greater focus on activities that children choose for themselves and a more successful approach to the teaching of phonics.

The school provides a very wide range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities, including excellent musical opportunities and a very well-attended Mandarin Chinese club.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The quality of pastoral care is excellent and enables pupils to make outstanding progress in their personal development and well-being. The school is a very welcoming place for children. Adults make a real effort to get to know the pupils and their families. Parents appreciate this and are very supportive of the school. As one parent commented, 'My son is thriving at school due to the happy, positive, disciplined environment.' Vulnerable pupils, including those with learning difficulties or disabilities, are very well supported. The induction of children into the Reception class is thoughtfully planned. As a result, children settle quickly into their new environment. There are good procedures for child protection.

Very good use is made of assessment to identify learners who need extra help or who are at risk of underachieving. Pupils know how well they are doing and have clear targets to aim for. They are becoming more actively involved in assessing their own work or that of their classmates. In one lesson, for example, a pupil described a fellow pupil as being 'a good reader because he paused in all the right places'.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

High quality leadership is a key factor in the success of this school. The headteacher provides inspirational and calm leadership which enthuses and unites the staff, leading to improvements in many areas. She knows the school's strengths and weaknesses very well and this is evident in the high quality of the school's self-evaluation. Excellent systems are in place to provide rigorous and regular monitoring of all that goes on. The improvement planning process takes careful account of the views of parents and pupils.

Issues relating to the last inspection have been tackled successfully. Governors are supportive and have a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The school is keen to improve even further. It has excellent capacity to improve. The success of the recent drive to improve the performance of higher attaining pupils in writing and mathematics in Year 2 is evidence of this.

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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?	1
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	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

23 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Our Lady of Victories Catholic Primary School, London, SW15 1AW

Thank you for the friendly way you welcomed me to your school recently. I enjoyed my day and the chance to meet so many of you. One of the things I will remember about Our Lady of Victories is hearing some of you sing 'Mr Sandman' during choir rehearsal. It was very special. I also enjoyed talking to some of you about your work - you brought along some excellent examples. Thank you for this.

A very large number of your parents wrote to tell me how much they value your school. Many of them told me that it is an excellent school and I agree. It is giving you an outstanding education. You reach high standards in English, mathematics and science and do very well in other subjects too, especially in music. The teaching in your school is excellent and you told me that your lessons are interesting. I think Year 6 pupils are lucky to learn Latin and your Mandarin Chinese club looks like great fun. Our Lady of Victories is such an excellent school because all of you - adults and pupils - work so hard to make it so. I was very impressed by how sensible and friendly you all are - particularly in the playground where you are a bit cramped for space. The behaviour I saw around the school was outstanding. The staff look after you very well and make sure you feel happy and safe. You are lucky to have such an excellent headteacher who is helped by the rest of the staff and governors to make sure that your school always wants to get better.

There is very little that needs to change in your school, but I have agreed with the headteacher that teachers carry on with the plans they have to help many of you in Years 1 and 2 to reach even higher standards in writing and mathematics. You can help them in this by continuing to do your best.

I hope you all keep on enjoying school and wish you well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Lynn Bappa, Inspector