

# Our Lady's Catholic Primary School, Alcester

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	125704
<b>Local authority</b>	Warwickshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	381113
<b>Inspection dates</b>	26–27 April 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Kath Campbell

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>	97
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Richard Jones
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jacqui Le Maitre (Executive Headteacher) Teresa Unitt (Head of School)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 February 2009
<b>School address</b>	St Faith's Road Alcester B49 6AG
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## Introduction

Inspection team

Kath Campbell

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed 9 lessons taught by 5 teachers. She also spent time talking with pupils about their work and enjoyment of school. In addition, the inspector made short visits to some sessions where support is provided by teaching assistants. She held meetings with groups of pupils, members of staff and governors, as well as talking informally to parents and carers to gain their views of the school. The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation, including samples of pupils' past and present work, information about child protection and safeguarding and the progress of pupils. She scrutinised 27 questionnaires completed by parents and carers and 57 completed by pupils.

## Information about the school

Our Lady's is much smaller than average for a primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. Most pupils are of a White British background and speak English as their first language. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is above average. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is below average. The school has gained numerous awards in recognition of its work, including an Eco School Bronze award. It meets the current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment.

The school is part of a federation. Since September 2011 there has been an executive headteacher who oversees the quality of education in three schools. There is also a head of school who takes responsibility for the day-to-day running of Our Lady's when the executive headteacher is working at one of the other schools. Some pupils, most notably those in the lower Key Stage 2 class, have experienced several staffing changes during the current academic year.

Alcester Nursery is situated on the school site. This facility is not managed by the governing body and is inspected and reported on separately.

**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>3</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>3</b>

## Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school that is improving rapidly after a period of staffing instability. It has notable strengths in the high quality nurture and care it provides for its pupils. The school is not yet good because pupils' progress is uneven in some year groups, chiefly because of inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next Section 5 inspection.
- Achievement is satisfactory. Children start school with skills that are broadly in line with those expected for their age. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall although the rate of progress in some subjects, including boys' progress in writing, has not always been good enough. Pupils make accelerated progress at the end of Key Stage 2 through good teaching and typically reach above average standards.
- Teaching is satisfactory. The good quality teaching within the school is yet to be shared with others to spread good practice. Not all teachers focus sufficiently on whether individual pupils have made enough progress in lessons. Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. Staffing changes have also contributed to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching.
- Behaviour and safety are good. Attendance is above average because pupils enjoy school. They feel safe, behave well and are enthusiastic about their work. Special occasions, such as 'Well Done Assembly', make an outstanding contribution to pupils' personal development.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. The good quality leadership of the executive headteacher and head of school has enabled the school to move forward during a difficult year. The leadership of teaching and management of performance are driving improvements and ensuring more teaching is good. The monitoring and evaluation role of middle managers is less well developed.

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

- During the current and next academic year, raise achievement in boys' writing throughout the school by:
  - developing boys' enthusiasm for and interest in writing from an early stage so that they become confident, independent writers as they move through the school
  - extending the range of opportunities that are specifically designed to engage boys' interest, as well as that of girls
  - giving pupils more opportunities to practise their writing skills in different subjects.
  
- During the current and next academic year, increase the proportion of good or better teaching by:
  - ensuring teachers in all key stages, including the Early Years Foundation Stage, have the highest expectations of what pupils can achieve
  - sharing the good practice that exists within the school in order to develop greater consistency in the quality of teaching and use of assessment
  - ensuring teachers have a greater focus on the quality of learning of individual pupils.
  
- Strengthen the leadership and management role of middle managers by giving them:
  - a more prominent role in monitoring the work of the school
  - greater involvement in driving the school forward through the use of data analysis, tracking and assessment information.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Most parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire feel that their children make good progress. A few express concerns about the disruption to their child's learning because of staffing changes. The inspector found progress in past work to be satisfactory overall, with pockets of good progress where teaching was good. Work seen during the inspection indicates that the recent progress of all groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, is always at least satisfactory and often good.

The good ratio of adults to children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the input of a very skilled teaching assistant ensure satisfactory progress is made from their average starting points, because children receive a high level of one-to-one attention. Attainment is rising in Key Stages 1 and 2 as a result of accurately targeted intervention and much improved procedures for tracking the progress of

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individual pupils. Standards in reading in Key Stage 1 are broadly average, rising to above average by the end of Key Stage 2. There is good evidence to show that the rise is chiefly due to pupils' increasingly secure knowledge of sounds and letters. This provides them with the skills necessary to work out new or difficult words. A very recent initiative to accelerate reading progress has proved very effective in motivating pupils, particularly boys, and has seen a rapid rise in the attainment of some pupils. Although there is further to go before the impact on standards can be seen, several initiatives to extend boys' writing skills, such as free writing activities, are also starting to develop a greater enthusiasm among boys. However, there are not always enough opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills in different subjects.

In lessons, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are supported well and make as much progress as other pupils. They work effectively with high quality teaching assistants and work is matched well to their needs. Although current levels of support are satisfactory, the school is in the process of providing staff training to develop a similarly effective support structure for the small but increasing number of pupils who speak English as an additional language.

### **Quality of teaching**

Most parents and carers and pupils believe that teaching is good. The inspection found that, although there were examples of good practice, teaching was satisfactory overall because there was too much inconsistency in its quality. There has been a good level of improvement in targeted areas and the quality of planning is now good because it focuses well on the needs of individual pupils. The teaching of reading is increasingly secure. Assessment is also a far more integral part of teaching and learning than in the past. A strength within teaching is the effective teamwork between teaching and support staff, ensuring that the needs of pupils of different abilities are met. All adults have a consistent, effective approach towards behaviour management. As a result, relationships are good and the quality of teaching has a positive impact on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. When they are given time to reflect, pupils give sensitive and mature answers. They listen with respect to the views of others. Where teaching is at its best, learning is fun and activities capture the interest of pupils. A good example of this was observed in a Key Stage 2 science lesson, where pupils were working on water purification. The classroom was a hive of activity, discussion was animated and pupils of all abilities rose to the challenge of the practical activities. Levels of cooperation were high and support staff made a strong contribution to pupils' learning. Pupils valued the rapid gains in their learning in a short space of time. At other times, when some teachers talk for too long, it leaves pupils with too little time to practise skills. Teachers do not always ensure more-able pupils move on to more challenging work quickly enough and valuable time is wasted moving between activities. In addition, not all teachers focus sufficiently on the learning of individual pupils when assessing the effectiveness of their teaching. Although the overall quality of marking has improved considerably since the previous inspection, pupils who have had several different teachers have suffered from a lack of continuity. In discussion, pupils say that, this

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has meant they are not always clear about their next steps in learning.

## **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Nearly all parents and carers believe that behaviour is good. The views in pupils' questionnaire responses were not quite so positive. The inspector talked to several pupils to gain a wider view. Pupils were very clear that, although the behaviour of a few pupils had not been as good as it should have been in the past, a more settled staffing situation meant behaviour was now back to being good. The inspector found this to be the case. Pupils are generally very polite and courteous and willing to support each other during lessons, if required. Most pupils leave the school as confident, mature individuals, ready for the next stage of their education. They are well informed about what constitutes bullying, including how to avoid cyber-bullying and are adamant that, when rare incidents occur, they are dealt with very effectively. The school is a nurturing environment where older pupils care very much about their younger friends. There is a deep sense of spirituality and moral responsibility which is underpinned by trusting relationships between staff and pupils. Incentives, such as 'This Week's Wonderful Work' are a strong feature of work on display. Pupils gain great pleasure from seeing their success.

Attendance has improved as a result of tighter monitoring and the successful methods used to reduce persistent absence. Pupils want to come to school and there are numerous incentives to encourage them to attend regularly and arrive on time. Special occasions, such as the weekly 'Well Done Assembly', show the school at its best and there is a very strong sense of community. Pupils are immensely proud of the awards they receive in recognition of their good work or behaviour. They are well motivated by the challenges that are presented. A few pupils, whose circumstances make them vulnerable, receive a high level of support and care. They participate fully in school life because they are treated as individuals and respected by all staff.

## **Leadership and management**

The executive headteacher and the head of school complement each other's skills well and present an effective partnership that has successfully addressed the areas for improvement from the previous inspection. Senior leaders have provided stability and have put good quality monitoring systems in place to ensure that areas, such as the Early Years Foundation Stage, have been able to move forward at a satisfactory pace during a period of change. They know their school well and are strongly focused on securing rapid improvement. The monitoring of teaching is rigorous but does not always focus sufficiently on the learning of individual pupils. Good quality professional development permeates the school's work and has helped to improve the overall quality of teaching. However, staffing changes have made it difficult to strengthen the monitoring role of middle managers.

The recently formed federation of three schools is starting to have a positive impact on leadership and management. The federation learning improvement plan capitalises on the sharing of expertise and resources. Although this plan is in its

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infancy, Our Lady's is already starting to appreciate the benefits of working as part of a cohesive group. Governance is satisfactory. The federation governing body is effectively led and well organised. It has a good level of expertise and is adapting well to its new responsibilities. It monitors aspects, such as safeguarding, well. Safeguarding procedures are secure and meet government requirements.

The curriculum is broad and balanced. Subjects such as art, music and science have a high profile and add much to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The recent introduction of a computer suite has also added to pupils' enjoyment of school. Information and communication technology is now a far more integral part of pupils' everyday learning. Awareness of the diversity of culture within the United Kingdom is promoted well through, for example, links with a school in Birmingham. Strong links with schools in the federation and partner secondary schools provide invaluable opportunities that pupils in small schools might otherwise miss.

The school is a very inclusive community where pupils are valued as individuals. It successfully removes barriers to enable all groups of pupils achieve equally well. Collectively, these factors illustrate the care with which senior leaders and staff promote equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination.

Through improved use of data analysis, more effective monitoring of performance and the benefits gained from being part of a federation, the school is well placed to secure further improvement.



## 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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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.
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.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
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.**



30 April 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Our Lady's Catholic Primary School, Alcester, Alcester, B49 6AG.**

Thank you for looking after me so well when I came to visit your school. You made me feel very much part of your school family. I enjoyed talking to you about your work and watching you working and playing together. I found you helpful and friendly. You say you enjoy school and feel very safe. It is good to see that so many of you have hardly missed a day at school this year. I liked coming to your 'Well Done Assembly'. It was a very special time for everyone.

You go to a satisfactory school where everyone cares for you a lot. You behave well and the older ones really care about and look after the younger ones. Your headteacher and head of school are doing a good job of trying to improve your school. Your teachers and teaching assistants try to make learning fun and give you the help you need to improve your work. Some of you who have had a lot of different teachers this year have found it hard to do your best. I am very pleased to see that you are starting to work hard again for your new teacher.

I have asked your school to do some things to help it improve. I want your teachers to find more ways to get the boys to enjoy their writing, so that they become confident writers as they get older. I also want your teachers to give all of you more chances to practise your writing skills in different subjects. Some of the teaching in your school is good and I would like all of it to be as good as that. I have also asked some of your teachers to keep a more careful check on how well you are doing and if you are making enough progress in the subjects they look after.

You can help by keeping up that good attendance and trying to do your best.

My best wishes to you all.

Yours sincerely

Kath Campbell  
Lead inspector

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