

Our Lady Roman Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100048
Local Authority	Camden
Inspection number	335482
Inspection dates	25–26 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Kekshan Salaria HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	170
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Fr Dominic McKenna
Headteacher	Mrs Karen Doherty
Date of previous school inspection	1 September 2006
School address	Pratt Street Camden London NW1 0DP
Telephone number	020 7485 7997
Fax number	020 7428 9426
Email address	head@ourladys.camden.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 15 lessons, and held meetings with two governors including the vice chair of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of evidence. In addition 32 parental questionnaires, 39 pupil and five staff questionnaires were scrutinised.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the achievement of pupils in English and mathematics
- the effectiveness of teaching in ensuring that it challenges all learners
- the effectiveness of assessment systems
- the impact of the school's work in addressing approaches to behaviour
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers and the systems for monitoring and evaluating at all levels.

Information about the school

Our Lady is a small one-form-entry Roman Catholic primary school. It shares a site, building and nursery with St Michael's Church of England primary school. The proportion of pupils in receipt of free school meals is twice the national average. The vast majority of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. Nearly half of the pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities, predominantly linked to difficulties in communication or behavioural, emotional or social needs, is in line with the national average. The school gained Healthy School status in January 2007.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

4

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvements in the school.

Since the previous inspection the school has experienced a period of considerable turbulence, with changes in leadership, structural setbacks with premises, and difficulties in recruiting and retaining teaching staff in key posts and core subjects. These difficulties, combined with low attendance and very high exclusion rates in the past, have had a detrimental effect on pupils' learning and standards have declined to significantly below average in 2009.

The headteacher has worked successfully with the staff to make the school a caring, safe and welcoming place. Responses to parent questionnaires indicate that the school continues to build good relationships with parents. This is evidenced also through the much lower exclusion rates currently and improvements in attendance which is now broadly average. It is also reflected in pupils' good behaviour. The standards pupils achieve are significantly lower than average by the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils are making insufficient progress given their starting points. The good start children get in the Early Years Foundation Stage is not built upon sufficiently well. The majority of pupils make slow progress throughout the rest of the school because the teaching does not provide adequately for their needs. Teachers are not using assessment data to plan lessons that challenge all learners; nor are lessons sharply focused on clearly stated learning outcomes. Too much teaching across the school is inadequate; it is of insufficient quality to accelerate pupils' progress in order for them to reach the standards of which they are capable. More able pupils are not achieving as well as they might, and this is reflected in the relatively few pupils reaching the higher levels at the end of Years 2 and 6.

Although the school has devised some methods for collecting and analysing pupils' progress data, these are time consuming and do not lead to effective action. The school has not made effective use of computer systems which would enable senior managers and subject leaders to monitor the progress of groups of pupils and to pick out patterns in the performance of pupils. Consequently, their decisions are not based on all the information that is contained within the data.

The curriculum provides adequately for the needs of all pupils, but is not yet securely matched to the needs of individual learners. Approaches to establishing links between

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subjects are at an early stage of development. For example, there are too few opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills in subjects beyond English. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum is restricted, mainly because there are only 15 laptops in the entire school. This limits the opportunities pupils have for research and restricts collaborative learning.

The school's leaders have not been successful in promoting pupils' academic achievement. The school's evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses is not incisive enough and key priorities such as improving teaching and learning and improving provision in ICT have not been addressed in development plans. Consequently, actions to improve attainment have been piecemeal and largely ineffective. Although the governing body is committed to the school's success, governors do not meet regularly nor do they have a clear understanding of their role in holding the school to account for its work. As a result, they are not well placed to challenge the school. The school needs stronger management systems, additional external support and a challenging and well-informed governing body to make the urgent improvements needed in teaching and pupils' achievement. This indicates that the school does not have the capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards and achievement in reading, writing and mathematics by:
 - eliminating inadequate teaching
 - matching learning tasks to each pupil's individual needs
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - improving the curriculum by encouraging more research and collaborative learning and ensuring that pupils have regular opportunities to develop their ICT skills.
- Make better use of assessment information to:
 - ensure assessment data are used to plan lessons that challenge all learners and by ensuring lessons are sharply focused on attaining clearly stated learning outcomes
 - ensure all leaders have information about trends in attainment and progress and use it to drive improvements.
- Ensure leaders at all levels:
 - evaluate accurately the work of the school
 - develop strategic plans that are based on a thorough evaluation of outcomes for pupils, and identify clearly what actions the school will take to improve outcomes for pupils, and how it will check if the actions are working
 - pursue improvement relentlessly and rigorously by systematically monitoring all aspects of the work of the school to ensure improvement plans are implemented

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- develop a secure oversight of their subject areas, undertake thorough analysis of all available performance data and are held fully accountable for their responsibilities.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**4**

Pupils do not achieve well enough during their time at the school. Their attainment on entry to the school is below average. Until 2008, standards at the end of Year 6 had been average but they declined significantly in 2009 particularly in English. The data provided by the school suggest that 2010 statutory targets will not be met. Given pupils' starting points this demonstrates inadequate progress.

Pupils show good concentration and apply themselves well when they are withdrawn for one-to-one support or when teaching is exciting and tasks practical. However, in a significant number of lessons pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make inadequate progress because the teaching is uninspiring and teachers' expectations are too low. In addition, pupils spend too long sitting and listening. As a result they become restless and either struggle with planned tasks or find them too easy.

Personal, social and health education lessons make a valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. Pupils are polite, friendly and play happily together. They respect each other's beliefs and they have a sound knowledge of different cultures. They say they enjoy and are proud of their school. Pupils have a good understanding of personal safety and feel safe around the school. They are conscious of the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle and identifying what this entails. Pupils make a positive contribution through raising money for a number of charities and they demonstrate a responsible attitude through the roles they have in school. Effective steps have been taken to improve behaviour and this is now good around the site although in less engaging lessons, low-level disruption of learning can take place.

Despite the many positive aspects of pupils' personal development, low standards at the end of Key Stage 2 and limited opportunities to develop skills in ICT mean that pupils are not adequately prepared for the next stage of their education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	4
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Senior leaders have an unrealistic view of the quality of teaching and learning. There is some evidence of good practice, but these strengths are not built upon and, crucially, weaknesses in teaching have not been identified or tackled. No thorough analysis of the gaps in pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding in reading, writing and mathematics has been carried out so teachers cannot plan accurately to fill the gaps in pupils' learning. In the majority of lessons, cursory lesson planning, a slow pace and teacher's low expectations often result in pupils losing interest and becoming inattentive. Too much of the work involves the pupils listening to the teacher rather than engaging in sharply defined 'thinking and doing' activities. The needs of the more able pupils are not met in these lessons.

Teachers do not use assessment information well enough to ensure that individuals are all appropriately challenged by their teaching. For example, questioning is not probing enough and does not always encourage the pupils to think for themselves. Although, most teachers share lesson objectives with pupils, they rarely check that pupils understand how well they have achieved them. Staff have tried to improve the progress pupils make in their writing by using broad targets. However, in the lessons observed, teachers made little or no reference to these targets and many pupils do not know what they are aiming for, or when they have achieved their targets. The quality of marking is variable. While some is regular, helpful and encouraging, other marking does not provide pupils with sufficient guidance on how to improve.

The curriculum is inadequate overall. Although there are opportunities for pupils' learning to be enriched by educational trips and by subject focus weeks, learning in the

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majority of the classrooms is often not very interesting. ICT is not sufficiently well provided to develop pupils' skills and to support learning across all subjects. Neither is literacy systematically developed across all subjects.

Pupils are well supported in their personal development. Staff know individual pupils well. A range of different intervention strategies is used to support pupils' different needs, including their social and emotional development. By working with outside agencies the school has been able to make sure that pupils who are experiencing difficulties are well supported.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	4
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	4
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Since the previous inspection the senior managers have made good progress in establishing a safe and caring ethos in the school. The school sees itself as being at the heart of the community and there is good evidence to support this. Community links are strong and partnership working with other local schools and organisations is productive. However, standards and the progress pupils make are declining and senior leaders are not driving forward the necessary improvements to the quality of the teaching and learning, to reverse this downward trend.

Self-evaluation is inaccurate. Senior leaders hold an unrealistic view of teaching and learning and are unclear about how to improve things at a suitably rapid pace. Monitoring lacks rigour and does not sufficiently evaluate the impact of the school's work on teaching, learning and the progress the pupils are making.

The school improvement plan is not sufficiently focused on raising standards and does not always reflect key issues that have been identified. Targets mostly focus on activities and procedures rather than on their effect on pupils' learning and achievement. There is no clear strategy for overcoming the effects of the decline in attainment.

Tracking systems are not effective in enabling senior leaders to track the progress of individuals and groups of pupils to ensure that all make good progress from year to year. Weaknesses exist in the use of assessment information. Many initiatives for improvement are recent and too much responsibility for the handling of data and the leadership of core areas lies with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. This is because subject leaders are new to their posts and have not had the opportunity to contribute fully to monitoring and raising standards; consequently, middle leadership is underdeveloped.

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The governing body, although supportive, is not challenging senior leaders sufficiently to account for weaknesses in the school's performance. Governors' committee meetings have not been held since January 2008. Their ability to hold the school to account is consequently hampered because the information they require and key decisions which need to be made have been seriously delayed. For example, key policies and financial decisions await governing body approval.

Provision for community cohesion is satisfactory. There is a strong cohesive community within the school. However, the promotion of cohesion with the wider community is at an early stage of development.

Procedures to ensure the safety of pupils are satisfactory. There are, for example, good procedures for ensuring the safeguarding of pupils through the checks made on all adults working in the school.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	4
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	4
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	4
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make a good start to school and achieve well. While their skills are below the expectations for their age, well-planned activities carefully matched to their needs, and a lively and stimulating environment, enable them to make gains in independence, social skills and confidence. Parents agree that their children settle happily into school because of the strong nurturing environment. Good parental relationships are maintained because parents are welcomed into school.

Adults work well together as teams in classrooms. The environment is stimulating but, while activities are carefully planned, opportunities to develop the children's language

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through dialogue are sometimes missed. Adults provide good routines, have high expectations of behaviour and achievement and relationships are good. The practical curriculum links learning and promotes all aspects of children's development well. Care is good and children develop their personal skills well. In particular, they work well together, take turns and are developing good skills of independence. This, together with good teaching, is the reason why children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The phase is led satisfactorily. The coordinator has a good understanding of the strengths and priorities for development but has not had time to evaluate fully the effectiveness of the provision.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

A low proportion of parents responded to the parental questionnaire. The majority are positive about the work of the school. Although inspectors are in agreement with parents regarding the care and support provided for their children, inspection evidence does not support the view that the school is providing an acceptable standard of education or that it is led and managed effectively.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Our Lady Roman Catholic Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 32 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 170 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	20	63	12	38	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	23	72	9	28	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	14	44	17	53	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	21	66	9	28	1	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	20	63	11	34	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	22	69	9	28	1	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	18	56	14	44	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	15	47	14	44	1	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	18	56	12	38	1	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	16	50	15	47	1	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	17	53	13	41	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	17	53	14	44	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	22	69	9	28	1	3	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



27 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Our Lady Roman Catholic Primary School, London NW1 0DP

Thank you very much for welcoming the inspection team to your school. We really enjoyed meeting you, particularly the chance to have lunch with you and talk to so many of you during the two days. I am writing this letter to tell you what we found out about your school.

These are the things that we liked about your school:

- You told us that you enjoy coming to school, making friends and playing at break times.
- You feel safe at school and know that if you have a problem there is always an adult to talk to. You make healthy choices, behave well and make visitors to your school feel very welcome.
- You are confident, have good attitudes to work, and show respect to each other and all adults.

The inspection team believe that many of you are not making the progress you are capable of. We have asked your school to make sure that the work set in lessons challenges you so that you can learn more quickly and do even better. We also judge that your school will need some help, so we will be checking on its progress very carefully. This means that you and your teachers will get extra support and inspectors will visit your school regularly to see how well you are doing.

You can help the school by making sure you all attend regularly, by sharing your views and working hard. Once again, thank you for answering our questions and good wishes for success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Kekshan Salaria

Her Majesty's Inspector

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