

St Agnes's RC School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101332
Local Authority	Barnet
Inspection number	335697
Inspection dates	12–13 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Madeleine Gerard

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	340
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Helen Datta
Headteacher	Catherine Jordan
Date of previous school inspection	13 May 2010
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 21 lessons and parts of lessons, saw 12 teachers and held meetings with parents, pupils, governors and staff. They observed the school's work, and looked at work in pupils' books, tracking data showing pupils' attainment and the progress they are making, the school's development plans, monitoring records and the 167 responses to the questionnaire received from parents and carers.

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

- the pupils' current attainment and how swiftly they are learning and making progress
- how successfully the school monitors the quality of its work, identifies and tackles key priorities and secures improvements
- the quality of the pupils' personal development.

Information about the school

This is a larger-than-average primary school. Pupils come from a variety of different backgrounds, the largest of which are White British. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly lower than average. These pupils have a variety of needs, including speech, language and communication difficulties, behavioural difficulties and specific learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils joining and leaving the school other than at the usual times is high in some year groups. The school has achieved a number of nationally recognised awards, including Healthy Schools status and the Activemark. There have been a number of staff changes over recent years.

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

St Agnes' Roman Catholic Primary School is a good school. In the school's caring and safe environment, pupils develop into confident and responsible individuals who make an excellent contribution to the school and local community. Links with the local church and Catholic community are strong. Pupils take on responsibility very enthusiastically, for example as prefects, in the school and eco-councils, or as leaders of the school's savings bank. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The Catholic culture permeates the whole school and helps pupils to think carefully about spirituality. Fundraising for local, national and international charities fosters pupils' awareness of others and those who are less fortunate than themselves. Pupils' extremely strong understanding of cultures and world religions reflects the school's outstanding promotion of community cohesion. Pupils feel exceptionally safe and are very confident that adults will help them should any problems occur. One parent typically wrote, 'My child is very happy at St Agnes'.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment by ensuring that assessment is always used effectively to provide pupils with challenging targets and work that matches their capabilities.
- Sharpen the skills of governors in the analysis of performance data.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils' achievement and enjoyment are good overall. Good learning and progress were observed in an English lesson when pupils worked in pairs to create a set of interview questions that would explore a character's feelings. Pupils made good progress in a mathematics lesson on number lines because they were all really involved in writing down their own answers in response to the teacher's well-framed questions. Recent improvements to provision in numeracy have resulted in a rise in attainment in mathematics, which is now above average. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress as a result of the support they receive. Pupils who join the school part-way through their education are well supported and make similar good progress.

Pupils are friendly, polite and behave well in lessons and around the school. Weekly physical activities led by specialist sports coaches, walking to school at least once each week and a good range of sporting equipment for pupils to use at break times foster pupils' positive attitudes to keeping fit and healthy. Visitors to the school from local

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emergency services support pupils □ outstanding awareness of how to keep themselves safe. They have an extremely good understanding of safety rules when using the internet.

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	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
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	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Teachers explain new learning clearly and use computers well to model explanations and what pupils are expected to do. This ensures pupils are clear about what they are supposed to be learning. Pupils make particularly good progress in lessons when teachers make it clear what they need to do to improve, but this is not done consistently. Teachers check the progress of pupils in reading, writing and mathematics. However, information gained from tracking pupils □ progress is not always analysed with sufficient speed and precision to ensure that it is fully effective as a tool to raise attainment further.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and supports pupils □ personal development. In classrooms and around the school, photographs and displays of recent curriculum events, such as book week, record the interesting activities pupils have enjoyed. The

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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curriculum is enriched by visitors to the school and visits to local places of interest, including a popular residential visit to the Isle of Wight for pupils in Year 6. There are some useful links between subjects, although opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy and numeracy skills across a range of subjects are sometimes missed.

The school knows all the pupils extremely well and works hard to ensure that they are well cared for. Links with a variety of outside agencies, as well as local schools and a school in China, promote pupils' learning and personal development well. Pupils are enthusiastic about the breakfast club. They enjoy eating together and playing games inside and sports outside with pupils in other year groups. The school takes some steps to promote regular attendance but there is more to do to secure a sustained increase in rates of attendance and reduce travel abroad during term time.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
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?

Action taken to develop the teaching of mathematics, enhancements to the outdoor areas for pupils in Years 1 to 6, as well as in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and improvements to computing resources to support pupils' basic skills show that ambition is embedded successfully and improvement is driven well. The headteacher and staff are an effective team. They place great store in promoting pupils' personal development. This, together with the school's outstanding promotion of community cohesion, is reflected in pupils' strong personal and social skills. Outcomes for pupils are good because the school promotes equality and tackles discrimination well. The school works effectively with parents to involve them in the life of the school. For example, parents are welcomed into the school's daily prayers at the grotto. Leaders and governors have ensured that procedures to promote pupils' health, safety and welfare are good. The governing body is committed to supporting the school. However, the governors are not yet holding the school sufficiently to account over its analysis of assessment data to ensure that this is consistently as rigorous as other aspects of the school's work.

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

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	
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
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	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children join the school with skills and capabilities that are below those typically expected for their age. They get off to a good start and settle in quickly because induction arrangements are good. These include individual discussions with parents and carers, and opportunities to visit the school before children start. In the Nursery and Reception classes, staff know the children well. Good records of ongoing observations are kept and parents and carers have opportunities to discuss their children's progress regularly. Planning does not always use information from observations and assessments to match learning precisely to all of the children's needs. Children work and play well together. Across the Early Years Foundation Stage, provision is good because adults plan a wide range of stimulating activities in the classrooms and outside areas. For example, as part of a project exploring what plants need to be able to grow, children in Reception compare the progress of seedlings kept in the dark and in the light. Through observations, systematic record keeping and predicting what will happen next, children develop a good knowledge and understanding of the world in which they live. Children enjoy taking turns and sharing equipment and toys, for example when they are building a water run. The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed. Improvements to the outside areas ensure children develop their skills equally well inside and outdoors. Parents and carers appreciate the flexible time arrangements that have been very recently introduced in the Nursery.

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

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Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire confirm that they are happy with their child's experience at the school, are confident that the school is well led and managed and that it keeps their children safe. Most parents and carers confirm that their children enjoy school and the large majority evaluate the school's work positively. The inspection findings uphold the positive views of parents and carers.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Agnes RC 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 167 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection.

In total, there are 340 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	105	63	57	43	3	2	2	1
The school keeps my child safe	108	65	56	34	2	1	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	83	50	74	44	9	5	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	75	45	83	50	7	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	91	55	70	42	3	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	74	44	80	48	11	7	2	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	82	49	76	46	4	2	1	1
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)	63	38	89	53	3	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	69	41	87	52	6	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	86	52	64	38	9	5	3	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	62	37	81	49	6	4	5	3
The school is led and managed effectively	84	50	80	48	0	0	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	95	57	66	40	5	3	1	1

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.



14 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Agnes's Roman Catholic School, London NW2 1RG

Thank you for your friendly welcome and for helping us when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed talking to you and listening to all that you had to say. St Agnes's Roman Catholic School is a good school. I am writing to tell you about the judgements that we reached. These are the best things about your school.

- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes get off to a good start.
- You learn and progress well in Years 1 to 6.
- You reach average standards, although we would like you to do even better.
- The teaching is good.
- The school organises a good variety of activities for you.
- You told us that you like coming to school, and your parents and carers like the school, too.
- You are very enthusiastic to take on responsibilities within the school and are keen to help others who are less fortunate than you.
- You get on well with each other and behave well.
- You have an excellent understanding of how to keep yourselves safe.
- The school works hard to ensure that you have an extremely good understanding of your own community and the lives of people who live in communities that are different to yours.

To make the school even better, we have asked the staff to make sure that they set work that is just the right level of challenge for all of you. We have also asked the school to analyse all the information it collects about how well you are doing in order to help you to do even better. You can help by telling your teachers if the work is too easy or too difficult for you.

Finally, we would like to thank you again and wish you well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Madeleine Gerard

Lead inspector

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