

Our Lady of Lourdes RC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105245
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	377211
Inspection dates	24–25 January 2012
Lead inspector	David Byrne

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	233
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bernard Carney
Headteacher	Linda Chadwick
Date of previous school inspection	3 July 2007
School address	Beech Avenue Farnworth Bolton BL4 0BP
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Introduction

Inspection team

David Byrne
Mary Liptrot

Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed nine teachers teaching 14 lessons, of which two were joint observations with the headteacher. In addition, the inspection team made short visits to observe phonics lessons and listened to pupils read. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body, school staff and a representative of the local authority. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' books, pupils' progress data, safeguarding information, and other documentation. They analysed 88 questionnaires from parents and carers and also those from pupils and staff. There were no responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) for inspectors to take into account.

Information about the school

This is an average sized primary school. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds and around a third are from minority ethnic backgrounds which is above the national average. The percentage of pupils speaking English as an additional language is above average although only a small minority of these requires support for English. An average proportion of pupils is known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with disabilities and those who have special educational needs and disabilities is average but the percentage receiving support through School Action Plus is much higher than average. The school exceeds the current government floor standards.

Since the previous inspection, a Nursery class has been developed. The school population has grown and the movement of pupils in and out of the school at times other than the normal starting and leaving times has reduced. The exception is in the current Years 5 and 6 where there has been a relatively high level of inward mobility.

The school currently holds Activemark, Artsmark Silver, International Gold Award, Healthy School status and FMSIS accreditation for the quality of its financial management.

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	1
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school. Pupils achieve well, develop outstanding levels of behaviour and acquire excellent attitudes to learning within a stimulating and friendly environment.
- Good provision for Early Years Foundation Stage, with excellent features in the Nursery, gives children a good start to their education. In Key Stages 1 and 2 progress has accelerated rapidly in recent years and is now good. Robust evidence from the inspection indicates that attainment is currently above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and those pupils who speak English as an additional language make at least the same good progress as that of their classmates.
- Teaching is good with much outstanding practice. Teachers are energetic, creative, and very knowledgeable. Assessment ensures that work is usually closely matched to the needs of every pupil although occasionally the very highest attainers could be stretched more. Pupils have many opportunities to learn independently and have a deep understanding of their own achievement and how to improve.
- Pupils' behaviour is excellent around the school and outstanding in lessons. They love school and this is reflected in above average attendance. Pupils know about risks they may face and understand how to keep themselves safe and healthy.
- The governing body and all staff share a common focus on improving the school. Effective leadership by the senior leaders creates a calm and supportive culture which permeates the school. The professional development of staff is valued and their morale is high. School self-evaluation is accurate and priorities for school improvement are appropriate. The curriculum is good and brings exciting opportunities for pupils to practise their basic skills across a range of

themes and topics. While the school values its partnerships with parents and carers, more could be done to engage with some hard to reach families.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement even further by:
 - developing clear strategies to support the very highest-attaining pupils and those who have specific gifts and talents
 - building closer relationships with parents and carers so that more are involved in school life and aware of how to support learning at home.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils achieve well and their attainment is above average. The vast majority of parents and carers are satisfied with the way the school is helping their children to develop. In lessons all groups of pupils were seen to make good and often outstanding progress. Most pupils are very keen to learn and demonstrate exceptional levels of concentration. From starting points in the Early Years Foundation Stage that are just below what is typical for their age, attainment increases at a good rate. In virtually all year groups, pupils' attainment is above the expectations for their age and by the end of Year 6 it is above average. Reading has a high profile. In the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 there is a good emphasis on teaching letters and sounds (phonics). A good example of this was observed when groups of Year 1 and 2 pupils were involved in a sound tennis game, which effectively developed their ability to identify and sound out tricky words with the sound of 'i' in the middle. Such activities, coupled with good strategies to make reading fun for both boys and girls contribute to above average attainment in reading by the end of Year 2. In Key Stage 2, high quality teaching in English and an inspiring curriculum enables pupils to read regularly and with interest; this leads to above average attainment in reading by the end of Year 6. Music is a considerable strength in the school and the quality of singing by the choir is excellent.

Detailed reviews of pupils' progress accurately identify disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Effective strategies support them and are effective in enabling pupils at School Action Plus to attain standards that are above those of similar pupils nationally. The progress of pupils in Key Stage 2 in mathematics exceeds national expectations and many pupils display an advanced knowledge for their age of basic mathematical ideas and confidently solve mathematical problems. In English similar rapid progress is evident; writing across the school is of a high quality in terms of content, structure and presentation. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 is steadily increasing. There are no significant variations in the progress made by different groups because the school takes swift action to accelerate the learning of any groups or individuals who fall behind.

Quality of teaching

Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent and successfully promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Sensitive support is provided for each pupil with adults skilfully building pupils' self-confidence and ambition. Lessons are planned with great imagination so that time is rarely wasted and pupils learn actively without too much time listening. Teachers very skilfully blend a variety of resources including information and communication technology (ICT) to make lessons interesting. Whether it is acting as the fortune teller 'Esmerelda' to inspire pupils to consider their aspiration for the future, or using 'Denzel' the puppet to capture the imagination of youngsters in Nursery, teachers successfully make lessons fun. Learning frequently benefits from close links between different subjects in the planned curriculum. This was seen in an excellent lesson in which pupils explored the mathematical idea of perimeter in the context of creating a fence to protect a 'mad scientist's' laboratory. Good assessment matches activities to the needs of pupils and frequently targets the more-able well although at times the most-able could be stretched even further. Throughout the school pupils are encouraged to work independently. When writing, pupils access a variety of resources such as thesauri, word lists and guidance to ensure that their writing is as good as it can be. Lessons have a clear purpose and pupils successfully develop a good understanding of how well they have learnt in their lessons and how they can improve. The work of teaching assistants makes a good contribution to the progress that pupils make, particularly disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. The vast majority of parents and carers feel that their children are taught well and this is an accurate view.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The school is caring and does much to support pupils as they mature and grow older. Virtually all parents and carers who returned their questionnaires indicated that their children are safe and well looked after. Some went out of their way to praise the quality of support given to disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. A small minority were concerned that behaviour could be better managed. Inspection findings support the positive views. Behaviour typically is outstanding, confirming the views of parents, carers and pupils, and has an excellent impact on learning. In lessons, and as they move around school and during play, pupils show maturity, sensitivity and care for others. Pupils respect others of different culture and ethnic heritage and everyone gets on very well together. They make a positive contribution to the safe and friendly environment within the school and willingly take on responsibilities for example as school councillors. Pupils are punctual and rarely absent. Attendance is improving and is above average. Incidents of bullying in any form are few and when they occur, they are dealt with swiftly and fairly. Pupils are adamant that they feel safe, that their views are valued and that they trust the staff.

Leadership and management

Strong, caring and skilled management by the headteacher supported by a talented deputy headteacher has created a school in which pupils flourish. Adults effectively promote equal opportunities and eliminate discrimination through raising pupils'

expectations of what they can achieve. Leaders at all levels have a good understanding of their roles. They constantly monitor the quality of teaching and learning and use assessment data to make sure that any underachievement is identified and action taken to remove it. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is well managed. The needs of more-able pupils are generally well met although a whole-school strategy for boosting the learning of the very able and gifted and talented is not fully developed. The governing body makes shrewd appointments to strengthen the strong staff team and all staff are valued; their professional development is promoted effectively. Partnerships with parents and carers are generally good and the large majority rates the school highly. A small minority feels that communication could be better and state that more could be done to inform them about how to help their children's learning at home. Inspection findings support this view.

An important factor in the rapid increase in progress is the impact of the good curriculum. It is well planned to maximise links between subjects so that pupils develop good skills of reading, writing, mathematics and ICT. The caring and calm ethos that pervades the school is the result of efforts by staff to promote good levels of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Initiatives such as those encouraging periods of quiet and reflection through relaxation methods in Year 5 add to the positive outcomes.

Governance is good. It ensures that all safeguarding requirements are in place and supports and helps the school to shape its direction. Together with the staff team, the governing body ensures that all resources are efficiently managed to get the best value for money. Leaders have moved the school forward in many ways since the previous inspection. This has been most noticeable in the rapidly rising attainment across the school. Such successes, coupled with their proven impact over time and very accurate self-evaluation, reflect the school's very strong capacity to further improve.

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 of Lourdes RC Primary School, Bolton, BL4 0BP

On behalf of the inspection team, I wish to say how much we enjoyed our visit to your school recently. We noted, and appreciated very much, the warm welcome, courtesy and help that you gave us.

You attend a good school which has a number of outstanding features. Some of its strengths are:

- your excellent behaviour and attitudes to school
- the good provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the good progress that you make in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2
- the quality of teaching which inspires you and makes lessons fun
- the improvements in reading, writing and mathematics and your above average attainment - some of your writing is of an exceptional standard
- the good support for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities and English as an additional language
- the contribution you all make to a safe and caring atmosphere in the school, such as the way you are keen to help others
- the skilled leadership of the headteacher, deputy headteacher and of all other leaders.

All schools can improve, so I have asked the school to plan more carefully to meet the needs of those of you with particular gifts and talents and to think of ways of helping more parents and carers to get involved with the school and support your learning at home.

I am certain that all of you will want to be very helpful by continuing to work hard, always doing your best and following the guidance from your teachers.

Good luck and best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely,

David Byrne
Lead inspector

