

St Monica's RC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102039
Local Authority	Enfield
Inspection number	286258
Inspection date	18 May 2007
Reporting inspector	John Earish

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	
School	420
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs G Wells
Headteacher	Mrs K Baptiste
Date of previous school inspection	8 May 2001
School address	Cannon Road Southgate London N14 7HE
Telephone number	020 8886 4647
Fax number	020 8882 8424

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This large primary school is situated in an area of Enfield where social circumstances are more favourable than average. It serves families from a variety of social backgrounds, with many pupils from relatively advantaged homes. It is oversubscribed. Almost half of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups although very few are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. When children start school, their skills and abilities are above those expected of four year olds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities [LDD] is below that found nationally. The headteacher and her deputy took up their posts at the start of the academic year.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

St Monica's is a good school where all groups of pupils make good progress. The school is successful because it is well led and managed, teaching and learning are good and pupils are very eager to learn. More than one parent commented that, 'the ethos and pastoral care are an important strength of the school'. Others wrote that, 'the school is extremely welcoming and friendly and there is a genuine effort to ensure that every child matters'.

Leadership and management are good. However, there is no complacency. The new headteacher and her deputy are working with determination to make the school outstanding in all respects. They have rigorously evaluated the school's performance and identified areas where changes are needed. This has resulted, for example, in recent improvements to the range of opportunities to write for different purposes which has helped raise standards in English even further.

Given their starting points, pupils achieve well and reach standards that are well above average at age 7 and 11 years. This is because they are well taught and have a good range of interesting and challenging tasks which inspire them to work hard. Although standards in science are well above average, the rate of progress is not as brisk as in English and mathematics. Children in the Foundation Stage get off to a good start because the good provision meets their social and learning needs and they make good progress.

The curriculum is good, and is enriched through an excellent range of out of class activities. It provides very well for pupils' personal, social and health education and makes a positive contribution to pupils' personal development and well being which is of outstanding quality. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to work independently through designing and carrying out their own experiments in science so that pupils match the brisk progress they make in mathematics and English.

All pupils are warmly welcomed and equally valued. The quality of care, guidance and support provided for pupils is good overall, with outstanding pastoral care. Pupils are increasingly involved in assessing their own learning in English and teachers often give them good written and verbal feedback on what they need to do to improve. However, this is less well developed in other subjects such as mathematics and science and consequently pupils have less guidance on how to improve.

Teaching and learning are good and ensure that pupils make good progress. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils should achieve and plan effectively to meet the needs of all learners. They work closely with teaching assistants to ensure that those who need extra help are given it. However, there are inconsistencies. Pupils are often given activities which help them to develop their thinking and express their ideas. Occasionally, however, teachers dominate lessons and do not give pupils sufficient opportunities to discuss their own ideas with each other.

The school leaders' track record of identifying and tackling weaknesses and their very clear view of what needs to be done means that they have good capacity for improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the opportunities for pupils to be involved in assessing their own work so they have a clearer understanding of what they need to do improve.
- Improve the rate of progress in science by increasing the opportunities for pupils to design and carry out their own experiments.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good. Children typically start school with skills and abilities that are above those normally expected of four year olds. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage and exceed the goals expected of them by the time they move into Year 1.

Standards are significantly above average in English, mathematics and science at age 7 and 11 and have been for the last five years. Pupils are making the best progress in English and mathematics. Although standards in science are well above average, the rate of progress is not as brisk as in English and mathematics. Pupils with learning difficulties make similar progress to their class mates.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. Pupils behave extremely well and attend school very regularly. From an early age children learn to cooperate with each other and can be trusted because they have a strong sense of personal responsibility. They make an outstanding contribution to the community and are fully involved in raising funds for different charities. For example, pupils have recently won the Sainsbury's Active Kids Christmas card competition and a poetry competition organised by the local education authority to commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day.

School councillors are confident their views are listened to and are certain they are making a difference. They have, for example, helped improve the playground and help supervise the younger children during wet playtimes

Pupils know about the importance of a healthy lifestyle and staying safe. They speak enthusiastically about healthy eating and are very aware of the importance of drinking plenty of water and taking regular exercise. They are also enthusiastic recyclers collecting paper, card, plastic bags, fruit for compost, mobile phones, toner and inkjet cartridges. Pupils rapidly acquire literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills (ICT) that will equip them well for later life and learning

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good teaching ensures good learning and progress. Teachers take account of the different levels of ability with the class, so that work is interesting and challenging. Marking is carried out conscientiously and there are good examples of teachers providing clear feedback and involving pupils in assessing their own work and exploring new ideas. However, these opportunities are inconsistent as on some occasions, teachers do not give the pupils enough time to explore new ideas for themselves or with friends to sharpen their critical thinking skills and to express ideas succinctly. Consistently good teaching and imaginative use of the good facilities in the Foundation Stage contribute to the good start made by these children. Across the school, teaching assistants and other support staff make a good contribution to pupils' progress, including those with learning difficulties.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum meets the needs of all pupils well, including those with learning difficulties. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good with a good balance between work chosen by the teacher and activities selected by the children. ICT is used well to support learning across curriculum. This is an improvement since the last inspection. However, opportunities for pupils to work independently through designing and carrying out their own experiments are not always fully exploited.

The outstanding range of enrichment activities including visits, visitors and after school clubs and activities makes a considerable contribution to their personal development. For example, pupils have an opportunity to learn Egyptian dancing and African drumming during workshops organised by professional dancers and musicians. They also enjoy practical activities during 'Science and Technology' and 'Arts' weeks organised by the teachers. Such experiences, together with the emphasis on staying safe and healthy, develop in pupils an outstanding sense of personal and social responsibility.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Very positive relationships across the school, coupled with a commitment to treat each child as an individual, ensure that support, care and guidance for all pupils are good. Pupils feel safe and say that the school deals with bullying effectively when it is aware that it is happening. Policies and procedures to ensure pupils health, safety and welfare are made clear to all staff and are carefully implemented. However, there is scope to improve the opportunities for pupils to develop an even clearer understanding of what they must do to improve their work by allowing them to be more actively involved in assessing their own performance. This is developing well in English and is a good model for other subjects.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The school's improvement plan shows that school leaders and governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and what needs to be done to make the school outstanding in every way. The new headteacher and deputy are focusing well on maintaining the many positive aspects of the school whilst building a new sense of community and team work so that all adults are able to respond purposefully to changing needs of the school curriculum. They are working well to establish the roles and responsibilities of the new senior management team to ensure school improvement matters are addressed effectively. Teaching is regularly monitored to improve the quality of lessons and teachers are set realistic targets for improvement. School self evaluation is good. Governors are effective and ensure that financial resources are used well. They provide good challenge to the school to improve standards and provision for pupils.

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Annex A

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	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?	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

31 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Monica's RC Primary School, London, N14 7HE

Thank you very much for making me so welcome when I visited your school recently. I was really impressed with your friendliness, very good behaviour and your sensible and helpful attitudes towards each other.

I agree with most of your parents that behaviour in the school is very good. Those of you I spoke to told me this too. You said that bullying is rare but that it is dealt with well if it does happen. Your school is a safe place because adults work hard to make it so, and you have clear ideas about how to keep safe and healthy.

I think that you go to a good school which prepares you well for the next stage of your learning. To make it even better, however, I am asking your teachers to increase the time you have to work independently to plan and carry out your own experiments. Your teachers are also going to increase the opportunities for you to assess for yourselves how well you are doing. You will then be able to discuss this with them so that you have an even clearer understanding of what you need to do improve your work.

You can all help by continuing to work hard and to meet the targets set for you. I am certain you can do this!

With best wishes,

John Earish Lead Inspector