

St Monica's Roman Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100268
Local Authority	Hackney
Inspection number	335515
Inspection dates	13–14 October 2009
Reporting inspector	John Horwood

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	222
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mena Rego
Headteacher	Violet Richardson
Date of previous school inspection	6 September 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 13 lessons, and held meetings with leaders, pupils and governors. They observed the school's work, and looked at documents including the school development plan, minutes of meetings, records of pupils' progress monitoring, and safeguarding and welfare arrangements. In total, 93 parental questionnaires were analysed

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

- the effectiveness of the revised systems for tracking pupils' progress, especially the performance of groups of pupils
- whether pupils all make good progress as a result of improved teaching and the use of assessment data by teachers
- whether all levels of leadership are having sufficient impact on improvement
- the overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage
- the school's safeguarding arrangements.

Information about the school

This is an average size primary school where the majority of pupils come from Black African backgrounds. Over 80% of pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is much higher than is usually found. The number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, which are mainly associated with behavioural/emotional difficulties or speech language and communication difficulties, is close to the national average. Since the last inspection, there has been significant focus on improving the accommodation. Following a period of interim leadership, the current headteacher took over the running of the school in September 2007. The Early Years Foundation Stage is made up of children in the Nursery and Reception classes. The school manages a breakfast and after school club.

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

This is a good and quickly improving school where both the provision and the outcomes for pupils have been transformed since the last inspection. Pupils make good progress as a result of improved teaching and effective use of assessment information. The headteacher and the governors have strengthened and restructured the leadership team and they have a clear focus on raising attainment and achievement. All levels of leadership are fully involved in the accurate self-evaluation processes. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are successfully working on improving teaching to further raise standards. Leaders are keen that best practice is shared amongst staff to ensure the pace of learning is consistently good for all pupils and so that more lessons are outstanding. The school demonstrates a good capacity to improve.

Leaders have developed good partnerships with others to promote learning and support the well-being of pupils. The school is a cohesive society, where pupils are successfully helped to extend and understand the world in which they live.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is effective and children make good progress as a result of good teaching in a well-resourced and managed facility. Pupils enter the school with skills that are lower than those usually expected. Since the last inspection, pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 has risen to average overall and this means that pupils are suitably equipped with the basic skills for their future lives. The most recent provisional results show that attainment was at the expected level in science, higher still in mathematics and well above that expected in English. This improvement is confirmed both by the school's tracking data and by pupils' work seen in books. There is no significant variation seen in the progress of any groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities or the higher attainers. This reflects the school's determined approach to providing equal opportunities for all pupils.

The improved standards result from pupils making good progress in all year groups. Effective assessment systems now play an important part in helping teachers to plan work that meets pupils' needs. In many lessons, but not all, teachers used good strategies to maintain a good pace of learning. The school is working to lift teaching and learning to be outstanding. Progress is monitored well through regular teacher assessment and progress meetings. The initial focus has been on English and monitoring has been more regular to ensure early support is in place. The school is currently increasing the sophistication of monitoring across all key subjects. The school is aware that science is at present weaker, because priority has been given to English and mathematics. Pupils do not always enjoy science as much as they could. The quality of written work is not as high as in English and pupils do not have such detailed and

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helpful targets. Leaders recognise that it would be helpful to apply their successful strategies in English, to science, as they work to raise standards. The school is also keen to improve standards in mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) to match those in English.

This is a very caring and supportive school. Pupils develop strong spiritual, social, moral and cultural skills. Behaviour is good throughout the school and there are harmonious relationships as pupils understand each other. Through the interesting curriculum, they have good opportunities to extend their understanding of children in more distant communities, and pupils' wider personal development is good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further raise standards, especially in science, by:-
 - ensuring the experiences gained by staff in raising standards in English, such as improving writing and presentation and setting more detailed targets are transferred to the development of science
 - making science more exciting to increase pupils' enjoyment
 - extending the sophisticated tracking of pupils' progress used in English across all key subjects.
- Increase the proportion of good and outstanding lessons by sharing best practice to ensure the pace of learning is consistently good for all pupils.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils achieve well and enjoy learning across in most subjects. In an outstanding English lesson, they were seen to be extremely skilful in both discussion and writing as a result of the teacher having such a strong rapport with them that they wanted to learn and succeed. School records securely show that progress has been good over the past two years. Learning has now improved to good and progress is good. Monitoring records also show that all groups of pupils are making similar progress, although a small minority who have very complex emotional needs make less progress in spite of the extra support they get. Science is the weaker of the key subjects because pupils do not identify it as a subject they enjoy and this is because they are not always fully engaged. Pupils' behaviour is good both in and out of lessons and there was no evidence of any bullying currently in the school. Exclusions are rare as a result of the school actions to promote good behaviour and inclusion. Attendance is exceptionally high, which is an outstanding achievement for an inner city school and reflects how much pupils enjoy coming to school. One pupil commented that there was so much more to do at school than at home. Pupils are very aware of the need to keep fit and eat healthy food and this has contributed to the school being awarded Healthy School status. As well as a high take-up of school lunches, where most pupils make healthy choices, there is a very high take-up of sport activities both through after school clubs and general playtime activities. The school operates as a harmonious community with good relationships

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clearly apparent. Pupils are very well prepared for future life in a diverse society. They thoroughly enjoy, for example, learning about and communicating with children from a village in Peru.

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	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Joint observations with senior staff confirmed that leaders' judgement of the quality of learning is accurate. There are good features within teaching such as teachers' subject knowledge, good planning based on good assessment records and good relationships. All the support staff are used effectively and make a good contribution to pupils' learning. In a few lessons, the pace is reduced because timescales are not sufficiently challenging or the planned activities are not sufficiently organised, such as in a science lesson where the task of measuring each pupil's height took too long. As a result, pupils had insufficient time to draw conclusions about their findings and work on more complex scientific thinking skills, for example if a person's height or length of leg determined how quickly they could run or jump or if there are other factors at work. This contrasts to an English lesson seen where pupils joined in discussions about the topic with enthusiasm.

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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The curriculum provides pupils with a good grounding in a wide variety of subjects. It is planned carefully to be appropriate to pupils' specific needs including those who find learning difficult as well as those who are very gifted and talented. Pupils benefit from working with local companies, artists and theatre groups to enliven their learning, such as literacy and numeracy activities with a publishing company and an arts project to paint a playground wall. Some of the most able pupils benefit from links with the secondary schools to give them more opportunities and challenge; for example, a club is being set up to support a boy with very gifted mathematics ability. Topic work is helping link subjects together but the school plans to extend this further. Pupils enjoy many sports including football, netball and swimming. The curriculum is enriched well by clubs and activities which are well attended by pupils of all age groups.

Good arrangements are in place to guide and support pupils in their personal development and their learning. Appropriate support is given to those who need help, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils are supported and helped to develop independence for when they transfer to secondary school. Pupils say they are given really good advice about secondary education and what is available to them. The overall good care and support for pupils is extended by the well managed provision of the breakfast and after school clubs.

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?

Staff share a common sense of purpose and the good leadership has raised aspirations so that all leaders are ambitious to improve the quality of teaching and learning. The restructured leadership is working well and has had a good impact on many aspects of the school, including the effective use of progress tracking systems. Governors provide a good balance of support and challenge, have a good understanding of the school's performance and are clearly focused on school improvement. The school has a strong focus on equal opportunities reflected by appointing an 'every child counts teacher'. The progress monitoring system is designed to pick up any child who is falling behind or not being sufficiently challenged. There is no evidence of any discrimination with such good relationships in place and no recorded racial incidents.

The school works well to engage parents. Parent teacher consultations are organised to accommodate working parents and staff are always available on the playground. Many staff have a range of languages which enables them to communicate with the different

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nationalities in school. The school is preparing to use text messaging to help reach a wider range of parents. The approach to community cohesion is good, especially within the school and the local community. The provision is regularly reviewed and extended wherever possible. European and global awareness is well promoted within the curriculum and through the range of cultures that exist in the school where they all work in a harmonious way. Within the school, pupils and parents from all backgrounds are valued and this has a significant impact on community cohesion and pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Safeguarding procedures are securely in place. All the required checks on adults who work in the school have been made and recorded. Support for vulnerable pupils and specific child protection training are secure and the school works well with other agencies to ensure this. Rigorous checks are made on security and on health and safety but there are a few omissions in some procedures.

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

Children enter the Nursery with skills well below those expected for their age. The weakest areas on entry to the Nursery are communication, language and literacy as well as social and emotional development. Children settle quickly into school routines and make good progress in what is a well resourced and well managed facility. Even though pupils have made good progress, their skills are still below that expected by the end of their Reception Year.

Teaching is good because staff have a good understanding of how children learn. They

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provide a broad range of activities to promote all areas of learning. Many areas of learning are taught through small group activities which also helps children gain confidence. There are activities such as painting to develop their creativity and lots of team games to promote social skills. Planning takes careful account of children's differing needs and is based on building upon their interests. There is a well thought out balance of adult-directed and free-choice activities. All staff are involved in making careful observations of children's progress. These are used at the weekly planning meetings to develop provision and make the best use of support staff. Assessment information is used well to keep a clear overview of children's progress. They benefit from the stimulating learning environment and the good and improving links between the Nursery and Reception classes.

The provision is well managed and there are extremely good arrangements to introduce both parent and child into the school. The transfer from Nursery to Reception is well managed and there is now a focus on developing further the arrangements for the transfer into Year 1. Behaviour is very good. All groups of children play and learn well together in a safe and caring environment. Staff know the children well.

Some of the children attend the breakfast and after school club where provision is also good. A good range of construction and creative toys are available for them to enjoy while supporting their learning and mixing with the older children who are good role models helps their personal development. The number of adults supervising the children meets the requirements for these younger children and they are also looked after by the older children.

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	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school, especially about how much they enjoy school, how the children are kept safe and the good behaviour. They are very supportive of what the school provides overall and one parent commented: 'My daughter really enjoys her school and the experiences that she gets from attending a school of many cultures and life views. It has made her a more rounded person.' There were several comments about how hard the school tries to meet specific needs. The few concerns identified were about the progress pupils make but inspectors found that, although this may have been a concern in previous years, it has now been corrected.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Monica's 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 93 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 222 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	63	68	29	31	0	0	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	57	61	33	36	1	1	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	54	58	34	37	3	3	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	47	51	36	39	7	8	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	50	54	40	43	2	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	45	48	40	43	6	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	46	50	42	45	2	2	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)	41	44	43	46	5	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	41	44	41	44	2	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	51	55	37	40	1	1	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	34	37	52	56	3	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	47	51	43	46	2	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	51	55	39	42	1	1	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.



Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Monica's Roman Catholic Primary School, London N1 6NT

We really enjoyed visiting your school, coming into your lessons and talking you. Your school provides you with a good education. There are many good things about your school and these are a few of them:

- You all enjoy school, where you get on so well together and join in all the activities, especially the sports.
- You behave well.
- Teaching is good and this is helping you all make good progress in lessons.
- You are doing really well in some subjects, especially in English.
- All the staff look after you and care for you well.
- Those adults who manage and run the school are working hard to give you more opportunities and to improve your work.
- You respect each other and are learning about the wider world in which you live.

These are a few things we have asked the school to do to make the school even better:

- Help you to do as well in all subjects, especially in science, as you do in English. We would like you to have more fun in science and improve the way that you write up your work. We also think it would be helpful if you had some clear targets, just like you do in English.
- Check how well you are getting on in science and some other subjects as carefully as teachers do in English.
- Make more lessons good and outstanding by making sure you are able to learn at a good pace.

You can help by carrying on working hard and helping your teachers. I hope you continue to enjoy your time at this school and when you move on to secondary schools.

Yours faithfully

John Horwood

Lead Inspector

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