



St Robert Southwell RC Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 101543
Local Authority Brent
Inspection number 286104
Inspection date 13 February 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 address	Slough Lane Kingsbury London NW9 8YD
School category	Voluntary aided	Telephone number	020 8204 6148
Age range of pupils	3-11	Fax number	020 8905 0287
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Chair	Mr Peter Manning
Number on roll (school)	365	Headteacher	Ms Shelagh Kelly (Acting Headteacher)
Appropriate authority	The governing body		
Date of previous school inspection	17 September 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a one-and-a-half form entry school that is over-subscribed. Most pupils come from relatively advantaged backgrounds and the proportion of pupils claiming free school meals is well below average. The percentage of minority ethnic pupils is above average. The largest ethnic group, apart from White British, is White Irish. The proportion of pupils with English as an additional language is just below average but increasing. The school is currently led by an acting headteacher who began work in January 2007.

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 good school. Parents are very pleased with the quality of education it offers. At the heart of the school lies a commitment to its Christian foundation. As one parent commented, 'You get the feeling that not only are you joining the school, but also a strong Catholic family.' 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 above average attendance, very good behaviour and excellent attitudes to work. Their extremely positive attitudes are a major factor in the good standards achieved.

Children enter the school with skills that are broadly average for their age. They rapidly find their feet and settle quickly into school life. They make brisk progress and are secure in all of the areas of learning by the time they start in Year 1. Pupils achieve well during their time in the school. They attain well above average standards by the time they leave in Year 6, with the exception of writing where standards are not as high as in other subjects. The school is well aware of this and has begun to take action to ensure that pupils reach the standards of which they are capable. The school sets challenging targets for pupils, based on assessment of their progress, and these targets are generally met.

Teaching and learning are good. Pupils experience a good range of interesting activities to help them to learn. As a result pupils enjoy their lessons, are very well motivated and work hard. The good curriculum makes good provision for art and music, as well as for basic skills. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise writing in different subjects. Classrooms are bright and attractive and provide the pupils with good opportunities to learn. Junior playground facilities and equipment, however, are inadequate.

The acting headteacher has made a good start to her job and is determined to build on the school's earlier successes. A real strength of the school is the high quality of teamwork and commitment which ensures that everyone plays an integral part in moving the school forward. In consequence, the pupils' personal development is outstanding and their academic achievement is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing by providing a wider range of opportunities across the curriculum for pupils to write in different styles and for different purposes.
- Provide more playground equipment and facilities for the junior playground.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good and standards are well above average overall. This is due to consistently good teaching and the pupils' excellent attitudes to learning. Children enter the school with levels of knowledge and skills that are in line with those normally

found. They make a good start to their schooling and are well prepared for more formal learning when they enter Year 1. This good progress is sustained in Years 1 and 2. Teacher assessments for seven year-olds in 2006 fell sharply but, due to determined and successful action have recovered well. Standards by Year 2 are now above average. Standards by Year 6 are well above average overall. The pupils' performance in writing, however, lags behind that of other subjects. The school has put into place strategies to improve standards in this area. Inspection evidence confirms that these are already bearing fruit, although standards are still not as high as in other subjects.

Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities gain the basic skills for learning and make good progress because they are supported well by teachers and classroom assistants. The growing number of pupils with English as an additional language achieve well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' excellent personal development and well-being are due to the high emphasis given to these aspects of education. Pupils develop into mature, confident young citizens during their time in the school. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong, are respectful of the needs of others and work very well together. Their self-esteem blossoms because their teachers value their opinions. Pupils have very positive views about their school but are keen to suggest ways in which it could be improved. They would like a greater variety of equipment in the playground, for example. From entry to the school, pupils' social skills come on quickly and they develop a good sense of right and wrong. Pupils participate enthusiastically in sports and show a good understanding of which foods are good for you. As one pupil said, 'We keep healthy in this school by drinking water and eating fruit.'

The pupils say that school is a 'fun and interesting' place to be and that there is a lot to do. They have excellent relationships with each other and with staff, and contribute very effectively to the school and outside community. Their above average basic skills and excellent attitudes to work prepare them very well for the next stage in their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are consistently good. This is a major factor in the pupils' good progress. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is lively and interesting and provides children with good opportunities to acquire essential skills. Teachers' expectations of work and behaviour are high. As a result, pupils work hard and behave very well. Teachers make tasks interesting and pupils really enjoy lessons. As one child

commented, 'This school is creative. Teachers try to make every lesson fun.' Teachers make good use of new technology, such as interactive whiteboards, to stimulate pupils' interest.

Teachers have worked hard to improve standards in English, with a particular focus on writing. As a result, standards have improved, although more remains to be done in this area.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is planned well to meet the needs of the mixed-age classes and offers a wide range of experiences to make learning interesting. Pupils in Years 3 to 6, for example, learn Italian. The strong provision for personal, social, health and emotional development equips pupils to deal with sensitive and personal issues. Recent improvements to planning in writing are beginning to be reflected in higher standards. The Foundation Stage curriculum covers all areas of learning imaginatively and successfully targets those areas where children need most help. Although plans to improve provision for outdoor play in Nursery and Reception are well-advanced, facilities and equipment in the junior playground are inadequate and restrict pupils' outdoor activities. Pupils are very enthusiastic about the good range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities, such as residential trips and many clubs, including the knitting club and after-school country dancing.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The pastoral care of the pupils is a strong aspect of the school's work. The school is a very welcoming place for children. Adults make a real effort to get to know the pupils and their families. The procedures for safeguarding pupils are robust and thorough. Pupils say they can talk to any member of staff if they have a problem. Well-established procedures help pupils settle quickly into school. Good links with secondary schools ensure smooth transition at the end of Year 6. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities, including those who are vulnerable, are supported well and included in all aspects of school life.

Academic guidance is good. Teachers have improved their tracking and assessment procedures so that it is easier to identify pupils who need extra help or who are at risk of underachieving. Pupils are becoming more actively involved in this process.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The new acting headteacher and recently-appointed deputy form a strong team. Despite the above average standards pupils achieve, senior leaders are highly focused on ensuring continuous improvement. The school has good systems for checking how well it is doing and uses these

effectively. Senior leaders have begun to monitor the impact of the initiatives put into place last year to raise standards in Years 1 and 2, for example. The school regularly seeks and acts upon the views of parents and their children through surveys and through the school council. Governors are fully involved in the life and work of the school and are becoming increasingly confident in checking the school's performance and asking staff challenging questions. Parents are very supportive of the school although they are understandably anxious to see the appointment of a permanent headteacher.

There are many signs of real improvement and the school is in a good position to build on these. Standards are rising and the school has successfully tackled the issues for improvement from the last inspection. There has not yet been sufficient time, however, to see the full impact of all the recent initiatives to raise standards.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	2
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	1
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 for making me so welcome and sharing with me your thoughts about your school. I particularly enjoyed talking to some of you about work that you are proud of and watching the country dancing club. I think that your school is a good school, and I think it has some excellent features. Well done to all of you! You obviously enjoy lessons and activities, and contribute much to making the school successful. Your behaviour is good and your positive attitudes to work and play and the ways in which you care for one another are excellent. The headteacher and all her staff are working hard to improve the school. They certainly believe that all of you can achieve well, so it's up to you to keep on proving them right.

I have asked your teachers to make a few improvements to make the school even better. Work has begun on helping you to do even better in your writing. I have asked them to carry on doing this. You can play your part in this by always working as hard as you can. I have also asked your headteacher to provide you with more playground games and equipment so that you have more to do at playtime and during the lunch break. I am sure you will have plenty of suggestions here.

I hope that you continue to enjoy your time at school and wish you well for the future.

Lynn Bappa
Additional Inspector