

Inspection of Our Lady's Roman Catholic Primary School

Oxford Road, Cowley, Oxford, Oxfordshire OX4 2LF

Inspection dates: 29 and 30 March 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Staff know each pupil well and want the best for them. Every pupil receives a warm welcome when they arrive each day. Pupils know that leaders want them to succeed in their learning but also develop as rounded individuals. They learn to understand the school's 'RUAH' values of respect, understanding, affection and humour. These are at the heart of everything that happens in the school and help to establish a strong sense of community.

Pupils treat each other with respect. This is developed right from the early years where pupils learn to work and play together cooperatively. They feel safe in school because they are well looked after. When there are misunderstandings, pupils appreciate the fact that adults help them to understand their differences and sort out any problems.

Pupils like that their teachers make their lessons enjoyable and memorable. Many parents told us that their children feel happy to attend school each day and commented on the positive and friendly atmosphere. The school's ethos is well summed up by its mission statement: 'you are young, you are precious, you are loved'.

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

Leaders are driven by the strong moral purpose that no child should be limited by their background or additional needs. They are ambitious about what all pupils can achieve from the moment they arrive at school in the early years. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). These pupils are identified as quickly as possible and effective support is put in place so that they can access the same learning as their peers.

Leaders have thought carefully about how pupils' learning starts in the early years then builds gradually through to Year 6. In some subjects, for example English, science and mathematics, leaders have thought precisely about what pupils learn and in what order. Pupils can talk in detail about their learning in these subjects and make connections between ideas and topics. However, this is not consistently the case in all subjects, for example in history. Leaders recognise what they need to do in these subjects to ensure that the curriculum is further developed. In key stage 1, leaders have rightly focused on identifying and addressing gaps in pupils' knowledge arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. This approach is having a positive impact, particularly on the quality of writing for all pupils including those with SEND. Although this work has been effective, it has resulted in fewer opportunities for pupils to consolidate their learning in the full range of subjects.

Leaders have rightly made reading a top priority in the school. They have provided training to staff so that they have expert knowledge of how pupils learn to read. This is clear in lessons where teachers deliver precise and effective reading

instruction. This work begins straight away in the early years including the nursery. The books that pupils take home allow them to practise what they have learned in class but also develop a passion for reading. If pupils are struggling to read, they are helped to catch up quickly with their peers. Strong teaching of early reading means that the majority of pupils in the school continue to be confident and enthusiastic readers once they have mastered the basics.

There are a range of opportunities for pupils to engage in extra-curricular clubs and opportunities. Leaders are in the process of restoring these following the pandemic. Pupils have the opportunities to take on roles in the school such as 'eco-leaders', sports leaders and RUAH leaders. Pupils take pride in these roles because they understand the positive impact they can have on their school. Leaders have created a culture in the school which celebrates the diversity of the local community. This has resulted in an inclusive environment where children are taught to embrace their differences and value everyone equally.

Leaders recognise how hard their staff work. They take this into account when introducing new ideas or initiatives. Staff know there is an expectation to do a good job for the pupils, but also feel grateful that leaders promote healthy work-life balance. Leaders work alongside the multi-academy trust (MAT) and other partners to provide high quality professional development. This includes highly effective support for teachers new to the profession.

Governors and trustees are knowledgeable and have an accurate understanding of the school. Governors support improvement in the school by challenging and supporting leaders regularly. They rightly have confidence in their school leaders who demonstrate a relentless focus on improving the standard of education for all pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders understand the pupils and families in their community. They talk with parents regularly and offer high levels of support. They ensure that all staff are trained in identifying and referring safeguarding concerns. As a result, staff are knowledgeable and log concerns even if these seem minor. Leaders take swift and effective action when required. This includes referrals to external agencies if appropriate.

Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe. They are particularly knowledgeable about how to stay safe online. They know that there is somebody they can talk to in school if they feel worried.

Leaders carry out the necessary pre-employment checks on adults in school. They keep accurate and up-to-date records that are checked regularly by governors.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have considered the development of skills in foundation subjects, but they have not always planned out precisely what pupils will learn and when. As a result, pupils' learning is not always coherent in these subjects. Leaders should continue with their plans to refine the curriculum in foundation subjects so that learning is as effective here as in the core subjects.
- Pupils in key stage 1 are not always given sufficient opportunities to consolidate their learning in foundation subjects. As a result, some pupils are not confident when recalling and talking about what they have learned. Leaders should make sure that what pupils learn in the foundation subjects in key stage 1 is reflected in the quality of work that they produce.

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

Unique reference number	139477
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10227900
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	305
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Paul Concannon
Headteacher	Tara Davies
Website	www.ourladyscowley.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	3 and 4 May 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has a nursery provision for children from age three. This has been opened since the last inspection.
- The school does not currently make use of any alternative provision.
- This school has a religious denomination: Roman Catholic.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with leaders, including the headteacher and representatives of the governing body and MAT.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in four subjects: reading, mathematics, history, and science. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work.
- Inspectors met with safeguarding leaders, looked at records and policies relating to safeguarding and talked to pupils, staff and governors about this aspect of the school's work. Inspectors also reviewed the school's employment checks on staff.
- Inspectors met with pupils and parents to discuss their views of the school and took into consideration survey responses.
- Inspectors also met with a wide range of staff and took into account their responses to the confidential staff survey.
- Inspectors reviewed and scrutinised a range of the school's documentation, including leaders' plans for improving the school, minutes of governing body meetings, and records of attendance and behaviour incidents.

Inspection team

Chris Ellison, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Sue Keeling

Her Majesty's Inspector

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