

St Charles RC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100505
Local Authority	Kensington and Chelsea
Inspection number	307410
Inspection date	25 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Lynn Bappa

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	285
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	39
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Fr Marcus Winter
Headteacher	Miss Ann Slavin
Date of previous school inspection	27 June 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	83 St Charles Square London W10 6EB
Telephone number	020 8969 5566
Fax number	020 8960 4338

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school. They looked particularly at the extent to which children benefit from the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), how well the school enables boys to achieve their full potential, support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those who are vulnerable and whether management structures are strong enough to sustain and improve the school's good results. The inspectors met with staff and pupils and scrutinised parents' questionnaires. They observed parts of several lessons and looked at school documentation, including the school's self-evaluation. The inspectors did not investigate other aspects of the school's work in detail, but found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified. These assessments have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

St Charles is a larger than average school with a 1.5 form entry. Despite being situated in one of the wealthiest London boroughs, it serves a very mixed population in a City Challenge area. The percentage of pupils entitled to claim free school meals is much higher than usual and the number coming from socially disadvantaged backgrounds is increasing. Nearly three-quarters of the pupils come from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds, a much higher percentage than is usually found. The largest ethnic groups are White British, White Other and Black African. The proportion of pupils with English as an additional language is much higher than average and increasing numbers of pupils join the school with little or no English. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is broadly average but increasing. Most have moderate communication or learning difficulties although there are a few pupils with more severe learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school has gained the Activemark and Healthy School awards and has achieved the national financial management standard. An acting headteacher and deputy headteacher have been in post since the beginning of September following the previous headteacher's retirement.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

At the heart of St Charles lies a clear commitment to Catholic values where every child really does matter. Parents and pupils agree. As one parent commented, 'I am so happy with every aspect of St Charles. I cannot think of a negative comment I could possibly make.' They are right to be proud of the school because it is outstanding in the way in which it promotes both pupils' personal development and their academic achievement. There are many reasons for its success. Standards reached by the pupils by the time they leave school in Year 6 are consistently well above average. Pupils make excellent progress, not only in English, mathematics and science but also in other subjects such as music, art, history, physical education and information and communication technology (ICT). The building blocks of success start in the EYFS where children become active and eager learners. All groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities and those with English as an additional language, make rapid progress in Key Stage 1, which provides them with a very secure foundation for success in Key Stage 2. Vulnerable pupils are given particularly good support and their achievement is very good. As one parent commented, 'I have a child with special needs. The progress and achievement my son has displayed since attending this school has been remarkable.' Last year's test results for boys, particularly in Key Stage 2, showed some underachievement. The school carefully investigated what had happened and acted swiftly to tackle the situation. As a result, this year's results show that almost all boys either reached or exceeded the expected levels. The school is well on its way to meeting its challenging targets for this year.

In this secure and happy environment, pupils thoroughly enjoy all aspects of their school life and attend very regularly. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. As one pupil explained, 'Love God, Love Your Neighbour really means something here'. Another added, 'As well as teaching the learning, this school also teaches politeness.' Pupils participate enthusiastically in the excellent range of sporting activities provided by the school and show a good understanding of why it is important to take part in them. They can explain very clearly which foods are good for you and enjoy the tasty and nutritious school meals at lunchtime. Their behaviour is excellent and pupils from all backgrounds get on very well together and show pride in where they come from. Pupils' high standards and excellent personal and social skills put them in a very strong position to do well in their next stage of education and beyond.

The school has excellent links with outside agencies, such as speech and play therapists, to support pupils with identified needs. Vulnerable children receive very good quality help. Child protection procedures are thorough and meet government requirements. Pupils feel safe and confident that someone will listen to them if they have a problem. Academic guidance is very good. Very good use is made of assessment to identify learners who need extra help or who are at risk of underachieving. Pupils know how well they are doing and have clear targets to aim for.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Teachers manage pupils very well and have high expectations of what they can achieve. Teachers set imaginative and stimulating tasks for their pupils underpinned by high quality resources, such as interactive white boards and computers. Tasks and resources, including interactive white boards, are imaginative and stimulating and, as a result, lessons are hives of activity. Pupils' work is marked thoroughly and detailed guidance is provided for the next steps in their learning. As a result, pupils work hard and take pride in their achievements. As one pupil commented, 'We like to work our brains in this school.'

The curriculum is vibrant and creates a very positive climate for learning. The excellent programme for personal, social and health education contributes exceptionally well to pupils' emotional development. There is effective specialist provision for music throughout the school and Spanish in Key Stage 2. Visitors and visits enrich the provision. Year 6 pupils, for example, are looking forward to their trip to the theatre at the end of the year because 'we will see something really good and we have to dress very smartly'.

A further key factor in the school's success is the outstanding leadership and management. Sustained well above average standards and success in helping pupils to develop excellent personal qualities are clear illustrations of the school's outstanding capacity for further improvement. Both parents and pupils think that the acting headteacher and deputy headteacher have made a very good start. Plans are very well considered but there is scope to sharpen the way that leaders measure the impact of some of their new initiatives. Staff share a common goal to enable all pupils to succeed and their commitment and enthusiasm remain undimmed. Teamwork is a strength of the school and everyone plays a part in how it is run. Year 3 pupils, for example, are very proud of the guide to their classroom which they wrote themselves. This includes information on topics such as behavioural expectations, location of resources and how to take the register. Subject leaders know what is going on in other classrooms and accurately assess the quality of teaching and learning through a rigorous monitoring programme. Governors provide a very good level of support and challenge. The school has very good links with the local community, such as a neighbouring Spanish school, as well as with the wider world.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children thrive in the Nursery and Reception classes. They start school with levels of knowledge and skills that are below those typical of three-year olds, with particular weaknesses in communication, language and literacy where their skills are extremely modest. Many speak little English or have restricted experiences and skills that represent significant disadvantages. Due to highly effective teaching within a bright and stimulating environment, children make excellent progress in their learning. By the end of Reception, the majority reach the expected levels in most areas of learning. Standards in speaking and listening, and early reading and writing skills are a little below those in other areas. In contrast, children show confidence in counting and basic numeracy skills. Teaching is very effective with a very good balance between tasks directed by adults and those chosen by the children. Adults take great care in helping children settle in. As a result, children are very aware of classroom routines and settle quickly to work and other activities, despite the fact that, at the time of the inspection, many of them had only had a few days in the school. Staff are vigilant in ensuring that children's welfare needs are fully catered for. Excellent partnerships with parents and external agencies, such as speech therapists, ensure that any specific learning needs are effectively met. The care provided for children with severe physical and/or learning difficulties is exemplary. Children revel in the wealth of activities and, by closely observing their responses, staff build up a clear picture of what children can do and what they need to do next. As a result, the activities are challenging and motivating but not daunting. An individual portfolio records each child's progress, celebrates achievements and provides guidance on the next steps. The content of these portfolios reveals an extensive range of practical activities such as baking Challah¹ bread and planting seeds, and taking part in a 'baptism' at the parish church. As they work together during these activities, pupils make good headway in communicating with one another and acquiring new vocabulary. Alongside this informal approach, a skilfully taught language programme is successfully

improving children's knowledge of letter sounds. The Foundation Stage is led and managed extremely well. The new EYFS leader has got to grips with what needs to be done to improve the provision further. In particular, she is aware that the outdoor space for Reception class children needs enhancing.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make use of more precise success criteria to measure the impact of new initiatives.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which 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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
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

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 eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

07 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Charles RC Primary School, London, W10 6EB

Your inspectors were really delighted to visit your school recently. What a warm welcome we received! Thank you all for taking part in the inspection of your school. Special thanks to the pupils who talked to us about their work and those who chatted to us at lunch. A big thank you also to the choir and orchestra who sang and played for me.

You all told us how special your school is and we agree. It is outstanding. You make excellent progress because you work very hard. The teaching in your school is excellent and you told us that lessons are fun and that the teachers always help you if you get stuck. You also told us that you really enjoy the trips you go on and that there are plenty of interesting things to do in school.

All the staff look after you very well and make sure you are happy and safe. You have an excellent acting headteacher who is helped by the rest of the staff and governors to make sure that your school always wants to get better. We were very impressed by how well you all get on together and how sensible and friendly you are. The behaviour we saw was excellent.

There is very little that needs to change in your school, but I have agreed with the school that it needs to have a clearer idea about how well it is improving things for you.

I hope you all keep on enjoying school and wish you well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Lynn Bappa

Lead Inspector