

Our Lady's Catholic Primary School, Princethorpe

Inspection report

Unique reference number	125721
Local authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	381115
Inspection dates	13–14 March 2012
Lead inspector	Terry Elston

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	116
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Chris Smart
Headteacher	Margaret Patrick
Date of previous school inspection	12 June 2007
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Terry Elston

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector visited 11 lessons taught by five teachers. The inspector took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, held meetings with members of the governing body, parents and carers, staff and groups of pupils. The inspector observed the school's work and looked at the tracking of pupils' progress, curriculum planning documents, policies and documents relating to safeguarding, and examples of the ways in which the school supports different groups of pupils. The inspector also analysed completed questionnaires from pupils, staff and 51 parents and carers.

Information about the school

The school is a smaller-than-average-sized primary school, where the large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. There are very few pupils who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is average. The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is below average.

The school meets the government's current floor standards for English and mathematics. It has recently gained national Healthy Schools status and the Activemark award.

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. Pupils achieve well in all aspects of their development and leave as confident, well-rounded citizens. The school is good rather than outstanding because the most able do not always attain the high standards of which they are capable in writing at Key Stage 2.
- Children make a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and parents and carers are full of praise for the way the adults help them settle into school life. Pupils make good progress and by the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, their attainment is above average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The consistently good teaching means that pupils learn quickly in every class. Teachers use questions very effectively to check on pupils' understanding and make a point of valuing every answer. This helps build pupils' confidence and makes learning fun. Teachers' marking is full of praise for pupils' efforts but is sometimes short on guidance on how their work could be improved.
- Teachers have high expectations of how pupils should act. Behaviour is good. Pupils feel safe and free from bullying and have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe.
- Leadership and management are good. The headteacher leads well, with high expectations of pupils' spiritual as well as academic development. The good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development shows in the way they think deeply about the hardships faced by people in wartime and about the wonders of the natural world. The evaluation of teaching and learning is rigorous and identifies clear ways for teachers to improve their work. Parents and carers value highly the way the school cares for their children and, as one commented, 'makes them feel so safe and want to come to school every day.'

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- By July 2012, ensure that the most able pupils make the best possible progress in writing by teachers:
 - giving them more time to work independently at challenging tasks
 - providing more opportunities to write longer pieces of work.

- Ensure that pupils know how to attain the next steps in their learning by teachers:
 - making it clear in their marking how their work could be improved
 - checking that they know their targets and are making good progress towards them
 - giving them opportunities to evaluate their own work.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Parents and carers believe strongly that their children achieve well, and inspection evidence supports this view. Pupils say that they do well at school and are proud of their successes. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are broadly typical for their age. They achieve well and the large majority attain the levels expected by the end of their Reception year. They do particularly well in reading and learn quickly how to build sounds into words.

At Key Stage 1, pupils make good progress and their attainment is above average by the end of the key stage. Their attainment in reading is above average by the end of Year 1 and Year 2. Most pupils are confident readers because they have a good store of known words and good strategies for tackling new ones. Pupils enjoy writing and produce good factual accounts as well as stories. For example, their work on the characteristics of chickens was as lively as their versions of the Cinderella story. In mathematics, many pupils calculate quickly in their head and have a good knowledge of simple shapes.

At Key Stage 2, pupils continue to make good progress and attainment is above average in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6. This continues the pattern of recent years. They read with good expression and are confident when reading to the whole class. Pupils research their topics well, using books and the internet to gain information on subjects such as the life of Nelson Mandela. The more-able pupils write with good awareness of the reader, as was seen in some excellent accounts of the lives of Jewish people in the Second World War. There are many activities like this that enhance pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development. However, pupils do not always get the opportunity to develop their skills further through writing long pieces of work or planning their own writing projects. In mathematics, pupils make rapid progress because teachers give them good opportunities to use their number skills to solve complex problems.

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Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. They benefit from good teaching and work based on accurate assessment of their difficulties. Teachers and teaching assistants provide effective support in lessons while also allowing good opportunities for them to work independently. Teachers build up the confidence of these pupils by ensuring that they have many opportunities in lessons to answer questions successfully.

Quality of teaching

All parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire agree that teaching and learning are consistently good. Inspection evidence and pupils' views support this. Teachers ask probing questions and are careful to ensure that the most assertive pupils do not provide all the answers. Pupils say how much they appreciate the way teachers make lessons interesting, particularly when they have the opportunity to work together in groups. They learn best when teachers set challenges to tackle at their own level of ability. For example, one group of more-able pupils made excellent progress when given very demanding mathematical problems to solve. Where learning is slower, pupils have to sit for too long as a whole class and this holds some back, particularly the more able. Teachers are very consistent in the way they manage behaviour and this makes lessons calm and productive.

The curriculum provides a good basis for teachers to plan interesting activities that promote pupils' skills and understanding. Furthermore, they do much in their planning to enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, from the Reception class onwards they provide good opportunities for pupils to learn about the natural world and how their actions affect the environment.

Teachers check on pupils' progress carefully and use these assessments well to plan future work. They mark pupils' work promptly, but are better at saying how good it is rather than how it could be improved. While pupils have challenging personal targets, not all teachers refer to them sufficiently, so pupils tend to forget them. In the best lessons, pupils have the chance to assess their own work, but this happens too rarely.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The vast majority of parents and carers believe that behaviour is good. Pupils' views and inspection evidence support this. Pupils feel safe, and free from bullying or any form of aggression. This is the result of regular anti-bullying campaigns in school and effective action to manage rare incidences. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe, for example, recognising the potential hazards of internet and having a good awareness of the dangers of fire and the nearby stream.

Pupils say how their involvement in setting the school rules and anti-bullying policy has helped improve behaviour around the school. This is supported by the steady reduction of recorded incidents of unacceptable behaviour over recent years. In the

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Reception class, children soon learn the rules for good behaviour and they listen carefully to the adults. Older pupils show an eagerness to learn and they persevere well with challenging work. Pupils are very punctual to lessons, and attendance rates are above average because parents and carers respond well to the school's rigorous systems to discourage unnecessary absences.

Leadership and management

The headteacher leads well with ambitious goals for the school based on accurate evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses. She is supported well by senior staff who share her vision for the school. Promotion of equality is important to the school. The leaders use data on pupils' performance effectively to identify any groups who are underachieving. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, and those of ethnic minority heritage, are fully included and supported to achieve as well as their peers. No pupil is discriminated against because of their particular circumstances.

Parents and carers feel strongly that the leaders keep them well-informed about the school's work and their children's progress. Many who spoke to the inspector explained how they decided to send their children to this particular school because of its reputation for good achievement and strong spiritual and moral values. Regular communication between home and school enables them to air their concerns and suggest improvements that the leaders always take seriously.

The leaders have introduced a broad and balanced curriculum with a good focus on basic literacy and numeracy skills while also providing many opportunities for pupils to enhance their artistic talents. Provision for music is a particular strength, and pupils' singing is outstanding. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of visits and visitors to make learning interesting, and an extensive range of clubs after school. The good provision for gifted and talented pupils means that they have opportunities to excel in areas such as sport, information and communication technology, drama and music. The curriculum and everyday work of the school provide many opportunities to enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They experience moments of inspiration in lessons, as was seen when one group gasped in amazement when finding hidden images of a wolf in a picture. They enjoy being involved in the church and local community and have good opportunities to join forces with other schools for sporting events. Their good cultural awareness is enhanced by fruitful links with a school in Kenya and enthusiastic fundraising to provide lavatories in African villages.

The leaders have developed good procedures to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning. These provide accurate judgements on teachers' strengths and weaknesses and provide clear direction for training to develop their skills further. Governance is good. The governing body supports the school well and has the skills to hold the leaders to account. Its members show a good commitment to safeguarding systems and they meet all statutory requirements. Action to rectify weaknesses in the provision is effective, as can be seen in good improvements since the previous

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inspection, particularly in systems to encourage good behaviour and provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This shows that the school has a good capacity to improve further.

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.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
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.



15 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Our Lady's Catholic Primary School, Princethorpe, Rugby, CV23 9PU

Thank you for making me so welcome when I came to your school. I really enjoyed seeing you work hard in lessons, sing so brilliantly and play so happily outside in your beautiful grounds. Those of you who were kind enough to speak to me or who filled in questionnaires said how much you enjoy your work. You are right to think that yours is a good school.

I was impressed with how hard you work. You make good progress, particularly in your reading, writing and mathematics. It was good to see you behave so well, make such good friends and take care of each other. You have a good knowledge of how to keep safe and live healthy lives. Even the youngest ones think a lot about people in the world who are poor and sad. The senior staff know how to improve things and make sure the school runs smoothly. You work hard at the activities provided and enjoy the many clubs after school. Your teachers make learning fun and you are right to say how well they help you when you find the work difficult. They work closely with your parents and carers to make sure they know how well you are doing at school. All staff at the school take very good care of you and keep you safe.

Your teachers are always looking for ways to improve. I have asked them to give those of you who find work easy more time to work independently, and to make sure that their marking of your books shows you how to do even better. You can help by telling your teachers about the lessons that you really enjoyed and taking good notice of their advice about your next steps in learning.

I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Terry Elston
Lead inspector.

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