

# Our Lady of Muswell RC Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	102142
<b>Local Authority</b>	Haringey
<b>Inspection number</b>	307910
<b>Inspection date</b>	11 September 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Graham Lee

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3-11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	378
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Veronica Brough (Vice)
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss Teresa McBride
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 June 2003
<b>School address</b>	Pages Lane Muswell Hill London N10 1PS
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8444 6894
<b>Fax number</b>	020 8365 4620

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: achievement and standards, personal development and well being, teaching and learning, care, guidance and support and leadership and management. Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, discussions with school leaders, governors, pupils and parents, examination of documentation and parental surveys. 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

This larger than average school is situated in an advantaged area but draws pupils from a wide area and a range of backgrounds. Most pupils are of White, mainly British heritage and the remainder of diverse origin. Most are practising Catholics but a minority are of other faiths. Around one in four speak English as an additional language. This proportion is increasing and is much higher than average. A new headteacher was appointed in September 2006.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Pupils are rightly proud of Our Lady of Muswell School because it provides them with a good quality of education. In some respects the school is outstanding. At the heart of the school's work is a strong Catholic ethos where every child really does matter. This is widely recognised by parents and one, representing the views of many, commented, 'The school is run with a great spirit and the welfare of children is top of the priority list.' The school has a warm and welcoming atmosphere where children thrive and really enjoy their education. Pupils feel extremely secure because 'teachers help us to be safe and healthy' as one put it. Consequently, their personal development and well-being are outstanding. They behave extremely well, are enthusiastic learners and achieve well.

Pupils achieve well because of consistently good teaching and learning and a good curriculum, which meets their needs well. Teachers enjoy excellent relationships with their pupils and have high expectations of their work and behaviour. They plan interesting activities, which engage and motivate pupils. They make particularly good use of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning and the school is widely recognised for its innovative work in this area. For example, in Year 3 literacy lessons teachers helped their pupils develop an understanding of a forest setting through the use of vivid imagery. As a consequence of the lively teaching, pupils are active and eager learners. They believe that teachers go out of their way 'to make learning fun' as one put it. They strive to do their best and are keen to contribute their ideas. Occasionally, teachers talk for too long, which slows the momentum of these lessons.

The school supports its vulnerable families extremely well and welcomes pupils of all abilities and backgrounds. It works successfully to include them in all its activities. The school's commitment in this area has been strengthened under the leadership of the new headteacher and the inclusion manager. New staff have been appointed to help meet the needs of the growing numbers of pupils who speak English as an additional language and those with a variety of learning difficulties and disabilities. This support is well coordinated and teaching assistants make an invaluable contribution to the quality of education. Consequently, these groups of pupils are enabled to achieve as well as their peers.

Pupils build on their good start in the Foundation Stage and make good progress. At the ages of seven and eleven they reach standards that are significantly above average in English, mathematics and science. In the 2007 national tests almost all eleven year olds reached the expected level for their age and around half reached the higher level. They are well prepared for secondary school and the world beyond. Current Year 6 pupils are again on target to meet their realistic and challenging targets. Pupils achieve exceptionally well in reading throughout the school but are not doing as well in writing. This was recognised by school leaders last year and a number of measures were put in place to secure improvements. This has met with some success but the school is aware that some pupils, particularly the more able, could achieve more in writing.

The key to the school's success is good leadership and management. The headteacher has quickly gained the confidence of governors and staff. She has kept the well-being of pupils at the centre of school's work and created a culture committed to continued improvement. This is shared by her deputy headteacher and leaders at all levels. They all play a full part in identifying the school's strengths and weaknesses and what needs to be done in order to

improve still further. Governors have also developed very good systems for gathering information, which enables them to provide a good balance of challenge and support to school leaders.

The new headteacher quickly identified the need to improve writing in the school and has also introduced a new system for tracking pupils' progress. Whilst the school has always gathered data on pupils' performance it had not been used with sufficient rigour to set challenging targets throughout the school. The new system is designed to enable underachievement to be identified at an early stage and effective support to be provided where needed. It is not yet firmly embedded. The impact of the new headteacher is noted by many parents and one commented 'She is very child friendly and has made excellent improvements in her first year.' The school communicates regularly with parents through newsletters and seeks their views through surveys. Despite this a significant minority of parents do not feel that communication is good enough and believe that the school pays insufficient attention to their views.

The school has successfully addressed issues for the last inspection. Attendance has improved and recent measures have greatly improved pupils' punctuality. This together with school leaders' relentless drive for improvement indicates that the school has good capacity to improve still further and will continue to go 'from strength to strength under the new leadership' as one parent put it.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

When they begin school either in Nursery or Reception children have skills and understanding which are wide ranging but are broadly typical of three and four year olds. They make good progress and reach standards that are above average in all areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1. In the Reception classes children are provided with a stimulating and welcoming learning environment. A range of exciting activities allows them to develop their skills in all areas of learning and to explore the world around them. Last year the school had identified issues with the under-use of the outside areas but this has been fully addressed and the curriculum is planned to make full use of the outdoor classroom. Leadership is enthusiastic, knowledgeable and innovative, for example in the way it is enabling young children to begin to assess their own progress. Very close and fruitful links are forged with parents when children first start school.

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

- Improve achievement and standards in writing, particularly for the more able pupils.
- Embed the new tracking systems to enable challenging targets to be set throughout the school.
- Develop the partnership with parents so that all are confident their views are listened to.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	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?	1
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	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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?	2
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	1
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

24 September 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Our Lady of Muswell RC Primary School, London, N10 1PS

You may remember that I visited your school recently. I really enjoyed my day at Our Lady of Muswell and you all helped by being so friendly and helpful. I thought you would like to know what I found out.

You are right to be proud of your school because it gives you a good education. You make good progress because teachers help you to learn and you told me how they make learning fun. I was able to see this for myself as I went round the classrooms. Those of you who find things a bit more difficult and those who are learning English are given lots of extra help. By the time you move on to secondary school you are doing well in English, mathematics, science and ICT and are well prepared for the next stage of your education.

I was really impressed with your enthusiasm in lessons and by your behaviour around the school. You were all very polite and considerate. Well done! You told me how staff help you to feel safe and to keep healthy. The school council were very thoughtful and proud of the contribution they make to the school.

Your new headteacher has made a good start and you pointed out some of the improvements she has made. She gets lots of help and support from all the staff and the governors. Together they are determined to make the school even better for you. I have asked them to do three things that I think will help.

- You are all reading very well but some of you are not doing quite as well in writing. The school is looking for ways to help improve your writing even further, particularly some of you who are doing very well in other subjects.
- The school is introducing a new system, which gives information on how well you are doing. I have asked them to use this to set challenging targets for all of you to help you improve even more.
- I want the school to work even more closely with your parents to help you to do as well as you can.

Yours truly

Graham Lee

Lead Inspector