

Our Lady's Catholic Infant School, Wellingborough

Henshaw Road, Wellingborough, NN8 2BE

Inspection dates 17–18 December 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.

- From starting points which are below what is typically expected for their age, pupils make good progress to reach average standards by the end of Year 2.
- Pupils enjoy rich learning spaces that are attractive and stimulating and celebrate their work.
- Teaching is good and some is outstanding. Innovative approaches to teaching mathematics have resulted in rapid progress.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, as well as those supported by the pupil premium, achieve well.
- The school supports the many pupils who speak English as an additional language well and they are fully included in all activities.
- Pupils have outstanding attitudes to learning, which prepare them extremely well for junior school. Their behaviour is exemplary and they feel completely safe in school.
- The school's values are fully embraced by pupils and staff, and make a very strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness.
- Leaders, managers and governors are highly ambitious for the school to excel, and have brought about improvements in teaching and achievement since the previous inspection.
- Attendance has risen considerably as a result of measures the school has taken to work with families to reduce absence.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not always check how well pupils are doing in lessons, in order to move learning on rapidly when pupils are ready.
- Marking in mathematics is not as effective in helping pupils to improve work as in writing.
- Not all staff are fully confident in using the new tracking system for measuring pupils' progress to drive improvement, especially of the most-able pupils.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 18 lessons or parts of lessons, some of which were seen jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspectors heard pupils read and, together with the headteacher, looked closely at examples of pupils' work.
- The inspection team looked at a wide range of school documents including development plans, policies, self-evaluation reports, monitoring files, safeguarding and curriculum materials, evidence of the school's partnership work and information for families.
- The inspectors met with pupils chosen at random. Discussions were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and other governors. A conversation was held with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspection team took account of the 44 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. They also spoke with some parents and looked at staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Nick Butt, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Nicola Hart

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school and is attached to the local parish church.
- The school is part of the North Northamptonshire Catholic School Partnership, a formal partnership of seven primary schools that support one another and share training.
- There are two Reception classes and two classes in each of the other year groups, housed in open-plan accommodation.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language. This number is increasing.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional funding for certain groups such as pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after by the local authority or with a parent in the armed services) is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The school shares its site with a pre-school and hosts a breakfast club and after-school club, all of which are subject to separate inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the amount of outstanding teaching by making sure that:
 - teachers keep a close check on pupils' understanding in lessons, so they can move learning on more rapidly
 - marking in mathematics shows pupils how to improve their work as effectively as in writing.
- Make sure that all staff use the new tracking system effectively to drive improvement for all groups of pupils, particularly the most able.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join Reception with skills and abilities below those typical for their age, especially in language and personal development. They get off to a good start because learning spaces are richly stimulating and attractive, and children's activities are varied, purposeful and designed to promote learning. As a result, children are well prepared for the National Curriculum in Year 1.
- Pupils in Key Stage 1 make good progress because much of the teaching is good and some is outstanding. Standards by the end of Year 2 were broadly average in reading and mathematics and above average in writing in 2013. These pupils achieved well over their time in Key Stage 1.
- The school data show that pupils make good progress in every year group and that there is consistency of good practice across classes. Pupils acquire early reading skills extremely rapidly because of the rigorous and systematic approach to teaching phonics (the sounds that letters make).
- The proportion of Year 1 pupils who reached the required standard in the phonics reading check in 2013 rose at a faster rate than happened nationally. This reflects the school's emphasis on helping pupils to learn key words and apply their phonic skills vigorously.
- All pupils develop a love of reading and older pupils speak with enthusiasm about the books they enjoy.
- Pupils' books show that they make good progress over time in writing. Year 2 pupils in particular have good opportunities to write across different subjects such as religious education. Pupils make good progress in spelling correctly and using grammar correctly.
- Some innovative approaches to problem-solving in mathematics have enabled pupils to make rapid progress. For example, Year 2 pupils enjoyed exploring the volume of three-dimensional shapes by trying to fill them 'snugly' with a variety of objects.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because their needs are identified early and they are set challenging targets to help them make rapid progress with the support of skilful teaching assistants.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium achieve well because the school has used the funding to buy additional support from teaching assistants. This extra help focuses on developing pupils' basic skills and working in partnership with parents to support their children's learning.
- Gaps between the attainment of pupils eligible for the pupil premium and those who are not have been closing, and were narrower than the national picture in reading by half a term and in writing by one term in Year 2 in 2013. Within the school, eligible pupils were one-and-a-half terms behind the others in reading and one term behind the others in writing. They were two-and-a-half terms behind the others in mathematics. The school's new approaches to teaching mathematics are helping to close these gaps.
- While most of the most-able pupils achieve well, some do not attain the higher levels because they are not always sufficiently challenged.
- The school meets the needs of the growing number of pupils from minority ethnic groups and

who speak English as an additional language well and makes sure they are fully included in all activities. Their achievement is good.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good because teachers have high expectations of pupils and plan interesting work for them to do which is usually set at the right level of difficulty – challenging, but not too hard. Relationships between pupils and staff are outstanding. Pupils are very well known to staff and valued as individuals.
- Pupils work together harmoniously and benefit from attractive learning spaces and displays of high quality artwork in particular. These include scarecrows made of different materials and paintings of tigers inspired by the Judith Kerr story, *The Tiger who Came for Tea*.
- Teachers make good use of technical language in subjects such as mathematics and science. The many examples of labels and useful words displayed around the school act as helpful prompts to pupils, especially those who are learning English as an additional language.
- Pupils enjoy many practical learning activities and good use is made of new technology, such as electronic tablets, to stimulate pupils. For example, a Reception teacher used photographs taken during a session to ask children to reflect on their learning. Year 2 pupils created festive scenes on computers using a range of tools.
- Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning because they are trained well and confident in engaging pupils, helping them settle to learn and bringing out the best in them.
- In Reception there is a good balance of activities led by teachers and those the children choose for themselves, both indoors and outside. Children were using blocks to build homes for reindeer and polar bears. Others were cutting carefully and safely to create three-dimensional snowmen.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language are taught well and their home languages are valued. Staff adapt the curriculum to suit them so that they are fully engaged in learning.
- Lessons are well planned and organised, with stimulating resources. Pupils are often given a choice about which resources to use. Occasionally teachers do not keep a close check on pupils' understanding in lessons, so they do not always move them on to new work as soon as they are clearly ready to do so.
- Marking has improved since the previous inspection, especially of writing. Pupils are given helpful advice about how to improve their work. This is not as evident in pupils' mathematics books.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils have outstanding attitudes to learning. They are extremely enthusiastic about all they do and respond very well to their teachers. Their behaviour is exemplary, both in class and around the school.
- Pupils show enormous respect to one another, to adults and to visitors. They have all embraced the school's mission statement, from St John's Gospel, 'Love one another as I have loved you'.

This is lived out by the headteacher and all staff, creating a very positive and secure place for children to learn.

- Pupils say they are free from bullying, but know to approach an adult if they have any worries. They have a strong sense of right and wrong. All staff are consistent in the way they positively manage behaviour.
- Pupils are safe in school and know about keeping safe, for example when crossing the road. They all know and follow the school's few simple rules.
- Pupils eagerly take on responsibilities such as through the school council. They have presented ideas to spend the primary school sport funding, requesting dance clubs. Their views have been taken on board by leaders and governors when deciding how to spend the additional funds.
- Attendance has risen sharply since the previous inspection because of the school's focus on working with families to reduce absence. It is now in line with the national average for all primary schools, even though infants are more susceptible to catching childhood illnesses.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is ambitious to see the school go from strength to strength and provides strong leadership. He is well supported by a highly committed staff team, who all take on leadership responsibilities and contribute to driving improvement.
- Leaders, managers and governors have successfully tackled the areas for improvement from the previous inspection and have a clear view of how well the school is doing based on their own checks on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. This feeds into the school's improvement plan, which has the right priorities.
- A new tracking system is presenting wider opportunities for staff to look for patterns in progress information and follow the progress of groups of pupils. However, this is in its early stages of development and some staff are still being supported to use it effectively, particularly to make sure that all the more-able pupils make the accelerated progress they can.
- The innovative and exciting curriculum inspires pupils in their learning and creates memorable experiences. Staff have used the theme of Christmas to create a wide range of imaginative activities suited to different groups of pupils. Reception children enjoyed reading winter-themed books in an igloo in their snowy book corner. Year 1 pupils put together magnetic shapes to create snowflakes.
- The school's ethos makes an outstanding contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is especially apparent in assemblies, when pupils wholeheartedly throw themselves into worship, creating moments of awe and wonder.
- Links with the parish and other schools are strong. The North Northamptonshire Catholic School Partnership creates opportunities for leaders and governors to compare notes and learn from one another. The local authority provides light-touch support, recognising that the school is able to shape its own improvement.
- The school is spending its primary school sport funding on developing dance (at the pupils' suggestion) and has linked up with a local secondary school to extend its range of opportunities for pupils and to train staff to make benefits lasting. It is too soon to measure the impact of this

work on pupils' health and well-being.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors are very supportive of the school but also ask searching questions of leaders. They know about the quality of teaching and from the data how well pupils are doing in relation to pupils in other schools. They bring a wide range of expertise and use this to check on the school's effectiveness and to offer help. The Chair of Governors said, 'Every person in the school community has something to gain from being here.' Governors use the management of teachers' performance to reward good teaching, linking their performance to pay, and make sure that any underperformance is tackled. They make sure that safeguarding arrangements meet all current requirements.

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	122049
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	433156

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	178
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Griffin
Headteacher	Clive Robinson
Date of previous school inspection	23–24 September 2010
Telephone number	01933 224900
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