

St Eugene de Mazenod Roman Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100047
Local Authority	Camden
Inspection number	307285
Inspection dates	17–18 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Norma Ball

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	189
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Valentine Jennings
Headteacher	Mrs Juliette Jackson
Date of previous school inspection	6 May 2003
School address	Mazenod Avenue London NW6 4LS
Telephone number	020 7624 4837
Fax number	020 7372 2280

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average primary school serving an urban community that includes some areas with high levels of social deprivation. Over half of all pupils are entitled to free school meals and this proportion is well above the national average. The proportion of pupils who come from minority ethnic backgrounds is also well above average with nearly half of all pupils speaking English as an additional language. A new headteacher was appointed in September 2007. The school holds the Activemark award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school, which is improving under the strong leadership of the new headteacher. Parents are very pleased that their children like school and are happy, one wrote 'My daughter enjoys coming to school, she loves learning'. As a result of improved behaviour in lessons and supportive staff, pupils want to do good work, contribute well to lessons and their personal development is good. Pupils are well aware of the importance of a healthy lifestyle and staying safe. Their Catholic values are expressed well through the respect and compassion they show to others.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. From very low starting points they make good progress in Reception and enter Year 1 with skills that are broadly average. They make satisfactory progress as they move through the school and reach standards that are broadly average by the end of Year 6. Pupils are equipped soundly for the next stage in their education. However, they do not do as well in reading and writing as they do in mathematics and not all higher attaining pupils reach the levels they should because work in literacy does not challenge them sufficiently. The school is aware of these issues and are focussing on their improvement. Pupils' progress is monitored with increasing rigour and targets set to help them make better progress.

Teaching and learning, and the curriculum are satisfactory. The curriculum has been carefully reviewed and provision for information and communication technology (ICT) and personal, social and health education are being improved. Teachers plan lessons with a clear structure and set work that is beginning to meet the needs of pupils but requires further refinement before it is suitably demanding for all abilities, particularly the more able. Those pupils who find learning difficult receive sound additional support and make the same progress as other pupils.

The pastoral care given to pupils is good so they feel safe and confident in the adults who look after them. However, academic guidance is less strong. Assessment data is being used with increasing accuracy by staff. A system of class, group and individual targets for pupils in English and mathematics has been introduced and is developing gradually but its impact is not yet evident in reading and writing. Targets are most effective in Years 5 and 6 where pupils are very clear about how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their work and their progress.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher gives a very good lead and her impact on tackling weaknesses in many areas of the school is already evident in the signs of improvement in progress for pupils, the enthusiasm of the staff and the renewed confidence of parents in the school. Subject managers are beginning to make a contribution to improving teaching and learning and raising achievement in their subject areas. However, it is only within the last term that they have been encouraged to assume their leadership roles and are still developing their skills and confidence under the guidance of the headteacher. Governors provide good support to the school and are becoming more effective in their monitoring role. A range of new systems and procedures, including a revised behaviour policy and better tracking of pupils' progress, has been introduced. Although there has been insufficient time for the full impact of these initiatives to be apparent the progress made in one term indicates the school has a good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

The Reception class offers pupils a safe and happy environment. Good routines have been established so pupils feel cared for and are encouraged to be confident and independent. Most children start school with skills and abilities much lower than those expected of four year olds. They make good progress and reach the expected levels for their age by the time they enter Year 1. Recent improvements in planning and assessment ensure that sound account is taken of children's individual needs. Teaching is satisfactory and support staff work as part of an effective team. Good emphasis is placed on developing pupils writing and number skills. However opportunities for learning through creative play are underdeveloped and there is only a limited range of engaging activities for children to explore. Social skills are developed well. Children enjoy using the outside play area, which has been greatly improved with vibrant murals and new play equipment.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in reading and writing by using assessment information more consistently to raise teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Ensure that teaching consistently challenges all groups of pupils to achieve as well as they can, particularly the more able.
- Develop the skills of subject managers in improving teaching and learning and raising achievement.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before the next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

All groups of pupils achieve satisfactorily during their time in the school. Pupils' progress is improving in all year groups as a result of a range of effective new initiatives. The strong focus on improving reading and writing skills, especially through developing extended writing, is beginning to have a positive impact on improving achievement in English. Achievement is improving in ICT as a result of better resources. Throughout the school more careful tracking of pupils' progress is helping to identify quickly those pupils who do not reach their expected targets. There are signs that this is beginning to be effective but is as yet inconsistent. Consequently, improvements are not as marked in reading and writing as they are in mathematics. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are well supported through a range of carefully planned programmes of individual and group work. Pupils with English as an additional language also make satisfactory progress because of improving support.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school and this is shown in their improved attendance, which is now average. Relationships at every level are good and pupils know they will receive help if they share problems. Pupils, staff and parents have seen a significant improvement in behaviour brought about by a new community spirit in the school and a clear behaviour policy, which pupils understand and respect. They show maturity and pride in the responsibilities they undertake

and are proud of their new school council and the work they do. The school has a loving Catholic ethos based on respect and care for others, which contributes to the good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. They are supportive of a range of charities, join in local and church based events and have developing links with the elderly residents near the school. Pupils have good opportunities to learn about other faiths and ways of life and are proud of the range of cultures within their own school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

A focus on improving teaching and learning, which are satisfactory, combined with pupils' positive attitudes promotes a good learning atmosphere in most lessons. Staff have embraced enthusiastically the new initiatives to improve teaching and learning and are improving their skills in using assessment information to plan lessons that meet the needs of pupils of all abilities. The purpose of lessons is invariably explained and activities structured for different ability groups. However, these activities are not always finely tuned to the needs of pupils and sometimes do not challenge them sufficiently, especially able pupils. Marking too has been improved and examples of good marking were seen in Years 1 and 4. The new policy is followed consistently although not all teachers are yet identifying clear and succinct points to help pupils improve their work. Teaching assistants work in close partnership with teachers and provide good support for pupils who do not find learning easy.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school has carefully reviewed all areas of the curriculum. Generous time is being given to mathematics, science, ICT and especially to English, as part of the schools priority to improve standards in that subject. More time in class and events such as the writing week are proving successful and evidence indicates that pupils are making better progress. Nevertheless, the school are aware of the need to intertwine subjects, especially English, to make lessons even more interesting for pupils and to develop their basic skills still further. Provision in ICT has been improved by giving pupils access to sets of laptops, which are portable between classes. Staff are undertaking training to implement the new personal, social and emotional education programme so improving the current limited provision. Enterprising use has been made of artists and musicians from the community and pupils enjoyed the chance to develop their creative skills. An expanding range of visits out of school extend the learning experiences of pupils well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school provides a caring and safe place for pupils. One pupil said, 'This school is a friendly happy place. Everyone is kind to us'. Requirements for safeguarding pupils are fully met. The needs of all pupils are carefully assessed from the time they enter the school and induction arrangements are sensitively organised. A sound and improving range of links have been formed with agencies to support the care provided in school. Less well developed, although improving rapidly, is the guidance given to pupils to improve their work and achieve as well as they can. The use of targets for groups and individual pupils to help them know how to improve their

work are developing soundly. There are still inconsistencies between year groups but all pupils have a growing understanding of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their work. Older pupils especially say they like targets and find them helpful. Guidance for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language is soundly organised and monitored.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The new headteacher has brought vision and drive to shape a new direction for the school. An accurate evaluation has been made of the school's effectiveness and urgent changes implemented sensitively with the support of staff and governors. Parents are almost unanimous in their approval and support for the changes that have occurred under the new leadership. One parent typical of many said, 'I am impressed with the changes since September, my son particularly likes the sporting activities at break time'. New developments are being linked with appropriate training and the skills and confidence of all staff are growing. Subject managers have only in the last term begun to embrace their responsibilities as subject leaders. They are beginning to show increased confidence in monitoring teaching and learning and achievement under the guidance of the headteacher. There have been changes to the governing body with some new appointments and a revised and simplified committee structure. All governors are very supportive of the school but only just beginning to be able to offer challenge to the school and monitor developments carefully. The changes are very new and their effectiveness cannot be assessed as yet.

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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?	3
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?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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

30 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Eugene de Mazenod Roman Catholic Primary School, London, NW6 4LS

Thank you very much for being so welcoming when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed meeting you, your teachers and other people who work in the school. You did such a lot to make our two days run smoothly.

Your school gives you a satisfactory standard of education, which means there are good things about your school and some things that could be better. We think your new headteacher has made a lot of important changes to improve your school and you told us you were very pleased about these. One of the best things about St Eugene de Mazenod is how much you like your school and how happy you all seem. We know that you like helping in school and some of you take responsibilities like being a school councillor. You behave well in classes and around the school, and also in the playground when you are playing ball games together. In lessons, you enjoy what you are doing, work well and try to do your best. You get on well with one another and like your teachers. You also know how to keep safe. You told us that adults are there to help you when you need advice. You know about healthy eating and the importance of exercise.

Your teachers make most of your lessons interesting and help you enjoy your learning. We have asked:

- that your teachers give you work that is not too easy and not too hard so that you can all do well
- that the teachers responsible for different subjects keep a closer check on your work and progress.

We feel that if they could do all of this more carefully you would always have a clear idea of how to improve your work so you will make better progress especially in reading and writing.

Thank you again for being so friendly and helpful to us.

Yours sincerely,

Norma Ball Lead Inspector