

Our Lady of Lourdes Roman Catholic Primary School, Bury

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105337
Local authority	Bury
Inspection number	395623
Inspection dates	13–14 June 2012
Lead inspector	Susan Walsh

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	157
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mychajlo Haniak
Headteacher	Donna Kiernan
Date of previous school inspection	10 December 2008
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Introduction

Inspection team

Susan Walsh
Peter McKay

Additional Inspector
Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors visited 16 lessons led by eight of the school's teachers. Meetings were held with staff as well as with members of the governing body and pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work. They also looked at development plans, records of pupils' progress and arrangements for safeguarding as well as other documentation. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They also scrutinised 73 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, as well as questionnaires returned by pupils and staff.

Information about the school

The school is smaller than most primary schools. A below average proportion of pupils is known to be eligible to free school meals. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is above average. There are a number of pupils with particularly complex needs. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds but a small number are from a wide range of minority ethnic groups. The vast majority of pupils speaks English as their first language. The school meets the current floor standards which sets the government's minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall Effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school that provides a welcoming family atmosphere and good quality care and support for all pupils, including disabled pupils or those who have special educational needs. This is not yet an outstanding school because the quality of teaching and use of assessment, although good, have some inconsistencies and progress in English varies between classes.
- Pupils make good progress from their starting points and their attainment is above average overall by the time they leave Year 6. This represents good achievement. However, in Key Stage 2 progress is usually faster in mathematics than in English. This is because of inconsistencies in the way in which reading and writing skills are taught to older pupils.
- Pupils' behaviour is always good both in lessons and around school. They have good attitudes to learning, get on very well together and bullying is rare. Consequently, pupils feel very safe in school. Each child is clearly highly valued as an individual and parents and carers typically comment that their children 'Skip to school every day.'
- Teaching is good. Lessons are structured carefully and a wide variety of activities ensure that pupils are well motivated. Occasionally, lesson introductions are too long and are not always matched correctly to the needs of different groups of pupils. Pupils are not always provided with effective guidance about how to improve their work.
- The determined yet thoughtful leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher has created a happy and effective school. Leadership of teaching is good and has succeeded in improving its quality, although a few shortcomings remain. Management of performance is effective. Pupils' performance is closely tracked and the school has a clear picture of pupils' progress. Recently implemented strategies have secured important improvements to the way that literacy is taught in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Boost pupils' progress in English in Key Stage 2 so that it at least matches progress in mathematics by:
 - developing a structured system for teaching more advanced reading skills
 - implementing a more consistent approach for developing writing skills across Key Stage 2.

- Further improve the quality of teaching, eradicating the few remaining inconsistencies, by:
 - reducing the length of introductions in the few lessons where these are too long and matching them more effectively to the needs of different groups of pupils
 - consistently providing pupils with effective guidance about how to improve both in lessons and through teacher's marking
 - sharpening procedures for linking information gained from the monitoring of teaching in lessons with the school's data on pupils' attainment and progress.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

When children join the school their personal skills and ability to speak are often very similar to those that are expected for their age, but their early reading and writing skills are sometimes below expectations. Progress is good and outcomes at the end of the Reception Year have improved substantially from below expectations to above expectations. Children's skills in linking letters and the sounds they make and reading and writing are much better than in the past. This is because the school has successfully employed a very structured approach to teaching early literacy skills. Not only has this scheme been taught well, its impact has been enhanced by the provision of extensive opportunities for writing that have excited and motivated boys. For example, in one lesson boys were very interested in making Olympic torches and in writing motivating messages for athletics.

Pupils make good progress in both English and mathematics lessons in Key Stage 1. Attainment has also improved this year as the literacy scheme that is delivered to Reception-aged children is also consistently implemented across Key Stage 1. It is taught with great enthusiasm. Consequently, learning is effective in lessons and pupils are extremely well motivated. They have a very good understanding of how letters can be combined to make different sounds. Even those who find learning more difficult recognise a wide range of letters and sounds and use this knowledge confidently to read words that are new to them. For example, in a lesson for Years 1 and 2 pupils they listened very carefully to each other's reading, vigilantly assisting each other if difficulties arose. Attainment has improved and is now average in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2.

Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 2. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is above average overall, but in reading it is average. Attainment is higher in mathematics than in reading and writing and more pupils gain the higher Level 5 in mathematics than in English. This is partly because the school does not have a consistent approach to teaching advanced reading skills and writing. Nevertheless, in lessons the majority of pupils make good progress. Older pupils are far more enthusiastic about mathematics lessons than literacy lessons. When asked why, one boy replied that it would help if they shared exciting books in class that fired their imaginations.

Parents and carers say that their children make good progress and overall inspectors agree with this view. Disabled pupils or those who have special educational needs make good progress and the school provides particularly well for pupils with very complex needs. These pupils often make especially good progress in their personal development. This is because they are taught by skilled special support assistants who know how to encourage these pupils and who deliver their individual teaching programmes well.

Quality of teaching

The vast majority of parents and carers think that teaching is good and say that staff respond well if parents or carers have concerns. Inspection evidence confirmed that teaching is good and is promoting good progress. Pupils are particularly positive about mathematics lessons because teachers use a good range of strategies, including games, which make learning fun. For example, in lesson for Years 2 and 3 pupils, they learnt multiplication skills and the use of mathematical language through a cleverly organised game of bingo. Teachers' expectations of pupils' behaviour and achievement are usually high. However, introductions to lessons are not always matched accurately to the needs of different learners and are occasionally too lengthy. In particular, more-able pupils are marking time during long introductions when they could be practising existing or developing new skills. Resources, including information communication technology, are used effectively to support learning in lessons. For example, interesting films about subjects, such as the opening ceremony at the Olympic Games, create a sense of awe and wonder. Pupils are given plentiful opportunities to work together; consequently levels of cooperation are high. Good relationships between staff and pupils encourage the development of confidence and the building of resilience. Teaching assistants are skilled and knowledgeable and make a strong contribution to pupils' good achievement, including for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. They are good at questioning pupils to check their understanding and at reshaping teachers' explanations for those pupils who find learning more difficult. Although teachers offer guidance in lessons about how pupils' can develop their skills, this guidance is not always clearly linked to National Curriculum levels and so pupils are less clear about how to reach the next level. While pupils clearly enjoy the generous praise that is often given, marking is not always clear about how pupils' work can be improved.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Parents, carers, staff and pupils are all highly positive about standards of behaviour in the school, which are typically good. This is reflected in a calm atmosphere and

pupils are consistently respectful to staff and thoughtful in the way they treat each other. In lessons, pupils have positive attitudes to learning. In a minority of lessons a small number of pupils are compliant rather than enthusiastic during introductions, preferring to sit back and let other pupils do the work rather than drawing attention to themselves. Some younger disabled pupils or those who have special educational needs find it difficult to concentrate in a whole-class situation but are able to focus far more effectively when they receive individual support. Pupils work together well and are often keen to help each other in lessons. Playground mentors and buddies for new pupils all add to the positive atmosphere in the school and all ages mix well together. Bullying is rare and pupils are emphatic when they say 'Bullying has been stamped out in this school.' Pupils feel very safe and say that staff take their concerns and opinions very seriously. Parents and carers share these views, which are also endorsed by inspection findings. Pupils are aware of different kinds of bullying, including cyber bullying, and know what they must do to keep themselves safe when using the internet. Attendance is currently above average and rates of persistent absenteeism are decreasing. This is because of the rigorous approach to the monitoring and promotion of regular attendance taken by the school in partnership with the local authority.

Leadership and management

The work of the ambitious headteacher, the supportive governing body and the dedicated staff is highly valued by parents, carers and pupils who appreciate the caring ethos that permeates through every facet of school life. The well-being of individual pupils is central to the school's work. Staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage are particularly good at identifying children who are finding learning more difficult and in providing timely support that prevents them from falling behind. The progress of individual pupils in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is also carefully checked. Consequently, the school identifies those pupils whose progress is slowing and offer packages of support that are carefully tailored to each child's individual needs. Leaders and managers energetically promote equality and successfully deal with discrimination and this is reflected in the good progress made by all groups of pupils. Good use is made of opportunities for teachers to develop their professional skills. The school collects extensive information about pupils' attainment and progress. The quality of teaching in lessons is monitored regularly and rigorously. However, the way in which school leaders link these two processes together in order to further improve the quality of teaching over time, is not always sharp enough.

Improvements have been made to the curriculum, particularly to the way that reading and writing is taught in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1. However, the strategies for teaching reading and writing are not as well thought out in Key Stage 2. The school has further enhanced the curriculum by introducing a range of interesting topics. For example, Years 4 and 5 pupils researched 'Significant People,' such as Martin Luther King and Robert Baden Powell. This encouraged the development of research skills as well promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. The governing body, which effectively monitors and challenges the school's performance, ensures that the school's safeguarding procedures are rigorous and the high standard of care that is provided for children and their families is enhanced by the good work of the Parent Support Worker and the Learning Mentor.

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

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.



15 June 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Our Lady of Lourdes Roman Catholic Primary School, Bury, BL8 1YA

It was a pleasure and a privilege to visit your school. We really enjoyed talking to you all and listened very carefully to what you had to say. We were very impressed by your good manners and behaviour including the way that you always try to help each other in lessons. You told us that you really enjoy school and feel very safe. We can understand why. You go to a good school that takes very good care of you.

By the end of Year 6 your attainment is often above that reached by pupils in most other primary schools, especially in mathematics. You make good progress and younger pupils have really improved their progress in reading and writing because the school has a very clear way of teaching these important skills. In Key Stage 2, you make better progress in mathematics than in English. So we have asked the school to plan methods that help older pupils to develop their reading and writing skills at an even faster rate. There is a lot of good teaching in your school. In order to make teaching outstanding we have asked some staff to make improvements to lesson introductions. We have also asked your teachers to make sure you to always fully understand how to improve your work.

The leaders and managers at your school are doing a good job and are working hard to make sure you are all happy in school. We have asked the school leaders to make certain that they always make the very best use of all the information they have about how well you and your teachers are doing.

You can help your school to improve further by always doing your very best in lessons.

Yours sincerely

Susan Walsh
Lead Inspector

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