

Our Lady of The Visitation Roman Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101920
Local Authority	Ealing
Inspection number	286223
Inspection dates	8–9 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Barry Jones

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	473
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms J Evans
Headteacher	Mr B Grzegorzek
Date of previous school inspection	12 March 2001
School address	Greenford Road Greenford UB6 9AN
Telephone number	020 8575 5344
Fax number	020 8575 6734

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Our Lady of the Visitation is an over-subscribed, larger-than-average primary school. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and for whom English is an additional language are higher than in most schools and are increasing. There are few pupils who are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is lower than in most schools. Attainment on entry to school is broadly average. The school has experienced a high turnover in teachers in the last two years.

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 of the Visitation is a good school and there are some outstanding features, particularly in Key Stage 2. The very large majority of parents are very appreciative and speak warmly about the school's efforts. As two parents wrote, 'Both our children have had an excellent education' and 'The children go to school with smiles on their faces.'

Standards by the end of Year 6 are well above average and achievement is good. Typically, children make good progress in the Foundation Stage as a result of the good teaching and curriculum. Consequently, they enter Year 1 with skills that are higher than normally found. Progress has then slowed in Key Stage 1 and standards slip to being average. It rapidly accelerates in Key Stage 2 and pupils not only make up for lost ground but forge ahead. Pupils make outstanding progress in Key Stage 2 because of the high proportion of excellent teaching and the consistent implementation of effective strategies. The picture at Key Stage 1 has improved in 2006 but the gains are not yet firmly established. There have been several changes in the teaching staff and this has led to improved teaching and better results. However, there is still some teaching that is only satisfactory and variation in the attainment of pupils in different classes, particularly in Years 1 to 3. The school has very good systems for tracking pupils' progress and these data are used well to support individual pupils when their performance dips. However, the school does not analyse the performance of groups or classes as rigorously and so does not have a complete picture of trends in the school.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good and this is testimony to the hard work and professionalism of all the staff. Pupils have positive attitudes and this is shown by their good attendance and the calm atmospheres in classrooms. They say that staff have their interests at heart and so they feel very safe and enjoy their time in school.

Leadership and management are good. Despite several changes in the leadership team in the last two years, senior managers have been effective in maintaining high standards of attainment and levels of care. Support for pupils with learning difficulties, having improved significantly, is now good and these pupils make the same progress as their classmates. In the previous inspection, there was a weakness in the identification of pupils with English as an additional language. This has been remedied, support is coordinated well and the pupils make good progress. However, the groupings in the school means that there is an unusually high proportion of pupils with English as an additional language in a few classes. Some parents feel very strongly that the needs in these classes are greater than in others and that these needs are not being met. They are, but the rationale for this grouping of pupils has not been explained clearly to parents. On the other hand, the school is disappointed by the low levels of parental involvement in particular activities. This apart, the school has addressed the issues from the previous report well. There is a new senior leadership team and the senior managers are settling into their roles and already having an impact. Capacity to improve further is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the quality of teaching is consistently good throughout the school.
- Extend the analysis of data to more accurately monitor the progress of different groups and classes to inform the deployment of resources.
- Improve links with parents and seek ways of involving them more in the life of the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children leave the Foundation Stage with secure standards in each of the six areas of learning. The pupils' skills, particularly in numeracy, are well above local authority averages and above national expectations. The very high turnover in staff in the last two years has meant that progress has dipped temporarily in some classes. However, in other classes pupils' progress has accelerated because of the good quality of the new teacher. The school is working effectively to remove differences in teaching. Pupils consistently make excellent progress overall in Key Stage 2 in mathematics and science because of the outstanding provision in Key Stage 2. For instance, in mathematics there has been a thorough analysis of pupils' strengths and weaknesses allied to a rigorous monitoring of the quality of teaching. This information has been collated well, incorporated into action plans and supported with appropriate training for the teachers. In 2006, there was a significant improvement compared to earlier years in the Year 6 English results. This was because the school introduced a new approach to teaching writing and strengthened the assessments of pupils' progress. As a result the school met its challenging targets in 2006 for each subject.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Relationships are very positive and this reflects well the Christian values and Catholic ethos of the school. Pupils are keenly aware of their rights and responsibilities. For instance, the school council makes a very effective contribution to life in the school. It has made very sensible recommendations regarding the use of the playground and school uniform. Older pupils willingly become 'buddies' for younger pupils and this helps to cement the caring, family atmosphere. As one pupil said, 'The school keeps us safe and we look after one another.' In each classroom there is a secure anxiety/worry box for safe sharing of concerns which is used by pupils and acted upon by staff. This helps to build the trust that pupils clearly have in their teachers. Behaviour is good in classes and around the school. Pupils say that bullying is rare. There is well thought-out guidance for healthy-living issues in lessons and through a recent 'theme week'. Consequently, pupils have a good understanding and this has been acknowledged through the award of 'Activemark' and Healthy Schools status. There are close links with the secondary school and pupils' good numeracy and literacy skills means that they are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers know their subjects well and give clear explanations and instructions to the pupils. Lessons are well planned, conducted at a good pace and most are successful in providing different work according to the needs of the pupils and this is a major reason why pupils progress so well. Sometimes more able pupils are given work that is not sufficiently challenging and this has been identified as an area for improvement by the school. Imaginative use is made of interactive whiteboards which helps to stimulate pupils and make lessons interesting. Pupils respond well and relationships in lessons are good. There is some outstanding teaching in all key stages. The pattern varies from year to year because of

the rapid change in staffing but teaching is consistently better in Key Stage 2. Marking is very good and helps the pupils to improve further. Opportunities are sometimes missed to enable the pupils to develop their skills to learn on their own. For instance, in the Reception classes, children do not always learn as much as they could through outside play as this aspect is not planned as well as other activities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. In the Reception classes there has been too much emphasis on teaching separate subjects but this has been recognised and greater links are being made to build on the strong provision already in place. In the main school the curriculum reflects well the pupil's ethnically diverse backgrounds. There is very good provision for literacy and numeracy. The number and quality of computers have been increased considerably this year. As a follow up to its curriculum review, the school is extending the use of computers by pupils in other subjects. There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities. Take up for these is good and contributes significantly to the good feeling that the pupils have for their school and they appreciate the efforts that staff make on their behalf.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Pastoral support is strong and starts with the good levels of care provided by the class teacher. It is complemented by the good support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities by all staff including effective work with other agencies. A strength of the school is that it employs its own counsellor and she arranges for a range of support to meet varying needs. This good teamwork contributes to the pupils' good progress socially and academically. It enables all pupils to play their full part in the life of the school. One parent commented, 'The school is caring and careful'. Academic guidance is good. The pupils know their targets and what they need to do to improve. Good quality information is given to parents but there is a lack of opportunity for parents to engage in informal discussions at the start of the day.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher is a strong driving force and has high expectations for staff and pupils. Planning for the school's development is very good but some developments have been delayed because of the high number of senior manager changes in the last few years. For instance, the school has not developed the analysis of its own data to evaluate trends in performance by groups of pupils or particular classes. Nevertheless, the senior managers have consistently promoted good standards and levels of care during this turbulent time.

The monitoring of teaching quality has been extremely thorough and has led to improvements in teaching. This rigorous approach underpins the improvement in standards. Some of the curriculum coordinators are experienced and make a valuable contribution. Several have only recently taken on the role and are undergoing a thorough training programme before taking on a full monitoring and evaluation role. Many of the governors are also relatively new. They are very supportive of the school and are undergoing training to extend their role as a 'critical

friend'. The governors have taken robust action when weaknesses in management have been identified.

The school has been less successful in engaging parents in the life of the school. Parents comment positively on the frequent newsletters sent by the headteacher and the usefulness of the school's website. However, there are often disappointing levels of support by parents for functions and a significant minority of parents feel that two-way communications with the school could be improved. This is recognised by the school and has been identified as a priority for development and is included in the school's development plan.

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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	2
The attendance of learners	2
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

18 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Our Lady of The Visitation Roman Catholic Primary School, Greenford, UB6 9AN

Thank you for the help that you gave to us when we inspected your school. You were courteous, polite and made us feel very welcome. I know that is something that other visitors have said and you should treasure this reputation. We spoke to many of you around the school or in small groups. You told us that you enjoy school, feel safe and that there is little bullying. You do think that the dining room can be too noisy though! We were impressed by your school council representatives and they feel that their views are valued by the school. For instance, they have been involved in decisions to improve medical support at lunchtime, school uniforms and the use of playground equipment.

The other things we liked about your school are that:

- you work hard and get good results in the SATs;
- you get good teaching and the lessons are interesting;
- you get along with one another;
- you behave and attend well;
- the staff care for you and have your interests at heart;
- the leaders of your school are doing a good job.

There are three ways in which we have asked the school to improve even further.

- We would like to see your parents more involved in the life of the school.
- Extend the checking of how well different groups and classes are doing.
- Try to make sure that the teaching is even better and for all of you.

We wish you every success in the future.

Barry Jones Lead inspector