

Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School

Curbridge Road, Witney, Oxfordshire, OX28 5JZ

Inspection dates 15–16 January 2013

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		Good	2
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:

- Pupils do not achieve well in English and mathematics because they do not make consistently good progress as they move through the school.
- The quality of teaching is not good enough because in some classes teachers do not have high enough expectations to challenge pupils of all abilities to achieve as well as they can.
- The teaching of calculation skills in mathematics, for lower attaining pupils in particular, is not as effective in class lessons as it is in smaller 'catch up' groups.
- The curriculum does not build on pupils' skills systematically from year to year or provide pupils with enough opportunities to apply the skills in literacy and numeracy in other subjects.
- Leaders and governors are focused on improving teaching but have not yet been able to secure consistently good teaching.
- New systems for tracking pupils' progress are not established well enough to enable leaders, governors and teachers to check easily that individuals and groups of pupils are making good progress.

The school has the following strengths

- The school is a harmonious community where pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is promoted well.
- Pupils are well looked after and feel safe in school. Most behave well in lessons and around the school.
- Effective support for pupils with disabilities and special educational needs and for lower attainers in mathematics is helping them to catch up.
- The acting headteachers and other leaders are providing strong leadership and a clear sense of direction for the school which is leading to improvement.
- Strong teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 1 enables pupils to get off to a good start. Similarly, they make faster progress towards the end of Key Stage 2 because of good teaching.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 18 lessons taught by eight teachers. A number of these observations were undertaken jointly with senior leaders. They also visited small phonic (letters and the sounds they make) groups and support sessions in mathematics.
- Inspectors talked to a group of pupils, leaders at all levels, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- They looked at samples of pupils' work and a range of school documentation including improvement plans, records of pupils' progress and information related to the safeguarding of pupils.
- Inspectors also took account of the views of parents reflected in the 29 responses to Parent View as well as considering additional written submissions.
- The views of 17 members of staff, expressed in their responses to questionnaires, were also taken into account.

Inspection team

Graham Lee, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Carol Warrant

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Our Lady of Lourdes is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage, although there are a number of pupils from other backgrounds, mostly Polish. Very few pupils are at an early stage of learning English.
- The proportion of pupils with disabilities and special educational needs supported at school action is below average, whilst the proportion at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- Few pupils are entitled to pupil premium funding. This is additional funding provided by the government to support, in this school, pupils who are entitled to free school meals. The proportion of these pupils at Our Lady is lower than average.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school meets the current government floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has had considerable disruption to leadership in recent years. The substantive headteacher is currently on maternity leave. Since November, the school has been led by two acting headteachers, one of whom is the headteacher of St Gregory the Great Catholic School in Oxford.
- There is no deputy headteacher in the school and the leadership team is made up of two key stage leaders. There has also been considerable turnover of staff and the majority of teachers are new to the school since the previous inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to good in order to quicken pupils' progress by:
 - ensuring that teachers have consistently high expectations of their pupils and challenge all groups of learners to achieve as well as they can
 - ensuring that the introductory parts of lessons are not too long and that pupils have sufficient opportunities to work in pairs and groups, and enough time to complete independent work
 - ensuring that the teaching of calculation skills is systematic throughout the school and is as effective in class lessons, especially for lower attainers, as it is in small support groups.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - developing the system for tracking pupils' progress so that it enables leaders, governors and teachers to easily check that individuals and groups of pupils are making good progress
 - developing the roles of leaders at all levels in improving teaching and learning and raising achievement
 - reviewing the curriculum to ensure that it is exciting and challenging, builds on pupils' skills and understanding from year to year and provides more opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy and numeracy skills in a range of contexts.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement requires improvement because pupils do not make consistently good progress as they move through the school. As a result, their attainment in English and mathematics has been broadly average at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 for a number of years.
- In 2011, pupils leaving the school had made improved progress in their years in Key Stage 2. This was not maintained in 2012 and progress had been particularly slow in mathematics, especially for lower attaining pupils.
- Children join the school in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and understanding that are broadly as expected for their age, except in communications and language, where they are often lower. They make a good start, especially in the development of early reading and writing skills and quickly close the gaps.
- In recent years pupils have not built well enough on this good start, as evident from the phonics screening check in Year 1 last year. However, this year pupils are developing their reading skills well as they move through Key Stage 1, learning to use their phonic skills to tackle unfamiliar words. By the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils read with fluency and enjoyment. However, too much 'catch up' support is still required through the school for pupils who have gaps in their phonic understanding.
- Pupils learn to write with increasing understanding of sentence structure, grammar and punctuation for a variety of purposes. However, in some classes too many worksheets are used and pupils do not have enough opportunities to write at length in other subjects.
- In response to pupils' slower progress in mathematics last year, the subject leader has been working very effectively with lower attaining pupils this year and most have made rapid progress in their calculation skills as a result. This progress is not consistently replicated in class lessons because teachers do not always expect enough of the pupils. In Years 5 and 6 a concerted approach to problem solving is helping pupils to apply their skills well to real life situations. This approach is helping the more able, in particular, to achieve higher levels.
- There are no significant differences in the achievement of boys and girls or of different ethnic groups, including those from Polish backgrounds. The few pupils entitled to the pupil premium mostly do as well as their peers and all pupils nationally.
- Pupils with a range of complex disabilities and special educational needs often make faster progress because their needs are identified well and they receive effective support. As a result, many are closing the gap with all pupils nationally.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching over time has not been good enough to ensure that pupils make consistently good progress. This is currently still the case and reflects the concerns expressed by a minority of parents in their response to Parent View.
- Children make a good start in the warm and stimulating environment of the Reception class and become confident and eager learners. An effective focus on early reading and writing skills enables them to do particularly well in these areas.
- Teachers have good relationships with pupils and manage their classes well.
- The consistency of approaches to assessment is much improved since the previous inspection. Teachers routinely share the purpose of lessons with their pupils, which sets a clear framework for learning. Pupils are clear about their targets and find teachers' marking helpful and supportive, although it is variable in the extent to which it provides clear pointers for improvement.
- Where the teaching is most effective, teachers really enthuse their pupils with interesting activities. In a Year 6 lesson, for example, preparation for writing a persuasive text prompted

lively and articulate debate about the merits of compulsory helmets for cyclists.

- In some lessons, teachers do not expect enough of their pupils and work is not demanding enough for different groups of pupils. Sometimes, teachers spend too long talking to their pupils and there is insufficient time for pupils to work in pairs and groups and to complete independent work.
- The teaching of mathematics is variable. At its best, for example in an outstanding lesson in Year 5, the teacher had high expectations and challenged pupils of all abilities to partition numbers for doubling and halving. As a result, all made rapid progress. At other times this level of challenge is less evident and calculation skills are sometimes not taught well enough, especially for lower attainers. It is evident from pupils' books that, sometimes, not enough is expected of these pupils and poor presentation is too readily accepted. This has a significant impact on pupils' understanding of place value for example.
- To some extent this is compensated by the highly effective teaching of groups of lower attainers by the mathematics subject leader which is closing gaps in pupils' knowledge significantly for these pupils. Similarly, a range of catch up programmes in literacy is helping to close gaps. The extent of these activities to plug gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding suggests that teaching over time has not been effective enough for some groups of pupils.
- Pupils with a range of disabilities and special educational needs are generally taught well in class and in small groups, which is enabling them to close gaps with other pupils. The well trained team of teaching assistants makes an important contribution to the progress of these pupils in particular.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is typically good. This is a view supported by pupils and the vast majority of parents responding to Parent View. Pupils are friendly and polite and welcoming to visitors. Pupils say they feel safe in school, a view supported by their parents. They have a good understanding of different kinds of bullying and say that it occurs only rarely. They have great confidence in the adults around them to deal with any problems that arise.
- Exclusion rates are low and behaviour records show that behaviour over time is good. The acting headteachers have focused on improving behaviour further since their arrival and pupils and staff are clear that this drive has been successful.
- Mostly pupils are well motivated and have good attitudes to learning. They respond well to their teachers and cooperate willingly in pairs and groups. Occasionally, younger pupils in particular lose focus and concentration when activities do not capture their imagination or they are asked to sit for too long without active participation.
- Pupils' attendance is broadly average and there are very few pupils who are habitual non attenders. The school has rigorous procedures for following up on absence.
- The school promotes pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development well. As a result, the school is a harmonious community where pupils get on well together. Good relationships are fostered and discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. One pupil, to the obvious approval of others, commented, 'We are just one big family.'

The leadership and management require improvement

- The leadership and management of the school have not yet been fully effective in securing consistently good teaching and raising pupils' attainment. Therefore, they require improvement. The rate of improvement has been impeded to some extent by significant changes in leadership and the high turnover of staff.
- Nevertheless, leaders have been successful in making some improvements since the previous inspection. In response to the dip in pupils' progress in mathematics last year, for example, the

range of interventions now in place is leading to rapidly improving progress for the lower attainers in the subject. Systems for target setting and assessing pupils' work are now being consistently used across the school to help pupils to improve.

- The acting headteachers have added a renewed momentum to the drive for improvement with a clear focus on improving teaching and learning and raising achievement. This is evident in revised plans for development which provide clear and ambitious targets for improvement as well as a sense of urgency.
- Teaching is led and managed with increasing rigour by school leaders who check the quality of teaching regularly. They identify what further training and support are needed and this is proving to be successful in improving teaching and tackling underperformance. As a result, there are examples where teaching has improved in a relatively short period of time. However, there has been insufficient time for leaders to secure consistently good teaching, especially as there has been a high turnover of staff in recent times.
- Leaders at all levels are also making an important contribution to school improvement, for example in relation to improving provision and accelerating progress in mathematics and for pupils with disabilities and special educational needs. Nevertheless, the extended leadership team has only recently been established and the roles in developing teaching and learning have not been fully developed.
- Systems for tracking pupils are not easily accessible for leaders, teachers and governors to check that individuals and groups of pupils are making good progress. A new system has been implemented recently, but it is not fully embedded and its impact is not established.
- Nevertheless, the impact of all leaders and the improvements made to date indicate that the school has the capacity to continue to improve.
- The curriculum provides many opportunities for pupils to go on visits to bring topics alive and to see the relevance of learning. However, it does not provide consistently exciting activities in the classroom or build systematically on pupils' skills from year to year. Nor does it provide systematic opportunities for pupils to apply their skills in literacy and numeracy to other subjects and real life situations.
- The local authority provides good support for the school at a strategic level through its school improvement partner. It has challenged leaders and governors about the school's performance.
- About one in three of the parents responding to Parent View had concerns about the leadership and management of the school and a slightly smaller proportion would not recommend it to others.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are now holding leaders more effectively to account for the performance of the school through the analysis and discussion of data about the outcomes for pupils. They know about the quality of teaching in the school and seek assurance that salary levels are now closely linked to performance in the case of both teachers and leaders. Governors manage the school's resources well and ensure that the additional pupil premium funding is used effectively to close the gaps for the pupils it is provided to support. The safeguarding of pupils is a high priority in the school and governors ensure that the monitoring and implementation of all policies and procedures in this respect are robust.

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	123205
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	406146

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	185
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Robert Dick
Headteacher	Jenny Walker
Date of previous school inspection	2–3 March 2011
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