

# St Mary Magdalen's RC Junior School

Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	101542
<b>Local Authority</b>	Brent
<b>Inspection number</b>	307729
<b>Inspection date</b>	24 January 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Vanessa Ward

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7-11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	328
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Tom Territt
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss Mary Carney
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 March 2004
<b>School address</b>	Linacre Road Willesden Green London NW2 5BB
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8459 3159
<b>Fax number</b>	020 8459 0108

---

<b>Age group</b>	7-11
<b>Inspection date</b>	24 January 2008
<b>Inspection number</b>	307729

---

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: how the school is trying to improve the achievement of pupils in mathematics; the extent to which pupils understand how well they are doing; how successful is the school's curriculum, particularly in relation to information and communication technology (ICT). Evidence was gathered from the school's records, planning and policies, from observing teaching and learning and from discussion with staff. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included in this report.

## Description of the school

The school is larger than average. Pupils come from many ethnic backgrounds, the largest groups having a range of White or Black heritages. Almost half of the pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, including those with statements of special educational need, is above average. Most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties. The percentage of pupils who qualify for free school meals is above average. The school has gained national recognition for its innovative work in ICT, and has been awarded the ICT Mark. A new school is currently being constructed in the school grounds, to replace the existing building.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

St Mary Magdalen RC Junior School is a good school with some outstanding features. Care for the individual pupil is central to all that the school does. This helps pupils to feel safe and secure and to enjoy their time in school. Parents are very positive about the school, typically commenting that 'the school has a real sense of community and is always welcoming'. Leadership and management are good and the headteacher and deputy have a very clear understanding of how to improve the school. They work very effectively as a team and are well supported by the staff and governors.

There is an impressive commitment to continuous school improvement. The procedures for school self-evaluation are accurate and successfully involve all stakeholders, including parents and pupils. As the result of an evaluation of data on pupils' progress, an initiative is currently being undertaken to improve standards in mathematics. This has involved a review of the teaching of mathematics, training and support for teachers and consultation with pupils. The school is successfully increasing the element of fun in mathematics and this is boosting pupils' confidence, increasing their enjoyment and accelerating their progress. Standards are now above average.

The school's curriculum is outstanding. It offers pupils a very broad range of activities and is greatly enriched by educational visits and visitors to the school. Pupils speak enthusiastically about having opportunities to take part in plays, visit museums and theatres, and play musical instruments. The school's many clubs are very well attended and contribute to pupils' positive attitudes and, particularly, to their participation in sport and exercise. The pupils' understanding of health issues and of how to keep safe is developed very well through the curriculum. This makes a significant contribution to their personal development and well-being.

The curriculum for ICT is excellent. Pupils are given opportunities to use ICT in innovative ways, such as making radio programmes, podcasts and designing robotic systems. Video conferencing with a school in Poland develops excellent cultural links and supports the school's Polish pupils as they settle into school. ICT is used extremely well in other subjects and does much to motivate pupils to learn. In a history lesson about Britain in the 1980s, pupils successfully developed their understanding of history whilst practising and increasing their ICT skills. Pupils enthusiastically continue their work on their home computer or come into school early to use the school's computers.

Pupils achieve well and, by the end of Year 6, attain standards that are above average in English, mathematics and science. The staff are diligent in tracking pupils' progress and intervene to provide additional support when pupils do less well than expected. This ensures that all groups, including those with moderate learning difficulties, make good progress. It also applies to pupils who are learning English as an additional language. The progress of all pupils is supported by good teaching. Pupils say, 'The teachers make learning interesting. They help us to understand if we get stuck'. Whilst teachers plan lessons conscientiously, they do not always ensure that the challenge they provide is sufficient for pupils' differing abilities. The school has already identified this and is working particularly to increase the challenge it provides for more able pupils. Plans are in place to incorporate this into the school's current initiative to raise standards in mathematics.

In providing academic guidance for its pupils, the school successfully involves parents in setting individual targets for their children. However, whilst pupils are aware of their targets, they are

not sure how close they are to achieving them. Similarly, although teachers often write useful comments on pupils' work, these comments do not relate as well as they could to the purpose of the activity. Therefore, the feedback to the pupil is less useful than it could be. The school acknowledges that this is an area for improvement and plans have been drawn up.

The pupils' personal development is good because of the good care and support that the school provides. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The school's strong focus on personal development through the curriculum, combined with the positive atmosphere in the school, contributes significantly to pupils' social and moral development. This results in good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning. Spiritual development is given high priority and pupils gain good understanding of the Catholic faith alongside a range of other faiths, and develop high self-esteem and confidence. The school celebrates the wide range of ethnic backgrounds represented in its population, and this promotes excellent understanding and racial harmony among the pupils.

Pupils take their responsibilities very seriously, such as in being prefects or school councillors. The school council is very active and pupils feel that it gives them a voice in decision-making at the school. They are proud of the involvement they have had in the design of their new school. Pupils have an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles. They eat healthily in school and talk confidently about a balanced diet. Pupils make healthy choices from school dinners or provide a healthy lunch box from home. Activities such as making presentations to parents and to organising fund-raising, combined with the school's strong focus on basic skills, prepare pupils well for the future.

Governors fulfil their roles well. They offer a good balance of support and challenge to the school and are well informed about its priorities for development. They have a good understanding of, and involvement in, school improvement.

The school has improved well since its previous inspection. Its track record of improvement, combined with recent successful initiatives, indicate that it has good capacity to continue improving.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Ensure that lesson planning meets the needs of pupils' different abilities, paying particular attention to the challenge provided for more able pupils.
- Increase pupils' understanding of how well they are doing by improving teachers' marking and involving pupils more in monitoring their progress towards their individual targets.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**

## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

### 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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

01 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mary Magdalen's RC Junior School, London, NW2 5BB

Thank you for making me feel welcome when I visited your school recently. It was a pleasure to talk to you and it was interesting to hear your views about your school. You and your parents and carers think that you go to a good school and I agree.

Here are the things I liked most about your school:

- your test results have been rising and, by Year 6, your standards in English, mathematics and science are higher than those attained in most schools
- the teachers give you really interesting things to learn, especially in ICT, where you are given wonderful opportunities to learn in different ways and have all sorts of programs and equipment to use
- you eat very healthily in school, take lots of exercise and behave well, and all of these things will help you as you grow up
- your teachers are very good at helping you to develop your understanding of other children, so that you work and play happily with all the children in your school
- all of the grown-ups take good care of you and this helps you to feel safe and happy.

Your headteacher, teachers and governors are working really well together to improve your school. In order to help them, I have asked them to look at two things:

- to check that the work they plan is always difficult enough for you, especially if you learn quickly
- to help you understand more about how well you are doing.

Vanessa Ward

Lead Inspector