

Our Lady's Catholic Primary School

Oxford Road, Cowley, Oxford, OX4 2LF

Inspection dates

06-07 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Not all teaching is good, which means that some pupils do not do well enough, especially in Years 2, 3 and 4, and in writing and mathematics.
- In lessons where the work set is not challenging enough, pupils' progress is too slow and some pupils misbehave.
- Pupils who are at an early stage in learning to read do not read often enough to an adult in school.
- The management of what the school offers to pupils who speak English as an additional language is not systematic enough, so they do not all do as well as they could.
- Goals within improvement plans are not clear enough.
- The ways in which leaders analyse information about how well pupils are doing and check on the quality of teaching are not fully embedded. As a result, some pupils do not do as well as they should.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders at all levels are well aware of what the school needs to do to improve. Recent changes in the senior management are resulting in improvements in what the school has to offer and this is starting to help pupils catch up.
- The strong Christian ethos of the school supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is very well run and ensures that children get off to a good start in their education. These good standards are maintained in Year 1.
- Teaching in Years 5 and 6 is good, so pupils' progress accelerates; pupils speak clearly and confidently and use mathematical and literacy skills in their work in other subjects. They are well prepared for secondary school.
- Parents are full of praise for the school. Pupils' attitudes are positive and pupils say that they enjoy coming to school and feel safe there.
- A consistent focus on teaching the sounds that letters make is addressing past weaknesses in this area. Pupils who need extra help are particularly benefitting from this.

Information about this inspection

- The school was notified about the inspection the day before it started.
- Inspectors saw teaching in every class. They observed 18 lessons, taught by 11 teachers. Some lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher and senior staff.
- Discussions were held with pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body, the headteacher, staff and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed many aspects of the school's work. They heard pupils read and scrutinised their work in their exercise books and on classroom wall displays.
- Inspectors looked at a number of documents, including plans for what pupils will learn in each subject, plans for the school's future development, the school's arrangements for keeping pupils safe, pupils' attendance records, records of how pupils' progress is checked and tracked and records of how the school checks on the quality of teaching.
- The views of parents were taken into account through the scrutiny of the 24 responses to the on-line Parent View survey and a discussion with a representative group of parents.
- Staff views were taken into consideration by looking at questionnaires completed by 23 staff members.

Inspection team

Chris Nye, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Alwyne Jolly

Additional Inspector

Anna Majcher

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is a larger-than-average-sized primary school which serves a number of Roman Catholic parishes, with some pupils travelling some distance to school each day.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a unit staffed by two teachers and support staff.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations of pupils' attainment and the progress that pupils make.
- The proportions of disabled students and those who have special educational needs who are supported at school action, or at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, are below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for additional government funding, the pupil premium, is below the national average.
- The majority of pupils are from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds with less than half of White British heritage. The proportion who speaks English as an additional language is higher than average and there are 16 pupils who are at an early stage of learning English. There are 38 different home languages spoken by the pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Spread the existing good practice in teaching so as to bring about more rapid improvements in pupils' achievement, especially in Years 2, 3 and 4 by:
 - ensuring that in mathematics and writing the work that is set for pupils meets their needs, motivates them and is consistently more challenging
 - ensuring that behaviour policies are consistently applied in lessons so that learning is not interrupted by low-level disruption
 - ensuring that pupils, especially those at an early stage in learning to read, are heard to read by an adult more frequently.
- Strengthen the impact of leaders at all levels on improving the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement by:
 - embedding newly introduced methods for analysing information about the progress of groups of pupils so that more precise targets for improving standards of their work are identified
 - ensuring that plans to improve the school contain clear and specific goals against which success in raising pupils' achievement can be measured
 - ensuring that the management of the support for pupils who speak English as an additional language is more systematic and structured so that the progress of such pupils is swifter.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Children do well in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They start school with skills that are below the expected levels for their age, but make good progress so that by the time they move into Year 1 they have caught up in most areas of their learning. They do particularly well in their understanding of numbers, counting and calculation.
- In Key Stage 1 pupils' progress is not as fast, especially in writing and mathematics, and their attainment at the end of Year 2, although close to that found nationally, is not high enough. For example, the proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels in writing and mathematics is well below that found nationally.
- In Years 3 and 4, pupils do not make rapid enough progress because they are not always challenged sufficiently and standards in writing and mathematics are too low.
- The results of national tests in Year 6 demonstrate that over time pupils attain levels that are consistently average in reading and writing and slightly below this in mathematics. This requires improvement because the progress that they make between Years 2 and 6 is not always swift enough. To address this, the school has introduced a number of strategies to accelerate progress and these are starting to have a positive impact, particularly in Years 5 and 6, where standards in reading, writing and mathematics are improving.
- Parents and pupils express positive views about learning and progress. Pupils speak with confidence about the progress that they make because they are actively encouraged to assess their own learning. They are encouraged to read widely in all the subjects that they study and talk with enthusiasm about books that they have enjoyed.
- Disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and others receiving additional support make increasingly good progress from their starting points. Support for pupils who speak English as an additional language is less well organised so their progress, especially in mathematics, is slower. Although the progress of White British pupils is slower than that seen nationally, especially in writing and mathematics, this is starting to improve.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because it is not consistently good across the school. The most effective teaching is in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 1 and in Years 5 and 6 because this is where pupils make the best progress.
- Pupils who were interviewed by inspectors said that they enjoyed their lessons and feel engaged and motivated, although a few said that the work was too easy, especially in mathematics and some of their homework tasks. The parents who met an inspector and the very large majority who completed the on-line Parent View survey expressed high levels of confidence in the quality of teaching.
- The best lessons are well planned and structured. They take good account of how well pupils learnt in previous lessons and ensure that imaginative activities meet the needs of all pupils. For example, in a science lesson on forces, pupils were enthusiastically debating the variables that would, or would not, affect the speed of descent of a parachutist.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is effective because activities are well organised and varied and there is an appropriate balance between children's learning which is supported by an adult and children learning by themselves.
- Teachers make good use of questioning to judge how well pupils understand what they are learning and adjust their teaching accordingly when misconceptions occur. Across the school, pupils' confidence and their speaking and listening skills are encouraged through, for example, the effective use of talk partners to explore ideas.
- In lessons, the strong Christian ethos which is at the heart of the school has a positive impact on

teaching because it supports pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development.

- Marking is detailed and usually provides clear guidance to pupils about what and how to improve. Pupils are aware of their targets and they are encouraged to record how well they understand what they are learning. This is helping them to take responsibility for, and reflect upon, how well they are doing.
- The school has taken effective action to improve the teaching of phonics (linking letters with the sounds that they make), following disappointing results in last summer's phonics test. This is now more systematic and pupils who read to inspectors were using phonics well to de-code words that they did not know. However, although pupils' progress in reading is improving, not all practise their reading frequently enough with an adult in school, especially those at an early stage in learning to read.
- Where teaching requires improvement, tasks are uninspiring and do not sufficiently challenge or motivate pupils who have a range of different needs and abilities. As a result, the pace of learning is too slow, and some pupils become distracted and lose concentration.
- Disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and others receiving additional support are well taught and supported through small group work and are starting to catch up more rapidly.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' behaviour around school is generally good. In the playground pupils are polite, considerate and play well together. Relationships between adults and pupils are warm and supportive.
- In lessons most pupils behave well, but when they are not sufficiently challenged some misbehave and this can disturb the learning of others. The school has an effective behaviour policy but in such lessons this is not always consistently applied.
- Incidents of bullying are rare and are always dealt with effectively. Pupils are aware of different forms of bullying, including cyber bullying and extreme behaviour such as racism. They feel confident in confiding in adults when things go wrong and demonstrate a well-developed understanding of what is right and wrong.
- Pupils told inspectors that they enjoy coming to school and feel safe and well cared for. The very large majority of parents who met an inspector and who responded to the on-line Parent View survey felt that behaviour was good and well managed by the school.
- Attendance is below average because many families take holidays during term time. The school is working hard to address this issue.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- After a recent period of change in the senior leadership team, there is now a more robust focus on improving the school and what it has to offer pupils. New senior staff appointments are effectively supporting the headteacher's drive to overcome underachievement and improve the quality of teaching. However, leadership and management require improvement because, whilst a good start has been made to improving the school, some of the systems to support it are not sufficiently well embedded.
- Leaders at all levels are very aware of the school's strengths and where it needs to improve and good progress has been made in resolving past weaknesses, especially in leadership and management. However, the school recognises that more needs to be done to ensure that leaders have a sustained impact on improving outcomes for pupils.
- Systems to check on the quality of teaching have not been robust enough in the past. Recently, however, this issue has been addressed by the introduction of much clearer criteria for judging lessons and the tightening of procedures for assessing pupils' progress. This action is starting to improve teaching, and performance targets for teachers are clearer because they link directly to

improving outcomes for pupils as well as identifying teachers' professional development needs.

- Although systems to set targets for individual pupils are clear and robust, leaders are at an early stage in developing systems by which they can accurately monitor and evaluate the progress of larger groups, such as pupils who speak English as an additional language. A recently introduced pupil tracking system is potentially very helpful in achieving more robust monitoring of such groups, but is not yet fully operational.
 - School improvement plans are detailed and well conceived. They identify suitable priorities and actions to address weaknesses. However, they do not always make clear how success will be measured in terms of raising standards of pupils' achievement.
 - The subjects that pupils study are well planned and effectively encourage pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. A newly developed policy clearly identifies plans for how skills in information and communication technology, literacy and numeracy will be developed progressively. Pupils are encouraged to be creative, imaginative and resilient in the subjects that they learn.
 - The local authority provides effective support for the school, especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in supporting senior management. For example, ongoing support in analysing data is helping leaders develop a more robust approach towards tracking pupils' progress.
 - The school works very well with parents and the local community. It has strong links to local churches and makes good use of external organisations to support pupils' learning, for example through the support of artists in residence and Oxford University students.
 - All safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements. They are securely in place and are rigorously applied. Leaders effectively promote equality within the school community and are proactive in tackling all forms of discrimination.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - A strong working relationship exists between governors and leaders. The Chair of the Governing Body provides effective leadership. Governors know the school well because they are kept well informed by leaders about the quality of teaching, performance management and salary progression. They are fully involved in judgements concerning staff promotion issues. They consult with parents on a range of issues and are regular visitors to classes. Governors effectively ensure that resources are used efficiently to support the school's drive to improve outcomes for pupils. For example, they have approved the use of pupil premium funding to make sure that individual pupils who need more help are supported in lessons and through the work of a home/school link worker. The governors have set suitable performance targets for the headteacher which link clearly to the school's improvement plans, although it is not always clear how success will be measured, especially with regard to improving outcomes for pupils.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	123215
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	402145

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	309
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Declan Brolly
Headteacher	Hilary Webb
Date of previous school inspection	28–29 January 2010
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