

# Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	106774
<b>Local authority</b>	Doncaster
<b>Inspection number</b>	377464
<b>Inspection dates</b>	21–22 November 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Jane Hughes

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>	132
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Lionel Axup
<b>Headteacher</b>	John McChrystal
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	23 April 2009
<b>School address</b>	Mere Lane Armthorpe Doncaster DN3 2DB
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in seven lessons and parts of lessons taught by five teachers. Inspectors held meetings with representatives of the governing body and staff, and talked with pupils, parents and carers. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including: the school's self-evaluation, improvement plans, policies, assessment and tracking systems, safeguarding procedures and pupils' work. Inspectors examined questionnaires from 48 parents and carers, as well as those from pupils and staff.

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

- How well the school promotes accelerated learning and progress, particularly for more-able pupils.
- Whether children in the Early Years Foundation Stage learn and develop effectively, particularly in terms of their language and social skills.
- Whether the school promotes regular attendance effectively.
- Whether leaders have an accurate view of the school's performance.

## Information about the school

This school is of smaller than average size when compared to other primary schools. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is smaller than average. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is smaller than average. The school has achieved the Activemark and the Inclusion Chartermark awards.

**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?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

Our Lady of Sorrows is a good school. It provides good value for money as pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. Pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development reflects in the kindness and respect they show to others, their eager celebration of diversity and their openness to new ideas. Pupils develop a good understanding of how to stay safe and how to make healthy choices. Behaviour is good. Pupils are keen participants in school and community life and enjoy seeing how they can 'make a difference'. Parents and carers are fulsome in their praise of the school's work, saying, for example, 'The teaching, caring and support have always been exceptionally high and children thrive here'.

Children get off to a satisfactory start in the Reception class from starting points that are generally below the expected level for their age. The quality of provision and practice lacks consistency but is evolving gradually as the new leadership in the Early Years Foundation Stage becomes more established. In Key Stages 1 and 2, achievement is good. Attainment is broadly average in English and mathematics by the time pupils leave Year 6. However, a few of the more-able pupils fail to reach the higher levels of which they are capable and their rates of progress are not always sufficiently rapid.

A strong focus on further improving the quality of teaching results in much being good, despite a few lingering inconsistencies including meeting the needs of all pupils. There are also occasional missed opportunities for pupils to use new technologies in lessons. Nevertheless, this overall effective teaching, coupled with an engaging curriculum and strong levels of pastoral care and personal guidance, supports pupils' positive outcomes.

The headteacher and other senior leaders have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses because they have effective systems in place to evaluate what is happening in school. Governance offers both good challenge and effective support to the school. The evidence of consolidation and improvement in key areas of the school such as the quality of teaching, pupils' learning and progress, and in leadership and management, demonstrates that the school has good capacity for sustained improvement.

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

- Raise attainment and accelerate further the progress pupils make in English and mathematics, particularly for more-able pupils, by:
  - ensuring teachers provide sufficient challenge in lessons so that pupils reach their full potential
  - ensuring teachers' marking consistently provides guidance to pupils on how to improve their work
  - encouraging pupils to take greater care in the presentation of their work
  - extending the role of new technologies in supporting and extending pupils' learning.
- Improve provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
  - increasing the focus on extending children's language and social skills during all activities
  - developing more consistent interaction between adults and children during child-initiated activities so that children advance their skills in more purposeful ways
  - consolidating the impact of leadership on all outcomes for children.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2
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Pupils achieve well and enjoy their lessons. They behave well, are eager to learn and waste little time in class. They settle quickly to tasks, listen well and confidently volunteer answers to teachers' questions. Although pupils usually complete a good volume of work in lessons, this is often untidy. Pupils respond particularly well to practical learning opportunities. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 persevered well, for instance, while creating and interpreting pictograms. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 enjoyed their quest to create the 11 possible nets of cubes and to construct the shapes for themselves. They work well with partners and in teams.

Pupils' progress overall is good and attainment is average at the end of Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported effectively both in class and in small groups and also make good progress. There is no significant difference between the progress of different groups of pupils, although a minority of the more-able pupils do not always make enough progress.

Pupils enjoy school and say how safe they feel in school. They recognise potential dangers. For example, they follow safety rules when using the internet either in school or at home to support their learning. Pupils have a good understanding of how to live healthily and are excited about soon being able to grow vegetables in the school's new allotment. They enjoy participating in a range of local sporting competitions as well as additional clubs. Pupils make the most of opportunities to develop an excellent awareness of spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues. They participate eagerly in reverent assemblies and make the most of engaging opportunities such as during regular circle-time discussions to improve their personal and social skills in particular. Parents and carers comment, 'The school teaches our children respect and caring attitudes for others and excellent values'. Attendance is

average and the majority of pupils attend regularly and arrive punctually. Pupils are prepared soundly for the future.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

## How effective is the provision?

Teachers and teaching assistants set high expectations of pupils in terms of their engagement in lessons. As a result, lessons move on at a brisk pace with little time wasted. Teachers have a good level of subject knowledge. They, along with the teaching assistants, work well together. Adults use questions skilfully to assess learning in lessons and draw out new learning or consolidate knowledge from previous lessons. Pupils are encouraged to complete a good quantity of work in lessons, although adults do not always remind pupils to take care with presentation in their books. Teachers mark pupils work regularly, although there are inconsistencies in the quality of the developmental comments to help pupils to improve. Teachers collate and analyse data pertaining to each pupil regularly and generally use this effectively in planning work that meets pupils' needs. Occasionally, tasks set for a few of the more-able pupils lack sufficient challenge and they could achieve more.

Creative links between subjects enthuse pupils and help them to appreciate the fun element planned into lessons. Pupils talk about how they really enjoy the links between history, religious education and literacy, for example. They enjoy using laptops for research or for recording, although pupils do not always have access to information and communication technology when it would be beneficial in lessons. There are regular opportunities for discussion and carefully planned lessons for personal, social and health education. These activities promote pupils' language skills alongside their emotional well-being. Well-established partnership work with a range of organisations enables pupils to experience a wide variety of activities that would otherwise be beyond the reach of a small school, such as drama, modern foreign languages and sports. Refurbished indoor classrooms and a brand new outdoor

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

classroom help staff to deliver the curriculum in bright and well-maintained surroundings.

All adults pay the closest attention to pupils' pastoral care, guidance and support. Pupils say they feel very safe and parents and carers confirm this. There are good induction and transition arrangements in place which assure clear continuity. The promotion of regular attendance is an ongoing focus for the school's leadership with steady improvement. Parents and carers are well informed about the importance of regular attendance and the school is extending initiatives to encourage pupils to strive harder to attend regularly.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has established a loyal staff team all pulling in the same direction. The senior leadership team has been extended and leaders more effectively share their skills and explicit ambitions for the school. As a result, the drive for improvement is strong and based on an accurate view of strengths and weaknesses in all aspects of the school. Regular monitoring of teaching in all classes has identified areas to improve although, as yet, actions have not fully resolved these. Nevertheless, skills have been extended through effective professional development. Teachers conscientiously share leadership responsibilities for different subjects. Despite this being a heavy workload with so few staff, these roles are carried out well with clarity about actions to improve.

The effective governing body brings a variety of expertise into school. It is efficient and provides strong challenge to the school's leadership. It has a clear view of the school's relative strengths and points to develop. Administration and financial management are well organised. Communication between home and school is well established and parents and carers are regularly informed of the progress their children make and also about school and community events. A range of partnerships ensure that pupils experience a variety of sporting and cultural activities out of reach of a small school. These opportunities help pupils to make good progress in their learning.

The school meets requirements with regard to safeguarding. Staff identify risks and pupils are helped to develop clear recognition of potential hazards. Leaders promote equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination well. They monitor the academic and personal outcomes for each pupil and provide suitable support and interventions where required to help close gaps in achievement. School self-evaluation has identified that additional action is required to ensure that all of the more-able pupils reach their full potential.

Close links across the parish help the school to promote community cohesion well. Strong ties with the local community extend globally as pupils are encouraged to think carefully about how best to support the needs of disadvantaged people on the other side of the world. The school understands its context well.

*These are the grades for the leadership and management*

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

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children learn and develop satisfactorily in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Skills vary widely from year to year as children join and then move on from Reception but overall progress is satisfactory. Attainment by the time children leave the Reception class is below average, particularly in relation to their communication, language, literacy, personal, social and emotional skills.

Children enjoy their time in the well-resourced indoor and outdoor learning environments. They learn to organise their time as they decide what to do and where to play during 'plan, do, review' sessions. Younger children emulate the good role models provided by their 'special friends' in Year 6. They treat each other with respect and behave well. They follow adults' guidance and instructions. However, some inconsistencies of approach by adults result in activities that do not always provide the required levels of challenge. This is because adults do not always support children's play sufficiently well in order to ensure it is purposeful, particularly when children initiate their own learning. Teaching assistants are an important part of the team and provide skilful support.

The relatively new leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage has started to review provision and identify priorities. It is too soon to measure the impact of new approaches and initiatives but strengths are emerging especially in teamwork. All staff work well together and put children and their parents and carers at ease. Well-planned induction arrangements help children to settle in quickly. Home-school links are strong and staff encourage parents and carers to become increasingly involved in children's learning and development. Parents and carers confirm that staff take good care of their children.



*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation stage</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

**Views of parents and carers**

Parents and carers are highly supportive of the school. All those who responded to the inspection questionnaire confirmed that their children enjoy school and that they receive enough information about their children's progress. They were positive that the school meets children's particular needs and deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour. They all confirmed that they are happy with their child's experience at Our Lady of Sorrows. Parents and carers are 'proud to say that my children come here'. They confirm that children are safe and that they learn about healthy living. They state that good teaching helps their children to make good progress in learning and to develop useful skills for the future. They are complimentary about the school's leadership and management. A few parents and carers disagreed to some degree with a variety of questions but there was no significant pattern to any of these. Inspectors pursued the small number of concerns and their findings are reflected in the main body of the report.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic 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 inspector received 48 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 132 pupils registered at the school

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	36	75	12	25	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	35	73	12	25	1	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	30	63	17	35	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	38	79	9	19	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	33	69	14	29	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	27	56	19	40	2	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	27	56	20	42	1	2	0	0
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)	27	56	20	42	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	32	67	15	31	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	31	65	17	35	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	56	18	38	3	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	24	50	22	46	2	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	31	65	17	35	0	0	0	0

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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 is for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and 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.

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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.**



23 November 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Primary School, Doncaster,  
DN3 2DB**

Thank you for your friendly welcome when my colleagues and I inspected your school. We enjoyed listening to your views and spending time with you in lessons.

You told us that you find school fun and learn a lot and enjoy your lessons. You also said that you feel safe in school and that adults care very much about your well-being. Your parents and carers agree with you. You and your parents and carers told us that the people who run your school do a good job. We confirmed these views during the inspection. We judge that Our Lady of Sorrows is a good school. You learn well, make good progress and reach broadly average standards in English and mathematics by the time you leave Year 6. You behave well and are kind to each other. Your spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.

One reason for our inspection is to see what your school could do better. We have asked the adults to help you to reach higher standards in English and mathematics. You can help by telling your teachers when you find the work in lessons easy. You can also make a big effort to present your work as neatly as possible – every day! We also want your school to improve how well it provides for children in Reception, and to help them in particular to develop better language and social skills.

We hope you have great fun using the new outdoor classroom and growing lots of different vegetables once the allotment is finished.

We send you our very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Jane Hughes  
Lead inspector

