

Our Lady's Catholic Primary School

Wash Lane, Latchford, Warrington, Cheshire, WA4 1JD

Inspection dates 3–4 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Our Lady's is a happy school where relationships between adults and pupils are excellent.
- Pupils are proud of their school. Their behaviour is good inside and outside classrooms. They have positive attitudes toward learning.
- Teachers and teaching assistants strive to do their best. Teaching is consistently good.
- Pupils of all abilities, including disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs, those who are disadvantaged, and those at the early stages of learning English as an additional language, make good progress.
- Pupils are keen to learn, well mannered and polite. They feel safe and happy in school. Attendance is average.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. It prepares them very well for life in modern Britain.
- The headteacher is passionate about improving the school. She has developed a very strong staff team.
- The governing body is highly skilled and effective at holding the school to account.
- Governors have a good understanding of the school, its strengths and how it can become even better.
- The school works closely with parents. Parents hold very positive views about their children's progress, safety and happiness at school.
- The early years provision is led well. It provides a good start to children's education, preparing them well to move into Year 1.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of teaching does not result in outstanding achievement for pupils. The work set does not always provide enough challenge, especially for the most able pupils. This limits the rate at which pupils make progress.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise and apply higher-level punctuation and grammatical skills in extended pieces of writing.
- Pupils do not always receive enough guidance about how to improve their work. When advice is given, teachers do not always give pupils time to respond to it or check that they have acted upon it.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in a range of lessons. In addition, they made a number of short visits to lessons and listened to pupils from Year 2 and Year 6 read. They also gathered other evidence related to the quality of teaching over time.
- The inspectors observed two lessons jointly with the headteacher. They also observed the headteacher reporting back to teachers on her findings regarding teaching, learning and pupils' achievement.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and senior and middle leaders. Inspectors also met with five governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body.
- The inspectors took into account the 18 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. They also spoke informally with groups of parents who brought their children to school.
- Inspectors considered the views expressed in the 21 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed the school at work and scrutinised the work in pupils' books, the school's own data on pupils' current progress, improvement plans, planning and monitoring information and minutes of governing body meetings. Inspectors also reviewed records relating to behaviour and attendance and documents relating to safeguarding and child protection.

Inspection team

Mr Anthony Kingston, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Mr Mark Williams

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Our Lady's is slightly smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, eligible for support through the pupil premium, is slightly above average. The pupil premium is additional funding that the school receives for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are in the care of the local authority.
- The very large majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who join the school part-way through their education is well above average. The majority of these pupils are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language.
- The early years comprises a Nursery class, which offers part-time places in both the morning and the afternoon, and a Reception class, where children attend on a full-time basis.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and increase the rate at which pupils make progress, particularly the most able, by making sure that teachers always:
 - challenge pupils, especially the most able, by consistently setting demanding work in lessons
 - ensure marking and feedback help pupils to know exactly how they can improve their work
 - ensure pupils are always given time to correct and improve their work by acting on the guidance in their teachers' marking.
- Raise pupils' attainment in writing, especially for the most able, by providing pupils with more well-planned opportunities to write at length.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The school is well led by a determined, caring and enthusiastic headteacher, ably supported by all the staff and by a well-informed and active governing body. The headteacher is highly respected by all who work alongside her. The staff are a cohesive team and work extremely well together.
- Systems to check on the school's performance are rigorous. Senior leaders and governors are reflective and outward looking. Consequently, they have an accurate view of exactly what they need to do to strengthen school performance even more. Actions are clear and their impact evaluated to ensure improvements are sustained.
- Senior leaders and teachers with subject responsibilities have put in place a thorough system to check the quality of teaching and for managing staff performance. Teachers feel supported by this monitoring process and welcome feedback about their performance in lessons. Feedback is sharp and focused. Targets for improvement are clear and training and support ensure they are met. This leads to improvements in teaching and learning. Teachers' pay is linked closely to their performance; the targets set for teachers, which are linked to pupils' progress, are challenging.
- The school checks that all pupils have equality of opportunity to succeed. Overall, the needs of all groups of pupils, especially those who have special educational needs, those who are disadvantaged or those who are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language, are identified promptly and support is provided where most needed.
- The local authority has a very good relationship with the school. It presents challenge and support in equal measure.
- The curriculum is exciting and captures the interests of pupils as well as catering very well for their individual needs. It is enriched by many lunchtime and after-school activities such as dodgeball, art club, rugby, knitting and the Mini-Vinnies, who are responsible for arranging charity events. These help pupils to broaden their skills and extend their experiences.
- The school works hard to make sure pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural experiences are rich and varied. For example, respect for others is reinforced through the teaching of cultures and countries, visiting speakers to the school and the range of faiths pupils explore as they move through the school. In this way, pupils are very well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The school uses successfully the primary school sport premium to extend the coaching skills of staff, boost participation rates by pupils and broaden their sporting experiences.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements. Pupils and parents overwhelmingly support the view that the school is a safe and friendly place.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are very effective in supporting and challenging school leaders. They know the school very well and visit it regularly. They keep themselves well informed about all aspects of school life.
 - Governors bring a range of very valuable skills to the school, which they use to good effect. They monitor the school's performance thoroughly and are becoming increasingly challenging in the questions they ask leaders in order to hold the school to account. They are familiar with the Teachers' Standards and use them to help manage teachers' performance. They have a clear understanding of the link between teachers' performance and salary progression. They oversee well the spending of pupil premium funding and the primary school sport premium. Governors are aware of the positive impact such spending is having on pupils' achievement and their physical well-being.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are proud of their school. Their good attitudes and the respect, care and consideration they show one another make a significant contribution to the sense of belonging to a community in which everyone is valued.
- Woven throughout Our Lady's is the fostering of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Consequently, pupils learn about the need for tolerance of different ideas and ways of life and are adamant that everyone should be treated with equal respect and consideration. This helps them to develop good relationships with one another and contributes to the caring and harmonious atmosphere in the school.
- Staff encourage pupils throughout the school to take keen interest in both the running of the school and in

the world around them. As a result, many relish the opportunities they have to become, for example, active members of the school council and the Mini-Vinnies. Others are proud to act as ambassadors when escorting visitors around the school or to take on the role of translators for parents and their children who, on entering the school, are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. This is exceptionally successful in helping pupils new to England to settle quickly into the school.

- A very small proportion of pupils find it difficult to meet the high standards of behaviour of their classmates. However, staff are skilled at managing pupils' behaviour and helping them to make marked improvements. This was exemplified by one pupil who said, 'They help to calm me down and when I do I can get on better with my friends and my work.'
- Attendance has improved rapidly and is now average.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Safeguarding procedures are comprehensive and fully meet current requirements.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school because adults look after them really well. This was exemplified by one pupil who said, 'The teachers are kind and bubbly. I feel protected by them because they are always there to help us.' All parents who responded to Parent View agree that their children are happy and safe at school.
- Pupils trust their teachers and have a good understanding of personal safety, especially how to keep themselves safe on the internet, when crossing the road and when on their bicycles. They understand what is and what is not bullying and say that it rarely happens in school.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is consistently good throughout the school. This is reflected in pupils' good progress over time in writing and especially in reading and mathematics. The work in pupils' books confirms that pupils make good progress.
- Teaching is characterised by teachers' enthusiasm, their skilful and challenging questioning to probe pupils' thinking and their good subject knowledge. These enable staff to provide pupils with precise explanations. This is successful in helping pupils to move on quickly in their learning and overcome barriers to their learning.
- The quality of relationships with pupils is a strength of the school. There is a very impressive level of mutual respect and trust. This has allowed pupils to develop a willing-to-have-a-go attitude because they are not afraid of making mistakes.
- Teachers assess the attainment and progress of pupils regularly and accurately. Generally, they use this information to set work that is matched well to the different ability groups within each class.
- Teachers have high expectations of what most pupils can achieve and plan lessons accordingly. However, on occasions, teachers do not plan work that is hard enough, especially for the most able pupils, and so the progress of some pupils is not as rapid as it might be.
- The teaching of reading is particularly strong throughout the school. Pupils enjoy the opportunities given by the school to read for pleasure and to extend their skills through reading groups. These help to develop pupils' skills of comprehension and inference.
- The teaching of mathematics is also strong. Teachers ensure that pupils have many varied opportunities to apply their skills to real-life contexts and investigations. For example, in Year 6, pupils calculated the areas of rooms in a house and worked out the cost of carpeting them. Others investigated the relationship between the circumference and the area of circles.
- The teaching of writing is good, particularly grammar, punctuation and spelling. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to write extended pieces of writing. This limits the opportunities of some pupils, especially the most able, to practise their skills at the levels of which they are capable and thereby reach the higher Level 5.
- Mostly, teachers give good consideration to pupils' varying needs so that the work provided meets their needs and abilities. Teachers and skilled teaching assistants adapt work successfully so it is at the right level to meet pupils' needs. This includes for pupils who find learning more difficult and those who are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language.
- Teaching assistants provide crucial support for learning. They routinely liaise very closely with teachers, assessing the effectiveness of their support to promote good standards of achievement. They are often responsible for specific group tuition, using an effective range of strategies to help pupils who have special

educational needs and those who are in danger of falling behind. They are skilled and highly effective in giving pupils a boost to their learning.

- Marking does not always give pupils clear enough advice on how they can improve their work. Even when advice is given, teachers do not do enough to make sure pupils have made corrections or acted on the advice to speed up learning.

The achievement of pupils is good

- The number of pupils who join the school part-way through their education is rising rapidly. Many of these pupils are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. These pupils make good progress but do not always attain national standards.
- From their starting points at the beginning of Year 1, pupils make good progress. However, in 2014, standards by the end of Key Stage 1 dipped in reading, writing and mathematics to well-below average. This was due to the composition of the year group, particularly the high proportion of pupils who joined the school throughout Years 1 and 2.
- Since 2010, standards reached by pupils by the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics have been average. However, in 2014, standards dipped to below average. This was due to the composition of the year group. In particular, there was a small but significant proportion of pupils who joined the school throughout Key Stage 2. These pupils were at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. Nevertheless, the proportion of pupils who made expected and better than expected progress was close to the national average. Hence, pupils in Year 6 who had been at the school throughout the whole of Key Stage 2 achieved average standards in reading, writing and mathematics and above-average standards in grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- The school's own data and inspection evidence indicate that the progress made by all groups of pupils in all current year groups is above average. Standards are improving rapidly.
- Reading is a priority throughout the school. The teaching of linking letters and sounds (phonics) is enabling younger pupils to tackle new and unfamiliar words with greater confidence. This is reflected in the results of the Year 1 phonics check, which show that standards are consistently average.
- As pupils move through the school, they are encouraged to read often and widely. This results in instilling in pupils a love of reading. This was exemplified by a group of Year 6 pupils who agreed that, 'The tension which builds up and your own imagination sucks you into the stories. It's like experiencing everything yourself.' Pupils throw themselves fully into characterisation. They read with expression and show they understand what characters may be feeling or thinking.
- Pupils' writing is helped by the emphasis that is given to reading. This boosts the range of words the pupils understand and use, and helps them to speak and explain ideas in lessons. This is increasingly reflected throughout pupils' writing, enhancing the fluency and meaning of what they write. For example, in Year 6, one pupil who composed a poem in the style of Dr Martin Luther King's speech, *'I have a Dream'* wrote, 'I have a dream that one day worries will float away like butterflies in the spring breeze.'
- Pupils are competent mathematicians. Their ability to complete numerical calculations and apply them to problem-solving activities is secure.
- Pupils are proud of their achievements. This is reflected in the high standard of presentation in all of their books. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. This is because accurate assessment of their skills ensures that extra support and work in lessons successfully address their specific learning needs.
- Disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 in 2014 achieved standards one term behind non-disadvantaged pupils nationally in reading, two-and-a-half terms behind in writing and two terms behind in mathematics. In comparison to other pupils in the school, disadvantaged pupils were one-and-a-half terms ahead in reading, of a similar standard in writing, and one-and-a-half terms behind in mathematics. In all current year groups, disadvantaged pupils are making progress at least in line with, and sometimes at faster rates than, their school peers. As a result, standards are rising and gaps between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils are closing rapidly.
- Pupils who join the school late in their primary school careers and who speak English as an additional language make good progress in speaking. They close the gaps in their learning with their classmates, especially in writing in sentences, vocabulary and fluency in their reading and writing.
- Virtually all parents who responded to Parent View or spoke with inspectors believe their children are taught well, make good progress and are set appropriate homework for their age.

The early years provision**is good**

- Children start in the early years with skills which, for the overwhelming majority, are below and for some, are significantly below, those typical for their age. This is especially so in communication, reading, writing and personal and social development.
- Children make good progress because of skilful teaching and carefully planned activities which are matched to individual children's interests and needs. As a result, by the time children leave early years at the end of the Reception Year, the proportion reaching a good level of development is now closing rapidly on the national average.
- Critical to children's good progress is the focus on developing children's personal skills. Adults carefully explain how to behave and what the routines are and they encourage children to work and play together.
- The behaviour of children is good. When children first enter the Nursery, they are helped to learn what is expected of them and to behave as part of a community. As a result, they quickly learn to be polite and caring. Relationships are excellent. Consequently, children are happy and feel safe and secure.
- Much thought goes into developing children's language skills. Daily opportunities to work in groups, listening to one another and discussing ideas, make a significant improvement to their language development. Those children who enter the early years speaking English as an additional language are supported extremely well.
- The quality of teaching is good and provides a secure base for future learning. A well-planned balance of adult-led activities and opportunities for children to explore for themselves mean that children can practise the skills they learn as they play. Adults track the progress children make and use this information carefully to plan the next steps in their learning.
- Links with parents are strong. Staff encourage parents to involve themselves in their children's education from the outset. Parents are appreciative of the time and effort staff put in to help their children feel happy and secure.
- The Nursery and Reception class teachers lead and manage the provision well. Adults work together effectively to ensure all children make good progress. They monitor the children's individual progress closely on a daily basis and use this information effectively to plan next steps for children's learning.

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	111305
Local authority	Warrington
Inspection number	456167

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	212
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Pat Gibbons
Headteacher	Mrs Julie Johnson
Date of previous school inspection	24 January 2012
Telephone number	01925 633270
Fax number	01925 654584
Email address	ourlady's_primary@warrington.gov.uk

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