

Notre Dame Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100179
Local Authority	Greenwich
Inspection number	335498
Inspection dates	9–10 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Kevin Hodge

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	202
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Father Paul Conelly
Headteacher	Frances Neligan
Date of previous school inspection	11 July 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 14 lessons taught by seven staff and a student teacher. They observed the school's work, and looked at planning, monitoring information, information sent to parents and a range of pupils' past work. Inspectors met with staff, pupils and members of the governing body. They also looked at 31 questionnaires returned by parents and carers and also those returned by staff and a sample of pupils.

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

- the provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, particularly for their outdoor learning
- the quality of teaching in Years 1 to 6, particularly in how it promotes writing
- why the school judged its teaching, role of governors and Early Years Foundation Stage as less effective as other areas of the school.

Information about the school

The school is of typical size. About three quarters of pupils are from ethnic groups other than White British heritage. The largest include those with a Black or Black British African heritage. About half the pupils speak English as an additional language, although the number at the early stages of learning English are few. The number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly above average. These pupils have behavioural, speech, language or specific difficulties. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is higher than normally found. The school has the Healthy School award for promoting pupils' healthy living. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in one Reception class.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Notre Dame Catholic Primary provides a good education for its pupils. Its strengths lie in the way the school cares and supports pupils, their good behaviour and their enjoyment of school, reflected in good attendance. The happy atmosphere promoted is noted and valued by staff, parents and pupils alike. One parent's comment summed it up accurately by saying, 'My child has greatly improved and he loves everything about it.'

The school has maintained its overall performance since the last inspection, but results in national tests have risen, particularly mathematics results which were better than the expected levels last year. Current information on pupils' progress and observations by inspectors indicate that by the time they leave, pupils make generally good progress and reach broadly average attainment levels. Combined with their good personal development, they achieve well given their starting points. Children make a satisfactory start to school in the Reception class. Their progress is good in some aspects such as number and counting skills, but their writing, reading and physical skills develop more slowly as these aspects are not taught or planned for as effectively. Pupils pick up progress in Years 1 to 6; although this is generally good, it is sometimes uneven between year groups. Teaching is good overall, but the quality is sometimes inconsistent between classes and subjects as higher attaining pupils are not always stretched in their thinking. That said, some outstanding teaching helps pupils to make very good progress in some lessons.

The school's good promotion of pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development helps them gain a clear understanding of right and wrong. This also helps ensure there are very harmonious relationships between pupils, regardless of their background. 'We really like the school and our teachers' and 'the school looks after us' were typical comments from pupils. Pupils like being involved in shaping the school's direction and taking on responsibilities, for example acting as 'stair' monitors or being on the school council, which takes its role seriously.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and more creative aspects and themed topics help motivate pupils' learning. In Years 1 to 6, opportunities for pupils to use their information and communication technology (ICT) skills in day-to-day work are too few. Additional expertise from beyond the school helps extend pupils' musical and artistic abilities. Good team work promoted by senior leaders has ensured that the school has maintained and improved some aspects of its work since the last inspection.

Self-evaluation is regular and draws upon analyses of pupils' progress, teaching quality and the views of governors, pupils and parents. This results in largely an accurate view of the school and senior leaders are trying to 'raise the bar' in key areas such as teaching quality and the effectiveness of assessment. The maintenance of the school's

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performance since the last inspection, combined with success in raising pupils' attainment, reflects a good capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - ensuring teaching develops children's writing and reading skills to the same good levels seen in other areas of their basic skills
 - give adults more guidance about how to develop children's learning when they engage in self-chosen activities
 - develop the outside areas to include greater opportunities for children's physical development and learning.
- Improve the consistency of pupils' progress through the school by:
 - giving pupils more frequent opportunities to use ICT skills in day-to-day activities to extend their learning
 - ensuring teaching consistently challenges higher attaining pupils to achieve even better.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils enjoy attending school and achieve well. They readily speak about the school's good points such as the teaching and the way they feel their views are listened to. The school council's influence is evident in practical areas such as in the design of specially made friendship benches and the links with those adults who made them. This has helped extend their links into the local community well. Pupils enjoy their playtimes together, whether it be playing active ball and chasing games or pretending to be potential 'Britain's got Talent' contestants. Pupils' good behaviour helps their learning in lessons to progress smoothly in most classes. The arrival of a pretend Pirate in a Year 1 writing lesson, while causing excitement, didn't detract from the pupils' production of good writing using lots of descriptive words to enhance their recount. In a well-taught science lesson in Year 3, pupils made good gains in their knowledge about different foods and how they can promote health. Pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities make good progress along with their classmates as they receive good support from adults in lessons and small groups. The generally good progress pupils make, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds, is slightly uneven through the school and often related to variations in teaching and occasionally the behaviour of some pupils in specific classes. Pupils' knowledge of how to stay healthy is good and although pupils admit eating healthily is difficult, they are mindful of what they are eating. A recent 'International day' helped pupils celebrate the range of cultures represented in the school and in the world at large to aid their understanding. Pupils are prepared well for their future in terms of basic skills, although they have too few opportunities to develop simple business or entrepreneurial skills, particularly for the oldest pupils in the school.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
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	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The good relationships fostered between staff and pupils develop positive attitudes towards learning. Some lessons are planned and organised well with interesting activities to engage the pupils, such as a very high quality lesson in Year 6 which helped pupils understand how algebra can be used in day-to-day problem solving. However, in otherwise well-taught lessons, opportunities to challenge pupils' thinking further, particularly for those who are more able, are sometimes missed. In others, teachers talk for too long, reducing the time available for pupils to get down to activities. Lessons usually have a clear learning intention and in the best lessons pupils quickly share their thoughts and ideas as they are very clear what they are learning and why. The support given by teaching assistants is consistently good in Years 1 to 6, often for the benefit of those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school has effective assessment and tracking systems which are increasingly holding teachers to account for their pupils' progress. Teachers' marking often refers to the next steps needed to develop pupils' learning in order to help them know how to improve their work. Pupils appreciate the efforts that the school makes to keep them safe and to care for

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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their day-to-day needs. The school's promotion of 'golden rules' and 'golden time' provides motivation and rewards in equal measure. Pupils say that adults listen to their concerns and, where possible, make changes. Links with parents are good and coffee mornings and induction meetings help parents feel part of school life. Those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified effectively and various activities from in-class support to one-to-one help ensure they achieve well. Links with local playgroups enable children to make a smooth start in Reception while the oldest pupils are prepared well for their move to secondary school.

The curriculum is adapted to meet the needs of different groups of pupils including those from minority ethnic backgrounds. Topics reflect pupils' interests, cultures and backgrounds successfully. Having raised standards in mathematics, the school is now focusing upon writing to increasingly good effect. A good range of extra-curricular activities add to the pupils' enjoyment of school along with enrichment activities taught by visiting teachers or artists. Interesting theme topics such as 'Peter and the Wolf' help combine learning in different subjects, although opportunities to incorporate some subjects such as ICT in everyday activities are too few.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The combined drive and determination of senior leaders, staff and governors have maintained the school's good performance since the last inspection as they know the school's strengths and weaker areas to remedy. In some areas, such the Early Years Foundation Stage, they recognise that more needs to be done to secure the clear vision for it to improve at a rapid rate. Day-to-day routines run smoothly and the desire to become more effective and to ensure improvements in teaching is now bearing fruit in most classes. Equal opportunities are promoted well in terms of the school monitoring how well pupils make progress. Senior leaders ensure pupils have equal chances to take part in activities and that discrimination is not tolerated. All staff take safeguarding seriously, have been recently trained in child protection principles and the school's vetting procedures of staff meet current requirements. Governors give good support in this respect, as their monthly checks on safeguarding routines enable them to oversee this aspect clearly. Governors also visit the school regularly to keep their 'finger on the pulse' of the school and their written reports, while not always extensive, do give a good overview so they can challenge the school to improve further. Their duty to promote

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community cohesion has been effective in ensuring all pupils learn together happily and are tolerant of each other's differing backgrounds. The school's Catholic ethos is promoted effectively. Pupils' knowledge of others both in this country and abroad is also good, aided by useful links with other schools in Devon and abroad.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
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	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

Views of parents and carers

About a third of the parents and carers returned a questionnaire. There were very few comments. Comments pointed to the good progress that pupils made, although others highlighted concerns over the number of different teachers that one class had. The school sent out its own questionnaires only a few weeks before the inspection. There

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was a similarly positive response and a few additional comments. These included positive comments and pointers for improvement. The happy atmosphere in the school was highlighted, although one comment asked if more information about pupils' progress and more homework could be given. Inspectors found that the range of meetings to discuss progress and the frequency of homework were typical of many schools.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Notre Dame 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 31 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 202 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	18	58	18	42	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	22	71	22	29	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	19	61	19	39	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	16	52	16	39	2	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	16	52	16	45	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	14	45	14	55	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	15	48	15	52	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)	8	26	8	68	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	8	26	8	68	2	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	5	16	5	77	2	6	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	6	19	6	77	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	8	26	8	74	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	13	42	13	58	0	0	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.



11 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Notre Dame Catholic Primary School, Greenwich SE18 3SJ

Many thanks for making us feel welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed looking at and hearing about what you like doing. Yours is a good school.

Here are some of the things we found out:

- You reach the expected standards when you leave, and you achieve well in most aspects of your work.
- You are good at keeping active at playtimes and I know most of you try to eat healthily.
- You behave well and work hard in lessons.
- You all said you feel safe as the school cares for you well.
- The range of things you do such as music and sports sound good.
- The school helps those of you who sometimes find work difficult or have a particular physical difficulty to achieve well.
- The staff teach you well and the school involves your parents or carers in the life of the school effectively to help it become even better.

We have asked the school to do two things to help it improve further:

- Give children in the Reception class more help with their reading and writing and help them make the most out of the activities they choose to do both in the class and particularly outside the classroom.
- Try to help pupils in every class make good progress, particularly in day-to-day work in ICT and those who are capable of harder work.

You can help the school to improve by continuing to be well behaved and well done to those of you who were practising for 'Britain's got Talent' in the playground!

Yours sincerely

Kevin Hodge

Lead inspector

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