

Our Lady's Catholic Primary School

Amersham Road, Chesham Bois, Amersham, HP6 5PL

Inspection dates 4–5 December 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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, and their progress is improving because of the good quality of teaching.
- Pupils' attainment in English and mathematics is consistently well above average by the end of Year 6.
- The quality of teaching is good and sometimes outstanding because of the improvements brought about, following school leaders' accurate checks and the effective feedback given to teachers.
- The school benefits from excellent relationships with parents and carers.
- Behaviour has improved and now is outstanding, due to the clear behaviour policy being consistently applied by staff. The pupils have a great respect for one another's learning.
- School leaders have effectively driven improvements in teaching and achievement with support and challenge from the governors, by regularly checking the progress of a clearly defined action plan.
- The school has the capacity for sustained improvement in the future.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils do not receive enough guidance on how to improve their knowledge and understanding through marking.
- Teachers do not use questions often enough to deepen pupils' understanding and guide their learning.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 15 lessons, every teacher being observed at least twice. One lesson was observed jointly with the headteacher. The lead inspector and headteacher also made a number of short visits to Key Stage 1 phonics sessions. The inspection included observations of playtime, lunchtime and assembly.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work and heard some pupils read.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and two other members, a representative from the local authority and other members of staff with specific responsibilities.
- There were 105 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors also took account of 16 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's data on pupils' progress, planning and monitoring documentation and records relating to pupils' behaviour, attendance, safeguarding and the performance management of teachers.

Inspection team

John Taylor, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Claudia Wade

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school. Reception has one class, and in Key Stages 1 and 2 there is one class for each year group.
- The proportion of pupils from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds is just above average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is well below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also well below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional funding for looked after children, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and service children, is very low.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching from good to outstanding by making sure that:
 - teachers show pupils what they need to do to improve their work when marking their books
 - teachers' questioning skills improve so they are used effectively to guide and deepen all pupils' understanding.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' skills on entry to the Reception class are at or above typical levels for their age. They make good progress throughout the school due to the high proportion of good or better teaching and the pupils' enthusiasm for learning. As a result, pupils leave the school with standards well above average.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress due to the accurate and rigorous monitoring which enables the well-focused support to be adapted to the their changing needs.
- Underpinning pupils' good progress is good teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make). This helps to make sure that pupils acquire essential basic reading skills at an early age. As a result, in the phonics reading check at the end of Year 1, a far higher proportion of pupils than the national average reached or exceeded the expected level. By Year 6, virtually all pupils show enjoyment in reading a wide range of books for pleasure.
- There is a good volume of work in the pupils' books, which is regularly marked with clear targets. Increasingly pupils are required to respond to the teachers' comments.
- There are no significant differences in the achievement of different groups. Boys' and girls' achievement is broadly equal, girls doing slightly better in English and boys doing slightly better in mathematics. Pupils from a range of ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language do equally well.
- In both English and mathematics, the very small number of pupils benefiting from the pupil premium are behind most other pupils in the school. The school has taken action to tackle this, providing a range of support which reflects its strong commitment to promoting equality of opportunity. There is evidence that this has been effective at improving the pace of learning for some of these pupils, and the gap is now narrowing in mathematics.
- The provision of well-targeted support for physical education through the use of specialist coaches, and professional development for staff, is having a positive impact on the health and well-being of pupils.
- The majority of parents and carers replied to Parent View and a very large majority of these were positive about the progress their children make at school.

The quality of teaching is good

- The improvement in pupils' achievement is because the overall quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection. Now it is predominantly good, and occasionally of high quality.
- School leaders accurately monitor the quality of teaching and provide accurate feedback on how it can be improved. This has resulted in its improvement.
- In lessons there are a good variety of activities, which engage the pupils and learning takes place at a brisk pace.
- High expectations, and work which is accurately matched to provide challenge to the pupils of all abilities, mean they make good progress.
- Teachers sometimes use questioning well to assess the pupils' understanding and adapt the lessons to meet their needs. However, in other lessons the questioning lacks depth, and is not well used to guide pupils' learning and to accelerate their pace of learning.
- Pupils enjoy lessons and are eager to learn.
- Marking of pupils' work is frequent and encouraging. It is increasingly requiring the pupils to respond to the teachers' comments. However, it is inconsistent in being clear about the steps pupils should take to improve their work.
- In Reception, the warm and stimulating environment for learning gives the children a wide range of opportunities to develop their skills and understanding both inside and out. Good questioning,

appropriate use of language by adults and effective adult-led activities help children to make good progress.

- Teaching assistants are mainly used to support small groups of pupils. They are well led and effectively used to make sure the pupils make good progress in these small groups.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils have outstanding attitudes to learning. They show an eagerness to learn, and are very willing to contribute to their lessons and engage in learning activities.
- Around the school and in the playgrounds, pupils are courteous and considerate to other pupils and adults. They have confidence in the teachers to deal with the very few cases of bullying that occur.
- Pupils value the rewards they can gain through good behaviour, and understand the sanctions that could result from poor behaviour. School records show that pupils' behaviour has improved due to the consistent use of well-understood procedures.
- The overwhelming majority of parents who completed Parent View had a positive view of the pupils' behaviour and how effectively the school deals with bullying.
- Pupils say that the school council 'gets things done around the school'. Many pupils are active in the local community and the school choir sings in local residential homes and in the local shopping centre when the Christmas lights are switched on. This makes a good contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Attendance is improving and is now above the national average, due to the targets set by governors and the effective action taken by the school. This reflects pupils' enjoyment of school.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of how to keep safe, with help from visitors from external agencies. The older pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep safe when using the internet.

The leadership and management are good

- School leaders have effectively driven improvements in the school, with the support and challenge from the governors, by regularly checking progress and a clearly defined action plan.
- There is robust evidence that the school has a strong capacity to improve. Leaders and managers have successfully tackled the issues from the previous inspection report and have shown clear evidence of further improvements, based on an accurate view of the school's work, with well-defined next steps.
- The school's development plan lists in detail the actions required for continued improvement. Progress on these actions is regularly checked and reported to governors.
- The headteacher has shared his performance management targets with all governors and staff. This has resulted in his high expectations and clear vision being shared with the staff and governors and this has provided a focus for the continuing improvements across the school.
- Good leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage, together with effective tracking of children's learning, has had a significant impact on improving the development of children's academic and social skills.
- The role of subject leaders is developing well. They have a good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses in their areas and across the school and they are becoming increasingly responsible for leading the improvements in their areas, including checking the impact of new ways of working.
- There is a robust system for managing teachers' performance. Setting targets for teachers, to improve their work, has been clearly linked to pupils' learning. There is evidence that underperformance has been tackled. There is a clear link between teachers' performance and their salaries.
- The local authority has provided good support to the school, which has helped it address key

areas for development and improve the pupils' progress.

- The curriculum meets pupils' needs well. Their wide-ranging knowledge and the wide variety of displays around the school show the good breadth of the curriculum. Pupils especially enjoy the strong music element.
- Pupils are confident. Through prayer and reflection, they develop and display a high degree of caring for one another and communities around the world. The school has worked hard to develop its cultural dimension and has had an extremely positive international day for pupils, parents and the community.
- Partnerships with other schools are used well to improve the quality of teaching.
- The primary school sport funding is used well to hire specialist sports coaches who run sessions before and during the school day. It is also used to train some of the staff in sports coaching with an aim to increasing the number of pupils taking part in competitive games and increasing the health and well-being of the pupils.
- Staff and parents are overwhelmingly positive about how well the school is led and managed.
- Safeguarding is robust and meets statutory requirements. Appropriate training of staff has taken place.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have an accurate and detailed understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They have a very good knowledge of, and effectively use, the information about pupils' performance. They have used this information to set challenging targets and make sure appropriate action is taken to improve pupils' achievement. They are exceptionally well organised, plan for the future, and effectively challenge the headteacher by setting aspirational targets. Governors have an accurate knowledge of the quality of teaching and how underperformance has been tackled. They know that teachers' performance is linked to pay. They are aware of how the pupil-premium funding is spent and its impact on eligible pupils' achievement. They rigorously check the school's finances.

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	110479
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	428837

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	201
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Thornberry
Headteacher	Mark Holdsworth
Date of previous school inspection	26–27 April 2012
Telephone number	01494 726 390
Fax number	01494 726 795
Email address	admin@ourladys.bucks.sch.uk

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