

St Mary's Priory RC Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102145
Local Authority	Haringey
Inspection number	286287
Inspection date	21 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Michael Pye

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	234
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs M Hibbert
Headteacher	Mrs F Collins
Date of previous school inspection	23 April 2002
School address	Hermitage Road London N15 5RE
Telephone number	020 8800 9305
Fax number	020 8880 1142

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector, as part of a co-ordinated inspection with the neighbouring infant school.

Description of the school

This average-sized junior school became part of a federation with its neighbouring infant school in September 2006 and shares the same headteacher. Situated in a socially and economically deprived area, there are well above average numbers of pupils entitled to free school meals. The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds is well above average, as is the number of pupils for whom English is an additional language. There are above average numbers of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, and three pupils have a statement of educational need.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

The school provides an outstanding education for the pupils. The leadership of the headteacher is excellent. Aply assisted by a wide range of managers, the school has delivered a consistently high level of achievement for pupils in recent years. This is due to a number of factors, not least the effective sharing of responsibility by managers, and rigorous self-evaluation and monitoring. Pupils adopt very positive attitudes, and their personal development is outstanding. Also, since the last inspection the school has successfully carried out some excellent work to develop links with parents. Their supportive comments include, 'I am really pleased to be associated with the school', and that 'The school is extremely well led, and managed excellently'.

Entry levels to the school vary but are at least below average, and in the past often significantly so. Many pupils join the school with little or no English; for example, eight out of ten pupils in the current Year 6 have English as an additional language (EAL). The effective tracking of pupils' progress helps ensure that pupils requiring extra help, and there are many with learning difficulties or disabilities (LDD), are quickly identified and appropriate intervention programmes are put in place. On leaving the school at the end of Year 6 the standards are broadly average. Given their low starting points this constitutes outstanding progress for pupils.

A significant reason for this achievement level is the consistency of good or better teaching. Relationships are very strong in lessons and pupils want to do their best. Work for pupils of different abilities is planned well; often, as in mathematics, there is additional extension work for three ability levels. It is made clear to the class what is the aim of the lesson. However, teachers could further challenge pupils by making it clear what is expected of them as individuals.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of pupils is outstanding. The school provides very good opportunities for spiritual reflection, pupils listen carefully and show respect for each other. Pupils spontaneously applauded the work of others in one literacy lesson. The pupils are full of life, talking enthusiastically about their physical activities; 'I like to walk to school on a Wednesday,' said one boy. Others chorused their agreement and added how much they enjoyed the sports clubs. Such enhancement is one aspect of an excellent curriculum which clearly meets the literacy needs of many of these pupils, but which supports their emotional learning as well. This, together with the knowledge that the school has of the pupils and their needs, contribute to outstanding levels of care, support and guidance.

Leadership and management are outstanding and a very clear direction has been set for the federation. Governance is outstanding; they are fully involved in school life, and consequently know the school very well. On occasions leadership has been over-modest in its assessment of the quality of its work. Improvement since the last inspection has been excellent. There is an outstanding capacity to further improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve teaching, particularly through promoting further challenge for pupils by making it clear what is expected of them as individuals.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

The varying nature of the intake is well illustrated by the current Year 6. On entry, their skills and knowledge were significantly below average, particularly in literacy and numeracy. If their

targets are met they will attain broadly average standards in English, and mathematics, and slightly above average in science. This reflects outstanding achievement, and continues a three year trend of good value being added to the scores achieved by pupils in their Year 2 tests. In the past the performance of higher attainers has been below the national average, but the school addresses this successfully through the planning of appropriate work for pupils of different abilities. More recently standards reached by pupils in Year 3, when they enter the junior from the infant school, have been higher and this can be seen in the higher levels of attainment, especially in the current Year 4. Consistently good teaching contributes to the high achievement levels across the school. Other contributing factors include the rigour with which the progress of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and for whom English is an additional language is tracked, and the use of very appropriate intervention programmes. Consequently, these pupils achieve as well as their peers.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Visitors to the school swiftly gain a clear sense of pupils' enjoyment. Sounds of singing and laughter are common, and pupils in a physical education (PE) lesson showed real excitement at who could throw the furthest. Pupils care for each other. They are respectful, polite, and behave exceptionally well. There are excellent opportunities for pupils to reflect, either during formal prayers, or during the comprehensive personal, social, and health education programme. Attendance is good. Pupils have an exceptional understanding of how to stay safe and healthy, because these messages are so well reinforced around the school and in lessons. They talk of the healthy and 'great school dinners'. Sport is very well promoted and pupils benefit extremely well from clubs and specialist PE teaching. They contribute extremely well to the school community; older pupils act as 'guardian angels' to others, and participate in 'work experience' in the infant school. Pupils experience very good links with local churches, the attached convent, and sing at the elderly people's home. There are good developing links with the local mosque and pupils participate in local festivals. Satisfactory basic skills, together with ample opportunities for team work and the very good quality of pupils' relationships mean that pupils are well prepared for the later stages of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall and often outstanding. It is rigorously monitored by school leaders. The consistent high quality of teaching helps account for the very high achievement levels. Teachers use assessment well to plan work for pupils of different abilities. The lessons have pace, for example, in a Spanish lesson the questioning was quick and kept pupils' attention very well. Classes are told of the learning intention for the lesson. However, there are missed opportunities for teachers to emphasise the expected learning of different pupils, and hence challenge them more, for example to use more enriched vocabulary. The teaching assistants make a significant contribution to pupils' achievement. In one lesson the assistant used skilled questioning and good resources which allowed the group of pupils with EAL to participate and progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding. It meets the needs of pupils extremely well, with a successful focus on delivering literacy and numeracy skills, including good opportunities in lessons for speaking and listening. There are some excellent programmes for pupils requiring additional support. The impact of those programmes on individuals is very carefully monitored. Learning is made more meaningful through very good opportunities for pupils to investigate, and problem-solve in the Friday challenge. Cross-curricular links are very well planned, with science, history and geography contributing to messages about healthy living, and in Spanish, for example, the names of Tudor monarchs are reinforced. Specialist teaching and coaching are positively impacting on pupils enjoyment, and achievement in sport, information and communication technology (ICT), Spanish, music, and guitar lessons. Furthermore there is very good support for the emotional needs of pupils. The nurture suite is effective for those pupils in Year 3 who require additional support on entry to the school. Pupils' social skills benefit from a very good variety of visitors, visits, clubs, and the Year 6 residential and outward bound trips.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care, guidance and support for pupils are outstanding. School systems help ensure that it knows the pupils and their needs extremely well. This has been further aided by the federation arrangements. Families feel welcomed and are quickly able to discuss any problems with staff. Pupils speak of feeling safe, well cared for and know who to approach if they have a problem. They like school because it is friendly and they feel their views are respected. One Year 6 pupil quoted the achievements of the elected school council and said, 'I am sad to leave - I love this school, I will come back every week to visit'.

A very good element in the academic support and guidance for pupils is the 'pupil progress meeting' which has now been adopted in the infant school. Leaders and class teachers review the progress of pupils and this influences lesson planning, intervention work, as well as pupil and teacher performance targets. Most pupils know their targets and use them to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. Ably assisted by her deputy, the very skilled headteacher has successfully established the correct balance between high academic achievement, and excellent levels of pupil personal development, care, support and guidance. Pupils thrive. All leaders have clear roles and there is a shared responsibility for ensuring the achievement of pupils. They participate fully in monitoring and evaluating performance. Analysis is extremely detailed, for example, pupil achievements are identified by gender, by different ethnic groups, and for other groups, such as LDD and EAL pupils. Such attention to detail leads to effective strategic planning, which is very well linked to performance management targets and the professional development of staff. Teaching assistants identified their need for further ICT training which has been delivered by on-site specialist staff. The school actively seeks out partners to support its work, and the network learning community has been particularly well

used. The governors and headteacher have handled the federation arrangements very well. It is positively impacting on the school through increased pupil links, and wider professional development and management opportunities for staff. For instance, subject leaders are planning to support links between subjects in the infant school.

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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?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
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	3
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	2
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	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?	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

3 July 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mary's Priory RC Junior School, London, N15 5RE

You may remember my visit to your school, and I thank you for your warm welcome. I listened carefully to what you had to say and especially liked how much you enjoyed the school. I can see why, because it gives you an outstanding education. This means that it is very good indeed.

You learn very quickly because the teaching is good. Also, you behave exceptionally well and work hard. Keep it up! Your teachers prepare your lessons well, and give you work that is at the right level for you. This is very important for those of you who do not speak English very well. When asked in lessons you were able to tell me what you were learning in the lesson. I have asked that your teachers challenge you more by making it clearer to you what they expect you, alone, to achieve. You could help by telling them when you are finding the work too hard or too easy.

You obviously enjoy school. You told me about how you stay healthy and safe; I am glad that you like the school dinners. You also said how effective your school council is and how you helped out around the school. I also liked very much the way you are given time to think about different things that might concern you. This is just one of many good activities that the school provides for you. You told me that you enjoyed the sports clubs, Spanish, art and music lessons, and the visits and visitors you have. I agree with you that you benefit from an outstanding variety of things that the school provides for you. Certainly it makes very good use of other people and places to help support you, the pupils. You realise that you are extremely well cared for by the adults.

Your headteacher is an excellent leader of the school. Her deputy and the other leaders also help to make sure that the school runs smoothly.

I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Pye
Lead inspector