

Our Lady's Catholic Primary School

Oxford Road, Cowley, Oxford, OX4 2LF

Inspection dates 17–18 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy
	This inspection:	Requires improvement 3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement 3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good 2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement 3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement 3
Early years provision		Requires improvement 3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement.

- Until recently, leaders, managers and governors have not done enough to improve teaching and pupils' achievement.
- The skills of newly appointed subject leaders to check on the quality of teaching and pupils' learning and achievement are not fully developed. Consequently, the impact of these leaders on improving teaching and achievement is not fully effective.
- Teaching over time has not been good enough to enable all pupils to make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers do not all have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and do not consistently set work which challenges them, especially the most able.
- Pupils are not always given clear guidance in teachers' marking in mathematics about how they can improve their work.
- Teachers do not give pupils enough opportunities to apply their mathematical skills and knowledge to solve practical problems.
- Achievement requires improvement. Although pupils' progress has improved, their attainment is still not high enough in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of both key stages.
- The early years provision requires improvement because staff do not always make learning challenging but achievable by all the children.

The school has the following strengths

- The recently appointed Principal is having a significant impact on improving pupils' learning. She has rapidly identified the school's weaknesses and has given immediate attention to raising the quality of teaching. As a result, teaching is improving.
- Disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because they receive good support from teachers and other staff.
- Pupils behave well, feel safe and enjoy school. They are keen to learn and their ability to work happily with one another contributes positively to their learning.
- Opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good and help to prepare them well for life in modern Britain.
- Governors provide effective support and challenge to the school. They are demanding further improvements in teaching and in the standards attained by pupils.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 19 lessons or parts of lessons. A number of lessons were observed jointly with the Principal.
- The inspectors looked at work in pupils' books and listened to pupils read. They met two groups of pupils to gain their views of the school. The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at breaktime, lunchtime and at the end of the school day, as well as in lessons. They attended two assemblies.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including: assessments and records of pupils' progress; the school's checks and records relating to safeguarding, child protection and attendance; records of how teaching is managed; and the school improvement plans.
- Meetings were held with the Principal and other staff, including senior and subject leaders. The lead inspector met with three members of the governing committee, including the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Committee. He had a meeting with a representative of the Multi-Academy Trust.
- The inspectors took account of the 31 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, talked to parents at the beginning of the school day and considered letters from parents. They also looked at the 23 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Adam Hewett, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Aileen King

Additional Inspector

Joanna Yates

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Our Lady's Catholic Primary School converted to become an academy school on 1st April 2013. When its predecessor school, Our Lady's RC Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, its overall effectiveness was judged to require improvement.
- The school is part of the Dominic Barberi Multi-Academy Trust.
- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Children in the Reception classes attend full time.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils – those who are eligible for pupil premium funding – is below average. The pupil premium provides additional funding for pupils eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- Nearly two thirds of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, a proportion which is well-above average compared to similar schools nationally. The largest groups are Black African and Other White heritage. More pupils speak English as an additional language than in most schools.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average compared to similar schools nationally.
- Pre-school provision and after-school provision operate on the school site but are privately run and are, therefore, inspected separately and not included in this inspection.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The Principal was appointed in February 2014 and took up the post in September 2014. The Deputy Principal took up the post in September 2014 and the Key Stage 1 leader took up the post in January 2015.
- Several staff have left the school during the past two terms and there have been difficulties in recruiting suitable staff. Some subject leaders are new in post.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better and raise pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics by ensuring that:
 - all teachers have sufficiently high expectations of what all pupils can and should achieve
 - the most-able pupils are set work that challenges and extends their learning
 - pupils are always given clear guidance in teachers' marking of mathematics about what they need to do to improve their work
 - teachers provide more opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical skills and knowledge to solve practical problems.
- Make leaders and managers more effective in improving teaching and pupils' achievement by providing subject leaders with time and training to develop their skills in monitoring the quality of teaching and the progress pupils are making so that these leaders have more impact on ensuring improvement.
- Improve provision in the early years by ensuring that all adults:
 - plan for and engage children in challenging activities that build on what they already know and can do
 - use timely help and questions to develop children's interest and learning.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Until recently, the expectations from school leaders of what pupils could and should achieve have not been sufficiently high. There has not been a strong focus on improving the quality of teaching and, as a result, not all pupils attained the standards of which they were capable.
- Although the Principal has been in post for a relatively short period of time, she has securely established her authority on the school community and has identified exactly what needs to be done to improve learning opportunities for all pupils. She is creating a school culture where good teaching is expected, if not yet fully achieved, and pupils behave consistently well. She has removed any inadequate teaching and is taking strong action to improve its overall quality. However, difficulties in recruiting permanent teachers for all classes means that her action has not yet had the full impact intended to make teaching and progress consistently good throughout the school.
- Recently appointed subject leaders are not yet fully effective in raising achievement in the areas they lead. They have not had the opportunity to observe colleagues' classroom practice, in order to improve the quality of teaching. However, they have identified a number of key areas for development and this has resulted, for example, in significant improvements in the teaching of reading across the school.
- The Principal has successfully established the well-being and achievement of pupils as priorities at the heart of all the school's work. She has established clear expectations of how all members of the school community should interact with each other and is applying an effective behaviour policy that has resulted in good behaviour across the school. This improvement is recognised and appreciated by pupils, staff and the vast majority of parents.
- Systems for checking how well teachers are planning, teaching and assessing pupils' achievements are not yet fully embedded. The Principal has introduced a whole-school progress tracking system, which is providing clearer data on how different groups of pupils in school are progressing. Scrutiny of these data show inconsistencies across subjects and classes; this provides direction for leaders to tackle weaknesses and ensure improvement.
- There is a highly inclusive ethos within the school. Pupils come from a wide range of cultural and ethnic backgrounds and they show respect and consideration for each other. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. The school's key statement of intent, 'You are young; you are precious; you are loved', is understood and appreciated by the pupils and, consequently, helps to ensure that discrimination in any form is not tolerated.
- Pupils are helped to appreciate the importance of key values such as democracy, respect and tolerance. For example, pupils value the opportunity to be voted on to the school council and conscientiously undertake their roles as representatives. The school's successful emphasis on inculcating key values prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- Pupil premium funding is used very effectively with additional support in reading and mathematics provided by trained teachers and teaching assistants for all eligible pupils. As a result, disadvantaged pupils make progress that is at least in line with that of others in school. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well because they receive well-planned individual support. There are no significant gaps in the performance of different groups of pupils in school. This reflects the school's commitment and success in ensuring equal opportunity for all pupils.
- The curriculum has been revised since the start of the school year and is now broad and balanced. The range of subjects and topics enables pupils to apply their reading and writing skills in different subjects and to develop their creative abilities. As a result, they are beginning to achieve more across subjects. Parents are informed about what their children are learning through termly newsletters so they can give support for learning at home.
- The school has used the additional funding from the primary physical education and sport premium effectively to provide a wider range of activities for the pupils to participate in and to develop teachers' confidence and skills in leading these activities. Rugby, indoor curling and table tennis have all been introduced and specialist coaches now work with pupils each week. As a result, pupils are developing their physical fitness and understanding of how to live a healthy life.
- Arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils have been strengthened since the start of the school year and statutory requirements are met. Child protection training is up to date and staff know who to report to should they have any concerns. All necessary checks are carried out on staff, volunteers and governors to ensure that pupils are safe. Consequently, pupils are safe in school.
- The school makes good use of its involvement of the multi-academy trust. School leaders now have the opportunity to work alongside colleagues from other schools in the trust and this is helping them to share

and benefit from good practice. The academy trust is effective in both supporting and challenging the school. It plays an important role in the strategic governance of the school. The school benefits from the sharing of financial expertise from within the trust.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors are an effective force in contributing to school improvement, not least through their appointment of the Principal, who is already raising expectations and leading improvement. They have developed an accurate understanding of how pupils' achievement compares with national standards and recognise that in the past progress for many pupils has not been good enough. They recognise that until recently pupils have not achieved as highly as they could. Governors are presenting a high level of challenge to school leaders to ensure that all teaching is at least good. They use the published data on progress and attainment and the Principal's reports to compare pupils' performance with that in other schools.
- Governors have established a system of visits to the school to check on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress for themselves. Teachers' performance is managed according to the regulations but only recently have increases in salary been aligned with teaching quality or how well pupils achieve. The governors monitor the resources that are available to the school effectively, including pupil premium funding. The governing body ensures that the school meets its statutory requirements with regard to safeguarding.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils enjoy school and are polite, courteous and welcoming to visitors. They hold doors open for each other and for adults and say 'please' and 'thank you' without needing to be reminded.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and show positive attitudes towards their learning. Occasionally, when the teaching is less engaging, some pupils lose concentration. Staff manage behaviour well and pupils are soon back on task.
- Pupils understand and appreciate the higher expectations for behaviour that have been introduced since the start of the school year. They have a clear understanding of what is right and wrong and recognise that their actions could affect other people. Parents spoken to during the inspection commented positively on the improvements in behaviour that they have seen.
- Pupils play together sensibly on the playgrounds. Older pupils look after younger ones. They behave well in the dining room and when moving around the school. Pupils wear their uniform with pride and look after the school site, making sure there is no litter.
- Attendance has improved and is now broadly average. The school works hard to ensure that parents and pupils understand the importance of arriving at school on time and to attending regularly. Good use is made of a home-school link worker to work with parents.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. School leaders have strengthened all policies relating to pupils' safety. Staff safeguarding training is regularly updated. There is a coordinated approach to child protection that ensures that the school plays a key role in supporting all pupils at risk.
- Pupils say there is very little bullying and that when it does occur teachers and other adults deal with it quickly and effectively. The school gives a high priority to developing pupils' understanding of the different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying, and this is reflected in their knowledge of the impact it can have on other people.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet and when crossing the road. Water safety is promoted well through swimming lessons for all the older pupils.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and know that there are people they can talk to if they have concerns.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve have not been high enough. The quality of teaching has been too variable over time and, as a result, pupils have not made the progress that they are capable of as they move through the school.

- Teachers do not always set the most-able pupils work that is sufficiently challenging or requires them to expand their knowledge and think deeply. This limits their progress.
- A whole-school marking policy has been introduced and this is being used effectively in responding to pupils' written work. However, marking in mathematics does not provide pupils with a clear indication of how they can improve their work. It is often too brief and focuses solely on praise for what pupils have got right.
- The teaching of calculation skills in mathematics has improved and this aspect is generally taught effectively. However, pupils are given too few opportunities to apply their knowledge to solve problems or to make decisions for themselves on which processes are needed to do so.
- The teaching of reading is improving across the school. Phonic (the sounds that letters make in words) lessons help pupils develop confidence in tackling unfamiliar words. There is now a greater emphasis on ensuring pupils understand and enjoy what they are reading. This has been supported by the purchase of a new reading scheme that appeals to all pupils and the establishment of a high-quality library with books that pupils are keen to read.
- Until recently, there were not enough opportunities for all pupils to use their writing skills to compose more than a few sentences. While practice has improved, there has not yet been time for it to have sufficient impact on the standards that pupils attain.
- The school has recently introduced a common approach to assessing pupils' progress. Opportunities for teachers to meet together to compare their judgements are being developed. However, this practice has not been applied long enough to ensure that pupils make good progress over time.
- Teaching assistants are generally used well to support pupils in their learning. They work alongside individual pupils and with small groups and are skilled in ensuring that pupils understand what is expected of them and in developing their confidence to attempt new work. The daily before-and-after school sessions that they lead for disadvantaged pupils have proved successful in helping these pupils to make good progress.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- The progress pupils make across the school has not been consistently good enough to ensure that they all reach the levels of which they are capable. In 2014, nearly all the pupils in Year 6 made the progress expected of them in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportions of pupils making better-than-expected progress were higher than those seen nationally in writing. However, too few pupils made better-than-expected progress in reading and mathematics. Progress is not consistent across other year groups and, as a result, some pupils do not achieve as well as they could.
- In 2014, the majority of pupils in Year 6 attained average standards in reading, writing and mathematics in the end of Key Stage 2 tests. However, too few pupils reached higher levels of attainment in these subjects. Pupils' performance in English grammar, punctuation and spelling compared favourably with national figures, with over half of the pupils attaining the higher level.
- Pupils in Year 2 did not achieve average standards in reading, writing and mathematics in the 2014 national assessments. Evidence gathered during the inspection and school data indicate that attainment may be higher this year, but achievement for these pupils is still not consistently good.
- Work in pupils' books, school data and other evidence gathered during the inspection indicate that progress across different classes and year groups is not consistently good. While pupils currently in Year 6 are making at least the progress that is expected of them, this is not the case for all other pupils. Progress in mathematics is weaker than in reading and writing.
- The most-able pupils make similar progress to that of their classmates. They do not make consistently good progress across subjects because they are sometimes asked to do tasks that are too easy. In 2014, the proportion of pupils in Year 6 attaining Level 5 or above was below average in reading.
- In the 2014 Year 1 phonics screening check, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected national standard was above average. This was due to the better teaching of reading across the school.
- Pupils from the wide range of different ethnic groups make similar progress. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make progress and achieve as well as others because the support they receive in learning English enables them to access the full range of the curriculum. Helpful language support is provided from the Reception classes onwards.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieve well, and gaps between their attainment and that of other pupils in school have narrowed. These pupils make good progress because the school uses the additional government funding well to give them the extra support they need to catch up with other pupils.
- In 2014, disadvantaged pupils were two terms behind both their classmates and other pupils nationally in

mathematics and writing. In reading they were broadly in line with their classmates and one term behind other pupils nationally.

- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make progress in line with other pupils in reading, writing and mathematics. The school has improved systems for identifying what support is required to help these pupils overcome any barriers to learning and makes sure that they receive the help that is required.

The early years provision

requires improvement

- Children start the Reception Year with skills and knowledge that are below those that are typical for their age. In 2014, the school's records show that the proportion of children who reached a good level of development was just below national performance. In this respect, children are not as well prepared as they could be for when they start in Year 1. Children who were disabled or had special educational needs and those who spoke English as an additional language achieved in line with their peers in 2014.
- Leadership requires improvement. There is currently temporary leadership of the early years provision, supported by the Principal, due to staff absence. Teaching and systems to monitor teaching are not yet effective enough to ensure that all children have consistently good teaching and make rapid progress in developing their skills.
- Adults are keen to improve their practice. They are currently being provided with opportunities to work with staff from other schools, both within the academy trust and at other local schools, to identify how learning opportunities can be extended and developed for the children.
- While staff plan activities that promote personal, artistic and creative development, they do not always ensure that children make consistently good progress in developing a range of skills, including speaking and writing. Adults do not sufficiently direct children's learning with challenging activities that build on what they already know and can do. The adults do not ask questions that will help the children to develop their thinking skills. Some children repeatedly opt only for their favourite pursuits, which means that they do not experience a sufficiently wide range of activities to extend their learning.
- The teaching of early reading is effective. Staff provide good opportunities for children to develop their phonic skills and to gain a deep interest in books.
- Assessment systems are applied to gather information on children's skills, knowledge and progress. This information is not always sufficiently well evaluated to identify how individual children's learning needs can be best met.
- Relationships are good and children's personal development is a strength. Role play, for example, is well supported by adults so that children engage enthusiastically and sustain their involvement in activities. Children's health, safety and well-being are effectively promoted.
- Parents are involved very well in induction activities, which help them to support their children. Arrangements for sharing information on children's progress with parents are good. Parents value and appreciate the care that is taken to make sure that the children make a positive and happy start at school.

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	139477
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	453550

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	310
Appropriate authority	The governing committee
Chair	Nora Allan
Principal	Anna Majcher
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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