

St Margaret Clitherow Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100180
Local Authority	Greenwich
Inspection number	307320
Inspection dates	20–21 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Michael Merchant

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	253
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Husband
Headteacher	Ms Malgorzata Wosiek
Date of previous school inspection	13 October 2003
School address	Cole Close Thamesmead London SE28 8GB
Telephone number	020 8310 1699
Fax number	020 8312 2177

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is of average size. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. The vast majority of pupils come from a variety of ethnic minority backgrounds. The majority of pupils are of Black or Black British heritage most of whom are of Nigerian descent. There are high numbers of pupils who are in the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is also very high. Pupils' specific needs are mainly speech, language and communication behavioural and moderate learning difficulties.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school, as the vast majority of parents agree. One parent said 'This is a warm, welcoming school which puts the welfare and development of every child at the heart of its work ... I am very glad I chose to send my child here.' The outstanding headteacher inspires and supports staff and pupils to get the best out of themselves and others. Because many middle managers are new to post, the school has recognised the need to increase their independence and influence within their own areas of responsibility. Governors involve themselves well in the life of the school and are supportive. The school is not at all complacent and whilst celebrating existing strengths and successes, it knows exactly what to do to improve further on its road to excellence. Therefore, overall, leadership and management are good and there is good capacity for further improvement.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding; they are proud of their school and enjoy it greatly. Staff have created a school in which all pupils get on well together, grow tremendously in confidence, courtesy, respect for others, and in their appreciation of how they can contribute to the community and the wider world. A very positive atmosphere permeates the school. Relationships are exceptionally strong. Pupils show a keen awareness of health and safety.

Children enter the Nursery with well below average skills and leave at the end of Year 6 with average standards overall. All groups of pupils achieve well and make good progress. Achievement is particularly good in mathematics in Year 6 where the rate of pupils' progress placed it in the top 8% of schools nationally in 2007. Pupils make good progress because staff are ambitious for them and fervent in their aim to get the best from each one, academically and personally. Every effort is made to ensure that all pupils are included and supported.

Pupils achieve well not just because teaching and learning are good but also because they are encouraged to see their potential and are given the self-confidence to work hard and aim high. Teachers mark books diligently and take time to write informative and helpful comments on pupils' work. Pupils say that this enables them to make improvements. Extensive and effective procedures are used to monitor, evaluate and improve the quality of teaching and learning. Whilst many lessons are of good or even outstanding quality, learning is occasionally slowed when teachers do not plan well enough to meet the wide range of needs in their classes. Consequently, in some lessons, higher attaining pupils are not always challenged as much as they could be.

The carefully planned curriculum ensures that learning is meaningful and fun. There is an emphasis on celebrating creativity as well as multi-cultural and cultural aspects in school. As a result, pupils value the diversity of their community and this makes a good contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. High quality displays ensure that the learning environment remains stimulating and motivates learners.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the Nursery with much lower than expected communication and language skills. They develop good social and personal skills because of the good care and support they receive from adults. Parents report that their children are happy and look forward to coming, and they like the way they are kept fully informed of their children's progress. Children make good progress in the Nursery because teachers plan work to give children a good start in literacy and

numeracy. Through skilful questions, pupils are challenged to think for themselves. Children make satisfactory progress in the Reception year in basic counting, reading and writing skills. Some children, especially those who find learning easy, are insufficiently challenged and some repeat work already accomplished in the Nursery. Teachers and classroom assistants know and care well for each child in the Foundation Stage.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that more lessons are of the quality of the best by making sure that all teachers plan to meet the needs of all groups of pupils, particularly the higher attaining.
- Develop the roles of middle managers and so strengthen cross-curricular links.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress through Years 1 and 2 and reach standards that are average. Standards in writing and mathematics are better than in reading. This good progress continues in Years 3 to 6 and current standards in Year 6 are just above average overall. These pupils achieve well in relation to the below average standards they showed when in Year 2. Standards fluctuate year by year and reflect the variations in attainment on entry to the school. Pupils' achievement though is consistently good and this has improved year by year. The rate of pupils' progress was amongst the top 15 per cent of schools nationally in 2007. There are strong signs of pupils' current standards sustaining this improvement. Scrutiny of pupils' work during the inspection and the schools' tracking of progress show standards are continuing to rise. Overall, all groups of pupils make good progress as they pass through the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Personal development is outstanding and makes a significant contribution to the progress pupils make in all aspects of school life. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. It is greatly underpinned by the school's Catholic ethos, together with a clear celebration of the contributions of other religions. The excellent rate of attendance and punctuality reflect pupils' outstanding attitudes towards their learning and their enjoyment of being at school. As one parent said 'My child has really improved in character and learning since she started this school.' Behaviour in and around the school is outstanding because pupils respect each other and show courtesy and manners to all visitors. Pupils understand that they have a personal responsibility to respect others and be aware of their needs. Pupils respond well to guidance on healthy lifestyles and understand clearly the need to keep fit. Pupils' sense of self-worth is extended through the many roles and responsibilities with which they are entrusted. For example, they act as playground friends, prepare for assemblies and represent each other in the school council where their views are listened to and acted on by the school. By the end of Year 6, pupils are confident and outgoing and understand the need to work as a team. This, in conjunction with their good progress in developing their basic skills, helps to prepare them well for the next phase of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Typically, teachers are knowledgeable and classrooms are well-ordered and calm. Pupils enjoy their lessons and learning takes place in a harmonious atmosphere. Teachers are good at telling pupils exactly what they are expected to do in lessons and this helps them make sense of their learning. In most lessons, pupils experience a range of approaches and this helps to sustain their interest, so that they quickly acquire new knowledge and skills. Sustained challenge and high expectations enable pupils to achieve well over time. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are very clear about subject targets and teachers in these years support pupils well to reach their goals. In a minority of lessons, this high level of achievement is not always obtained. This is because not all teachers plan their work to provide sufficient levels of challenge for all pupils, particularly those who learn quickly.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum contributes positively to pupils' enjoyment of their learning, excellent behaviour and personal development. Music and art are particularly well promoted, which does much to celebrate the rich mix of heritages at the school. There is an appropriate focus on developing literacy and numeracy skills and encouraging pupils to express their ideas through speaking. This contributes greatly to the good progress and improving standards in core subject areas. Curriculum theme weeks, such as Grounds Week, add variety and breadth to the curriculum. Visits to explore the local area and nearby places of interest, such as to galleries and museums enhance the curriculum by setting learning into context. Pupils are keen to attend the range of out of school clubs, which include art, choir, chess and sports. The school is linking some subjects together so that skills learned in one subject can be transferred to another. Subject leaders, however are new to their posts and the school has yet to adopt a fully integrated approach to curriculum planning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good because of the high level of commitment from all staff, which ensures that pupils' well-being is promoted very well. One parent said, 'The school takes great care of my child and my child loves school'. The school places a strong emphasis on the pastoral care of pupils. The arrangements for safeguarding pupils and ensuring their health and safety are rigorous. The school's procedures for maintaining high attendance have been extremely successful.

There is effective support for pupils with learning difficulties and those who are at the early stages of learning English because the school works closely with a range of outside agencies to benefit these pupils so that they achieve as well as others. Vulnerable learners and those at risk of underachieving are identified early and highly effective strategies are put in place to support them. Careful monitoring of progress, particularly in Years 5 and 6, ensures that pupils know their targets and understand what they need to do to achieve them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The outstanding leadership of the headteacher engenders loyalty amongst staff, who work with clarity and enthusiasm. Staff morale is strikingly high and the strong camaraderie at all levels contributes to the excellent relationships in the school. They have created an ethos of inclusion that has enabled all pupils to flourish. Most middle managers are new to their responsibility but are beginning to grasp what they need to do to fulfil their roles even more effectively. Because senior leaders lead by example this contributes to the developing confidence of subject and phase leaders. The leadership team rigorously monitor all areas of the school's work and this results in improvements to teaching, learning and the standards achieved by learners. Governors hold the school to account well for its work. In places, the school's classroom accommodation is cramped and small. This prevents some teachers planning for activities that more fully involve pupils, such as group work and so holds learning back at times.

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

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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
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?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
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	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

05 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Margaret Clitherow Catholic Primary School, London, SE28 8GB

I should like to thank all of you very much for the kindness and consideration you showed to my colleagues and me when we came to visit your school recently. We really enjoyed ourselves. We think you go to a good school. You told us many interesting things about your school, which was very helpful. When we watched your lessons, some of you showed us your books. We saw how well your teachers mark them and you told us that their comments helped you to improve and to meet your targets.

Here are some of the good things about your school.

- You behave outstandingly well and you get on well with your fellow pupils. St Margaret Clitherow is a well ordered school and you look after each other very well.
- Teaching is good and sometimes excellent and your teachers are very concerned to make sure that you do as well as you can.
- By the time you are in Year 6, you reach standards that are similar to those of other pupils in other schools and you make good progress in your lessons.
- You learn lots about keeping yourselves safe and leading a healthy lifestyle.
- Your headteacher and your teachers know exactly how to make St Margaret Clitherow an even better school.

What we have asked your school to do now.

- Make sure that when teachers plan activities for you, they give to those of you who learn quickest work that is hard enough.
- Help the new leaders who are in charge of subjects to have the chance to work together and so do their job well.

I hope that you all continue to work hard and do well at St Margaret Clitherow.

Yours sincerely

Michael Merchant

Lead Inspector