

# Our Lady's Catholic Primary School

Oxford Road, Cowley, Oxford, Oxfordshire OX4 2LF

## Inspection dates

3–4 May 2017

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The acting principal provides excellent leadership. Since taking on this role, she has revitalised the ethos and reinforced the school's core values, expressed as 'You are young, you are precious, you are loved.'
- At all levels, including governors, leaders have high expectations and a secure grasp of what needs to be done to improve the school further.
- Leaders have successfully driven improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. As a result, pupils' progress has generally accelerated.
- Leaders are aware that some most-able pupils did not make the expected progress last year. They are taking steps to address this issue.
- The school is a harmonious community where adults and children from a wide range of backgrounds enjoy excellent relationships. Pupils behave well. They are kept safe and are extremely well cared for.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are committed to improving their skills and are keen to participate in additional training.
- The rich, engaging curriculum is underpinned by the excellent work that the school does to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6, they typically reach standards that are above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Children in Reception make good progress within a warm and supportive learning environment.
- The acting principal provides an excellent role model in her own teaching. Her current teaching commitment constrains her ability to support other teachers, particularly those new to the profession working in lower key stage 2.
- Effective teaching engages and challenges pupils. Pupils are typically extremely conscientious and self-motivated. Leaders are aware that a few pupils in lower key stage 2 have not yet developed the mature approach to learning seen in most classes.

## **Full report**

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Ensure that the acting principal has sufficient opportunities to sustain improvements in the quality of teaching by releasing her from class responsibilities as soon as possible.
- Support teachers, especially those who are new to the profession, in how best they can help pupils to learn confidently on their own and persevere before they ask for help.
- Ensure that the most able pupils continue to be challenged so they achieve more than the expected progress.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The acting principal is held in high regard by staff and parents. Among parents' numerous positive comments were, 'She has transformed the atmosphere in the school in such a short space of time; it now seems upbeat and positive and there is a real sense of teamwork' and, 'A loving, caring environment for children and a sense of community among parents, staff and pupils has returned.'
- Middle leaders share an incisive knowledge of the school's strengths and are very clear about what they need to do to improve the school further. They have high expectations and have created a culture of ambition across the school.
- Pupils are proud of the school and of their achievements. The school's excellent work to promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is evident at every turn. The oldest pupils are deeply thoughtful, as evident in their sensitive writing about the depletion of rainforests. They value each other, and do not have discriminatory attitudes when making friendships. Pupils are respectful of all their peers and staff.
- British values are promoted well. Pupils develop a secure understanding of democracy when electing members of the school and learning councils. They have an excellent sense of fairness and tolerance. Pupils said they, 'learn right from wrong, to think before you speak, and to treat others as you would want to be treated'.
- Pupils benefit from a rich, diverse curriculum both during and beyond the school day. The effectiveness of the curriculum is continuously evaluated and there is a clear vision for development. The recently established pupil learning council has already made contributions to curriculum design, such as an increase in educational visits.
- There is a sharp emphasis on the development of reading, writing and mathematical skills and knowledge, but pupils also enjoy and achieve well in a wide range of other subjects. Classroom displays reflect good-quality work, for example, in science, history and geography. There are extensive opportunities for pupils to practise, consolidate and extend their literacy and mathematical skills across the curriculum.
- Leaders and governors target the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils carefully and effectively. For example, staff are employed to provide before- and after-school sessions for them. Together with effective classroom teaching, this additional support has a good impact on the progress that disadvantaged pupils make. There is currently little difference between their achievement and that of other pupils nationally.
- The additional funds for sport are used effectively. In collaboration with the school council, new playground equipment was designed and developed which is now in use during break and lunchtimes. A sports coach runs a wide range of clubs, and new equipment has been acquired. Leaders report a positive impact on pupils' skills and enthusiasm for physical activities. Competitive team games feature strongly, evident, not least, in the football team's forthcoming appearance in a national final at Wembley.
- Leaders ensure that they manage the performance of teachers rigorously. Teachers are

well supported. The acting principal coaches staff effectively, helping them to identify their own needs. Teachers relatively new to the profession said that they felt valued and cherished. That said, the acting principal's own teaching commitment somewhat limits the time she can spend supporting them.

- The school leadership has been supported effectively by the Dominic Barberi Multi Academy Trust and by external consultants. Governors and leaders now have the ability to drive school improvement without such support.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors are passionate about promoting high-quality learning and achievement. Members of the governing committee have a broad range of experience and expertise and provide strong support.
- Governors seek assurance that the school's budget is spent well. They carefully monitor the impact of spending, including additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and funding to enhance sports and provision for physical education.
- Governors have a secure grasp of the school's performance. Governors' minutes record a range of insightful questions that committee members have asked in relation to pupils' achievement. Decisions are well-founded and centred on the impact they will have on pupils' academic progress and personal development.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Parents are confident that their children are kept safe. Pupils say that they feel safe and are taught how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations, including when using the internet. Pupils spoke confidently to inspectors about the security of the site, fire drills, and how they are aware of the different coloured lanyards for staff and visitors' identification badges.
- All aspects of health and safety meet requirements and potential risks are evaluated thoroughly before school trips. Regular internal audits ensure that the school maintains a safe environment. A recent audit by the county council found all aspects of safeguarding to be good or outstanding. Recommendations about further training on e-safety were immediately implemented.
- Safeguarding procedures and checks on personnel meet all statutory requirements. The governor overseeing safeguarding has extensive experience in all aspects of safeguarding and child protection. There is a comprehensive training programme for staff and governors.
- Child protection procedures are compliant and robust. Children in need of support are identified quickly. Staff work closely with a range of external agencies to ensure that children are well supported. Records of concerns are analysed and stored securely. The school's designated safeguarding lead is rigorous in following up concerns.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Pupils make good progress due to skilled teaching. Teachers and teaching assistants work very closely together and have time allocated to plan learning for all pupils. This ensures that all adults have a very clear shared understanding of pupils' learning.
- Staff are very knowledgeable and imaginative in their approach. Pupils, whatever their starting point, respond enthusiastically because teachers craft learning so that it engages and deepens their knowledge through active participation. For example, Year 5 and 6 pupils were totally engrossed as they read the current edition of a local paper to determine fact from opinion.
- Teachers recognise that pupils learn best when they are offered challenges which make them think and deepen their understanding. There is a clear focus on mastering concepts and then using them to solve problems. During a lesson in key stage 1, pupils applied what they had learned earlier about number patterns to make up their own puzzles. Similarly, Year 6 pupils composed comprehension questions for their classmates based on the newspaper articles they had read.
- Activities such as these make learning both relevant and engaging for pupils. As a pupil commented, 'Our attitude to learning is good because we have really good teachers that make our learning fun and challenging.'
- As a result of the highly effective teaching of phonics, nearly all pupils reach the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check. Expectations are high and staff persevere to help ensure that pupils do as well as possible. All Year 1 pupils reached the expected standard in 2016, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Pupils' reading skills move on apace due to skilful teaching. Daily guided reading sessions, where pupils increasingly analyse and question texts, help to accelerate and deepen their comprehension skills. Moreover, pupils talked about how, when writing, they use new vocabulary and the literacy devices they pick up from their reading. One remarked, 'Reading fires our imagination and gives us ideas to write about.'
- Staff assess pupils' needs well. They check and measure progress very carefully and ensure that any gaps in learning are addressed.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from skilled support. All pupils have an individual profile and a highly detailed learning plan which set out long-term plans and are broken down into small steps. Teachers and support staff use these effectively during lessons and small group work.
- Teachers typically manage behaviour seamlessly. Pupils respond positively when encouraged to take some responsibility for their own learning. For example, when asked to discuss ideas with one another and reach a consensus. Pupils in Year 5 and 6 classes rise to this expectation in an exemplary way. Some pupils in the lower key stage 2 classes are not so adept and this occasionally limits their progress during lessons.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils demonstrate a strong sense of pride in their school. They enjoy taking on roles and responsibilities such as membership of the school council or the recently established learning council. Pupils respond well to the high expectations placed upon them. They show respect for themselves and for each other.
- Leaders ensure that pupils from all backgrounds have equal opportunities to benefit from all the activities that the school offers, both within and beyond the school day. Pupils and parents appreciate that achievements are valued and celebrated. A parent of a child who has special educational needs was full of praise for the way other pupils befriended and supported him.
- Pupils feel entirely safe at school and trust the adults who work with them. They know that they can seek help if they need it. Pupils say bullying is extremely rare and that when it does happen it is 'always sorted'.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are keen to learn and do well, and they become confident learners. Behaviour in classrooms and around the school is consistently good. Pupils are exceptionally well-behaved and attentive in assemblies.
- Pupils respect one another and show tolerance and understanding, in keeping with the school's mission statement. Pupils are extremely kind and supportive of their classmates who have physical disabilities.
- The school is an orderly place. Pupils talked about the school's Christian values. One remarked, 'We treat each other equally, like we are all best friends.' Another pupil commented, 'Our school is a whole family.' Occasionally, pupils in lower key stage 2 do not show the same sense of personal responsibility as is evident in the other classes.
- Attendance is just below the national average. The few cases of lateness are carefully addressed and every effort is made to improve the attendance of the very few pupils who are persistently absent.

## Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' performance has been typically better than average at both key stages in recent years. This included the progress made by disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational need and/or disabilities, reflecting the school's success in helping pupils to overcome barriers to learning.

- Outcomes were very high in 2015 and 2016, when the overall picture was positive, with a much higher-than-average proportion of pupils reaching the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics. However, with more challenging standards in 2016, the proportion of pupils achieving above-average results in these three areas was below average at both key stages.
- Current assessment information collected by the school and work in pupils' books indicate that pupils are making at least good progress from their starting points. The most able pupils are now fulfilling their potential. In each year group, they are rising to the increased challenges. By and large, the most able pupils in Year 6 confidently apply their mathematical knowledge when tackling complex problems and write with considerable flair across a range of styles. However, a few still struggle with such challenging tasks.
- The achievement of pupils who speak English as an additional language closely matches that of other pupils. Similarly, disadvantaged pupils are making similar progress to other pupils. The proportion of these pupils working at a greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics is comparable to the overall picture across the school.
- Pupils achieve well in science and in English spelling, punctuation and grammar. Standards in these areas were above average last year. The work of current pupils shows that they rise to the challenge of conducting investigations and recording their findings using the correct scientific terms. Pupils' writing is increasingly well presented and free from mistakes.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress, not only because of the extra help they receive, but because teachers ensure that they are supported during day-to-day lessons.
- Any pupil in danger of falling behind is quickly identified and supported. For example, the few pupils in Year 3 who did not do as well as expected in the Year 2 assessments are now back on track.
- Pupils build well on the very secure start made in phonics and become confident readers. They enthusiastically choose from a wide range of books in the recently refurbished library. When discussing their reading with inspectors, older pupils explained articulately how they preferred reading to watching a film, saying, 'When reading, we can picture things in our heads.'
- Pupils' very secure basic skills, underpinned by their positive attitudes to learning, means they are well prepared for secondary education and beyond.

### Early years provision

**Good**

- The early years leader has a clear and well-informed understanding of the needs of young children. Since her appointment in September, she has ensured a consistent and effective approach across both Reception classes. Assessment is accurate and used precisely to plan for next steps in children's learning. The leader reviews the work of the team closely and has a good knowledge of their shared strengths and areas for improvement.

- Children are making good progress from their starting points because of consistently effective teaching. By the end of Reception, the proportion of children attaining a good level of development is typically average or above. Parents value the frequent discussions about their children's learning and are pleased with the progress they see their children making, for example in learning to read.
- Activities are well planned. Children learn to talk, write and play with one another and with adults. Children enjoy the opportunities to learn in the indoor and outdoor areas. Although some time is allocated for children to pursue their own interests, staff are aware that opportunities for children to find things out for themselves and choose ways to do things are rather limited.
- Children are kept safe and are extremely well cared for. They behave well and are developing the skills and self-confidence they need for their future learning in Year 1.
- Adults take every opportunity to interact with children to support their personal development and promote their communication skills. Teachers and teaching assistants work successfully together as a team. They teach phonics to small groups of children following a carefully planned programme. Occasionally, these groups are not organised effectively enough for learning to be pitched at the right level for all children.
- Staff have good opportunities to learn from one another and to contribute to improving their shared work. They show children that they value their writing, drawing and models they make by displaying them thoughtfully around the classrooms.
- Support for disadvantaged children is planned carefully and is used thoughtfully to give children extra assistance in their learning.



## School details

Unique reference number	139477
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10032852

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	308
Appropriate authority	The Dominic Barberi Multi Academy Committee Board
Chair	Paul Concannon
Acting principal	Tara Davies
Telephone number	01865 779176
Website	<a href="http://www.our-ladys.oxon.sch.uk">www.our-ladys.oxon.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:ourladys@dbmac.org.uk">ourladys@dbmac.org.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	17–18 March 2015

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is larger than the average primary school.
- Around two thirds of the pupils, well above average, are from a range of minority ethnic groups. Around 40% of pupils speak English as an additional language; twice the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is half the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is half the national average. These needs relate mainly to speech, language and communication or moderate learning difficulties.
- Children in the early years attend full time in Reception.

- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- At the time of the inspection, the acting principal (previously the deputy principal) led the school, pending the appointment of a substantive principal.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed activities in all year groups. Observations were undertaken with the acting principal.
- Inspectors met with members of the governing committee. Meetings were also held with pupils to discuss their views on their learning and well-being and with parents to gain their views about the school.
- Inspectors heard pupils read from Years 1, 2, and 6. They talked to pupils at breaktimes and in the lunch hall, in lessons and as they moved around the school.
- Inspectors examined a range of school documents, including information on pupils' performance across the school, school improvement plans, the school's evaluation of teaching, learning and assessment, governor minutes and curriculum plans.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of books to see what progress had been made across a range of subjects.
- Inspectors took account of 38 responses to the Ofsted parent survey, Parent View.

## Inspection team

Rob Crompton, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Hilary Goddard	Ofsted Inspector
Graham Marshall	Ofsted Inspector

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