

Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School, Carnforth

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 119618 |
| Local authority | Lancashire |
| Inspection number | 379854 |
| Inspection dates | 29–30 May 2012 |
| Lead inspector | Judith Straw |

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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|--|-------------------------------------|
| 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 | 105 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Rosemary Smyth |
| Headteacher | Arran Daly |
| Date of previous school inspection | 15 May 2007 |
| School address | Kellet Road Carnforth LA5 9LS |
| Telephone number | 01524 732289 |
| Fax number | 01524 732289 |
| Email address | bursar@olol.lancs.sch.uk |



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Introduction

Inspection team

Judith Straw

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed 10 lessons taught by six teachers. The inspector also made short visits to guided reading and letters and sounds sessions taught by teachers and teaching assistants. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, governors and staff and informal conversations were held with parents and carers bringing their children to school. The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at school improvement planning, the school's records of monitoring and evaluation, safeguarding documentation, pupils' progress data and the work in pupils' books. The inspector analysed the 47 questionnaire responses from parents and carers as well as those returned by pupils and staff.

Information about the school

This is a smaller-than-average primary school. The very great majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds with a very low percentage of pupils from minority-ethnic backgrounds. A small number of pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is a little above average. The school meets the current floor standards, which are the minimum standards expected by the government. A new headteacher was appointed in April 2012, having been the acting headteacher for the previous two years.

The school has gained several awards in recognition of the quality of its work. These are National Healthy School, Activemark, National Trust gold award for tree planting and the Get Set award for promoting Olympic values.

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 | 1 |
| Leadership and management | 2 |

Key Findings

- This is a good school. It is not yet outstanding because of some inconsistency in teaching. Parents and carers are very positive about all aspects of the school's work.
- Attainment is above average at both key stages in English and mathematics and all groups of children achieve well. Progress is good across the school. Gaps between the achievement of girls and boys have almost been eliminated. Well-targeted support in lessons for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs allows these pupils to make the same good progress.
- The quality of teaching is good with some which is outstanding. Lessons are effective because teachers use the curriculum in interesting and enjoyable ways, often consulting the pupils before planning takes place. Some variations in teaching remain. Pupils are not fully involved in target-setting, and not all teachers have high enough expectations of the presentation of work or develop effectively pupils' independence in learning.
- At the heart of the school's work is doing all that it can to care for and support pupils. As a result pupils feel entirely safe, their behaviour is excellent and their attitudes to learning are very positive. Pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development is outstanding. Parents and carers are unanimous that their children are safe and that they thrive in this stimulating and nurturing environment.
- The headteacher's drive and determination, coupled with the very positive support of the acting deputy headteacher and their vision to provide the best possible education for all pupils, are key factors in the school's good improvement. All staff and members of the governing body share this vision. There is effective management of teaching and the school's performance. As a result there is a strong track-record of identifying areas of comparative weakness, taking swift and appropriate action and bringing about rapid improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of teaching which is outstanding by:
 - providing pupils with more opportunities in lessons to work independently or together on a range of open-ended, investigative activities which develop independence and confidence
 - involving pupils more closely in setting their own short and longer-term targets which will help them to take more responsibility for their own learning
 - implementing a consistent style and level of expectation of handwriting and presentation.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and abilities broadly typical for their age, although with small groups this varies from year to year. Children settle quickly and make good progress, whatever their starting points, so that nearly all reach the goals set for them and many exceed them. Children are lively, enthusiastic learners and learning in class is effective. For example, in an outstanding numeracy lesson they were excitedly practising ways of measuring using matchsticks, cotton reels and cubes and then devising their own methodologies. Children who might need extra help are identified early and their progress is boosted by extra specialist support.

Good progress is maintained in Key Stages 1 and 2 and overall attainment is above average. It has been above average by the end of Year 6 for four of the last five years and this year is set to rise again because of the school's successful focus on increasing the proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 5. In reading, at the end of Years 2 and 6, attainment is above average and has been for some years. Many pupils read aloud with fluency and expression, clearly enjoying themselves. In the recent past there has been a wide difference in the attainment of boys in comparison to girls in Key Stage 1, particularly in reading and writing. Boys have responded well to strategies to improve their progress and now perform as well as the girls. The school is steadily increasing the proportion of boys and girls reaching the higher Level 3.

In both key stages disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress and often achieve more highly than similar pupils nationally. This is because teaching assistants are proficient at re-shaping teachers' explanations and ensuring pupils fully understand the concepts that are being taught.

In Key Stage 1 and 2, pupils learning in lessons is good because pupils have positive attitudes and concentrate well in class. They are eager to learn, usually tackling challenges with enthusiasm. For example, in a Year 5/6 mathematics lesson all pupils were working hard on a range of multi-step word problems in a spirit of friendly competition to be the first to reach the correct answers. Although many enjoy writing their handwriting is not always neat. The many parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire were unanimous in the view that their children make good progress in developing key skills. Inspection evidence confirms this.

Quality of teaching

When asked which lessons they enjoy most, pupils quickly responded, 'All of them.' A member of Year 6 explained, 'You see when we have fun, we learn best.' Inspection evidence confirms parents' and carers' views that teaching is good. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage benefit from a wide range of activities indoors and outdoors. They enjoy taking on different characters in the imaginative role-play areas and respond enthusiastically to the highly effective questioning of adults, which extends their learning. This imaginative use of role play is also evident in Key Stages 1 and 2. For example, Year 5 and 6 pupils were flamboyantly re-enacting the poem *The Highwayman*. Year 1 and 2 pupils enjoyed miming how the disciples might have felt at Pentecost and this promoted their spiritual development. Lessons are well organised with a good variety of activities making full use of the expertise of teaching assistants and stimulating resources. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge. Well-framed questions make pupils think hard and extend learning. Where teaching is outstanding, learning is effortless because pupils are inspired to find out for themselves. Many develop resilience and confidence but this is not always the case. Sometimes pupils can become too reliant on teachers and are less inclined to become independent learners.

Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are very well supported in class and in smaller groups by skilled teaching assistants as well as teachers. They benefit from very personalised learning matched closely to their individual needs.

Good quality assessment and rigorous tracking systems give teachers an accurate view of pupils' progress. This information is used well to plan the next steps in learning. All pupils have individual short-term and longer-term targets but are not involved in setting these and so have less chance to take responsibility for their own learning. Marking in pupils' books is frequent and advice is given on how to improve. Some pupils respond to their teacher's comments so that work is re-drafted or corrected but this is inconsistent, as is the quality of handwriting and presentation which is accepted by different teachers.

Teachers use the curriculum with imagination and flair, often responding to requests from the pupils, such as an exploration of the many nations taking part in the forthcoming Olympic Games and the Early Years Foundation Stage children's fascination with the lifeboat service. Many visits bring topics alive. Teachers are very good at promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and allow time to reflect and explore deeper meanings.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Inspection evidence supports the views of parents, carers, pupils and staff that the school is safe and behaviour is typically excellent. Pupils have an in-depth awareness of how to keep themselves safe. They confidently explain the rules for security using the internet and the need to be alert in the event of meeting strangers. The great majority of pupils say that behaviour is outstanding and this enables them to relax and enjoy their lessons, extra-curricular clubs and outings. Attitudes to learning for the great majority are excellent, although not all pupils take as much care with the presentation of their work as they could. A very small minority of parents and carers raised concerns about bullying. The school takes full account of such concerns and acts promptly to intervene where necessary. Pupils are confident that there is no bullying and say that if there are any problems it is only friends, 'falling out' and is soon sorted out by the children themselves. They understand there are

different forms of bullying and insist that there is no name-calling which might be interpreted as racist or homophobic. Attendance is above average because pupils enjoy school. There are robust procedures to promote and reward attendance. Pupils are very proud of their school. They are notable fund-raisers, participate in numerous national and local events and, on the day of the inspection, celebrated winning a county competition to have lunch with some of the Olympic team. The school council is very active, involved in canvassing opinion and investigating ways of improving the school.

Leadership and management

An ambitious vision to improve is shared by all. The headteacher has developed collaborative leadership so that all are involved in monitoring teaching and progress. Consequently, self-assessment is accurate and leads to clear priorities and everyone knows what they are trying to achieve. Performance is closely tracked. Strategies to narrow the gap between girls and boys have been successful along with major improvements to provision for information and communication technology. Standards are rising as more pupils reach the higher levels in national tests. Although minor weaknesses in teaching remain, overall monitoring is effective and has led to effective professional development and a rise in the quality of teaching. The governing body is very involved, monitoring attendance and progress. Governors are often in school and some go on school visits or listen to pupils read. Governors ensure safeguarding meets requirements. Leaders and governors promote full equality of opportunity. They are proud of their commitment to the school's vision to see every pupil as 'precious'. The school works closely with external agencies to remove any barriers to learning, especially for pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Above-average attainment is consistent but there is no complacency with a clear focus on the future and good capacity to improve.

The skills-based curriculum is rich and rewarding and ensures that pupils are well prepared for the future. Pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is evident in their awareness of other people's lives, their appreciation of art and music and their interest in science and the natural world.

The school has a good relationship with parents and carers who are kept well-informed about their children's progress and how to help them at home. The very great majority who responded to the questionnaire were very sure their concerns were listened to and promptly acted upon and that they would recommend the school to others.

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).

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

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|----------------------------|---|
| 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.



31 May 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School, Carnforth LA5 9LS

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school. I was very impressed by your good manners and your excellent behaviour. I enjoyed taking part in your assemblies, listening to you sing, listening to some of you reading and discussing your views and opinions.

You attend a good school, with good leaders and managers. I was impressed by the way you try hard in class and listen to your teachers, and each other, with respect. You are well taught so that you make good progress and reach standards which are above average in English and mathematics. You told me that you enjoy lessons and your attendance is good. You are making better progress than many other pupils of your age.

You told me that you feel very safe in school and free from any kind of bullying. Your spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.

To make your school even better I have asked the leaders to develop more outstanding teaching by building up your confidence to investigate things for yourselves and work independently; to involve you more in setting your own targets and to set the same high standards for the presentation of your work.

I know you will work hard to help the teachers. I hope your Diamond Jubilee celebration is a great success and I am sure that Year 6 will produce a wonderful leaving concert in their performance of *Oliver*.

Yours sincerely

Judith Straw
Lead inspector

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