

# Our Lady of Lourdes RC School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	101331
<b>Local Authority</b>	Barnet
<b>Inspection number</b>	307652
<b>Inspection dates</b>	15–16 January 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Martin Beale

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	238
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Pauline Woolford
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Marybelle Morrissey
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 May 2003
<b>School address</b>	Bow Lane Finchley London N12 0JP
<b>Telephone number</b>	0208 346 1681
<b>Fax number</b>	0208 346 0579

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This average-sized school has a part-time Nursery from which half of the children then enter Reception. More than half of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and a quarter are learning English as an additional language. The characteristics of each year group fluctuate quite sharply. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and newcomers to the country with limited English varies, as does the attainment on entry of each year group.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

The headteacher, staff and governors are accurate in their evaluation that this is a good school. It has several outstanding features that contribute significantly to the excellent personal development of the pupils. Parents are overwhelming in their support of all that the school does for their children. Pupils are confident and have high self-esteem because they feel valued. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is exemplary. Pupils are keen to do well and to achieve their best. They take care of newcomers to the school, helping them to settle in and to learn English quickly if necessary.

The school successfully seeks ways to improve teaching and learning. As a result, teaching is effective and contributes very significantly to the good progress made by pupils. Standards vary but are generally above average by the end of Year 6. The school tackles well the challenges the variations between year groups present, because it knows the circumstances of each pupil and provides carefully targeted and highly effective support to meet their particular needs. One example of its success is that the increasing numbers of pupils from Eastern Europe make rapid progress once they have developed confidence in speaking English. Another is the good progress of pupils with moderate learning difficulties towards their individual targets.

The stimulating curriculum, with its strong international links, generates huge enjoyment and helps pupils to be sensitive to diversity in and beyond the school. They show great respect for others and try hard to see the world from other points of view. The pupils care strongly about the environment and are proud of the work through their 'Eco Council' as 'litter detectives'. Pupils are sharply aware of how diet and exercise can help them to stay healthy, as recognised the 'Healthy Schools' award. Pupils develop impressive information and communication technology (ICT) skills and apply these in many contexts. The pupils' outstanding personal qualities, good basic skills and the active support of the local secondary schools set them up very well for success in the next stage of their education and beyond.

The focus over the last few years on improving achievement in writing and science has been fruitful and standards have risen in both areas. Mathematics has received less attention with the result that achievement and standards are lower than in English and science. This is because there is less good teaching in mathematics and, unlike in writing, pupils do not have sharply defined targets to help them improve. The headteacher's strong leadership is supported well by an able senior leadership team and effective governing body. They have brought greater rigour to monitoring teaching, but subject leaders do not contribute all they might to this and to the development of their areas. The school has effective self-evaluation procedures and good capacity to become even more successful.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

The Nursery and Reception classes are stimulating and interesting places for young children to learn and develop. Adults work well as a team and are ably led and managed. Sensitive arrangements, based on a very good understanding of each individual, help to smooth the introduction of children into the Nursery and then aid the transfer of those who move into Reception. Both classes offer a well-balanced programme of adult-led and child-initiated activities that focus on developing all areas of learning. Children settle quickly and become confident and independent learners who are able to make sensible choices about their learning.

Children make good progress in both classes particularly in their personal and social development. This is because of the good teaching that focuses on their carefully assessed individual needs. A small minority of children did not reach expected goals in aspects of literacy and numeracy last year and so the school has strengthened the monitoring of the children's progress. This is leading to improved achievement.

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

- Improve teaching in mathematics by focusing more sharply on how to improve the learning and rate of progress of all pupils.
- Develop the expertise of subject leaders so that they play a greater role in evaluating and raising achievement in their areas.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils build on their good start in the Foundation Stage and make good progress in Years 1 to 6. The results of assessments for Year 2 pupils have risen over the last three years and were above average in 2007. In spite of improved progress at Key Stage 2, particularly in English and science, test results for Year 6 pupils fell slightly in 2007. Some of these pupils had only recently joined the school. When account is taken of this and the prior attainment of all pupils, achievement is good. Scrutiny of work and the school's assessment data show that standards are well above average in the current Year 6. Progress in mathematics is at least satisfactory, but slower than in the other two subjects and standards are lower by Year 6. It is too early to judge whether the action taken this year is having a sustained impact on achievement and standards in mathematics. Pupils' achievement in ICT is particularly good leading to high standards by Year 6 and they readily apply their skills to enhance learning in other subjects.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils flourish in the school's calm and stimulating environment. They very much enjoy coming to school as it offers them exciting opportunities in lessons and enriched activities outside the classroom. Relationships are very constructive and support their growing maturity and sense of responsibility. Pupils feel very safe and very well supported by staff. They take part enthusiastically in sporting activities and choose healthy options in school meals or their packed lunches. Pupils are friendly, polite and exhibit exemplary behaviour. Cultural differences are greatly valued, celebrated very effectively and are an integral part of the school's family ethos. Pupils are reflective and they have a strong sense of fairness and empathy, which was clear to see in a school assembly where they were encouraged to think about other people, their families and their place in the family of God. They are proud that the school seeks and acts on their views, expressed through their council representatives.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Classrooms are calm and purposeful, because teachers encourage and praise pupils and make sure that their contributions are valued. Teachers make learning interesting by adopting a wide variety of methods that engage the imagination of the pupils, and make very good use of all

of the new technology available to them. Teaching assistants are well deployed; they make a valuable contribution to the learning of individuals and groups. Pupils enjoy the group and practical tasks, but also involve themselves in discussions particularly where teachers use questions skilfully to draw ideas from them. Mathematics teaching is not as effective because some teachers base lessons too closely on a commercial scheme and do not take the learning needs of pupils into account sufficiently. Teachers' marking is regular and often asks further questions of the pupils, but does not consistently guide their understanding of how to improve their work or develop their independent learning skills.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 1**

Parents are very pleased with the way the school adds interest and breadth to their children's experiences, citing this as a major reason their children are so happy in school. The careful linking of subjects not only leads to good progress and improvements in standards such as in writing, but also adds much enjoyment. Very many creative opportunities are provided for the pupils to use their refined ICT skills to support learning. The international dimension, including links with schools in Africa and Madrid, makes a major contribution to broadening the pupils' experiences. This, along with learning Spanish, provides them with many opportunities to develop their communication skills and geographical awareness. Enrichment activities within and outside lessons are much valued and enjoyed. The school provides an impressive range of well-attended clubs. Visitors, visits and residential trips, such as the residential trip to Flatford Mill for Year 3 pupils and the visit to the Isle of Wight in Year 6 considerably extend the pupils' experiences.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The high quality of care, guidance and support, reflects the way the school values all pupils. They learn in a very safe, secure and stimulating environment. All adults show a high level of commitment to securing the pupils' well-being. Procedures for the pupils' welfare and protection are securely in place, understood by all staff and rigorously implemented. The school keeps excellent records of the checks on the background of all adults working in the school. The personal, social and health education programme pays very good attention to the development of safe and healthy lifestyles and pupils demonstrate this clearly in their life choices. Thorough assessment enables staff to identify quickly those who need more help and to target effective intervention swiftly through carefully tailored individual programmes, including for pupils with a particular talent. These are greatly enhanced by close and very productive links with outside agencies and local schools.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The school is successful in meeting the academic and personal needs of each individual pupil under the determined leadership of the headteacher and the strong senior staff team. All members of staff reflect on their performance and are keen to do better. Targets for the performance of individual pupils are challenging and used to judge whether key priorities are being met. The rigorous attention given to improving achievement in writing and science has led to considerable improvements. The contribution of other staff with leadership responsibilities

is too limited. This accounts, in part, for the slower progress of pupils in mathematics. The impact of governors on the development of the school has improved considerably under the astute leadership of the chair. Governors are fully involved in forward planning, which is based on a rigorous evaluation of the school's performance to identify priorities for improvement. They have invested much time in developing their expertise and understanding of the school, using this to ensure that their challenge to the headteacher is informed and appropriate.

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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?	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	1

### 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?	1
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	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

29 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Our Lady of Lourdes RC School, London, N12 0JP

I am writing to thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave to us when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you and your teachers and watching you learn. You were very kind, polite and helpful. You showed us how proud you are of your school. You, your parents and teachers are right in thinking that you go to a good school.

You make good progress during your time at school and are prepared very well to take the next steps in your education. Your skills when using computers are very impressive. You thoroughly enjoy school, attend regularly, work very hard and behave sensibly. Your teachers provide many interesting tasks to help you learn and you clearly enjoy extra activities such as trips and visits. The 'Katie Morag' day seemed to be fun and the youngest of you are clearly enjoying your topic on 'Space'. All members of staff help to make sure you are safe and cared for very well. You have an excellent understanding of the importance of diet and exercise for a healthy lifestyle. You take your responsibilities as school and Eco councillors seriously and make a huge contribution to the life of the school, such as by being 'litter detectives'. Keep it up!

Your headteacher, other staff and governors are trying hard to make the school even better. We think that there is one thing in particular they could do, so we have asked your teachers to:

- improve the way you learn in mathematics
- take a greater part in helping the headteacher to make sure you all do as well as you can.

We are sure that you and your teachers will work hard to make this happen.

We wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Martin Beale

Lead Inspector