

# Our Lady of Lourdes Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114278
<b>Local authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	378831
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 March 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Moira Fitzpatrick

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>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	122
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jane Affleck
<b>Headteacher</b>	Lisa Ashton
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	22 May 2007
<b>School address</b>	Fleming Field Shotton Durham DH6 2JQ
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## Introduction

Inspection team

Moira Fitzpatrick

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed five teachers in 11 lessons and visited other lessons or parts of lessons to listen to pupils read and to observe the learning of pupils with special educational needs. Discussions were held with the headteacher, staff, pupils and a group of governors. The inspector observed the school's work, examined work in pupils' books, and looked at safeguarding arrangements and a variety of documents provided by the school. These included policies, data about pupils' progress and the school's own evaluation of its work. In total, 59 questionnaires returned by parents and carers were analysed as well as those returned by staff and pupils. The inspector referred to the online questionnaire (Parent View) when planning the inspection.

## Information about the school

The school is smaller than the average size for a primary school. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage with very few who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is average. The proportion of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs is above average. The school meets the government's floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for attainment and progress. The school holds the International School Award and the Investing in Children Award. There is an on-site breakfast club run by the school.

There have been a number of changes since the previous inspection, including the appointment of three new teachers, and in the September 2011 a new headteacher took up post.

**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

<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key Findings

- This is a good school. It is not outstanding because teaching across the school is not consistent enough to ensure that pupils make exceptional progress, especially in mathematics and writing. Pastoral care is outstanding; it promotes excellent feelings of safety and security in pupils and contributes exceptionally well to their academic and personal development. Parents and carers unanimously agree that their children are safe in school. Many see it as 'one big happy family'.
- Teaching is good. It has improved since the previous inspection, with a higher proportion of outstanding teaching than formerly, especially in the Reception class and in Years 5 and 6. Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding. Children make a flying start and are very well prepared for the challenges of Year 1.
- Pupils achieve well. By Year 6 attainment is average, except in reading, where it is above average. Attainment in writing and mathematics is slightly behind that in reading, partly as a result of slower progress in these subjects in lower Key Stage 1.
- Pupils' outstanding behaviour makes an excellent contribution to the calm, purposeful atmosphere in the school. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is particularly strong. It reflects the school's motto, 'Let Your Light Shine', in the care, respect and support pupils give to each other and adults.
- The headteacher is giving a good lead to improving the school, the quality of teaching, and managing performance. Recent improvements to systems for tracking pupils' progress have had a significant effect on teachers' expectations so accelerating progress and closing gaps between groups of pupils.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and increase progress in mathematics by:
  - building securely on pupils' knowledge of number in Year 1, especially through practical activities by the end of the school year
  - improving pupils' mental agility with number by providing regular opportunities for fast paced recognition and calculation of numbers

- ensuring that pupils have problem solving activities in Year 1 so that they apply and consolidate their number knowledge.
- Raise attainment and increase progress in writing by:
  - reinforcing pupils' knowledge of letters and sounds regularly in Year 1 through opportunities to practise their emerging writing skills everyday
  - extending the opportunities for all pupils to write in other areas of the curriculum
  - providing weekly opportunities for all groups to write at length so that they develop the good stamina and perseverance for writing seen in the work of Year 6 pupils.

## Main Report

### Achievement of pupils

All pupils make good progress in most lessons because they are keen to learn and have excellent relationships with each other and their teachers. Pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs make the same progress as others because their needs are well met by teachers' careful planning and the skilled support of classroom assistants. Parents and carers accurately evaluate their children's achievement as good.

Pupils in the Year 2/3 class made great strides in their reading skills because of the well planned and varied activities they enjoyed. These were well pitched so all groups of pupils worked independently or with a partner to learn at a good rate. In some lessons, progress is excellent, as in a Year 4/5 writing lesson where the teacher's example of diary writing fired pupils' enthusiasm to produce the same high quality work. Good preparation through skilful questioning together with careful listening ensured pupils were well aware of how writing a diary differed from other styles of writing, so were confident when they worked on their own.

Learning is nearly always well matched to pupils' needs, because of improvements to assessment of their learning. New systems have given teachers a much sharper picture of how quickly pupils are progressing so they are able to adapt tasks quickly to challenge pupils. Progress is satisfactory in Year 1 because too few practical, problem solving activities are planned in mathematics. Pupils' enthusiasm wanes and their writing lacks the confidence seen in the work of younger children. This is because they do not have regular opportunities to write independently and develop their knowledge of letters and sounds. On entry to Reception, children's attainment is below and sometimes well below what is typical for their age, because of weaknesses in their language and communication, and mathematical skills and knowledge. They make exceptional progress to reach at least the levels expected by the time they join Year 1, and every year some children exceed this.

Attainment in reading is average by the end of Key Stage 1 and above average by the end of Year 6, because of the well planned provision, good home-school links to support reading at home, and the use of reading for learning in all subjects. Attainment in writing and mathematics is closer to average, with fewer pupils reaching the higher level in these subjects than do so in reading. Pupils have good communication skills because they are encouraged to discuss ideas and develop their thinking through talk.

## Quality of teaching

All parent and carers who returned a questionnaire believe their children are taught well. This is an accurate view. Teachers and teaching assistants work in good partnership to get the best from pupils of all abilities, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.

Teachers promote communication skills well. They provide frequent opportunities for pupils to discuss their learning and share their views. Pupils in Year 6 made excellent gains in their confidence and communication skills through discussing each other's strengths and how these contributed to the good of the class. The teacher's high expectations and skilful encouragement allowed pupils to speak clearly and confidently and to listen with patience and respect to the views of others. Teachers expect pupils to work hard and quickly give support when anyone falters. Their high expectations of pupils' behaviour and support for each other are very well met and so make an excellent contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Teachers' marking and feedback are thorough; it helps them to understand their targets and improve their work. Teachers' use of assessment is improving well with the new systems embedding quickly in most classes. This is accelerating progress and fuelling the school's ambition to raise standards further.

Staff have planned and created a good curriculum that effectively meets pupils' needs and interests and develops their basic skills. However, there are not enough regular opportunities for pupils to sharpen their mental calculations in mathematics or to write at length in different subjects. The teaching of basic skills is not consistently good across the school. There is evidence that pupils' learning slows in Year 1. Here, in writing and mathematics, pupils make less progress than elsewhere because tasks do not build on previous learning. There are insufficient practical and problem solving activities in mathematics and not enough opportunities to practise writing to reinforce the pupils' skills in letters and sounds.

Outstanding teaching in the Reception class is rooted firmly in an excellent understanding of how young children learn. The teacher and teaching assistant both display an infectious joy of learning, which they combine with astute knowledge of what each child is ready to learn next. They successfully stimulate children's curiosity so they are daring, ready to explore by themselves and tackle any challenges they are offered. For example, re-enacting a jungle story gave children the perfect preparation for their own writing by making the events lively and memorable. Their excellent knowledge of letters and sounds allowed the children to write independently at impressive length – telling the story in their own way.

## Behaviour and safety of pupils

'We love school and it is just perfect as it is.' This comment by a Year 6 pupil reflects the outstanding attitudes of pupils to learning and explains their high attendance. All pupils are excellent ambassadors of a school which is an Investor in Children. They willingly accept responsibilities and create a safe and positive learning environment by protecting and promoting the rights of others. Members of the school council, playground leaders and Buddies take seriously their role in improving the school and in looking after younger children. Parents and carers overwhelmingly say that behaviour is excellent, 'because of the excellent dedicated team of teaching staff', and has been over time. Observations in lessons and around the school confirm that behaviour is outstanding. Pupils have a thorough

understanding of different types of bullying and what action to take if they encounter it. They say that such cases are rare and usually involve name-calling. They are adamant that any issues are quickly resolved. Year 6 pupils are equally confident that teachers are fair and 'listen to both sides'. All parents and carers agreed that their children are kept safe. Pupils fully understand how to assess an unsafe situation and have been taught how to keep themselves and others safe.

The school is rightly proud of its inclusive approach. Effective partnerships with external agencies ensure that support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is a strong feature of its work and allows them to succeed as well as their peers. Parents are fulsome in their praise of how the school helps them to support their children's learning. They value the workshops that give them insights into their children's learning and appreciate the 'open door' policy which allows them to seek help when they need it.

### **Leadership and management**

The new headteacher demonstrates the determination and vision to build upon the school's good performance at the previous inspection. Teaching has improved through new assessment and tracking systems which have raised teachers' expectations of pupils' achievement. Progress meetings have made teachers more accountable for pupils' progress and have helped them identify any pupils at risk of falling behind more quickly. Staff have accepted these changes wholeheartedly and are delighted with the improvements they see in pupils' progress and attainment. Self-evaluation gives the headteacher and members of the governing body an accurate understanding of strengths in teaching of individual staff so that professional development is well focused on ensuring improvement in performance. These effective actions demonstrate good capacity to embed ambition and drive improvement.

The governing body has a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and uses this knowledge well to support and challenge the school. Safeguarding practices meet requirements and complement the excellent care, guidance and support. The promotion of equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination is central to the school's work. Consequently, outcomes for all groups of pupils are good and any gaps in achievement are closing rapidly as new systems embed. The curriculum is good and developing well to meet pupils' different needs and interests by opening a window on the wider world and increasing opportunities for pupils to link with others from backgrounds and traditions. It provides extremely well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Consequently, pupils have an excellent understanding of shared and agreed values and the personal qualities necessary for living and working together.

## 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](http://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.**



16 March 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Our Lady of Lourdes Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary, Durham, DH6 2JQ**

Thank you all for making me feel so welcome when I visited your school recently. I am pleased to tell you that yours is a good school and that some things about it are outstanding. Your behaviour is outstanding and you are very caring and supportive of each other. You work together extremely well to make your school a calm and happy place where everyone can get on and learn. No wonder your families and your teachers are so proud of you.

You are taught well and make good progress to reach average levels in writing and mathematics and above average levels in reading. Well done! This is because you work at it and practise reading regularly. I have agreed with your headteacher that the school should help you to improve your mathematical and writing skills so that they are as good as your reading skills, and you are even better prepared for secondary school. Children in the Reception class have an excellent start to their learning and very quickly learn to work together, share and gain all the skills to become successful learners.

You said you feel very safe in school and know what to do if you have a problem. I could see that your teachers look after you exceptionally well and are always there if you need support with your work or someone who will listen to your concerns. Their outstanding care and support are what makes you feel safe and happy in school. Your parents and carers are very pleased about this because they know you are well looked after.

Each one of you is a credit to your school and you can help it to improve by working as hard as you do now on the new challenges coming along in writing and mathematics. My best wishes to all at Our Lady of Lourdes for the coming year.

Yours sincerely

Moira Fitzpatrick  
Lead inspector

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