

Our Lady's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111305
Local authority	Warrington
Inspection number	378272
Inspection dates	24–25 January 2012
Lead inspector	Judith Straw

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	197
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	P Gibbons
Headteacher	Mrs J M Johnson
Date of previous school inspection	27 April 2009
School address	Wash Lane Latchford Warrington WA4 1JD
Telephone number	01925 633270
Fax number	01925 654584
Email address	ourladys_primary@warrington.gov.uk



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Introduction

Inspection team

Judith Straw
Philip Choi

Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 16 lessons taught by nine teachers. They also visited several guided reading sessions to hear pupils read. Inspectors held meetings with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. In addition, they had informal conversations with parents and carers bringing their children to school. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at the information the school had collected on pupils' progress, school improvement plans, records of the school's monitoring processes and the work in pupils' books. They considered the 78 questionnaires returned by parents and carers as well as analysing responses from pupils and staff.

Information about the school

The school is smaller than the average sized primary school. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds with a broadly average proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is average. Most of these pupils speak Polish as their first language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is a little below average. The proportion of pupils who are disabled and those with special educational needs is average. The school meets the current floor standard.

The school holds a number of awards including Eco bronze and has the national Healthy School status.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school. Leaders have an accurate view of what the school does well and where more improvement is needed. Within the school there is a clear sense of purpose and shared goals that underline its good capacity to continue to improve. The great majority of parents and carers are very positive about the school.
- Children get a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. From starting points that are broadly below, and often well below those expected for their age, children make good progress in school and reach average attainment by the end of Year 6. Attainment is slowly rising and pupils achieve well. Currently, attainment in English is higher than it is in mathematics. Pupils who speak English as an additional language, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs also achieve well because they are well supported in their learning.
- Teaching is good across the school although there is some variability. Teachers' enthusiasm is infectious and they quickly establish positive working relationships with pupils and set high expectations for good behaviour and concentration. Pupils say that they enjoy their lessons most of the time and usually know how well they are doing and how they can improve their work. Very effective improvements have been made to the curriculum so that it makes learning stimulating and enjoyable. Good support is offered to individuals and families so that children are able to learn in a happy and secure environment.
- Behaviour is typically good in class, around the school and in the playground. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour consistently well and create a purposeful climate for learning. Pupils know about risks, how to keep themselves safe and the vast majority confirm that they feel safe and happy in school and trust the adults around them. Attendance is average and pupils are punctual to school and to lessons.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to raise pupils' attainment and further develop teaching by:
 - making sure introductions to lessons do not go on too long, so that the pace of learning is accelerated
 - matching work even more precisely to individual needs
 - improving the quality of marking and advice given on how to improve in mathematics so that it is as good as it is in English
 - fostering pupils' use of expression and tone in reading aloud
 - continuing to share best practice.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Children start in nursery with skills and abilities that are generally below what is expected for their age and generally well below in their language and communication skills. The welcoming and stimulating environment supports children's learning well so that they settle in very quickly and make good progress in developing the skills needed in Key Stage 1. However, they do not meet all the age-related expectations in the area of communication, language and literacy because their skills are weak initially. In lessons, learning is effective and children become confident, independent and curious. Relationships with adults are excellent. Children especially enjoy 'every child a talker' sessions when together they make up stories around pictures and add actions and songs to their inventions.

Good progress continues in Key Stages 1 and 2. This progress is very evident in lessons and pupils say that 'learning a lot' is amongst the things they like best about school. They are keen and readily contribute ideas and answer questions. They collaborate well, for example, in Year 4 in a history lesson pupils were discussing what children evacuated in the Second World War would pack and how the items chosen by girls might differ from those chosen by boys. In a Year 6 English lesson, pupils were sharing ideas about Greek myths and congratulating those who had written the most impressive sentences. Regular, well-structured phonics and guided reading sessions help pupils of all ages to make good progress in reading so that attainment is average at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. However, some pupils read very mechanically and so miss out on the enjoyment of good, fluent reading aloud. Attainment is average overall as pupils leave school. The school has implemented various strategies to improve writing with good success. Attainment in mathematics has lagged behind in the last few years but is now rising rapidly and is much closer to the expected level.

In the past, there have been variations in the progress of different groups of pupils, particularly girls, who were not achieving as well as boys. However, progress is now good for both. Pupils who are disabled and those with special educational needs make the same good progress as their peers. These pupils benefit from the effective support of teaching assistants and extra small group sessions devoted to supporting them in work they find especially difficult. Pupils in the early stages of learning to

speaking English progress well because staff understand their needs and take good care to meet them.

The vast majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire and all those spoken to during the inspection agreed that their children make good progress and achieve well. Inspection evidence supports this.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is good. Teachers usually plan stimulating lessons which gain pupils' attention from the start and in most lessons work is well matched to the individuals in the class. Teachers make sure pupils understand what they are to learn and how they can recognise success. Agreed approaches, for example, to teaching pupils how to plan their writing, are implemented uniformly. Teaching assistants are clear about their roles and make valuable contributions to supporting whole classes, individuals and groups. Good relationships build up pupils' trust and confidence so that they are happy to risk answers. Some of the best teaching offers pupils the opportunity to research and find out for themselves. For example, Year 2 have been finding out about the Great Fire of London in 1666 and provided a mine of information in their well written sentences. However, just occasionally, teaching falters when teachers talk for too long at the start of lessons, leaving less time for active learning. In a very few lessons, tasks are not sufficiently targeted at the right level for pupils to make the best progress, for example, when a large group of pupils is doing the same work when it is clear that some could achieve more and others do not quite understand.

The teaching of reading is good in both key stages. There is currently a whole-school focus on letters and sounds and spelling to further raise attainment in English. Pupils have many opportunities to choose what they want to read and are taught a range of strategies to use when faced with new or difficult words.

Teachers' planning of lessons and of the curriculum is good. Expectations are high and teachers put a great focus on the key skills but not at the expense of developing pupils' creativity, speaking and listening skills and use and enjoyment of information and communication technology. Teachers successfully promote the use of basic skills across all subjects and include activities that have a positive impact on pupils' good personal development. Pupils enjoy themed weeks, such as those devoted to Islam, Judaism and Poland, which enhance their awareness of other peoples' lives.

Pupils' work is marked very regularly so that nearly all pupils know the levels at which they are working and how well they are doing. However, advice on how to improve work is much sharper and more helpful to the pupils in English than it is in mathematics. The vast majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire were very pleased with the good teaching their children receive and praised the commitment of the staff and the way in which they immediately follow up any queries or concerns. The inspection confirms that teaching is good.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Nearly all pupils say they feel safe in school and are able to talk to an adult if they have any worries. They agree that bullying, of all types, is very rare and if it occurs, it is dealt with swiftly by adults in school. The vast majority of parents and carers agree that their children are safe. A few parents and carers mentioned concerns about behaviour. Inspectors investigated this and found that although a few pupils do occasionally exhibit challenging behaviour, incidents are well managed by teachers who consistently apply the behaviour code. The school is well aware of the impact of challenging behaviour and has evolved effective behaviour management strategies to ensure that learning is not disrupted. Typically, the pupils behave well and say this is usually the case in their school. They are polite, courteous and helpful and their positive attitudes contribute well to their learning. Pupils in Year 6 are teamed up as buddies to children in reception and welcome them into school each day, share wake and shake sessions and generally take care of them. Pupils from different backgrounds get on well treating each other with kindness and respect. Some Key Stage 2 pupils are proud to be interpreters and regularly show Polish visitors around the school.

Attendance is average. The school works well with parents and carers to encourage good attendance and tries to discourage parents and carers from taking holidays in term time. Pupils and their families are known extremely well and the school goes to great lengths to support children and their families. Staff are quick to observe signs that may indicate the need for the school to offer extra support when pupils or families are facing difficult circumstances. Well-established links with a wide range of agencies support this work.

Leadership and management

The headteacher's drive and ambition, well supported by the deputy headteacher, have been key factors in the school's improvement. Other leaders and staff share their high ambition and effective teamwork is a strong feature of the school. All aspects of the school's work are rigorously monitored, for example, the quality of teaching, planning, marking and assessment. The school's records reveal that leaders have a very accurate view of the quality of teaching and how to improve it. Planning for developments is successful and has led to improved achievement for all pupils, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage. These many strengths and their proven impact over time reflect the school's good capacity to further improve.

The curriculum has been much improved since the previous inspection so that it now provides a wide range of learning opportunities as well as enrichment in sport, music and art. For example, all pupils in Year 4 learn to play the violin and all pupils in Year 5 learn to play keyboards. Pupils are effectively prepared for the next stage of their education. The school held its first 'world of work' week in July to raise aspirations and give pupils a glimpse into possible future opportunities.

Members of the governing body are involved in closely monitoring the school's work and take time to find out about it at first-hand. They are well-informed, committed and enthusiastic, prepared to challenge the school to improve further. They carry out their statutory responsibilities diligently ensuring that safeguarding arrangements

fully meet requirements as well as rigorously promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



26 January 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Our Lady's Catholic Primary School, Warrington, WA4 1JD

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited you in school this week. We would especially like to thank those pupils who talked to us and those who read to us. You are excellent ambassadors for your school.

We have judged that yours is a good school. Here are some of the things that helped us to make our decision:

- you make good progress because you have good teaching and are achieving well
- your behaviour is good and nearly all of you put into practice the school code of conduct about courtesy and respect
- you say you feel safe and well looked after in school and your parents and carers agree
- you have good attitudes to learning, are curious about the world around you and are interested in trying to make other people's lives better
- your school leaders manage your school well and that is why it now provides you with a good education and is continuing to improve.

Part of our job is to look for ways in which the school can improve further. We have asked the school to make sure lessons always give you the chance to be actively involved, that work is always set at just the right level, not too hard and not too easy. and that you get the same good advice on how to improve your work in mathematics as you do in English. We also would like you to improve your skills in reading aloud so that you can read fluently and with expression.

You can play your part by continuing to come to school every day and enjoying your learning.

Yours sincerely

Judith Straw
Lead Inspector

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