

Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic First School

Downsell Road, Webheath, Redditch, B97 5RR

Inspection dates

11–12 September 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well in relation to their starting points, making consistently good progress from the Early Years Foundation Stage. The current Year 4 pupils are above the standard expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching is good, with some that is outstanding.
- Teachers and teaching assistants have good relationships with the pupils, who respond with a keenness to learn well.
- Behaviour in lessons is exemplary and staff convey their high expectations to pupils calmly and consistently. Behaviour around the school is almost always excellent. Pupils feel very safe and act with consideration for others.
- The atmosphere of the school, which is exceptionally open, welcoming and inclusive, permeates all parts of school life.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher lead the school well, ensuring that leadership and management at all levels successfully promote good teaching and achievement.
- Parents are overwhelmingly happy with the way the school provides for their children.
- Robust, accurate self-evaluation is used effectively in the school development plan. The highly effective governing body and headteacher ensure that all staff make a strong contribution to school improvement. As a result, the school continues to improve.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers occasionally do not challenge the more able and modify tasks to the right level for individual pupils during lessons for them to do their very best.
- There are insufficient opportunities for good teachers to learn from those who are outstanding.
- Teachers' marking varies in quality, not always showing pupils clearly what they need to do in order to improve their work.
- Opportunities are not given for pupils to practise and improve their skills by responding to teachers' comments in their books.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 21 lessons taught by 11 different teachers, of which three were joint observations with the headteacher.
- The inspectors spoke formally with two groups of pupils and informally with others during work and play.
- The inspectors visited assembly, listened to pupils read and discussed the work they have been doing in class.
- The inspectors carried out a scrutiny of pupils' written work.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and considered a range of documentation it provided regarding: pupils' achievement; minutes of governing body meetings; records relating to attendance and behaviour; the school's self-evaluation of its work; and information on the setting of targets for teachers.
- Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body and other governors, staff, and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of the 67 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), the school's own parental survey and spoke informally with parents and carers.
- An evaluation was made of the views of staff expressed in 10 questionnaires.

Inspection team

Terry Mortimer, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Tracey Kneale

Additional Inspector

Kerin Jones

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This first school is a slightly bigger-than-average primary school.
- The vast majority of the pupils speak English as their first language. There is a small but growing minority of pupils, from a variety of minority ethnic backgrounds, who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium, which is extra government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after children and some other groups, is well below the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average.
- There is a breakfast and after-school club on the school site. This is privately run, and is inspected and reported upon separately.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the amount of good or outstanding teaching by:
 - ensuring that teachers always give clearly-defined, challenging tasks to more-able pupils
 - improving teachers' questioning so that they can check pupils' understanding and reshape tasks during lessons to improve their learning
 - showing pupils consistently in marking how to improve their work and providing them with enough opportunities to respond to these comments
 - sharing the features of existing outstanding practice in teaching as a matter of routine.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children start in the Reception Year with skills and understanding that are generally in line with levels expected for their age, but slightly above in personal, social and emotional development. Learning and progress are good in the Early Years Foundation Stage because of consistently strong teaching. The children are offered and engaged in a wide range of activities that flow freely between indoors and outdoors. By the time they start Year 1, the large majority reach levels in reading, writing and mathematics that are above those expected.
- The teaching of phonics (the links between letters and the sounds they represent) is effective throughout the school, and pupils become confident and competent readers. Pupils enjoy reading and are keen to describe the books they are reading. Pupils in the Reception class and in Years 1 and 2 learn phonics systematically and effectively. In the national Year 1 phonics check last year, pupils achieved more marks than pupils of a similar age nationally.
- Pupils supported by pupil premium funding make similar progress to others as a result of the extra support they receive in lessons and small-group teaching. The numbers in each year group are too small to make meaningful overall comparisons. In some year groups, they make better progress, in others less. In 2012, in Key Stage 1, they attained lower scores than their classmates, but better than similar pupils nationally. The gap in attainment during 2013 has closed with their peers and nationally.
- Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those for whom English is an additional language are equally well supported and make good progress.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs generally make good progress. They receive good individual support and are given work that is closely matched to their individual needs. As a result, they grow in confidence in what they can achieve.
- Pupils in Year 1 through to Year 4 make good progress overall, building on the strong foundations laid in Reception. This includes the small number of pupils learning English as an additional language and pupils of all backgrounds. However, for more-able pupils, in some lessons, the tasks they are provided with do not always extend or deepen their knowledge and understanding, so their progress requires improvement at these times.
- Most more-able pupils make good progress overall, but current data shows that a few fall short of the standards they should reach in mathematics in Key Stage 2.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is good overall resulting in pupils achieving well over time. There is some outstanding teaching and learning, which typically is seen in reading and writing more than mathematics. Overwhelmingly, parents and carers believe that teaching is good.
- In the best lessons, there are very good relationships with pupils and staff, and effective use is made of questions to find out what pupils are thinking. Teachers make good use of 'talk partners' for pupils to discuss what they intend to write. For example, good progress was made in a Year 2 English lesson where pupils explored their feelings through character changes in the story they were reading. In a physical education (PE) lesson, good modelling from adults helped pupils to make outstanding progress in skills development.

- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is never less than good and is often outstanding. Teachers and support staff engage the children well and provide challenging activities for them. There is a very good balance of adult-directed activities and tasks that children choose for themselves. Activities are particularly effective in developing pupils' language and communication skills.
- The teaching of phonics (letters and sounds) is good in both the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. This builds on the foundations for pupils' early language skills and is responsible for the improved outcomes seen in the assessments of pupils' progress in reading and writing.
- In most lessons, pace is good and work is well matched to pupils' abilities. For example, in an English lesson in Year 3, pupils worked individually to develop their vocabulary, creating exciting sentences. One pupil said that she created more words through using opposites, extending what she had learnt earlier while the teacher reinforced and praised the development. Lower ability pupils worked successfully with a teaching assistant who, through expert questioning, built their knowledge and understanding well.
- The vast majority of the capable teaching assistants provide good support for disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those supported through the pupil premium.
- In a minority of lessons when teaching requires improvement, more-able pupils do not move forward in their learning quickly enough because activities are not sufficiently challenging to encourage them to think for themselves, and tasks are not amended during the lesson to raise their challenge. This is seen most often in mathematics lessons. As a result, the more-able pupils do not always make the progress of which they are capable.
- Marking is inconsistent throughout the school. While there is good marking, some does not explain clearly enough to pupils what they need to do in order to improve their work. Pupils are not always given enough chance to respond to the comments made. School leaders are aware of these inconsistencies and are working on greater consistency across the school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- All pupils are very enthusiastic learners. They work together very happily and support each other extremely well in this calm environment where everyone has a strong sense of being part of the school community. Parents, carers and staff agree. The school's motto, 'Love God and love one another' along with their phrase from assembly, 'You can do it', is an aspiration shared by all pupils from the Reception class upwards.
- Pupils listen carefully to their teachers, participate fully in lessons and show a keen interest in their learning. As a result, they choose to behave outstandingly well in lessons.
- Pupils settle to the tasks they are set quickly, concentrate fully on their work, and show a high degree of perseverance.
- Overwhelmingly, pupils say that behaviour is good and all of the parents who responded to the online questionnaire or met the inspector agreed with this. Staff, and governors all have the same very positive view that pupils' behaviour is even better than at the previous inspection.
- Pupils say that they 'love coming to school to learn because everyone cares for you'.

- Pupils feel very safe in school. They know about different types of bullying, including name-calling, and say that bullying in any form is extremely rare and quickly addressed by staff if it does happen. Their knowledge of how to keep themselves safe, such as when using the internet, is very good.
- Effective management of behaviour and positive use of praise and encouragement contribute to the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, older pupils support the younger pupils very well in the playground as buddies. The assembly was a wonderful example of how successfully the school fosters pupils' confidence and reinforces its motto to the pupils' benefit.

The leadership and management are good

- The committed leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher, supported by effective subject leaders, is promoting the drive towards becoming an outstanding school. This has led to improvements in the quality of teaching since the last inspection.
- Senior leaders have successfully secured improvements in the quality of teaching. This has been achieved by professional development, both within the school and externally. This is helping teachers and teaching assistants to develop their skills and subject knowledge.
- The curriculum is continually being reviewed and the school uses an internationally themed curriculum as a basis to make sure it interests pupils as much as possible. The recent intake in the Early Years Foundation Stage of pupils from Eastern Europe has prompted the school to review its provision and to further develop its multi-ethnic curriculum.
- The good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported by regular trips, including a residential visit in Year 4, which is partly financed by the school and enhances pupils' learning and social skills very well. Music lessons support an appreciation of music, and work towards the gold Artsmark helps the pupils to produce a variety of artwork.
- The headteacher's particularly good links with parents and external agencies mean that there is full understanding and support for the needs of each individual pupil. The school works well with parents and carers. The class newsletters and home-school link books in each phase are helpful and informative, and set out expectations for a variety of aspects of school life, such as homework and what physical education kit to bring. Parents made positive comments on how approachable the school is, and they appreciate being invited to class and celebration assemblies.
- Leaders throughout the school have an accurate awareness of its strengths, and prioritise the right areas to help pupils achieve more in the future. Progress towards achieving these aims and fulfilling the school vision is regularly and rigorously reviewed by leaders and governors.
- Self-evaluation is robust and built on accurate data, which inform the school development plan. Teaching is monitored effectively and highly effective action has been taken to address all previously identified areas for improvement. Measures to improve teaching through the management of teachers' performance and tight target setting have been effective, and teaching and learning overall have improved since the last inspection. However, teachers do not routinely get the chance to see each other teaching, and so share the existing outstanding practice more widely.

■ Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.

■ The local authority provides appropriately light-touch support for this good school, recognising the strengths in teaching and leadership that exist.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors support the headteacher and senior leaders well in the ambitious drive for improvement to outstanding. The governing body has a thorough understanding of its responsibilities and statutory duties. Governors have a detailed programme of visits to check the school's effectiveness and are able to offer high levels of support and challenge. They are very well informed about pupils' achievement, compare it with that in other schools nationally, and are pleased to see that it is improving. They ensure that the budget is spent wisely and that all funding, including the pupil premium, is used to maximise pupils' learning and progress. Governors know the performance of staff well and are fully aware of strengths and weaknesses, understanding how arrangements to manage staff performance are directly linked to pupils' progress and salaries. They have ensured that safeguarding arrangements meet requirements and regularly seek support and training to maintain their effectiveness.

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	116909
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	427087

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

Type of school	First
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	296
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jane Kembery
Headteacher	Anthony Tamburro
Date of previous school inspection	25 November 2008
Telephone number	01527 546398
Fax number	01527 404523
Email address	office@mountcarmel.worcs.sch.uk;

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