

# The Rosary Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	103428
<b>Local Authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	308316
<b>Inspection dates</b>	6–7 March 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Sheila Browning

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	392
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mary Reidy
<b>Headteacher</b>	John Gubbins
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 March 2003
<b>School address</b>	Bridge Road Saltley Birmingham B8 3SF
<b>Telephone number</b>	01214 644519
<b>Fax number</b>	01214 641637

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a larger than average primary school. Since the last inspection, there has been a high turnover of staff, including at senior management level. The school has a much higher proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups than is found nationally. Pupils speak a wide range of mother tongues and many have no knowledge of English when they start school. Most are from Asian or Asian British Pakistani heritage, and from White British and Black or Black British heritage. A high proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals and have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Almost a quarter of pupils enter or join the school during their primary education. When children start in the Nursery, they have much lower levels than is usual for their age. In recognition of its work, the school holds an Investor in People award and has a local authority 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: 3

This is a satisfactory school. It is improving and has some good features. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher provides good leadership and is supported well by governors and an energetic team. They are all determined to raise standards and provide pupils with every opportunity to succeed. Although middle management has a prominent role in monitoring and evaluation, it does not secure better standards.

The care, support and guidance of pupils is satisfactory overall; adults provide good care and support, and are rightly proud of how pupils, some of whom face some significant challenges, are nurtured and encouraged to achieve their aspirations. Pupils are aware of the progress they are making and, as a result, are keen to do even better; however, they are unclear about how to improve their work, so that academic guidance is satisfactory. Pupils enjoy school and particularly like their teachers and the wide range of extra-curricular activities. They have a good understanding of how to keep safe and keep healthy through good diet and exercise. The very good relationships reflect pupils' good personal development.

When children start in Nursery, their age-related skills are exceptionally low. Achievement is good in the Foundation Stage due to good provision and teaching. In 2007, standards rose at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. Standards in the current Year 6 are at least satisfactory and achievement is also satisfactory, given children's exceptionally low entry points. Last year, the focus to improve pupils' writing skills across the school was successful. Consequently, standards rose sharply in English and continue to rise. Similar approaches are now starting to work in mathematics, science and reading, where pupils do not achieve well. More rigorous checks on pupils' achievement and better use of information have led to those needing an extra boost in their learning being identified quickly and effective support given. However, more able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged and are capable of more.

The improved curriculum is strongly focused on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and is extended by visits and visitors that motivate pupils well. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported and the strong partnerships with external agencies and parents benefit all pupils. Many parents trust and value Rosary; as one said, 'I am proud that my children attend.'

The school has developed effective systems to support pupils in the early stages of English as soon as they start and throughout the school. Consequently, they build on their use of vocabulary and understanding of English quickly. Teaching is typically satisfactory, with some inconsistencies between classes in what is expected of pupils that are more able. Teaching assistants make a strong contribution to pupils' learning. Given the effectiveness of recent action taken to raise the level of pupils' achievement, and the improving picture in teaching, and the curriculum, the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Standards on entry to Nursery are exceptionally low. In particular, many children's English and personal, social and emotional skills are limited. The curriculum necessarily focuses strongly on these areas. At lunchtimes, staff eat with the children to develop their social skills. A very high proportion of children have English as an additional language and many speak no English at all. The use of 'sign language' has proved a positive means of developing children's

communication skills. The majority make good progress to achieve well below age-related expectations by the start of Year 1. Learning activities are effective because rigorous and thorough assessment ensures that children make good progress. Children are encouraged to explore and investigate and more formal activities improve their knowledge of letter sounds. Nursery children can independently access the outdoor provision whilst building constraints somewhat restrict access for Reception children. Close liaison with external agencies, specialist speech and language support, and home school links are all good features that strengthen the children's learning opportunities. A well-structured induction programme helps children to settle quickly.

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

- Accelerate the level of achievement for pupils, particularly for the more able, so they have better basic skills and understanding in English, mathematics and science.
- Ensure teaching is consistently good and provides challenge, and check that pupils understand the next steps to improve their work.
- Strengthen the monitoring skills of middle management so they have a greater impact on raising pupils' standards and achievement.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

From exceptionally low starting points, children gain ground at a good rate in the Foundation Stage. By the start of Year 1, their attainment is well below age-related expectations but this represents good achievement. The exception is in speaking, listening and in their personal, social and emotional development because they have more ground to make up in these areas. In Years 1 to 6, standards are generally below average. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. There are times, however, when more able pupils are not challenged sufficiently. Across the school, pupils' achievement in English is better than in mathematics and science. This is due to the recent intensive focus on improving pupils' writing skills. More recently, pupils' achievement and standards have begun to move on at a faster rate. This is because checks on pupils' achievement are more rigorous and teachers are more aware of the weaknesses that need to be tackled. The wide range of interventions, including extra teachers, well briefed teaching assistants and bilingual assistants support pupils well. The priorities to lift pupils' skills in reading, mathematics and science are just beginning to show signs of improvement. Improvements in the provision for the pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are helping them to achieve satisfactorily from their different starting points.

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

### **Grade: 2**

As a result of the good teaching in the Foundation Stage, children are helped to develop their social skills and, as a result, relationships are positive. Across the school, pupils say they enjoy school because, 'Learning is fun and we do interesting things in lessons.' This is reflected in the above average attendance levels that are achieved. They relate well to teachers and other pupils and this is evident in the 'peer mentoring' scheme where older pupils support Nursery children. Behaviour is good. By the time they leave, most pupils show good levels of

self-confidence and maturity and, as a result, they are well prepared for the next stage of education. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They are sensitive to things of beauty, have good insights into human emotions and act on an understanding of what is right. They appreciate the arts, have good links with Rwanda, but are less well informed about multicultural aspects of Britain. Pupils express views and undertake responsibility diligently, as members of the school council and undertaking playground duties. They show good awareness of safe practices and the importance of healthy eating. Pupils make a good contribution to the wider community, for instance, 'Growing grains' - cultivating vegetables in the school garden, and tidying up the local area and making hanging baskets with floral displays to improve the locality. They are satisfactorily equipped for their future economic well-being.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The good relationships between adults and pupils result in pupils' enthusiasm for learning. They behave well in lessons and are eager to respond to questions in a mature way. Lessons are well planned with a focus on clear learning objectives and with assessment opportunities built in. The work set for more able pupils is not always well matched to their abilities and lacks challenge. Teachers use resources, such as interactive whiteboards, very effectively. The use of timers in numeracy lessons engages pupils well. Teachers provide good opportunities for the pupils to talk about their work with each other, enabling them to improve their speaking skills and their understanding of what is being taught. Whilst the pace of most lessons is appropriate, in some, pupils spend too much time listening to the teacher and not enough time actively engaged in learning. Support staff work in an extremely focused way with both individuals and groups of pupils, which ensures that their learning progresses successfully. Assessment procedures are good and marking is regular, helpful and developmental.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is increasingly responsive to learners' needs. The school is rightly focused on developing the core skills of literacy and numeracy. The sharper focus on pupils' writing, reading, speaking and listening has helped them develop their communication skills. French and drama are taught and the personal, social and health education programme significantly strengthens pupils' personal development. The good range of clubs, from pottery to gardening, are very popular and Rosary pupils are successful in a wide range of sports and outdoor pursuits. Many have opportunities to play musical instruments and readily use information and communication technology. The particular needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/ or disabilities, or learning English as an additional language, are addressed satisfactorily. Visits and visitors, such as storytellers, poets and musicians, enrich it further. Nonetheless, extra literacy and mathematics work to help pupils better understand scientific language, problem solving and calculation are too recent to have secured raised standards in mathematics and science.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 3**

Parents are very pleased with the good quality of care and support the school provides. Teachers know their pupils well and are alert to any concerns that may arise for individual pupils. Child

protection and health and safety procedures are good and any pupils at risk are identified and supported well. Consequently, they develop in a safe and secure environment. Breakfast club and a 'wrap around service' offered in partnership with local schools extend the good care and support. However, academic guidance is satisfactory and improving, but it is not fully developed in all areas of learning. There are clear assessment systems in place. Pupils are well informed about the progress they are making, particularly through careful and informative marking. However, they are less confident in how to progress to the next stage of learning. Learning targets are set at school, class and individual level. Although pupils receive a great deal of encouragement to work hard and extend their learning, the quality of academic guidance is inconsistent across subjects.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership at the highest level is good and effective. The headteacher is supporting and strengthening the roles of the new middle managers well. Nevertheless, their monitoring roles and skills are not fully robust enough to have had a full impact on raising standards. Governors make a strong contribution to the school because they have a good understanding of its strengths and are well informed to hold it to account for areas which need improvement. The headteacher and governors have effectively created an ethos that promotes high expectations for pupils' welfare and well-being. Staff work together with a sense of purpose to achieve the school's priorities that are clearly outlined in the school improvement plan. Comprehensive systems are in place to monitor teaching and learning, the outcomes of which are shared with staff. Pupils' progress is checked half-termly and is comprehensive in that it allows the school to match support to those pupils who would benefit. School self-evaluation processes are accurate, indicating that the school knows what is effective and what needs to be improved further. Resources are used well, reflected in the decision to employ additional teachers to support the needs of groups of pupils.

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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?	3
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	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

### 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	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
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	3

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

<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>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Rosary Catholic School, Saltley B8 3SF

Thank you for helping us when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking with you, looking at your work and seeing your lessons. We found Rosary to be a satisfactory school. It has some good features and it is improving.

Here are some things we found out.

- Younger children get off to a good start in their learning.
- You achieve satisfactorily because of sound teaching and a satisfactory curriculum, but you do not reach the standards expected for your age.
- Your behaviour and attitudes are really good and you get on so well with each other. Well done!
- You told us that you enjoy school and that you know how to lead safe and healthy lifestyles.
- You like being school councillors, play buddies and appreciate that older children help the younger ones.
- The adults in the school look after you really well.
- Everyone at Rosary is working hard to make it even better than it is.

Here are some things we have asked the school to improve.

- To make sure all of you, especially those of you who find work easy, make even faster progress so that you can learn as well as you can in English, mathematics and science.
- To make sure all your lessons are good and that work is set at the right level for you, and that you understand what to do next to improve your work.
- To help those teachers with responsibilities to find out more ways to help you do your very best.

We hope you will do all you can to help your teachers improve your school. Yours sincerely

Sheila Browning Lead inspector

7 March 2008

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Lead inspector