

Our Lady of Lourdes RC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101545
Local Authority	Brent
Inspection number	307731
Inspection dates	17–18 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Ruth McFarlane

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)	273
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Pauline Pompilis
Headteacher	Mrs Mella Waterhouse
Date of previous school inspection	6 December 2004
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Wesley Road London NW10 8PP
Telephone number	020 8961 5037

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	17–18 November 2008
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Fax number

020 8963 1197

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average, multi-cultural Roman Catholic school. Few pupils are from a White British background. The largest groups are from Black African and Black Caribbean backgrounds. Far more than average pupils have English as an additional language (EAL) or have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, mostly for moderate learning difficulties, or social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is much higher than average. More than average numbers of pupils enter and leave the school at other than the normal times. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) has places for 60 children aged from 3-5.

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 Lourdes is a good school. The Roman Catholic ethos is palpable. It is a very caring and close-knit community that, as several parents wrote, 'is very supportive of our children and our families'. Pupils' positive attitudes and their generally good behaviour allow them to take full advantage of the good teaching they receive. Consequently, they make good progress overall from their early days in the Nursery through to Year 6.

Pupils start at the school with skills and abilities that are below the level expected at their age. By the end of Year 6, their standards are similar to the national average. This is good achievement, especially considering the numbers who enter the school later than normal and the many who start school at an early stage of learning English.

Pupils enjoy coming to school. Excellent pastoral care, guidance and support is confirmed by pupils who behave well and say they feel happy and safe. They particularly value the excellent relationships they have with adults and fellow pupils that helps them build on the good start they receive in the EYFS. They keenly join in those lessons that stimulate them and participate eagerly in the wide range of after-school clubs as well as community projects. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay healthy, and take part enthusiastically in the good opportunities for exercise which are provided.

The curriculum is good. It encompasses a well structured approach to teaching basic skills and some useful cross-curricular links that bring learning to life. Teaching quality is good overall. A significant strength of the best lessons is the skilful management of pupils. These lessons are calm, happy and purposeful events where teachers and pupils alike are fully focused on learning. Pupils say lessons are often fun. Teachers challenge pupils to do their best and provide plenty of encouragement and support. Occasionally, however, teachers' assistants are not managed well. In these lessons pupils have few opportunities to discuss and think things out for themselves, and progress is slower.

Good leadership from the headteacher and the senior team has led to sustained improvement since the previous inspection. Action to improve attendance has had a significant positive impact. At a time of significant staff turnover, careful attention to training the new staff has assisted the steady rise in standards. A new group of subject leaders has just been appointed. Already working as a team, they lack experience but are enthusiastic about school improvement. Their checking of the quality of teaching and learning is at an early stage. Consequently best practice is not shared well and not all teaching is good. All staff contribute fully to the school's excellent atmosphere of care, close relationships and commitment to equal opportunities. Governance is excellent. Taking this into account, along with the improvements since the last inspection, and the good teamwork now evident, the school has good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter with skills and abilities below those expected for their age, and well below in linking sounds to letters, social and emotional development and calculations. They make good progress in the EYFS from their individual starting points. Though none attain all the skills expected nationally for five year olds by the time they move into Year 1, they achieve well. A very well-balanced curriculum and high quality teaching in Nursery assists them to learn and develop rapidly in all the areas of learning including their personal development. A rich variety

of indoor and outdoor activities and opportunities during adult-led and child-initiated activities reinforces and extends their learning in relevant and meaningful ways. For example, during the inspection, children immensely enjoyed creating their birthday invitations to the three bears.

A high number of new children enter Reception with abilities well below expectation in calculation, reading and writing. During the inspection, opportunities were missed to extend and develop children's learning through outdoor activities. The quality of questioning was not focused enough during some adult-led activities, slowing progress. The leadership and management are good. Leaders show clear understanding of strengths and areas of development. The team has developed good partnerships with parents and other groups. Staff are enthusiastic and caring and pay close attention to the children's welfare. As a result, children thrive in a happy and secure environment.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the skills and abilities of the new subject leaders to enhance their contribution to school improvement.
- Accelerate progress by raising the quality of all lessons, including adult-led activities in the EYFS, to that of the best.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well. Pupils' results in national tests for Year 6 are broadly in line with national averages. This represents good progress throughout the school from their low starting points. Standardised measures of pupils' progress from the Year 2 tests to the Year 6 tests are high. Inspection evidence confirms that pupils make good progress regardless of gender or background and some groups, particularly those with learning needs, and the Black African and Black Caribbean pupils, do better than their peers, and better than similar groups nationally.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' excellent relationships with adults and each other help to account for their improved attendance, which is now average. Their enjoyment is clearly evident in their smiles. Following the staff's lead, pupils treat each other with respect and kindness, regardless of difference in background. They cooperate very well. Though a few pupils have not responded to the school's concerted efforts to improve behaviour, the great majority behave safely and feel safe, and insist that bullying is not a problem. They develop very sensible attitudes to learning, especially when teaching is strong. 'Teachers challenge us to make us better learners,' one pupil said. Pupils are immensely proud of their contribution to school life, for instance, taking responsibilities as peer mediators and as elected members of the school council. Some excellent links with local community organisations and facilities help to develop responsible attitudes. Pupils know all about how to live a healthy life, and make healthy eating choices. Growing independence and teamwork skills combine with good progress in basic skills, particularly in information and communication technology, to prepare pupils well for the demands of future adult and working life. Social development is good and pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development is outstanding.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers often make learning fun and plan their lessons carefully to ensure pupils attend well to their tasks and try hard. They explain their clearly-defined lesson intentions simply to pupils and check on learning regularly and this leads to the good progress by pupils. Teachers make good use of interactive whiteboards to give visual impact to ideas and explanations. They give patient support and encouragement to those having difficulty with their task. This encourages confidence, contributing to pupils' high standards of personal development. The best lessons offer brisk pace and variety of task to invigorate learning. These lessons combine individual, paired and group work, matched to ability, and assist pupils to make good and sometimes more rapid progress. In a very few lessons observed, support staff were not used well, and pupils were required to listen for too long, having little opportunity to explore and discuss their own ideas. In these lessons, pupils' attention faltered and progress slowed. Teachers' marking is generally helpful and explains the way forward, a significant improvement since the last inspection, when it was a weakness.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Pupils thoroughly enjoy their lessons because teachers plan carefully to inspire their learning and to match activities to the needs of different groups. Teachers are starting to link subjects together in interesting and relevant ways. For example, the study of Greek myths lent itself well to history and literacy. Despite many recent changes of subject leaders, the senior management team has established a methodical plan to ensure all subjects are properly and smoothly covered. The school provides a wealth of extra-curricular experiences many pupils would not otherwise have. However, some trips are not sufficiently planned in advance to ensure there is a rigorous link to learning. All aspects of personal and health education are fully covered. Pupils' contribution to their community and their understanding of citizenship is particularly good because the school encourages participation in jobs and responsibilities around the school and beyond, making a strong contribution to pupils' personal development. The school is justifiably proud in having representatives on the local authority Youth Forum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The very close, caring relationships which staff make with pupils and their families are supported by thorough formal procedures to safeguard pupils and ensure their welfare. Pupils find staff very approachable and responsive to any concerns they may have. Staff know their pupils very well. Support systems and arrangements for monitoring academic progress are rigorous and used meticulously to drive progress forward. This is evident in the relatively strong performance of target groups. Pupils know how to improve their work. Stringent and successful efforts have been made to raise levels of pupils' attendance, which was identified as a weakness in the last inspection. Similar well-thought out strategies are in place to improve pupils' behaviour. The guidance pupils receive on personal, social or emotional matters is excellent and is reflected in their confidence and enjoyment of school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school has made good improvement since the previous inspection. The headteacher is maintaining the momentum of improvement very well. She and her able senior team, and excellent governors, nurture the school's strong Roman Catholic ethos. Attention to promoting further links and cohesion with the community is a developing initiative. Leaders have identified scope for further improvement to raise standards because their analysis and use of challenging targets is rigorous. They have gained the confidence and support of the new and inexperienced subject leaders, and have ensured effective oversight of subjects. The new post-holders are now taking an increasingly effective role. This group is working together well to develop management skills in order to contribute fully to school improvement, such as planning to develop more stringent monitoring of teaching and learning. The school knows itself well. The school has clear procedures to intervene and include, for instance in tackling the remaining behaviour issues. The success with which its strategies have significantly improved attendance shows it knows clearly how it can be better still and is determined to make it happen. The capacity for further improvement is good. The school's positive and inclusive ethos extends to mutually beneficial and close relationships with parents and the local community. Parents think highly of the school.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	2

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?	2
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	2
The extent to which 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	1
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 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

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

01 December 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Our Lady of Lourdes RC Primary School, London, NW10 8PP

The inspectors who visited your school recently want to thank all of you for your friendly welcome. We really enjoyed the days we spent with you.

Your parents are pleased with the way all the adults in your school look after you. We agree that this is excellent. We were glad to see that you really enjoy school. We especially liked the way you all get on with each other and with the adults. You have a sensible attitude to school and to your work. The great majority of you behave well and you pay attention to your lessons and try hard. All of this is helping you to make good progress. Most of you are doing as well as pupils in the rest of the country, by the time you leave.

The teachers play their part by giving you mostly enjoyable lessons. They give you lots of help and encouragement. The work they give you is helping all of you to learn. You also really enjoy the after-school clubs that help you learn still more and let you get plenty of exercise.

We think that yours is a good school. The adults in charge of the school are doing a good job by seeing that you have the sort of education you need. We have suggested two ways in which the school could be even better. First, we have asked the school to make sure that those teachers who have only just taken on extra responsibility for a subject are given more training to help them do their job better.

We've asked the school to see if they can make all the lessons as good as the best, because we have noticed that some teachers are excellent, and in those lessons your behaviour is excellent, too, and that helps everyone learn and enjoy their lessons. We think that knowing what the best lessons are like should give the school great ideas as to how they can make the few less interesting lessons better. This would also help those of you who find it hard to behave well.

We have asked the school to try to make these changes. We hope you will play your part by continuing to try your hardest so that you do as well as you possibly can.

We wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Ruth McFarlane

Lead Inspector