

# Our Lady of Dolours RC Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	101124
<b>Local Authority</b>	Westminster
<b>Inspection number</b>	307591
<b>Inspection date</b>	6 June 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Sheila Nolan

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3-11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	323
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Steve Maingot
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Mary Wilson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	11 October 2004
<b>School address</b>	19 Cirencester Street Paddington London W2 5SR
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 7641 4326
<b>Fax number</b>	020 7641 4389

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues.

- How well children in the Foundation Stage make progress.
- How well pupils achieve in science and in writing.
- How effectively leaders and managers maximise the progress of all groups of pupils.

Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation (SEF), by observing lessons, scrutinising the school's records of students' standards and achievement and other documentation, and by discussions with students, governors and staff. Parents' responses to questionnaires also informed judgements. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in the SEF, were other than justified. These have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

Our Lady of Dolours Primary School serves a community that is socially, economically and culturally very diverse. A much higher than average proportion of the pupils, almost 90%, is from a wide range of minority ethnic heritage. Three quarters begin school with little knowledge of English. A third of the school population, an above average proportion, is eligible for a free school meal. The percentage of pupils with specific learning or behavioural difficulties is similar to that found nationally. Small numbers from other Christian and non-Christian faiths are admitted each year if places permit. The school has achieved the Healthy School award.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Our Lady of Dolours is a good school. It successfully meets its aim to be 'a community of faith and learning'. The school works tirelessly to support positive relationships within its local community, not least by including pupils from other than its main faith group. Although a few parents are concerned about communications with the school, the majority endorse the school's generally accurate evaluation of its work and consider it well deserves its good local reputation. 'This is the best school for my child', noted a parent.

A really significant improvement since the last inspection is the precision with which the school checks how successfully pupils achieve. Senior leaders have a very clear view of how well pupils of all ages are attaining and are now able to hold class teachers to account for pupils' progress in all year groups. This is particularly so with the assessments at the end of Year 2. Current school records, in contrast to previous published results, show that these Year 2 standards are average and that pupils make good progress from their below average starting points at the end of the Reception Year. As pupils move through the school, all groups sustain this good progress so that by the end of Year 6 many reach above average standards. A real strength of the school is the way it nurtures the talents of Black Caribbean and Black African pupils. They regularly exceed the standards typical for them nationally. The many pupils at the early stages of learning English make rapid gains in fluency as do those with specific language and communication difficulties. Often this is because of the school's close involvement with external specialist support and much individual attention within the school.

Pupils of all ages do especially well in mathematics because of good guidance to teachers on how children learn mathematics. There is also a strong emphasis on thinking and problem-solving skills. Despite overall above average standards, however, the school rightly recognises that pupils still achieve less well in science than in English and mathematics. Staffing challenges have hindered the school's efforts to improve science rapidly. The school has analysed thoroughly the areas of science where pupils do not do well enough. It is now focussing sharply on how coherently pupils explain their investigations and findings. The school is also aware that boys are less successful in writing than are girls and is now focusing on ways to help boys write well.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development is outstanding. Relationships between children are harmonious and they show respect and tolerance for each other and the adults around them. Those from minority faith groups are welcomed wholeheartedly into the daily assemblies and religious celebrations. Behaviour is also good. Pupils are very happy to be at the school. 'I love school', a Year 4 pupil said spontaneously in the corridor. Pupils feel safe and secure within the well-ordered, calm environment that both protects them from, and prepares them well, for the challenges of a busy inner city area. They report that they are very pleased with the success of the worthwhile play activities over the lunch break that have lessened accidents and other incidents significantly. 'Play supporters' work closely with duty staff and are very proud of their roles. Many pupils attend regularly but some miss too much of their education because of extended family visits overseas, despite the school's best efforts. Central to the school's outstanding care, guidance and support for pupils is the way it involves parents and other agencies in their nurture. These excellent links also provide support for families when needed and help build links within the local community.

'Learning is the best thing about school', said a pupil. Pupils really enjoy learning in lessons and this helps them achieve well. Good and sometimes outstanding teaching provides meticulous

attention to basic skills, often in exciting and stimulating contexts. This prepares pupils well for their future economic well-being and for the transition to the next stage of their education. The emphasis on speaking and performance in English, for example, builds pupils' confidence so that they believe they can succeed. There is a strong international dimension to the school's good curriculum. The 'China event' during the inspection thrilled many pupils and encouraged their efforts at Mandarin. Pupils participate well in the many out-of-hours activities open to them. They particularly enjoy sport, language groups and drama. Most have a very good understanding of healthy and safe living because of the school's efforts to ensure they exercise regularly and eat sensibly. 'Crisps are only allowed on Fridays in packed lunches'. Fruit and other healthy meals and snacks are readily available. Pupils not only co-operate well with school rules on eating but also try to follow their own 'golden rules' for behaviour and work. They contribute well to their school community in many ways through a range of duties, not least, through the school council.

The school has undergone many positive changes since the last inspection. These improvements owe much to the determination and drive of the headteacher and her senior team. Through the systematic evaluation of classroom practice, training for teachers and the promotion of challenging targets, the school is striving for excellence. Middle managers are developing well although some unavoidable staffing turbulence has led to unevenness in how well they manage their accountabilities, for example, in science. Nevertheless, overall leadership and management are good. Governance is outstanding. Enthusiastic and well-informed governors are very active in holding the school to account. Some give real hands-on support as well as acting as critical friends. They have led by example in improving the garden and playground areas and are assiduous in working to ensure that all children should achieve as well as possible. The school's capacity to improve further is good.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Provision for Nursery and Reception children is good. Many children enter the Nursery with little knowledge of English and sometimes limited social skills. Careful observation and planning for their individual needs ensures that most get off to a good start. A careful balance of activities directed by teachers and those where children make their own choices helps them gain steadily in fluency in English and in their social and emotional development. Support staff provide sterling service in ensuring that children's all-round development is a priority. They also ensure continuity in planning and assessing children's progress when there are staff changes. By the end of the Reception class, around three quarters of children are working securely within the expected learning goals in their personal, physical and creative development. They make good progress in counting and readily use numbers as labels. Because of their language needs, they develop more slowly in linking sounds and letters. The school is rightly aware that there are not enough activities to ensure that boys make fast enough progress in fine motor skills and lay good foundations for writing.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Accelerate the drive to raise standards in science.
- Ensure that there is a strong focus on boys' writing at all stages.

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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?	1
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 <sup>1</sup> 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?	2
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	3
The behaviour of learners	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?	1

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	1
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	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



## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

16 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Our Lady of Dolours RC Primary School, London, W2 5SR

Thank you for welcoming me to Our Lady of Dolours School and for sharing not only your ideas and opinions but also your 'Chinese' assembly, your lessons and your playtimes. Thank you, particularly to the school councillors who so ably shared their thoughts with me.

You and your parents are rightly proud of Our Lady of Dolours. You think that it is a good school and I agree with you. Your committed and determined headteacher, staff and governors want the best for you and are determined that you make as much progress as you can in lessons and in your personal development. Because you enjoy school and many of you attend well and work hard, you make good progress, particularly in mathematics.

Your teachers and support staff know you all individually and look after you very well. You also help to look after others, particularly those younger than you. You told me you feel really comfortable in school and that there is always someone to help you if you are distressed. You try to eat healthily and I was impressed by the guidelines you follow for your packed lunches. You are confident to express your views but at the same time ready to listen to others. You understand the importance of helping others and are ready to support children in the playground and around the school.

When thinking about how it could be even better, your school is very clear that it would like to provide you with as good opportunities in science as in English and mathematics. It also intends to do more to improve boys' writing.

For your part, some of you need to attend more regularly. I am sure all of you will continue to do your level best to cooperate with your teachers.

I wish you a very happy future at Our Lady of Dolours.

Yours sincerely

Sheila Nolan

Lead Inspector