

Our Lady of Good Counsel Catholic Primary School

Pigeon Cote Road, Seacroft, Leeds, West Yorkshire LS14 1EP

Inspection dates

1–2 May 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher has created a warm, nurturing culture in which pupils thrive. Respect and care for one another underpin everything the school does. As a result, pupils develop into caring and thoughtful individuals.
- Leaders know the school's strengths and areas for further development. Following disappointing key stage 2 results in 2017, they took assertive and timely action to successfully tackle weaknesses.
- Most pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, rise to their teachers' high expectations and make strong progress from their starting points.
- Standards are improving in reading and mathematics and most pupils are being effectively supported to reach the expected levels.
- Pupils' handwriting is of variable quality in key stage 1. Boys' limited vocabulary does not always demonstrate their good understanding in mathematics.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Pupils relish the responsibilities they are given to contribute to school life and work together.
- Outcomes in the Year 1 phonics screening check for 2017 were consistently above the national average.
- Although improving, the most able pupils do not consistently achieve the standards they are capable of.
- Children in the early years are happy, successful learners. They make good progress and achieve well because teaching is planned effectively to meet their needs.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They are confident and articulate, and say that they enjoy school. Pupils work hard and are keen to learn.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school's pastoral care. Staff go the extra mile to help pupils and, as a result, attendance and punctuality are improving rapidly.
- Governors have a clear and detailed knowledge of the school and community. They effectively challenge leaders, and contribute to the continual drive to improve the school.
- The school makes good use of the physical education and sport premium. Pupils benefit from the opportunities they have to develop their independence through sport, music and school trips.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on the work already undertaken to improve the attainment of pupils in order to secure consistently strong progress across all year groups, including in the early years.
- Ensure that teachers' expectations of the most able pupils are high enough to enable a greater proportion to reach the highest standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Further boost pupils' progress in writing, by:
 - improving pupils' handwriting and letter formation in key stage 1
 - improving boys' understanding and use of complex vocabulary to enable them to demonstrate their knowledge and skills, particularly in their reasoning in mathematics.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders have created an ambitious culture that has pupils' learning, safety and welfare at its heart. This is encapsulated in the school's mission statement, which includes the words: 'We acknowledge the unique value of each person, nurturing them to full potential so they can become the best they can be.'
- The headteacher and the deputy headteacher understand the school's strengths and areas for improvement in great detail. They have been successful in developing a caring and nurturing culture which ensures that pupils come to school and are happy to learn. Teachers have high aspirations for all pupils.
- An outward-looking leadership team has successfully drawn on a range of external support to develop in-house expertise. Teachers benefit from a range of professional development opportunities, which allow them to advance and refine their teaching and leadership skills. Leaders now make sure that teachers are held to account, stringently, for the progress pupils make.
- Senior leaders and governors have developed a strong sense of purpose among staff and morale is high. Staff enjoy working at the school and display an unshakeable commitment to the well-being of the pupils in their care. All who responded to Ofsted's staff survey said that they are proud to work at the school.
- Leaders have strengthened the support for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Leaders make sure that the extra help pupils receive is making a difference. The accurate identification of pupils' needs and effective monitoring of the impact of support mean that these pupils make good progress.
- Additional funding is used effectively to enhance the progress that pupils make. The primary physical education (PE) and sport premium is leading to improved skills and a greater range of sporting opportunities and activities. Leaders are aware of the specific emotional, welfare and academic needs of disadvantaged pupils. Staff check carefully how well these pupils are doing, and report on the positive impact of the funding on pupils' progress, attendance and well-being.
- The curriculum is broad, balanced and well planned to motivate pupils to want to learn. It is supported well by a range of visits and other activities. On the day of the inspection, for example, an external visitor led an assembly on Judaism which supported pupils' spiritual, moral and social development effectively. Spiritual development is closely linked to the Christian ethos in the school. Diversity is celebrated and embraced. Pupils from all backgrounds are treated equally and with kindness and respect.
- Leaders have employed a family support worker and a counsellor to support vulnerable pupils and their families. This has had some notable successes. For example, pupils' attendance and punctuality have improved markedly.
- The local authority is providing effective support for leaders. Regular visits and precise monitoring from the local authority's staff ensure that leaders remain focused on the key areas of school improvement.

- Parents and carers say they have confidence in the leadership of the school. Many commented on how happy their children are and how much they love coming to school. Parents also comment on the hardworking and committed staff. One parent reflected the overwhelming views of others by saying, 'The children's needs are put at the forefront of everything.'

Governance of the school

- Governors have a strong understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the school. They have taken positive steps to support senior leaders to begin to remedy the decline in standards. Governors keep up to date with the actions that leaders are taking through their regular visits to the school. In addition, they receive timely information from the headteacher in detailed reports.
- The records of governors' meetings show that governors challenge and contribute well to the school's improvement planning. Leaders are held to account for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, as well as for the quality of outcomes for pupils seen in statutory tests and school data. Governors are passionate to see all pupils fulfil their true potential.
- Governors monitor the spending of additional funding and effectively hold leaders to account to ensure that the funding has a direct impact on pupils' outcomes. For example, governors challenge leaders to demonstrate the impact of additional intervention and support for disadvantaged pupils to ensure that the pupil premium is spent effectively. Governors also ensure that the physical education and sport premium funds are being spent appropriately to have a positive impact on pupils' progress and pupils' participation in sport.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding, which places pupils at the heart of the school's work. During the inspection, several members of school staff were checked for their knowledge and understanding of signs and symptoms of pupils being at risk. Staff and governors are clear about what to look out for, because of the induction and continued training they receive.
- Leaders have ensured that there are clear procedures for staff to follow if they have a concern about a pupil. Leaders, including the family support worker, act on concerns quickly and make further referrals when necessary. Furthermore, leaders are not afraid to escalate a concern if they feel that they have not received an adequate response.
- Leaders with designated responsibility for safeguarding work with a variety of external agencies to minimise vulnerable pupils' risk of serious harm. Governors go about their safeguarding duties diligently and have been well trained. The safeguarding governor meets with leaders frequently to review safeguarding practice.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching and learning is good and this leads to pupils, throughout the school, making at least steady progress. Teaching is particularly strong in Years 2, 5 and 6, and pupils are making rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Some pupils in key stage 1 still have gaps in their learning and are catching up.
- Teachers and their assistants are enthusiastic and hardworking. They are passionate about their work and ambitious for their pupils' achievement. There is evidence of the positive impact of this on pupils' self-confidence and attitude to learning as they progress through the school. Pupils work hard in lessons and most are resilient when tackling new material.
- The vast majority of teachers and their assistants have high expectations of pupils and they model good learning behaviours. They make skilful use of questioning to challenge pupils' thinking and encourage them to explain their ideas. Teachers are increasingly making better use of the school's assessment system to design learning activities which enable most pupils to make strong progress in lessons. The most able pupils, however, are not always able to progress their learning quickly enough in key stage 1. On occasion, targets for the most able pupils in lower key stage 2 are not always explicit enough from the outset, which slows progress of these pupils.
- Teachers set interesting tasks that motivate pupils to do their best. Pupils learn from an early age how to listen carefully to instructions and work as part of a group. For example, pupils in Year 2 walked sensibly to the outdoor classroom and quickly became engrossed in a search for mini-beasts. They thoroughly enjoyed using magnifying glasses to explore the habitat of insects and they described them imaginatively.
- Teachers have established effective routines for learning that enable pupils to settle quickly to their work. Pupils treat their teachers and each other with respect and listen courteously to their peers in class discussions. Staff build exceptionally strong relationships with their pupils, and are highly effective in reducing the levels of anxiety of vulnerable pupils.
- Teaching assistants are well deployed and they play a vital role in supporting pupils' learning and emotional development. Disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are monitored particularly closely. When staff become aware that a pupil is falling behind, they make sure that they are given extra support. Activities planned for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are broken down into the small steps required. Consequently, their learning and progress are as strong as for other pupils.
- The teaching of phonics is highly effective thanks to the structured approach implemented by the leader of English. Teachers and teaching assistants have secure subject knowledge and accurately model letter sounds that effectively develop pupils' phonic understanding. This shows the positive impact on pupils' skills.
- Regular reading lessons across school successfully develop pupils' ability to decode, and comprehend. As a result, younger pupils are able to use their phonics skills effectively to help them to read unfamiliar words. Older pupils read with fluency and confidence and show a secure understanding of what they read.
- Effective training and robust monitoring by the subject leader is leading to good rates

of progress in mathematics for all pupils. For example, teachers have been trained to focus on effective approaches that will allow pupils to develop their reasoning and problem-solving skills. This is evident in pupils' books from the Reception class to Year 6.

- The teaching of writing is improving, and teachers ensure that pupils learn and practise different kinds of writing. Pupils develop and apply their grammar and punctuation skills in their writing as they move through the school. However, the quality of handwriting is inconsistent in key stage 1. This is borne out in pupils' books, where the evidence of progress in boys' writing also varies. Some boys find it difficult to explain their reasoning in mathematics. Their limited vocabulary leads to brief written explanations which do not always demonstrate their accurate understanding of their solutions to problems.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are proud of their school and value being part of a small community where everyone knows each other.
- The school's Christian values underpin its caring culture. Adults have created a safe and nurturing environment where pupils learn to respect each other and get along together. Pupils build friendships well and demonstrate responsible and thoughtful behaviour in lessons and around the school.
- Pupils say they feel safe and are happy at school. They demonstrate a good understanding of the different forms of bullying, including physical, verbal and cyber bullying. Pupils and parents say bullying and bad behaviour are rare. Pupils are confident that staff will take good care of them and quickly resolve any issues that do occur. Staff reported that behaviour is well managed and that the school is 'like a sanctuary' for children.
- Pupils have regular opportunities to develop their understanding of healthy lifestyles. They know how to keep themselves healthy. They enjoy activities such as learning in the outdoor classroom and participating in the play activities organised by older pupils in the school.
- Older pupils are encouraged to be role models of good behaviour for younger children. Pupils are proud to take on roles of responsibility to lead and support younger pupils to learn and develop. For example, there are active school councillors, punctuation police, Minnie Vinnies, who are a part of the Saint Vincent De Paul Society; faith friends and health ambassadors.
- In April 2018, a representative from the Leeds Mind Mate scheme from Leeds city council carried out a 'diagnostic review' of support for pupils' emotional health and well-being. It confirmed inspectors' findings that the school is child-centred with a strong pupil voice. Leaders are rightly proud of their award as a 'mind mate friendly' school.
- The school's work in personal, social and health education and in religious education is

having a positive impact on pupils' attitudes to, and respect for, one another's differences. Leaders ensure that they prepare pupils for life in modern Britain and the links with other countries and cultures are strong. However, younger pupils are less secure about people's different life and relationship choices which tend to only be taught in Years 5 and 6.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils from different age groups get along well together. They play energetically, but safely, at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive and girls are particularly diligent. Pupils work hard, concentrate well and persevere when they find work difficult. They listen attentively in lessons and settle quickly to their work. Most pupils take a pride in their work and present it neatly.
- Established routines ensure that pupils enter school at the start of the day, after playtime and after lunchtime in a quiet and orderly manner. This leads to a calm and prompt start to lessons. Pupils work hard to achieve their rewards for working conscientiously and behaving well.
- Pupils are polite and courteous when talking to adults and one another. They are friendly and welcoming to visitors. Doors are routinely held open by pupils for adults and other pupils to pass through.
- Leaders know individual pupils and their families well and use a wide range of strategies to tackle absences, particularly those which are unauthorised. As a result, attendance is improving and is currently broadly in line with the national average.
- The school is becoming more successful in establishing productive relationships with parents to enable them to gain a greater understanding about how they can help to improve their children's learning, particularly in the early years.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Phonics is taught well. A higher proportion of pupils than seen nationally consistently achieve the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check. By the end of Year 2, all pupils achieve the expected standard in the phonics screening check.
- In 2017, the proportion of Year 2 pupils achieving the expected standard in mathematics was above the national average. A favourable proportion of boys also achieved the higher standards. Boys' outcomes in reading and writing, however, were well below those of girls and few pupils achieved at greater depth.
- In 2017, the proportion of key stage 2 pupils achieving the expected standard in reading was at the national average. This represented an improvement on the previous year. Disappointingly, outcomes in writing and mathematics were below the national average, having declined from 2016. Boys' progress in writing was well below average and reflected the slow progress made by those who joined the school in Year 6 in 2017.
- While pupils' outcomes in mathematics, at the higher standard, improved, the

proportion doing so remained below the national figure. There is more to be done to ensure that the most able pupils achieve as well as possible in reading, writing and mathematics.

- School leaders and governors took timely and decisive action to exploit the expertise of staff and reorganised classes accordingly. An extensive training programme was implemented with assistance from the local authority and the local cluster of schools. These and similar initiatives had an immediate impact to rapidly improve the progress of pupils across the school and particularly in Year 5 and Year 6.
- The joint and in-depth checks of current pupils' work carried out by inspectors and subject leaders demonstrate that the vast majority of current pupils are making much better progress in both English and mathematics this year. This includes disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- A greater proportion of the most able pupils in upper key stage 2 are making the progress of which they are capable. However, the progress of the most able pupils is inconsistent across the school. Some staff do not have high enough expectations of this group of pupils.
- Pupils' skills in information technology (IT), writing and mathematics are being developed well in other areas of the curriculum. For example, Year 6 pupils' writing and IT skills were developed well in religious education as part of the school's Judaism week. Pupils researched and wrote at length about the types of food eaten by those of the Jewish faith.
- The curriculum is designed and built around themes which meet the needs and experiences of pupils well. Pupils are making good progress in the acquisition of skills in a range of subjects, including geography, history, science and music.
- Pupils who are currently in Year 6 are being prepared very well for their move into key stage 3 in September.

Early years provision

Good

- Early years provision is well led. School leaders have worked hard to address the issues raised at the time of the last inspection. The experienced leader of early years now has an accurate understanding of the strengths in the early years, but also where further development is needed. Staff are now given clear direction to the planning and provision for children's learning in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- Children often start school with low scores on some of the baseline assessment aspects, particularly in language, communication and personal and social skills. The early years leader makes sure that staff know the starting points of individual children and provide rich learning experiences which help children to develop their skills quickly.
- Staff understand the individual needs of children well, especially children who are disadvantaged, have SEN and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. Links to the local Forest School are particularly beneficial to these children. Staff seek relevant support from external agencies when needed. As a result, these children make rapid progress from their starting points.
- Early years assessment and monitoring systems are robust and accurate. Activities are

carefully designed to take children's learning forward in all areas, especially communication, language and literacy. Children show a high level of engagement and sustain concentration for lengthy periods because activities are tailored well to meet their individual needs.

- Children in the Reception class are already developing their reasoning skills in mathematics and the most able enjoyed solving true/false statements about the properties of three-dimensional shapes. They thoughtfully investigated if cuboids can be curved and experimented to see if only spheres could roll.
- The teaching of phonics is effective as a result of the structured approach implemented successfully by the English leader. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and accurately model sounds and allow pupils to practise these in lessons.
- The school has rightly identified writing as a priority; early writing is planned and taught skilfully. Teachers expect children to apply the skills they have learned independently and this was evident in the observations undertaken by the inspectors. Children in the Reception class confidently used their phonics knowledge to write signs for the superheroes' house and they could write 'Superman' and 'Spiderman' accurately. Nursery children reacted excitedly when they found dinosaur eggs and wrote enthusiastically about them.
- At the end of the Reception Year, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development remains below the national average. This reflects the range of children's starting points on entry to the school. The early years leader has also identified reading skills and understanding of what pupils have read as a priority to improve outcomes. This is preparing current children better for the curriculum in Year 1.
- The school has extensive evidence to show that children catch up quickly and are now making good progress from their starting points across all areas of learning. Children are positive about their learning. Adults skilfully encourage children to ask questions, listen respectfully and cooperate with each other. Adults have consistently high expectations. Consequently, children quickly develop the skills to become successful learners.
- Leaders have established a culture in which children's safety and welfare are protected at all times. Adults ensure that safeguarding procedures are followed rigorously. Children are taught how to keep themselves safe in the classroom and beyond.
- The early years leader makes sure that children's transition into the school is smooth. Relationships with families are good. Parents value the information they receive from the school about the progress their children make.

School details

Unique reference number	108030
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	10047618

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	231
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kath Walpole
Headteacher	Stephanie Flaherty
Telephone number	0113 232 9031
Website	www.ourladys.org/
Email address	s.flaherty@ourladys.org
Date of previous inspection	16–17 September 2014

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The majority of pupils come from a White British background.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium funding is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above that seen nationally. An average proportion of these pupils have an education, health and care plan.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors undertook a series of short, focused visits to classrooms and longer lesson observations in each class. A number of these were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- Formal and informal discussions took place with senior leaders, including governors, subject leaders, pupils, parents and two representatives from the local authority.
- Documentation relating to the school's website and safeguarding, including the record of recruitment checks, was scrutinised.
- The school's self-evaluation, plans for improvement and analysis of current pupils' attainment and progress were evaluated.
- Inspectors, together with senior and middle leaders, scrutinised pupils' work in different subjects.
- Inspectors listened to several pupils read individually.
- Pupils' behaviour was observed by inspectors in lessons and during break and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors considered the nine parents' responses to Ofsted's free-text service and the 18 parental responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors spoke with parents and considered the school's own surveys of parents' views. Inspectors also took account of the responses to questionnaires from 17 members of staff and 35 pupils.

Inspection team

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