

Rosary Roman Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100035
Local Authority	Camden
Inspection number	307280
Inspection dates	7–8 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Kekshan Salaria 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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	345
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Raymond Morris
Headteacher	Ms Isobel Gaffney
Date of previous school inspection	6 October 2003
School address	238 Haverstock Hill Hampstead London NW3 2AE
Telephone number	020 7794 6292
Fax number	020 7433 2010

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Rosary is a larger than average sized voluntary aided Roman Catholic primary school serving an inner city area. The proportion of pupils with free school meals is nearly a quarter of the school population; this is above the national average. The proportion of pupils whose first language is not English and the percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is over a third of the schools' population, which is above the national average. The school has gained Healthy Schools, Active Schools and Investors in People status. It is also a Young Enterprise Centre.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Rosary Primary School is an outstanding school. There is a very strong commitment towards making every child feel valued and fully included in all aspects of school life. Staff, parents and pupils are rightly proud of this. As one parent commented, 'This school nurtures pupils and enables them to make good progress. The staff are supportive, raise self esteem and boost children's learning.'

Senior leaders assess that when children join the school their developmental levels are broadly in line with those normally found in children of this age. Children enjoy their time at school because they have good opportunities to explore, investigate and discover together. In the Foundation Stage they get off to a good start and are well prepared for learning that is more formal when they enter Year 1. By the end of Key Stage 2 in 2007, standards overall in English, mathematics and science were significantly above national averages. Given pupils' starting point, this represents good progress over their time in school, particularly in science. The school has identified the need to improve writing, actions taken to address this have been successful, and pupils are on track to meet the challenging targets set for them. By the time pupils leave the school, they are very confident and out-going with excellent social skills. Attendance is monitored closely and there are close links with the Education Welfare officer. As a result, attendance rates are improving and are good. However, punctuality is an issue at the start of the school day; despite strenuous efforts by the senior leaders, many parents do not reinforce the school's high expectations of pupils arriving at school on time.

The leadership of the headteacher and senior staff is outstanding. They have built an effective and dedicated team, wholly committed to the welfare and academic success of the pupils. Senior leaders have a well thought out programme for checking the work of the school throughout the year, which involves staff and pupils. This gives them a very accurate assessment of the school's strengths and needs, which translates into effective strategic planning for future development. The school is in an excellent position to continue to improve.

Parents wholeheartedly support the work of the school. Governors know and support the school well, and play a key strategic role in reviewing its performance. Pupils are cared for exceptionally well and feel safe and secure in school, giving them the confidence to try their best. Their personal development and well-being are outstanding. They treat one another with great consideration and respect, and are keen to participate fully in all the school offers them. Behaviour is excellent. Pupils follow the strong spiritual and moral lead given by adults in a school underpinned by Christian values, and this is reflected in their outstanding social development. Their cultural understanding develops well through subjects such as art, music and literature, and through educational visits and visitors to the school. However, this is not yet fully embedded into the life of the school. The curriculum is broad and interesting. The Foundation Stage classes are stimulating environments, which encourage younger pupils to learn well.

Teaching and learning are good, ensuring that all pupils achieve well whatever their starting points. Classrooms are attractive learning environments, with stimulating displays of high quality pupils' work, especially in art. Teachers use interactive whiteboards well to interest and engage pupils, and to involve them fully in lessons. Pupils like the variety of approaches teachers adopt and the 'fun ways' they show them to go about their work. Staff and pupils work together well to maintain a very happy and orderly community. Pupils' welfare has a very high priority and

pupils are cared for effectively. Pupils enjoy coming to school a great deal and feel they make good progress. Many take part in the wide range of extra curricular activities on offer.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children settle well into the nursery class and enjoy a good range of provision across all six Foundation Stage areas of learning. They are well prepared for the next stage in their learning. They make good progress because teaching is good overall. There is a good mix of activities led by adults and opportunities for children to make their own choices. Consequently, children's personal development and attitudes to learning are particularly good. The atmosphere for learning, both indoors and outdoors, is very positive. Parents appreciate the ways their children are enabled to settle quickly, and how active and occupied they are in their learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure the cultural diversity of the school is fully reflected and embedded in the curriculum and the day-to-day life of the school.
- The school should continue to work with parents and outside agencies to improve punctuality.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Overall, pupils' achievement is good and improving. At the end of Key Stage 1, standards overall have been below national averages but as a result of the school's work to improve writing and tracking, progress in English and mathematics is improving and inspection evidence indicates standards now are in line with national expectations. Overall, progress in Key Stage One is satisfactory.

By the end of Key Stage 2, standards are well above national averages. Pupils' progress is good and this includes those learning English as an additional language. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities, including those with moderate learning needs or behavioural difficulties, also achieve. The school has continued to develop rigorous procedures for tracking the progress pupils make. This has contributed to additional support being targeted more effectively and as a consequence further accelerating pupils' progress through out the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is outstanding and central to the identity of the school. Pupils know they are part of the church community and their well-being is a priority for all staff. The Prayer Garden is a particular example where pupils have created a place to reflect and pray. The excellent behaviour of pupils and their very positive attitudes towards learning is demonstrated in lessons. Pupils are friendly and confident and say they feel valued and respected. Their enjoyment is evident in the enthusiastic way in which they talk about the many things they like about the school. As one pupil described it, 'My teacher makes things fun.' Pupils are confident that bullying is not tolerated and say they feel safe because of the support the school gives them through the Playground Squad and the way they are encouraged to support each other. The high priority the school places on valuing and developing all pupils as individuals means that they are sensitive to each other's needs and abilities. Pupils' good awareness of healthy lifestyles is shown by their healthy food choices at lunchtime as well as

their enthusiastic participation in physical activities. The elected school council makes a thoughtful contribution to the running of the school, and involves pupils in making 'real life' economic decisions by managing their own budget on behalf of the school. Pupils express their views while making a positive contribution to the community. The environmentally safe bags created locally are a direct result of challenging traders to reduce the use of plastic bags.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning is good overall and is having a very positive impact on pupils' performance and their learning. Lessons proceed at a good pace and effective questioning builds on pupils' existing knowledge and understanding. Many teachers make good use of interactive whiteboards to demonstrate and teach concepts, and involve pupils in lessons. Lessons are well prepared, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are high and relationships are outstanding. This helps the pupils to feel secure, raises their self-esteem and hence boosts their learning. Lesson objectives and success criteria are pupil friendly and accessible in most lessons. In a small number of lessons, opportunities to consolidate pupils' knowledge and understanding are missed. Planning for, and assessment of, the needs of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties is very good. As a result, these pupils make good progress in relation to their starting points. Teachers' marking of work is thorough and their comments link well to the pupils' individual targets and give clear guidance on how to improve further.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum provides a good range of activities and is carefully organised to take account of the mixed-age classes. It is enriched by interesting visits and visitors and these extend pupils' experiences and add to their enjoyment and enliven learning. For example, a visit by the nursery class to a local pizza restaurant gave the children the shared experience to talk about and to support their learning back in school. The writing curriculum has been a focus for development and this has resulted in improvements, especially in Key Stage 1.

The school employs specialist teachers for music, drama and physical education and this helps to ensure good learning opportunities across a full range of subjects. The use of an 'artist in residence' last summer helped pupils, throughout the school, to research different methods of painting and well known paintings. Consequently, they enjoyed producing some high quality art work in the style of famous artists which are displayed to good effect around the school.

A range of interesting extra-curricular activities, including instrumental tuition and 'Debutots' drama for under 5's take place in the school. These opportunities extend pupils' knowledge and enjoyment and contribute to their personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides outstanding pastoral care and support for its pupils. Well-established procedures ensure very good attention is given to child protection, health and safety, risk assessment and first aid. Good liaison with other agencies helps to meet the needs of pupils

with learning difficulties or other vulnerable pupils, resulting in sensitive and successful inclusion. Pupils with English as an additional language also receive good support and make good progress.

Personal, social and health education is given a high priority and pupils are taught how to keep safe. Transition for pupils moving from year to year and on to secondary education is also well established and very effective. As one Year 6 pupil said, 'I feel secondary transfer was well organised and helped me to think about my next school'.

Learning targets are set so pupils know what they are aiming to achieve. In addition, following consultation with the pupils, the school uses a system of 'Two stars and a wish' to encourage pupils to assess their own learning and work by identifying two things they are pleased with and one thing they will improve on. Pupils' progress is tracked rigorously enabling accurate targeting of support where needed.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding because there is a clear focus on maintaining and improving high standards as well as promoting the personal development and well-being of pupils. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership. She works in close partnership with a dedicated and talented leadership team to ensure that pupils develop a deep love of learning and school. In consequence, the pupils' personal development is excellent. A real strength of the school is the high quality of teamwork and commitment, which ensures that all adults play an integral part in moving the school forward. The school takes good account of the views of parents. The headteacher knows the school very well and this is evident in the high quality of the school's own self-evaluation. This is comprehensive and rigorous, clearly identifying strengths and areas for improvement. The decline in standards in writing has been reversed because of changes introduced by senior leaders and taken on whole-heartedly by all staff. A robust programme of continuing professional development has been established. Staff are encouraged and expected to share good practice and this is beginning to have an impact and teaching is improving even further.

Governors are supportive and have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They receive reports from subject leaders on curriculum developments and ask relevant questions in relation to improvements.

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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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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?	2
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	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

20 May 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Rosary Roman Catholic Primary School, London, NW3 2AE

I am writing to let you know how much we enjoyed coming to visit your school. Thank you for making us feel so welcome and helping us during the inspection. We enjoyed talking to you about your work and sharing lunch with you. It is obvious that you are very proud of your school and rightly so.

I am writing this letter to tell you what we found out about your school.

- Your school is outstanding. The school community has worked together to make it so.
- Your behaviour is excellent and you and your parents and carers are rightly very proud of your school.
- Your school is a welcoming and safe place and you know that if you have a problem, there is an adult to talk to.
- The teaching is good and the school provides you with many interesting learning activities both in and out of school. You told us how much you enjoy these.
- You take care to make sure that you help and support each other.
- Your headteacher does an excellent job and is very well supported by the staff and governors.

We know that your headteacher and the staff work very hard to provide you with a good education. To make your school even better, we have suggested that they continue to work with your parents and the local authority to make sure you get to school on time and to ensure that your cultural development is fully embedded in all the work of the school.

I hope that you carry on enjoying school, work hard and wish you all success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Kekshan Salaria

Her Majesty's Inspector