

Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School, Witney

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123205
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	359392
Inspection dates	2–3 March 2011
Reporting inspector	David Carrington

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	184
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mary Hull
Headteacher	Chris Crouch
Date of previous school inspection	22 November 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed teaching and learning in 10 lessons, led by seven teachers. Meetings were held with the acting headteacher, substantive headteacher, senior leaders and members of the governing body. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at school planning, assessment data, records of children's work, the school's checks on the quality of teaching and a number of policy documents. The team received 82 questionnaires from parents and carers and also evaluated those from pupils and the school staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The degree to which the school's self-evaluation is firmly and accurately focused on pupils' progress as the key indicator for the effectiveness of the quality of provision.
- The sustaining of improvement during recent staff changes and the temporary arrangements for headship.
- The effectiveness of partnerships with different communities in the United Kingdom and overseas.
- Improvements to provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage that ensure the children make good progress, especially in writing and calculation.

Information about the school

Our Lady of Lourdes is a little smaller than most primary schools. The pupils come from an extensive area around Witney. Most are from White British families, although some come from minority ethnic groups including Polish and Portuguese. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is just over 10%. Very few pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. Some of these pupils have impaired hearing and a few have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.

There have been a number of changes of staff in recent years. The school is led at present by an acting headteacher until the substantive headteacher returns during the coming summer term.

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: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Our Lady of Lourdes provides a satisfactory education for the pupils. Good leadership means that it is improving well after a period of instability. Good improvement has been made to provision and children's progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, both of which are now good. Similar improvement has been made to the support and encouragement given to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This extends to pupils whose circumstances may have made them vulnerable, those who speak English as an additional language and pupils with some form of learning difficulty. For these reasons, the quality of care, guidance and support is good. The school's evaluation of its work is increasingly robust. The headteacher, senior leaders and members of the governing body are probing in their work to identify strengths and weaknesses of the school. The agenda for future improvement is well rooted in the secure knowledge of pupils' progress that is gained by the detailed analysis of assessment data. The school has good capacity to maintain its improvement into the future.

Attainment is average by the end of Year 6, which demonstrates satisfactory progress from pupils' average starting points. Progress is, however, inconsistent as pupils move through the school. Besides the good progress made by some groups, as identified above, brisk progress is made by most pupils in Years 3 to 6. It is not as rapid in Years 1 and 2 due to the tight control of learning in lessons which does not always challenge the pupils enough or help them develop full independence in learning. Boys have tended to make less progress than girls, although there are positive signs that the difference is being eroded. Progress in writing has lagged behind that in other aspects of English and in mathematics. This, too, is improving, as pupils' books show. The quality of writing by some Year 6 pupils is impressive.

The school has sustained its strengths in the personal development of pupils. Their standard of conduct is good. Most pupils hardly ever stray from the expectation of good behaviour. Those that do are managed effectively, resulting in lessons that are settled sessions of hard work. Senior leaders recognise that in one key area of personal development, further work has to be done. This concerns pupils' contribution to the community. The pupils are regularly involved in the school, parish and town communities but links with different communities in the United Kingdom and overseas are less effective. This is also why the promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory rather than good.

The transition from substantive to acting headteacher has been managed well. Priorities such as the more effective use of assessment to support learning are being promoted skilfully. Some of the marking of pupils' work is of top quality, such as in Year 6, although in some other years it is less successful in helping pupils take the next step towards their targets. In some lessons, there is not enough reference to the key learning target as the

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session unfolds. Also, at the end of the lesson, shared evaluation of success is occasionally rushed or omitted. These are the other main reasons why progress is not yet good.

The school has a good ethos which stems from the shared drive and ambition to make improvements. This ethos permeates the work to foster pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It is also the underpinning of the school's good work to safeguard all pupils.

Up to 40 % of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- In order to raise pupils' progress to good, ensure the strengths of the use of assessment to support learning are shared across the school by:
 - ensuring that the targets for learning in lessons are always clearly identified at the start
 - returning to these targets periodically through the lesson
 - ensuring that all pupils are challenged in Years 1 and 2
 - sharing good practice between teachers
 - allowing enough time at the end of lessons for pupils to review their own progress
 - making sure the marking of work in books is equal to the best quality in school in all years.
- Develop pupils' independence and self-reliance in learning by:
 - creating a better balance between adult-led and work pupils manage for themselves in all lessons, especially in Years 1 and 2
 - ensuring there is always enough opportunity for practical activity as well as periods of listening in lessons
 - encouraging the pupils to share their ideas and understanding with each other as well as with the teacher.
- Broaden the opportunities for pupils to understand and communicate with other people in the United Kingdom and overseas.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

During recent years, attainment in school has not been as high as it should be. Assessment and test data show pupils have made satisfactory gains in their learning but also that this has been inconsistent. Part of this has been due to inaccurate assessment. This has been overcome and assessment is now an accurate measure of pupils' achievement. Within the school's data, there is ample, secure evidence to show pupils' progress is accelerating. Achievement is now satisfactory.

The progress in lessons is often good, particularly at the end of Key Stage 2. For example, in a Year 3 mathematics lesson, the pupils thoroughly enjoyed the challenge of placing shapes in the correct position on a grid according to criteria identified above and

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alongside. The placing of the circle was particularly demanding as pupils enquired whether it should be placed in one of the two zones or neither, according to the rules. Learning in this session was 'hands-on' and captured pupils' appetite for learning.

While progress is improving in Years 1 and 2, it is not yet as brisk as elsewhere in school. In some lessons in this key stage, there is insufficient time for pupils to solve problems or make investigations, whether in pairs or in groups. This is caused by too long spent listening to explanations and instructions. This means that pupils are not given sufficient opportunity to work independently and become more self-reliant. Occasionally, lessons are not planned well enough which means there is a gap in learning between one part of the lesson and the next.

For the majority of children in Reception, the level of skill and knowledge when they start is as expected. Because provision is good, they make brisk progress and gain ground, especially in writing and numeracy.

The pupils work well together and are clearly ready to be challenged further by handing more responsibility to them to manage their own learning. They support each other well and are proud of each other's achievements. They are alert to the need to keep safe and healthy. A science lesson in Year 5 was particularly helpful in assisting pupils to consider the merits of eating fruit. The teacher usefully extended the basic theme of the lesson to the production of a persuasive leaflet to encourage other children to eat more fruit. This provided good opportunities to consolidate and extend pupils' writing skills, too. While pupils' cultural awareness is underdeveloped, their spiritual, moral and social development is very strong. Hence, this aspect is good overall.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is improving well. The majority of lessons are well taught, although there are some lessons which are satisfactory. In general, planning is completed carefully and comprehensively. It identifies the work to be set for different ability groups but less consistently in Years 1 and 2. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution in lessons. Their role is well considered and includes observational assessment of pupils' responses as the teacher starts the lesson. They show considerable talent in supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The good care, guidance and support for such pupils extends to groups withdrawn for additional input and the effective partnerships with parents, carers and outside agencies. These pupils make good progress as a result.

The use of assessment to support learning in lessons has been adopted by every teacher. There are some different interpretations of what this should include and how it might be promoted. Therefore, practice is not consistent enough. The strengths of the use of assessment in this way have not yet been spread across the school sufficiently. There is enough good practice in school to share between teachers to enable all to help pupils meet their targets.

The curriculum provides appropriate opportunities for pupils to build basic skills and knowledge in literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology. The links between subjects to assist pupils to practise and extend their writing capability, for

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example, are being strengthened successfully, though not yet extensively enough. The promotion of pupils' personal, social and health education is good. Pupils are not always given sufficient opportunity to work practically, particularly in Years 1 and 2.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

During the period of staff and headship change, senior leaders and members of the governing body have maintained a rigorous watch on school performance. Difficulties that emerged due to changes in personnel since the last inspection, were for the most part, identified quickly and acted upon. In particular, steps taken to ensure maximum reliability of assessment data have been effective. This has helped to improve the quality of teaching and strengthened the school's self-evaluation. Further, it is helping to target support for those groups of pupils who are not yet achieving highly enough. Consequently, although equality of opportunity amongst pupils is only satisfactory, it is improving. There is no tolerance at all of discrimination or harassment.

All staff are watchful which ensures the secure safeguarding of pupils. There are well-judged precautions, for example, when visitors arrive for school events. The home-school partnership is good. Many parents and carers commented on the helpfulness of staff and the headteacher. ♦

The school has also built satisfactory partnerships with a range of other schools, groups and agencies that it is enabling it to strengthen its work. Partnerships outside the local area are not yet fully established, resulting in satisfactory, rather than good, promotion of community cohesion. The school uses resources appropriately to give pupils a satisfactory education. Some resources, such as teaching assistants and the new outside area for the Early Years Foundation Stage, are used well. Consistently good teaching and learning is the appropriate quest of senior leaders in order to maximise resource use.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

The children in Reception enjoy their learning and show good initiative as they work and play. One group of children decided to ask other children and the adults present to write their names on their clipboards. There was much discussion among the children of how others had written their names. 'That one slopes', 'That one is long'. The children's spontaneous decision to do this demonstrates the value placed on early writing in Reception. There are many other good examples of children's writing on display, which illustrate the good progress made in improving children's skills since the previous inspection.

The significance of such awareness of the importance of writing amongst the children relates to their starting levels, which, while at the expected level overall, are less than this in writing and calculation. The children make good progress across all six areas because there is thorough assessment and planning to ensure activities are matched to the children's needs and enthusiasms. By the time they enter Year 1, most children have met their targets, including in literacy and numeracy.

Leadership of the phase is good. There is the necessary focus now on increasing the proportion of children who reach above average levels by the end of Reception. The leader recognises the need to gain even greater benefit from work and play outside and to form closer links with Year 1. The 'Forest School' initiative is clearly a successful innovation that is contributing well to the first of these priorities.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The return rate of the questionnaire was a little above average. Parents and carers share mostly positive views. Some are concerned about the management of behaviour. During this inspection, inspectors observed behaviour in and around school, scrutinised behavioural records and held discussions with staff and pupils. They found behaviour to be good. Others feel their children could achieve more in school. Inspectors have identified those areas where the school could accelerate progress and, thus, raise standards. There were many comments in the support of the school. These include the helpfulness of staff, communication between school and home, and the approach to teaching literacy. These thoughts are similar to those of the inspection team.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 82 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 184 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	49	60	26	32	6	7	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	49	60	30	37	3	4	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	30	37	41	50	10	12	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	33	40	31	38	8	10	6	7
The teaching is good at this school	34	41	42	51	6	7	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	32	39	38	46	9	11	2	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	29	35	44	54	8	10	1	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	31	38	31	38	6	7	3	4
The school meets my child's particular needs	27	33	38	46	14	17	2	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	19	23	41	50	15	18	5	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	29	35	41	50	4	5	5	6
The school is led and managed effectively	31	38	35	43	8	10	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	35	43	33	40	7	9	2	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

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.



4 March 2011



Dear Pupils



Inspection of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School, Witney OX28 5JZ



Thank you for the friendly welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. We thought you were well behaved and polite. We have written our report to show what works well and what can be improved in your school. The main judgement we make is that it provides you with a satisfactory but improving education.



There are a number of other important judgements in our report.

- You make satisfactory progress and reach the levels of work expected of you.
- Children in Reception learn well and make good progress. They enjoy their work and play.
- Those who find work difficult make good progress, too.
- Some of your writing is of good quality. You are taught soundly and looked after well.
- Your teachers are working successfully to increase your progress.
- All the adults in school expect you to do well.

In order to make your education even better, we have identified three main ways in which it can be improved. The school should:

- give you plenty of opportunities to check your own progress and to identify how to improve your work
- make sure you have enough time to work in pairs and groups or on your own to complete your written or practical task
- help you learn more about people and their customs in other parts of this country and overseas.

We know you will help your teachers make these improvements. To begin, all of you could make a list of the things in lessons that help you learn well. Share this with your parents, carers and teachers.

Yours sincerely

David Carrington

Lead inspector

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