



Divine Saviour Roman Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 117485
LEA HERTFORDSHIRE LEA
Inspection number 280095
Inspection dates 27 March 2006 to 28 March 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs. Joyce Cox LI

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary	School address	Broomfield Rise
School category	Voluntary aided		WD5 0HW
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01923 265607
Number on roll	221	Fax number	01923 291632
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr.Andrzej Krajewski
Date of previous inspection	28 February 2000	Headteacher	Mr. Philip Gibbs

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average sized Roman Catholic primary school situated in Abbots Langley, north of Watford. The school draws its pupils from two parishes. There is diversity in the pupils' backgrounds. The school has a higher than average number of minority ethnic pupils, a small number of whom do not speak English at home. Relatively few pupils are entitled to free school meals. An average number have learning difficulties or disabilities. When children start in the Nursery at age three, their abilities are generally slightly above the expected level.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school judges itself to be a good school and inspectors agree. It provides good value for money. In this inclusive setting, with its strong Catholic ethos, pupils from a wide range of backgrounds flourish. Parents overwhelmingly support the school and appreciate all that it provides. One parent writes, 'Our children have been given the best start possible in both their education and their personal development.' Children in the Nursery and Reception classes make good progress and attain the expected standards on entry to Year 1. All pupils achieve well as they move through the school. Standards are above average at the end of Year 2 and very high by Year 6. All pupils including those with learning difficulties achieve well because the quality of teaching is good throughout the school. Pupils are encouraged to think about how well they are doing but they are not always told exactly what to do next in order to improve. The curriculum is enriched through a good range of other activities. There are good resources to support pupils' learning with the exception of the computers which are shortly to be replaced. The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide good leadership. They are relatively new to their roles but in a short time have succeeded in significantly improving many aspects of the school. Senior leaders are successfully focussed on raising standards, improving teaching and promoting the well-being of all pupils. The school has begun to use assessment information effectively to track pupils' progress but accept further work is needed. Governors support the school well but currently they lack the understanding that comes from first hand observation and evaluation. There is a good commitment to continuous improvement at all levels in the school leaving it very well placed to make further progress. The school has made good improvement since its last inspection and has succeeded in turning any weaknesses into strengths. The school runs very smoothly and pupils say they feel very well prepared for the next stage in their education. The headteacher has swiftly and successfully created an atmosphere where staff, pupils and parents feel confident and know that their views are listened to and acted upon.

What the school should do to improve further

- Further develop the way pupils' achievements are recorded to make it easier for staff to track their progress throughout the school.
- Improve marking so that all pupils understand what they need to do to make their work better and achieve their targets.
- Strengthen the governing body's role in directly monitoring the work of the school and through this their own effectiveness.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes in all the areas of learning. The majority of children attain the expected standard on entry to Year 1. Year 2 pupils' achievement in national tests is good and they reach above average levels. Writing standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 have improved

considerably since the last inspection when they were judged to be average. In 2005, standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 were exceptionally high in English and above average in science and mathematics. Standards achieved by the pupils in spoken English are exceptionally good throughout the school. Senior leaders set challenging but realistic targets for Year 6 pupils to attain in national tests and these are normally achieved and occasionally exceeded. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress as they are quickly identified and receive good support from the special needs co-ordinator, the learning support teacher, class teachers and support staff. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those at an early stage of learning English also make good progress because of a good focus on encouraging pupils to communicate in all lessons.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and reflects the school's strong, caring Catholic ethos. This ensures that pupils' personal development and well-being are good and reflected in every aspect of school life. Pupils have a positive approach to learning and behave well. Very good relationships come from the way pupils are taught to value and respect everyone in school. Pupils reflect upon their feelings and actions and their contributions to the school and wider community through assembly and class discussions (circle time). Older pupils carry out their responsibilities well, for example, in their roles as playground 'buddies'. The school council is active and gives pupils an effective voice in helping to improve the school. Through a good personal, social and health education programme (PSHE), pupils understand about keeping safe, staying healthy and the problems caused by the misuse of drugs and other substances. Regular physical exercise and a good variety of break time activities contribute well to their overall health. Pupils are developing a good range of skills that will equip them well for the future. Attendance is good.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning is good with some very good features. In all classes teachers and pupils have very good working relationships. Consequently, pupils enjoy their learning and are hard working, well behaved and eager to succeed. Teaching is good in the Nursery and Reception classes and children learn through a good variety of exciting and carefully planned practical activities. Nursery nurses and teaching assistants in all classes are very capable and confident and take a full part in planning and assessing pupils' learning. In outstanding lessons, the teacher's planning is exceptionally clear and work is skilfully matched to cater for pupils' various abilities. Pupils know precisely what they have to do and settle quickly and happily to their work. Teachers use information and communication technology (ICT) effectively to capture pupils' interest. Marking of pupils' work is regular and supportive. While there are examples

of high quality marking this is not yet consistent across all classes. As a result not all pupils are clear about exactly what they need to do to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The broad and balanced curriculum meets all requirements, and a stimulating curriculum in the Foundation Stage links areas of learning together well. The curriculum is well planned and regularly reviewed to ensure all pupils make good progress from year to year. The links made between subjects are improving, enabling teachers to develop pupils' skills in a range of contexts. The school also provides well for creative and practical learning, for example, through music and science. The curriculum makes good provision for pupils' PSHE, guiding them towards being safe and healthy and to contributing to the community. Pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities are well provided for and teaching assistants are deployed well to help all pupils succeed. Teachers make good use of the interactive whiteboards to bring lessons to life and pupils think these 'make lessons really interesting'. Good links, with their local secondary school for example, support the teaching of ICT and science and also provide well for those pupils who show particular talents in these subjects. A good range of enticing enrichment activities are provided such as science, French, sports and music clubs and drama workshops. These together with a good number of visits and visitors have a very positive impact on pupils' personal and social skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school takes the care and welfare of pupils very seriously and the systems in place to support this are good. Pupils say they feel safe and secure in school. They know that they will be listened to if they are worried or having problems and say they would 'have no hesitation' in approaching an adult. The school promotes both pupils' personal development and their academic achievement well. There are good systems for assessing and recording pupils' progress across the school. However, whilst all of the necessary information is available, it is not yet in a form that enables teachers to see at a glance how well pupils are progressing without having to look at several different records, which is a weakness in an otherwise good system. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language are identified early and good support is provided.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. Since his arrival just over eighteen months ago the headteacher has successfully made many improvements to curriculum planning, teaching and assessment. Together with the deputy headteacher he has also made significant strides forward in involving all staff in school improvement. For example, senior leaders have provided clear expectations and guidance to subject leaders on

how to raise pupils' achievement. Good improvements have been made to successfully raise standards in pupils' writing throughout the school. The leadership team know their school well and have clearly identified the strengths and areas for development. Parents speak highly of the school and appreciate and respect their new headteacher, one parent writes, 'He is courteous, fair, and accountable and has changed the whole ethos and performance of the school for the better.' Managers have implemented a good programme for checking and improving the quality of teaching and learning and in close conjunction with local advisors have considerably improved the Reception class curriculum. Governors provide a good level of support and a satisfactory amount of challenge. However, they do not yet have the strategies that enable them to be involved in evaluating the school's work for themselves or to judge their own effectiveness. The headteacher's commitment and purposeful leadership together with a strong sense of teamwork have successfully moved the school forward rapidly. Therefore the school shows a good capacity to improve even further.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you very much for welcoming us to your school when we visited. It was a real pleasure to talk with some of you and to watch you working. This letter is to tell you about some of the important things we saw. We think that you are extremely fortunate to go to such a good school. Your headteacher and deputy headteacher are good leaders and your school has caring teachers and support staff who work very hard to ensure you all make good progress. They also succeed in helping you reach good standards in your work and in keeping you happy and safe at school. They encourage you to be healthy and provide good opportunities for you to learn exciting new things. We were particularly impressed with the high quality of your singing in preparation for the end of term Mass. Many of you told us how much you liked your new headteacher and all the other staff and how well you thought they helped you to learn. You also really like being responsible and helping to run the school through the school council and by being in the playground squad. Older pupils also told us they really enjoy producing booklets for the rest of the school about different topics such as recycling and Easter. The headteacher and other staff are very keen to make the school even better for you. We think that to do this, your headteacher and all the other staff should keep on working out the best ways to track your progress through the school. Also it would be good if all teachers told you exactly how you could improve your work. It would also be great if governors were a little more involved in helping the headteacher work out the best ways to improve the school. It was so good to find that all of you are very happy at school and doing so well, and to hear from your parents that they appreciate and value your school highly too. Keep working hard and enjoying life at Divine Saviour.