

Our Lady of Dolours Catholic Primary School

Cirencester Street, London, W2 5SR

Inspection dates 20–21 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The attainment of pupils at the end of Year 6 rose above national averages in 2012.
- Pupils make rapid progress from very low starting points, especially in Key Stage 2. Here, it is well above national expectations in reading and writing, and equal to national expectations in mathematics.
- Teaching is usually good and some of it is outstanding.
- Leaders and teachers check on pupils' progress regularly to identify pupils in need of extra help very quickly and provide appropriate support.
- Pupils are a credit to this school. They are very well-behaved, in a confident and mature way. They are happy and feel very safe. They like coming here. 'We are a family' said one pupil.
- All staff are committed to improving standards. They feel very well supported by school leaders in their professional development, so this can be achieved.
- Governors offer the right balance of challenge and support to improve the school.
- The areas of improvement identified in the previous inspection report have been tackled. The curriculum covers more scientific enquiries and boys' writing has improved.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage receive a nurturing education that allows them to make rapid progress in all areas of their development.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding. In mathematics in particular, work is not always well enough matched to pupils' abilities.
- The school's marking policy is not followed consistently by all teachers and pupils do not always understand teachers' written comments.
- In a few lessons, teachers talk for too long at the start of lessons, which does not allow enough time for pupils to work independently.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 15 lessons in the 12 classes. Some observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher and with the deputy headteacher. They listened to children read and looked at pupils’ workbooks to see how much progress they make while they are at school.
- Meetings were held with the senior management team, with a number of other teachers and subject leaders, with the Chair of the Governing Body and the Chair of the Standards Committee of the Governing Body, and with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors talked to pupils too, and to parents and carers, to see how they feel about the school in general.
- Inspectors looked at all the relevant documents, including the school’s self-evaluation, the school’s improvement plans and policies, including those regarding behaviour and attendance, and the safeguarding of all pupils.
- Inspectors examined the most recent government data on the attainment of pupils in the school and the school’s system for checking on pupils’ progress through the school year.
- In addition, inspectors took account of the responses by 10 parents and carers to the online questionnaire (Parent View), and the responses by 26 parents to the school’s own parental survey, and other external reviews commissioned by the school.
- Responses from 15 members of staff to the staff questionnaires were also considered.

Inspection team

Mina Drever, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Bryan Meyer

Additional inspector

Philip Mann

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average primary school. A larger than average number of pupils join or leave the school at other than the usual times.
- There are very few White British pupils. Most of its pupils come from a variety of ethnic backgrounds, with the largest groups being Black Caribbeans and Black Africans.
- About half of the pupils arrive at this school speaking no English at all. Many of these children's parents and carers speak little or no English.
- The proportion of pupils in receipt of additional government funding (pupil premium) is much higher than the national average. The proportions of pupils identified with special educational needs at school action and those supported at school action plus are broadly in line with the national averages.
- Children can join the Early Years Foundation Stage either in Nursery or in Reception.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards.
- The current substantive headteacher has been in place since April 2012 and the deputy headteacher since May 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching to outstanding by:
 - preparing activities and tasks in mathematics which are a better match to the needs of different ability groups in the class
 - ensuring that teachers allow enough time in lessons for pupils to work independently
 - ensuring that the school's marking policy is followed consistently across all subjects
 - checking that pupils understand the written comments on their work so that they are able to respond to them and improve their work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Attainment and pupils' progress have been rising rapidly, especially in Key Stage 2. Practically all the children come to this school with skills and abilities well below the levels expected for their ages in all areas of development.
- By the time they leave this school at the end of Year 6, pupils have made more than expected progress in reading and writing, though progress in mathematics has been slower. Their standards are mostly above the national average.
- Children make good progress in Nursery and in Reception. By the time they reach Year 1 a very large majority have progressed to the expected age-related stages in all areas of their development. Parents and carers comment on how well their children develop as soon as they come into these classes. One parent or carer said of her four-year-old daughter who joined the school in January 2013: 'I don't recognise her; she is a different child; she is much more confident.'
- Many children come to school speaking little or no English. In the first term they make rapid progress in all areas, with 85% of them, for example, reaching the expected level of understanding in the language and communication area of learning in the autumn of 2012.
- The school's current checks on progress show that since September 2012, all pupils in all year groups are achieving above target for both attainment and progress.
- The school is very committed to promoting the rapid progress and successful attainment of all its pupils. It has put in place a number of extra support systems to target the individual needs of pupils in receipt of the pupil premium.
- The extra support is having beneficial effects on these pupils' achievement. Their attainment at Key Stage 2 in 2012 was higher than that of other pupils in both English and mathematics. School data based on average point scores at the end of Year 6 show that this good rate of progress is being maintained. For example, pupils in the current Year 3 made two terms' progress in reading during the autumn term in 2012. In Years 3 and 5 they made two terms' progress in writing in the same period.
- Although the progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is more varied, the school is ensuring that all these pupils make at least expected progress. The school's data show that the school is making sure that pupils supported with the help of outside agencies (those on School Action Plus) are making increased progress. Support targets individual needs well and pupils are reassessed every six weeks so that they can move out of support groups as soon as they are ready to do so.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is generally good, well planned and well structured so that pupils make considerable progress in all learning, although it is slower in mathematics.
- Where teaching is outstanding, pupils' work displays a maturity of understanding beyond the required standards. Their communication skills are highly developed and they approach their learning with inquisitive minds and independent thinking. For example, in one Year 2 class pupils were making very good progress in how to use more and more sophisticated descriptions of a character in a story, building up more complex sentences as they did this.
- Equally outstanding was teaching in a lesson on similes where teacher and pupils engaged in an animated dialogue, often accompanied by hand and arm movements, as they discussed quite passionately exactly what the author of the text they were reading had really meant by the use of certain words.
- In most subjects, teachers work well with learning assistants in planning together the work for different ability groups. However, in mathematics this is less successful; activities and tasks are not always well enough adapted to the needs of different ability groups in the class. As a result,

progress in mathematics is not as rapid as it is in English.

- Teachers check pupils' understanding and progress regularly during lessons, using a variety of methods and a wide range of good questions. They also make good use of talk partners, much enjoyed by pupils and used effectively in short, sharp bursts so as not to lose pupils' concentration.
- In few lessons, mostly in Key Stage 1, teachers talk for too long at the start of lessons. As a result, pupils do not have enough time to work on the tasks they have been set.
- Although the school has a very good marking policy, it is not implemented fully across all the subjects. Teachers write regular and clear comments in mathematics workbooks. However, this is not done so consistently in literacy workbooks and pupils do not always understand the comments made. When this happens, it is hard for them to act on the advice and improve their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The strong Catholic ethos of this school gives pupils a very deep sense of right and wrong, in a relaxed atmosphere of mutual respect.
- Pupils are very well behaved. They are courteous and polite. They open doors for adults and stand in waiting to give way. They greet visitors with genuine interest and are very interested in what they do. 'So what is it like being an inspector?' asked seriously one Year 6 boy at lunchtime, while the rest of the table waited eagerly for an informed answer.
- Attendance has improved as a result of measures the school has put in place, but it is still a little below the national average.
- Pupils feel very safe and secure and their parents and carers are confident that the school manages behaviour well.
- Their attitudes to learning are very good, though they sometimes lack that spark of spontaneity that comes with independent learning, a result of too many teacher-directed activities.
- The school has a number of highly effective strategies in place to promote good behaviour at all times, in the form of rewards rather than sanctions
- Pupils have a very good understanding of all forms of bullying, which they all agree are very rare, including cyber bullying. They know the school's e-safety rules and all class behaviour conduct rules are posted everywhere. They know how to keep themselves safe and have a great deal of confidence in their teachers to keep them safe.
- The school is a fully inclusive community. 'We are a family', said one pupil. There is a deep concern for all the pupils' well-being and their achievement on the part of adults and a profound sense of trust in adults on the part of the pupils.

The leadership and management are good

- The current leadership has put in place very rigorous systems to improve the quality of teaching and push up standards. They set high targets for all subject teachers linked firmly to pupils' attainment.
- Senior leaders and middle managers share a clear practical vision with all the teachers and other adults in the school to ensure success for all the pupils.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium and those with other specific educational needs are accurately assessed and their progress is regularly reviewed so that they receive appropriate extra support for the time it takes them to catch up and make at least the expected rate of progress.
- As well as this, the extra government funding is used to support educational visits and participation in clubs and other out-of-school activities. It pays for cultural visits where needed and, sometimes, essential items of school uniform.
- The impact of these measures on pupils' attainment is very strong. The school is successfully closing the gap in achievement between pupils in receipt of such funding and other pupils. This is evidence of the school's commitment to eliminate discrimination and promote equality of opportunity.

- The school's self-evaluation and related school improvement plan are rigorous and directly linked to the pupils' achievement.
- Leaders monitor all teaching and progress rigorously so that areas of need are identified swiftly and actions taken regularly. For example every six weeks they can tell which pupils in which class and in which subjects are doing very well, well, not so well and not at all well, and act upon this information immediately.
- The performance of each teacher is strictly monitored in relation to the Teachers' Standards and to the achievement of each pupil. Where the need for new training is identified, it is agreed and pursued.
- The curriculum is broad, balanced and based on a creative approach. It allows for a richness of opportunities to raise pupils' awareness of other cultures and other belief systems. For instance, two weeks a year are dedicated to the study of other religions. At other times visiting speakers from other faiths come to talk to pupils and visits are made to mosques and other religious places of worship, the most recent having been a visit to a synagogue.
- The local authority supported the school well in previous years, helping the leadership's efforts to put in place strong systems to raise standards. In the last six months this support has decreased because the leaders have demonstrated the capacity to manage the changes with less external support
- Leadership and management are not yet outstanding because they have not fully secured the above average progress in Key Stage 1 as they have in Key Stage 2, although they are well on the way to doing so and have the capacity to achieve it.
- Leadership and management meet the statutory safeguarding requirements.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body is fully supportive of the school and holds its leadership fully to account through a rigorous regular review of the headteacher's performance which is firmly linked to pupils' achievement. Governors have also approved and ratified a similarly rigorous set of procedures for the performance management of all teachers in the school by the headteacher. The governing body works effectively through a number of sub-committees which work very hard with the school to pursue its drive for improvement forward. For instance it works well with the school's administrator in maintaining a healthy budget. The Standards Committee questions the quality of teaching, and is fully aware of what the school is doing to improve teaching across the school in order to continue the drive to raise standards even further compared with the national picture. It contributes to discussions on how to spend the pupil premium money. It does not yet fully contribute to the school's self-evaluation. With the school's leaders and teachers it is setting up pathways so that they can work more closely together to raise attainment even higher for all pupils in all phases.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	101124
Local authority	Westminster
Inspection number	402844

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	308
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Steve Maingot
Headteacher	Mrs Sarah Alley
Date of previous school inspection	6 June 2008
Telephone number	020 7641 4326
Fax number	020 7641 4389
Email address	head@ourladydolours.co.uk

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