

# Inspection of a good school: Our Lady's Catholic Primary School, Princethorpe

Leamington Road, Princethorpe, Rugby, Warwickshire CV23 9PU

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Inspection date:

16 November 2021

## Outcome

Our Lady's Catholic Primary School, Princethorpe continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Our Lady's is a welcoming and friendly school. Staff and pupils told inspectors they love their school. The staff are experienced and dedicated people. They are focused on providing the best possible education for pupils. Pupils think their school is fantastic. They say that behaviour is very good and that there is no bullying.

Staff are managing the ongoing challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic well. Supporting pupils' well-being and maintaining a focus on teaching the curriculum have been priorities. A rich programme of clubs and extra-curricular activities have resumed for all pupils.

A very large number of parents expressed their thanks and praise for the school's work during the inspection. Several families specifically wanted to share how well they felt induction to the early years has been managed this year. One parent's feedback summarised the views of many others: 'This isn't just a school. It is a family too, and we all support one another'.

The headteacher has a strong understanding of what is working well and the next steps for school development. Other leaders and managers, including governors, make up a very capable team. Leaders have worked hard to design a rich and coherent curriculum. However, the knowledge that pupils learn in some subjects is not as well defined as in others and some of the books that pupils take home to practise their phonics are not closely matched to the sounds they are learning.

## What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have continued to review and renew the curriculum since the last inspection. There is now greater clarity about what is taught and why. For example, mathematics plans set out the content to be taught from early years to Year 6. Staff are particularly alert to the importance of pupils securing key number facts. New strategies have also been introduced to ensure that these facts are revisited frequently by pupils so that they

can be recalled with ease. As some of these strategies are relatively recent initiatives, they are not yet fully embedded. Leaders intend that these new strategies will also guard against the need for more general additional support in later years.

Greater coherence of curriculum plans has been achieved in other subject areas. For example, in history leaders have introduced overarching questions to help organise key aspects of each historical period. Pupils look forward to learning this knowledge and most are able to remember and explain the information they have been taught. However, the knowledge that pupils will acquire is not set out in sufficient detail in some curriculum areas. As a result, some of the answers that pupils provide to subject specific questions can lack sophistication. Pupils have the capacity to learn an even richer level of knowledge.

The ongoing development of reading is central to the school's work. Staff have built up considerable expertise in the teaching of phonics. As a result, children get off to a flying start with their early reading. Teachers track pupils' progress carefully. They offer additional support to any pupils that fall behind. During national lockdowns phonics teaching was prioritised. Special sessions were recorded for families and resources were sent to homes. This focus helped the school maintain momentum. Despite these strengths, some of the books that pupils take home to practise their phonics are not closely matched to the sounds they are learning.

Pupils' behaviour is strongly positive. They are very keen to learn; they have a thirst to find things out and share what they do. Incidents of poor behaviour are very rare. Older pupils enjoy and benefit from the responsibility of 'buddying up' with younger pupils. There is a strong family feel throughout the school.

There are lots of opportunities for pupils to attend clubs and wider enrichment activities. The school's gardening club provided the whole school with sunflowers and runner beans in the summer term. Pupils can also join the school's basketball, tennis and football clubs. The lunchtime chess club, which is run by pupils, even has a waiting list.

The headteacher and her senior team have a very organised and effective approach to supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders work well with outside agencies to understand pupils' needs and establish the right support.

Leaders and governors are dedicated and aspirational. They keep a close eye on day-to-day development and are quick to identify what can work even better. They are proud of the school's Catholic ethos and are committed to threading their values and faith through all areas of provision. Staff say that they are proud to work at Our Lady's. They feel strongly that pupils are kept safe and that leaders take account of workload.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are appropriately trained and prioritise pupils' welfare. Any concerns about pupils are shared with the right people and acted upon quickly. Leaders were able to evidence the actions that they have taken to safeguard pupils and support families effectively.

The school has a programme of personal, social and health education that teaches pupils how to stay safe. Older pupils that spoke to the inspection team have a strong awareness of this programme. They know exactly who they can go to if they have any worries.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Some subjects in the wider curriculum do not include sufficient detail about the exact knowledge that pupils will learn over time. Consequently, pupils' answers to some subject specific questions lack sophistication. Leaders should further review curriculum plans so that they include the rich detail that pupils are capable of learning and including in their work.
- Some of the books that pupils take home to practise their phonics are not closely matched to the sounds that they are learning. This can have a detrimental impact on the progress that pupils make. Leaders should ensure that all books match to the respective stages of the phonics programme that pupils are on.

## **Background**

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2012.

## **How can I feed back my views?**

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

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| <b>Unique reference number</b>             | 125721   |
| <b>Local authority</b>                     | Warwickshire   |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                   | 10200034   |
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Primary  |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Voluntary aided  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 3 to 11  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 105  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body   |
| <b>Chair of governing body</b>             | Peter Griffin  |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Rachael Batson   |
| <b>Website</b>                             | <a href="http://www.ourladysrc.warwickshire.sch.uk">www.ourladysrc.warwickshire.sch.uk</a> |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>         | 15 September 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005                               |

## Information about this school

- The school appointed a new headteacher in September 2019.
- Our Lady's is a Catholic school and received a section 48 inspection of its denominational education and collective worship on 10 and 11 July 2017. The school's next section 48 inspection will be within eight years of the last inspection.
- The school offers before- and after-school childcare which is managed by the governing body.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- During the inspection meetings were held with the following leaders: governors, a representative from the Archdiocese of Birmingham, the headteacher, the acting assistant headteacher, subject leaders and the business manager.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and history. Deep dives entailed: a meeting with senior leaders to understand their aims and rationale for

overall curriculum design; meetings with subject leaders to explore long- and medium-term thinking; visits to lessons to see the curriculum in action and consider the activities chosen by teachers; a review of work in pupils' books; and discussions with pupils and teachers about their experience and understanding of the curriculum.

- Inspectors reviewed responses to staff and pupil surveys. Inspectors also took account of responses, including written free-text submissions to Ofsted's questionnaire, Parent View.
- To determine the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed: the single central record; met with the designated safeguarding lead to discuss record-keeping and training; talked to staff about safeguarding training and how pupils are taught safety through the curriculum; and reviewed exclusion and attendance records.

### **Inspection team**

Jonathan Keay, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Heather Fearn

Her Majesty's Inspector

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