

Notre Dame Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100179
Local Authority	Greenwich
Inspection number	298516
Inspection dates	11–12 July 2007
Reporting inspector	Jacqueline Krafft HMI

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	207
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr William Laws
Headteacher	Ms Frances Neligan
Date of previous school inspection	2 May 2006
School address	169 Eglinton Road London SE18 3SJ
Telephone number	020 8854 0585
Fax number	020 8317 9948

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This school was found to be inadequate when it was last inspected in May 2006. A 'Notice to Improve' under Section 13(3) of the Education Act 2005 was given because significant improvement was required in relation to pupils' achievement, the quality of teaching and learning, the curriculum and leadership and management.

Notre Dame is a smaller than average primary school serving a culturally diverse community. Three quarters of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups. The largest group is of black African heritage. A high proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language and the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is also high. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is above average but fewer than average have statements of special educational needs.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Notre Dame Catholic Primary School provides a good standard of education and, in accordance with Section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer needs significant improvement.

A clear focus on improving the quality of teaching, which is now good, has led to pupils making good progress in their learning in Key Stages 1 and 2. Although there have been many staff changes there is a shared understanding of the features of a good lesson. Teachers inform pupils of what they will be learning and provide them with good opportunities to work with each other. Interactive whiteboards are also used to enliven lessons. Good links are made between different subjects to develop pupils' literacy skills and this resulted in their improved writing. The good range of extra-curricular activities, including the increased number for younger pupils, and particularly 'Golden Time' contributes to pupils' enjoyment of school.

The pupils have also made a positive contribution to the school's Christian ethos and improvements. They are polite, take turns and listen to the views of others well. They are self confident and make suggestions through the school council about further improvements they would like to see made. Good support and guidance ensures they feel safe and are well cared for. As one parent wrote, 'my child has a medical condition and I have found the headteacher and staff extremely supportive and willing to be flexible on her account.' Most parents are positive in their comments about the school and one noted, 'I am very happy with my child's education, he has particularly developed more in the last six months and communications and meetings have also improved.'

Quality and standards in the Foundation Stage are satisfactory. Pupils start school with skills and knowledge lower than expected for their age and make satisfactory progress in the Reception class. Staff turbulence and inconsistencies in assessment and recording have impacted on the quality of Foundation Stage provision since the previous inspection. Pupils are provided with an appropriate range of independent and teacher-directed learning. However, a lack of assessment information and understanding of the needs of younger pupils leads to tasks which are not well matched to their needs. This limits the progress they make in some lessons.

The senior leaders and governors have been guided and supported well by the local authority advisers and acted on the advice given. As a result, systems have been established to track and review the progress pupils make, target support and monitor the quality of teaching and learning. However, the role of subject leaders and governors is not yet fully developed. They are not fully involved in the development and evaluation of the school's plan for improvement so are unclear about how improvement priorities and the impact of their work will be measured. As a result of improvements made since the previous inspection with good external guidance and support the school has satisfactory capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop rigorous evaluation at all levels to ensure improvement priorities are clear and measurable.
- Improve the provision in the Foundation Stage based on accurate, ongoing assessment of what pupils know and can do.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress from low starting points to reach standards by the end of Year 6 which are broadly average. There has been a clear focus on improving standards and progress in English, particularly in writing. As a result, indications are that Year 6 pupils have met their challenging targets for 2007 and exceeded them at the highest level. This has not been mirrored in mathematics because improvements are more recent. The needs of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, those who speak English as an additional language and those who join the school at different times are identified early. Good support is provided and the progress they make is reviewed frequently and so they achieve well too.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal development and well-being of pupils, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. They feel safe, well cared for and enjoy school so attend regularly. Although punctuality remains a priority, the school is taking good steps to improve this, for example, through regular feedback in newsletters and the presentation of an 'on time in school' award. Pupils have good relationships with each other and the adults in school. As a result, pupils behave well and confidently report that they know who to turn to if they have any concerns or worries. They particularly value the opportunities to talk about their feelings and consider the feelings of others in circle time. They have a good awareness of how to stay safe, fit and healthy and were keen to show their badges which were awarded for walking to school. They make an active contribution to the school community through the school council and running stalls at the school fair. They are currently presenting a case for changes to the school uniform to governors. They also make appropriate contributions to the wider community, such as a school in Ecuador, through links with the church. Pupils respond well to the responsibilities they are given, work well together and are self confident. These skills, together with their numeracy and literacy skills, ensure they are well prepared for their next steps in education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good and so pupils make good progress. Lessons are well structured, enjoyable and provide good opportunities for pupils to be actively involved in their learning. As a result, they are engaged and motivated to do their best. For instance, in one lesson observed, Key Stage 1 pupils were taught punctuation through hand signals and sounds that made the learning fun. Teaching assistants across the school provide an effective contribution to pupils' learning. Both teachers and teaching assistants are skilled at managing pupils so that they behave well. There are some inconsistencies in providing appropriate challenge for all pupils. For instance, in the Foundation Stage, tasks are not always well matched to the pupils' needs so they find the work too difficult or tasks lack a clear focus. All teachers mark pupils' work regularly and provide appropriate guidance on how well pupils are doing. However, there is inconsistent feedback to pupils on how they can further improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It successfully promotes an enjoyment of learning and the good personal development of all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities and English as an additional language. Themed weeks have proved particularly effective in increasing pupils' enjoyment and the 'Big Write' project has impacted positively on pupils' progress in writing. The school has also promoted opportunities for pupils to use their literacy skills in other subjects. So, for instance, the pupils designed posters for saving water as part of a geography study. Resources and provision for information and communication technology (ICT) have improved. The curriculum is well supported by a good range of extra-curricular activities that add excitement to pupils' learning. These are well attended and much appreciated by the children. Cheerleader club is particularly popular, with a pupil remarking, 'It is fun and you need a lot of energy'.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support provided are good. There are clear, robust systems and procedures in place for safeguarding pupils. Positive relationships have been built with the parents and there are good levels of support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Good transition arrangements are in place and, in particular, for pupils with statements of special educational needs, when transferring to secondary school. Specialist agencies, including speech and language therapists, art therapists and a special school outreach team are used well to provide good support and guidance for those pupils who need it. Additionally, school-based strategies such as 'Catch me being good' are having positive results for pupils who display challenging behaviour. Most pupils now know their targets for literacy and numeracy and work well to achieve these. However, there is still some inconsistency in academic guidance. Pupils are not always given clear advice on next steps for learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management at all levels are satisfactory. The headteacher, well supported by the local authority adviser, has developed a cohesive team. Despite high staff turn over, there is a shared understanding of the features of good teaching. This has had a positive impact on the progress pupils make. Self-evaluation accurately identifies most of the school's strengths and areas for development. Systems have been established to monitor the quality of provision which involves subject leaders but this is not yet fully developed. Many are new to their roles and have been given appropriate guidance and training to develop their skills and expertise but do not yet have the necessary information to robustly evaluate the impact of their work. The school's plan for improvement identifies appropriate annual priorities linked to areas identified in the previous inspection. Success criteria are included but are not specific or measurable. Long term goals are unclear and governors and subject leaders are not yet fully involved in their development and evaluation. The governing body has improved its systems, structures and contact with senior and subject leaders and so provide an appropriate level of support and challenge.

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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	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
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	3
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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
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	3
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

19 July 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Notre Dame Catholic Primary School, London, SE18 3SJ

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school recently. We especially enjoyed looking at your work, seeing you in lessons and talking with so many of you. You were very polite, confident and told us what you thought very clearly.

You told us that you enjoy school and particularly like Golden Time when you can choose to do lots of interesting activities such as sewing and cooking. You get on well with each other and told us you feel safe and well cared for. You behave well, work hard and have really improved your writing skills. I was also very impressed by the guitar playing in assembly.

There have been lots of changes in school to help you make as much progress as you can. You have coped well with the changes and have helped your headteacher and teachers to improve the school. You are making good progress. Well done! To make the school even better, we have asked the headteacher, teachers and governors to match activities better to what the youngest pupils know and can do. We have also asked them to check really carefully that the things they are doing to help the school get better are working and helping you continue to make good progress.

Thank you again for making us so welcome and we hope that your end of year production was a huge success!

With very best wishes

Jackie Krafft
Her Majesty's Inspector