

St Robert Southwell RC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101543
Local Authority	Brent
Inspection number	335743
Inspection dates	25–26 January 2010
Reporting inspector	David Wynford Jones

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	371
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Peter Manning
Headteacher	Miss Honor Beck
Date of previous school inspection	3 February 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They visited 20 lessons and saw 11 teachers teach. They held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at the data the school has collected on pupils' attainment and progress, procedures for keeping pupils safe, the school improvement plan and 216 questionnaires completed by parents and carers.

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

- pupils' attainment and progress in mathematics
- the impact of teaching and the use of assessment on pupils' progress
- the effectiveness of middle managers in contributing to school improvement.

Information about the school

St Robert Southwell is larger than most primary schools. The majority of the pupils are of White British or Irish heritage. However, the percentage of pupils from a minority ethnic background is considerably higher than that found in the large majority of schools. The main groups are of Asian or Black African origin.

The proportion of pupils who do not speak English as their first language is well above the national average. There are approximately 28 different home languages represented within the school. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly similar to the national average. However, a greater number than average hold a statement of special educational needs. The majority of pupils with special educational needs have moderate learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The school offers up to 30 part-time morning or afternoon places in the nursery. The school holds the Healthy Schools and the Sports Activemark awards.

The headteacher has been in post for approximately two 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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

St Robert Southwell provides its pupils with a satisfactory education. Its strengths lie in the inclusive and welcoming ethos, the good quality of care and the promotion of pupils' personal development. Pupils have an excellent understanding of healthy living and a good knowledge of staying safe. They behave well and enjoy school. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Following the appointment of the headteacher in September 2007, much has been put in place to take the school forward. A wide range of policy and procedural documentation and aspects of the curriculum have been reviewed and updated. Provision for children in the Nursery and in the Reception classes has improved significantly and agility equipment for older pupils has just been erected on the field. More rigorous assessment procedures have been introduced. These are beginning to be used to track pupils' progress and to hold teachers to account. However, teachers' and middle managers' use of the data is at a relatively early stage of development. The headteacher has also worked effectively with the governing body to plan major improvement to the building, with building work starting during the inspection. Pupils are very positive and have great confidence in the headteacher. They say that they feel safe and that behaviour has improved.

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge levels similar to those expected for their age. By the end of the Reception class their attainment is in line with the national average in all areas of learning. Their progress is satisfactory. However, recent changes are beginning to impact and children's progress is accelerating. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall in Years 1'6 but it is variable between classes. Their attainment by the end of Year 6 is broadly average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils' attainment in mathematics is consistently lower than that in English and science. This is because the pupils' skills in using and applying their mathematical knowledge are not sufficiently well developed and some pupils, particularly the more able, are not challenged sufficiently. The school has introduced a number of strategies to raise attainment and accelerate the rate of pupils' progress. Pupils' rate of progress is variable because of inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. Some teaching is exemplary but in contrast, teaching in some lessons is barely satisfactory. There is not enough good quality teaching. Teachers do not have sufficient opportunities to share and build on good practice. Targets have recently been introduced in mathematics but targets in reading and writing are not set as a matter of routine. Although there is some informative marking, pupils are not given enough guidance on how to improve their work. Consequently, teaching, pupils' progress and their achievement are satisfactory.

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The headteacher knows the school well and is providing good leadership. She is supported effectively by the deputy headteacher. The key areas for improvement are clearly identified in the detailed school development plan. Middle leaders are enthusiastic but have yet to fully develop their roles in leading their subject and contributing to whole school improvement. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They are supportive and provide challenge. They are keen to ensure that all are welcome and that staff and pupils feel valued. However, the underdeveloped role of middle leaders and the inconsistencies in the quality of teaching result in the school having satisfactory rather than good capacity for improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and accelerate the rate of pupils' progress in mathematics by:
 - consolidating and extending the recently introduced strategies
 - ensuring all pupils further develop their skills in using and applying their mathematical knowledge and understanding
 - providing greater challenge for the more able mathematicians.
- Ensure that all teaching is consistently of a good or better standard by:
 - giving staff more opportunities to share and build on good practice
 - ensuring class teachers analyse assessment information more effectively to track pupils' progress, inform their planning and to set challenging individual targets
 - improving the quality of marking so that pupils understand their next steps in learning.
- Enhance the role of middle managers by:
 - clarifying their roles and responsibilities for promoting school improvement
 - developing their skills in analysing and using assessment information and in evaluating the impact of teaching on learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

In lessons, pupils are attentive and behave well. They are keen to take part and respond well to challenge. They speak positively about their teachers and support staff but some say the work is often too easy. Lessons observations and scrutiny of pupils' work show that the vast majority are making satisfactory progress. Pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language are supported appropriately. This enables them to make progress similar to their peers. The attainment of pupils who speak English as an additional language and from the two largest groups of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, Asian and Black African, is generally above that found for their respective group. This is because very few pupils start school with lower-than-average communication and linguistic skills. There is no marked difference in

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the performance of the different ethnic groups or between boys and girls.

Pupils' excellent understanding of healthy living is evident in their knowledge of healthy eating and their understanding of the importance of taking physical exercise. This has contributed to the school being awarded the Healthy Schools and the Sports Activemark awards. Their good knowledge of safety was clear as inspectors discussed potential hazards on the building work scheduled to start on site. One pupil said, 'We will have to be really careful with all the work going on and stay off the building site.'

Pupils get on well with each other and have good social skills. They are respectful of each other and are developing a good understanding of different cultures, religions and beliefs. Pupils interact well with each other and are keen to take responsibility and to become members of the school council, the environmental group and peer mediators. They raise funds for national and international charities and take part in church and local events. Pupils' average attainment and their good social skills prepare them satisfactorily for the next stage of their education. Attendance is monitored systematically and any absence is followed up quickly.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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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How effective is the provision?

The curriculum supports pupils' personal development well. Provision for developing the pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding in English, mathematics and science is satisfactory. However, staff are in the process of reviewing the curriculum to develop a more creative approach in which basic literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills are consolidated and extended through other subjects. Most lessons are planned satisfactorily and engage the pupils. Teachers share with the pupils the learning objective and provide clear explanations. They have secure subject knowledge and are satisfactorily promoting subject-specific vocabulary. Teachers are confident in the use of the interactive whiteboard to support learning. There are positive relationships between adults and pupils. As a result, pupils are interested and work with reasonable concentration. In the better lessons, pupils of all abilities are challenged. Teachers make effective use of questioning strategies. Initial answers are probed and pupils' thinking is consolidated and extended. Many lessons proceed at a quick pace and there is good balance between the teacher's and the pupils' contributions. This good practice is not evident in enough of the teaching. In some lessons, groups of pupils are not challenged, the pace slows and teachers do not take the opportunity to consolidate basic skills.

Assessment strategies to support learning are in the early stages of development. The information is not consistently used well enough to raise expectations and to plan work that challenges all groups of pupils. There is limited evidence of the pupils assessing their own work or that of their peers. Pupils' learning is enhanced by good links to numerous organisations and the opportunities to take part in a good range of extra-curricular activities and educational visits. There is a high take-up for most activities. Art features highly in the work of the school and pupils' work is generally of a good quality. Pupils are provided with appropriate opportunities to receive tuition from sports coaches and specialist music teachers. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are taught Italian. All staff place significant importance on ensuring the welfare of the pupils is paramount. The level of care, particularly for the most vulnerable, is good. The school works well with a wide range of agencies to promote pupils' learning and it welcomes parental involvement.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
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	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

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How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders are committed to school improvement. The recently introduced systems for recording and analysing pupils' attainment and progress are resulting in the work of the school being scrutinised with increasing rigour. As a result, there is a sharper focus on identifying the precise areas for development. Expectations are rising as staff are increasingly being held to account and the role of middle leaders evolves. Governors take their roles and responsibilities seriously. They set suitably challenging targets and monitor the work of the school closely. They ensure that the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures are good and implemented consistently. They promote equality of opportunity by welcoming pupils to the school and ensure that all groups are treated equally. However, the lack of detailed summative assessment information for the different groups restricts the level of challenge governors can offer.

The school's contribution to promoting community cohesion is good. The governors and senior staff know the local community well and have done much to promote the school locally. They have taken a proactive role in developing pupils' respect and cultural awareness of pupils from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
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	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children feel safe, settle quickly and develop their self-confidence because induction arrangements are good. They enjoy school, behave well and quickly form good relationships with the adults. The emphasis placed on ensuring the children's welfare

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provides all children with good opportunities to experiment and explore within a safe and supportive environment. Planning is satisfactory, with clear links made to the early learning goals. There is an appropriate balance between activities led by adults and those initiated by children. Carefully managed situations help the children to develop a good understanding of healthy living. The two Reception classes work together well. This enables staff to make effective use of the teaching space to create a stimulating learning environment. Good use is made of the outdoor areas by children in the Nursery and in the Reception classes.

Accurate assessments of the children's learning are undertaken on a regular basis. These are recorded in the 'learning journey' folder and shared with parents. Parents' views on their children's attainment are valued and used appropriately to plan the next steps in their children's learning. However, this initiative is still in its relatively early stage. The folders have only just been introduced into the Nursery. Insufficient use is made of the assessments to provide challenge for all children and to accelerate their rate of progress.

The headteacher has successfully led the initiatives to bring about improvements to the curriculum and assessment procedures. Considerable sums of money have been spent on the purchase of a good range of equipment to improve classroom and outdoor provision. The responsibility for the Early Years Foundation Stage has recently been delegated to the Early Years team. Their respective roles and responsibilities have yet to be clarified. Nevertheless, the team has a sound understanding of the strengths and areas for development. Relationships with parents are good. The vast majority of parents are pleased with the provision. The children's sound introduction to school life prepares them satisfactorily for the next stage in their education.

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	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of the responses from parents and carers were entirely supportive of the school's work. Their positive views are generally supported by the inspection evidence. A particularly high percentage of parents and carers stated they were happy with their children's experiences at school, that their children felt safe and enjoyed school. Discussions with the pupils, and their questionnaire responses, confirm this to be the case. A few parents and carers felt that their children did not make sufficient progress and that the school did not deal with unacceptable behaviour effectively.

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Inspectors found that pupils' behaviour is good and rare incidents of inappropriate behaviour are dealt with appropriately. Inspectors found that pupils make satisfactory progress and agree with parents that the rate of pupils' progress could be accelerated.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Robert Southwell RC 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 216 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 371 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	143	66	69	32	3	1	1	0
The school keeps my child safe	156	72	55	25	2	1	3	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	110	51	94	44	9	4	3	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	102	47	99	46	11	5	2	1
The teaching is good at this school	120	56	89	41	5	2	2	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	112	52	91	42	9	4	2	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	119	55	95	44	2	1	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)	94	44	96	44	8	4	2	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	100	46	105	49	8	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	118	55	85	39	5	2	6	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	104	48	97	45	4	2	4	2
The school is led and managed effectively	139	64	66	31	4	2	3	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	140	65	76	31	6	3	1	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 January 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Robert Southwell RC School, Kingsbury NW9 8YD

Thank you very much for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed our visit and talking to you. We were very pleased to hear that you like coming to school and that your attendance is better than that found in most schools. You showed us that you are keen to take responsibility and that you all get on together well. You have an excellent understanding of healthy living and enjoy keeping fit. We found that your behaviour in lessons and around the school was good. You show respect for each other as you move safely around the school and in the playground. You clearly know a lot about keeping safe. This is really important with all the building work that is about to be started. Well done.

Your school is very welcoming. It provides you with a satisfactory education. The recent changes made in the Nursery and in the Reception classes are starting to help you make quicker progress but overall, the progress you make is similar to that found in most schools. By the end of Year 6, your attainment in English, mathematics and science is broadly similar to the national average. However, it is slightly weaker in mathematics than in the other two subjects. To help you we have asked your teachers to concentrate on helping you to reach higher standards not only in mathematics but also in other subjects. We believe they can do this by ensuring that all your lessons are taught to the best of their ability and they use their assessments about how well you are doing to set work that will really challenge you. We have also suggested that the teachers in charge of subjects can also look more carefully at how well you are learning.

Please remember, you must also play your part by always trying your best. Good luck for the future and remember to keep working hard.

Yours sincerely

David Wynford Jones

Lead inspector

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