

Our Lady of Lourdes RC Primary School

Beech Avenue, Farnworth, Bolton, Lancashire, BL4 0BP

Inspection dates 21–22 April 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.

- Senior leaders, including governors, have an accurate view of the school's strengths. They know what needs to be done to continue to improve and together have the skills and knowledge to achieve their ambition for the school.
- School leaders regularly check on the quality of teaching and learning to make sure that standards are at the very least maintained.
- Pupils feel safe in school because they know that staff care for them well.
- Pupils and teachers have positive attitudes toward learning and good behaviour is a feature across the whole school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effective.
- Attendance continues to improve and is above the national average.
- The quality of teaching is good; teachers create lessons which motivate and engage pupils. A wide range of trips and after-school activities enhance pupils' experiences.
- Achievement is good. Pupils make good progress from their individual starting points.
- Effective support for pupils who are at the early stages of learning how to speak English, the most able, disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs helps them achieve at least as well as other pupils.
- Children get off to a successful start in the early years because of good teaching and the close attention staff give to meeting their learning and developmental needs.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not always check that pupils follow the guidance provided when they mark pupils' work. As a result, pupils do not always have the opportunity to improve their work or learn from their mistakes.
- Teachers in Key Stage 1 do not always plan work that builds on what pupils know and can do or insist that pupils produce enough work of a good quality.
- The governing body does not have a clear enough understanding of national data to be able to make comparisons and challenge school leaders fully with regard to pupils' progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes taught by teachers and in activities supervised by teaching assistants. Two learning walks around the school also took place.
- Inspectors met with two groups of pupils and observed and spoke with pupils during lessons and at playtimes. They also listened to pupils reading.
- Meetings were held with parents, staff, senior leaders and managers, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. An inspector also met informally with parents when they brought their children to school.
- A range of documents was considered by inspectors, including: the school’s analysis of how well it is doing, the school development plan, information about pupils’ progress, checks on the quality of teaching, minutes of governing body meetings, and records relating to attendance and safeguarding. Inspectors also examined work in pupils’ books.
- Inspectors took account of 15 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and also considered responses from 20 staff to the inspection questionnaire.

Inspection team

Louise Murphy, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Douglas Scholes	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is slightly smaller than most primary schools.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is similar to the national average. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well-above average, as is the proportion of pupils at the very early stages of learning to speak English as an additional language.
- The school provides full-time places for children in the Reception classes and part-time places for children in the Nursery class.
- Two teachers have joined the staff since the previous inspection.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and learning so more pupils make outstanding progress and secure the highest levels of attainment particularly in Key Stage 1 by:
 - making sure teachers always have high expectations of the quality and quantity of work pupils are expected to complete
 - building securely on what pupils already know and can do
 - ensuring that all staff consistently check that all pupils correct their work so they learn from their mistakes.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by further developing the skills of the governing body in analysing national data so that they can challenge school leaders even more effectively.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has an accurate view of what the school does well and what needs to be improved. She is well supported by the deputy headteacher and the governing body. Together they have addressed the areas for improvement highlighted at the previous inspection and maintained good standards at the school. Leaders have the skills and ability to continue with school improvement.
- Staff support the headteacher's aims for the school and demonstrate their dedication to contributing towards school improvement by very quickly and consistently implementing new practice. A good example of this is that, after training, staff quickly and successfully implemented new strategies for teaching reading.
- Middle leaders are effective in driving up standards in their areas of responsibility and, together with senior leaders, regularly check upon the quality of teaching and the progress that pupils make. Monitoring procedures effectively hold teachers to account and identify training needs.
- The primary school sport funding is used well. Specialist coaches work with pupils and staff to help develop their sporting skills. The school offers a range of after-school sporting activities and school teams do very well in inter-school competitions. As a result, pupils are developing increasingly active and healthy lifestyles.
- The school is committed to ensuring there is no discrimination and all pupils have equal opportunities to succeed. Consequently, the pupil premium funding is used effectively to support disadvantaged pupils. For example, the school has appointed a member of staff to work with disadvantaged pupils. This provides additional small group teaching sessions and focused one-to-one reading support, which helps narrow any gaps in knowledge between disadvantaged and other pupils in school.
- The curriculum meets pupils' needs well and prepares them for life in modern Britain. Through the school council, pupils are encouraged to share their opinions and develop their understanding of democracy. The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effective. Good relations are fostered across the school and this is evident in the way that pupils learn and play well together.
- Safeguarding requirements are robust and effective. All staff and governors agree that keeping pupils safe is one of their prime responsibilities, and this is very much appreciated by parents.
- The school receives a helpful light level of support from the local authority.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governors are effective and supportive of the school. They are wholeheartedly committed to maintaining its role at the heart of the local community. They know the school well because they receive detailed information from school leaders. Governors do question the information that they are given if there is something that they do not understand; however, they are not fully adept at analysing national data in order to challenge school leaders even more effectively regarding pupils' achievement. Governors are fully involved in setting targets for the headteacher and they have a clear understanding of the quality of teaching and how good performance is rewarded and any underperformance is tackled.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are well-mannered, take good care of each other and show respect for the adults around them. Pupils look very smart in their uniforms, the school environment is well looked after and classrooms are bright and vibrant. When pupils go out of school on trips, passers-by often comment on their excellent behaviour.
- Pupils are eager to learn and they speak enthusiastically about the way their teachers help them and make learning fun. Most pupils try their best and know that their hard work is valued.
- Pupils receive praise and encouragement from staff and their work is attractively displayed and celebrated. Pupils feel they are part of the Our Lady of Lourdes family and there are also displays to let them know how important they all are within that family. For example, in Year 4 the message is 'We are all unique and beautiful but together we are a masterpiece.'
- Pupils take on responsibilities around the school, for example, older pupils act as 'buddies' to Reception children, helping them to settle well into school life. The school council arranges fund-raising events to help buy equipment for school and to donate to charities both local and international.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school because they know that the adults care for them well. They are confident that there is always a member of staff who will listen to them and any concerns will be dealt with quickly and effectively.
- Pupils know about different types of discrimination and bullying. Pupils who spoke with inspectors said that there is no bullying at their school and agreed that this is because they are all friends and look after each other. School records confirm that bullying is rare.
- Staff make sure that pupils have a good understanding of risk, including risks associated with using the internet. Pupils use the acronym 'THINK': is it True, Helpful, Inspiring, Necessary and Kind, to remind them of how to stay safe when using technologies.
- Pupils who are vulnerable are well supported by school staff who actively work with families and engage the services of external agencies when necessary.
- Pupils arrive at school on time; their attendance is above national average levels and continues to improve. This reflects how much pupils enjoy coming to school at Our Lady of Lourdes.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The school's assessment information and work in pupils' books show pupils make good progress over time in reading, writing and mathematics because they are taught well.
- The school has adopted a more consistent approach to the teaching of reading. Every classroom has an extensive range of books and a comfortable reading area. All pupils read every day and pupils are encouraged to think hard about what they are reading. For example, pupils reading about the Mary Celeste had to use their reading skills to develop a set of questions that would help solve the 'mystery from history'.
- Teachers provide a range of exciting tasks which interest pupils, so they are keen to learn. Interesting trips and visits provide a good stimulus for developing pupils' writing skills. For example, Year 6 wrote some very interesting and detailed reviews of their residential visit in the style of a well-known trip advice website.
- Well-planned lessons, knowledgeable teaching and challenging activities enable pupils to achieve well in mathematics. For example, in Year 3, pupils enthusiastically rounded numbers to the nearest 10, 100 and 1000 and then matched their answer to an associated letter. The letters had to be sorted to convey a secret message that pupils were desperate to understand. Such activities powerfully encourage pupils to want to get the answer right and go back and check their answer if it does not fit.
- Teachers, particularly those in the early years and in Key Stage 2, have a clear focus on what pupils are learning. They assess pupils' work frequently and use this information to plan future lessons.
- Most teachers' marking is of good quality. Teachers give good advice to pupils on how to improve their work and also celebrate work that is well done. However, they do not always check that pupils complete their corrections so they can learn from their mistakes.
- Teachers provide work that challenges pupils at the correct level and use praise effectively to encourage pupils to work well. However, there are occasions, particularly in Key Stage 1, when teachers do not always build on what pupils already know and can do or insist that enough high quality work is completed.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work very well together to guarantee that all pupils including the disadvantaged, the most able, those who speak English as an additional language, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are supported well in lessons.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils in Key Stage 1 continue to develop their skills. The rate of progress they make, although still mostly good, is not as rapid as progress made in the early years. Pupils usually attain broadly average standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they leave Year 2, although attainment in reading dipped to well-below-average in 2014.
- Results of the 2014 Year 6 national tests show that the proportion of pupils making the progress expected of them or more than the expected progress in writing is well-above national average. In mathematics, the proportion is similar to the national average and in reading well-below average. Attainment in writing and mathematics is broadly average and improving. Attainment in reading in 2014 dipped to well-below the national average.

- The dip in achievement in reading seen at the end of 2014 was unexpected and was as a result of a number of pupils missing a higher level score by only one or two marks. School leaders acted swiftly to prevent a recurrence of this. Staff training, along with new teaching, learning and assessment strategies and improved reading resources have all been introduced. School records and work seen in pupils' books show that attainment and progress are now good.
- The performance of Year 1 pupils in the national screening check for phonics (matching letters to the sounds they make) is similar to the national picture. Older pupils read well and enjoy the wide range of new books available at school. Parents who spoke with an inspector confirmed that their children were avid readers and insisted on reading every night to earn reading points for their class.
- At the end of Year 6 in 2014, compared to other pupils nationally and relative to their individual starting points, disadvantaged pupils eligible for support through pupil premium funding made excellent progress in writing. They made good progress in mathematics but their progress in reading was slightly below national expectations.
- Disadvantaged pupils attained at approximately five terms behind other pupils nationally in reading, at the same level in writing and two terms behind in mathematics. Compared to other pupils in the school, disadvantaged pupils attained two terms behind in reading, one term behind in writing and less than one term behind in mathematics. For pupils currently in the school, and attainment gaps are narrowing as pupils move up through the school.
- In the 2014 end of Key Stage 2 national tests, the proportion of pupils who reached the higher Level 5 in reading was below average, in writing it was above average and in mathematics it was broadly average. The most able pupils currently in the school make good progress. Teachers consistently provide challenging tasks for the most able pupils during lessons. In addition, talented mathematicians attend activities at the local high school on Saturday mornings to help them develop their skills further. Moreover, higher-level reading resources are now available to pupils.
- The additional needs of pupils at the early stages of learning to speak English are met well. Children who speak English as an additional language tend to start school in the early years and a programme of language immersion is put into place. For example, children are introduced to topic-specific vocabulary before a topic begins so they understand what they will hear during lessons and activities.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs also achieve well. Their additional needs are met well because they are identified early, effective interventions are put into place and their progress is carefully checked.

The early years provision

is good

- The knowledge and skills children have when they join the Nursery and Reception class have been improving over time. Most children now start in the early years with a number of skills typical for their age but overall their skills are low in literacy, number skills and personal development.
- Half of those children who start school in the Reception class have not had the benefit of the excellent learning and teaching in the Nursery class. From individual starting points, children make at least good and at times exceptional progress across the early years. Almost all now leave the Reception class at or close to the expected level of development and are equipped with the skills and abilities needed to succeed in Year 1. This is an improvement on outcomes in previous years, which is set to continue.
- Learning Journeys, which are records of children's achievements, clearly show the good progress they make as a result of the good teaching they receive. Well-planned, interesting activities, skilled teachers and a stimulating indoor and outdoor learning environment all help children to achieve well.
- The early years team is led and managed well. Staff work closely together to plan work and assess children's progress accurately. Children quickly become confident learners. They very much enjoy activities, such as building a cosy den for a dragon, creating their own dragon masks so the dragon can feel at home with other dragon friends, and planning ways in which they can help the dragon to get water from the pool.
- Children behave very well. They follow instructions, take turns, help each other when they can and are able to concentrate on their work. The well-trained staff care for children very well and keep them safe and secure.
- Parents who spoke with inspectors were highly supportive of the early years staff. Staff work closely with parents but there are missed opportunities for staff to gather information from parents about their child's learning developments at home. Consequently, new skills learned at home are not always promptly built upon 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	105245
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	461715

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	237
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bernard Carney
Headteacher	Linda Chadwick
Date of previous school inspection	24 January 2012
Telephone number	01204 333181
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