

INSPECTION REPORT

OUR LADY OF LOURDES PRIMARY SCHOOL

Yardley Wood, Birmingham

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103430

Headteacher: Mrs Bernadette O'Shea

Reporting inspector: Mr John D Eadie
20191

Dates of inspection: 24 - 26 June 2002

Inspection number: 198570

Short inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Trittiford Road
Yardley Wood
Birmingham
West Midlands

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Pat Cassidy

Date of previous inspection: 10 November 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Our Lady of Lourdes Primary school is a Catholic Voluntary Aided school in the Yardley Wood area of Birmingham, taking pupils from four to 11 years of age. There are 316 pupils on roll, of whom 47 are under the age of five in the reception classes. The vast majority of the pupils are of white British heritage and only two do not speak English as their first language, neither of whom is at an early stage of learning English. The pupils come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds, reflecting the diversity in the area. Ninety pupils are eligible for free school meals, a proportion rather higher than the national average. There are 52 pupils on the school's special education needs register, rather fewer than one would expect in a school of this size. These pupils have a range of special needs, including moderate learning difficulties, emotional and behavioural difficulties and speech and communication difficulties. Only one pupil has a statement of special educational need. Attainment on entry to the school is rising and is now just above average, as most children have attended the new parish nursery situated in the school grounds.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School is a very good school. Although standards have been variable over the years, the pupils are now achieving well. Standards of behaviour and the pupils' attitudes to their school and their work are very good. The quality of teaching and learning is very good, and leadership and management are very good overall. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- The school is very well led and managed
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good
- The school provides a particularly broad and relevant curriculum for all pupils
- The school makes very good provision for the pupils' personal development, and the pupils consequently have very good attitudes to their school and their work and behave very well
- There are very good procedures in place for assessing and keeping track of the pupils' progress in English and mathematics

What could be improved

These areas for improvement should be read in the context of this being a very good school; they do not represent weaknesses, rather they are pointers to refine further the very good practice that already exists.

- The targets set for progress for those pupils with special educational needs
- Systems of assessment in subjects other than English and mathematics
- The facilities for the physical development of the pupils in the reception classes

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in November 1997 and has made very good progress since then. This progress has been particularly good in the last year, largely due to the new management team within the school. All the key issues from that report have been addressed very effectively. For example, the quality of teaching has been raised significantly. Although standards have been variable over the years, procedures put in place during the last year are already beginning to have a positive impact and standards seen in Year 5, for example, are very good. The school has a culture whereby it looks critically at its own work and, consequently, is very well placed to identify areas for development and act upon them.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
English	A	C	B	A	well above average A above average B
mathematics	A	D	C	A	average C below average D
science	B	D	C	A	well below average E

Standards in recent years in the national tests in Year 6 have been variable, although standards have generally been just above the national average. Statistics show that the group which took the tests in 2001, made good progress, based on the standards attained in 2001 in comparison with their scores in the tests in Year 2 in 1997. Standards in the national tests in Year 2 have also been variable. The judgement of the inspection is that standards in English, mathematics and science are average at the end of Year 2 and above average at the end of Year 6. A number of procedures has been put in place to raise standards and these have only recently begun to make an impact. Some very good work was seen during the inspection in these subjects in a number of year groups. Very challenging targets were set for the pupils' performance in the tests for 11 year olds in 2001 and these targets were met. Standards of work seen in information and communication technology are above average at the age of 11, a significant improvement as raising standards in this subject was a key issue in the last inspection report. Some outstanding work in art and design was seen around the school. Much of this is as a result of the termly art and design and technology week that the school holds, and the opportunities that the pupils have to work with visiting artists. Overall, the pupils achieve well through the school.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The pupils have very good attitudes to their school and their work, often expressing genuine disappointment when lessons end.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in and around the school is very good. There have been no exclusions in recent times.
Personal development and relationships	The pupils' personal development is very good and relationships are excellent at all levels within the school.
Attendance	The school has put in place a number of procedures to improve rates of attendance. These have been successful and the rate is now in line with the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Very good	Good	Very good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. Three quarters of the 31 lessons observed were good or better, and over half were very good or better. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. The teaching of English and mathematics is very good and the skills of literacy and numeracy are very well taught. A particular strength of the teaching in these subjects is the very effective way the teachers plan and adapt the national strategies to suit the needs of their pupils. The teachers have particularly high expectations of the pupils' abilities to perform and the pupils respond very well to these expectations, working very hard and conscientiously. The teachers make very good use of resources to interest and involve the pupils. Teachers have excellent relationships with their pupils, and this helps in their very good management of their classes as they create a calm and orderly environment in which the pupils find it easy to learn. The excellent relationships are reflected in the teachers knowing and meeting the needs of their pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, very well. In almost all lessons, the pupils are given very good knowledge of their own learning, as what they are expected to learn during the lesson, is displayed on the board throughout. The teachers almost always return to these objectives at the end of their lessons so that the pupils can judge how effectively they have learnt. The vast majority of lessons progress at a very good pace, ensuring the pupils work very productively.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a particularly broad, interesting and relevant curriculum for the pupils. A very good range of visits out of school and extra curricular activities significantly enhances the curriculum. An area for development is that there is insufficient outdoor space to enable the teachers to plan for the physical development of the children in the reception classes.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good provision is made for those pupils with special educational needs. Their needs are identified early and they receive good support in lessons. However, most of the targets in their individual education plans are not specific enough.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good provision is made for those pupils with English as an additional language, and they are quickly able to take a full part in all school activities.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good provision is made for the pupils' personal development. The Catholic ethos of the school is very evident in all areas of school life. Very good procedures are in place to encourage good behaviour, and initiatives, such as the School Council, are ensuring very good social development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares very well for its pupils. The procedures for keeping track of the progress of the pupils in English and mathematics are particularly good, although there are few systems for recording progress in other subjects.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides excellent leadership for the school, and her deputy and the senior management team very ably support her. Curriculum coordinators have been given very good levels of responsibility and have begun to take a significant role in raising standards in their subjects.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their responsibilities well. They are knowledgeable, very supportive and are kept well informed.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school is very good at evaluating its own strengths and areas for development. A particular strength within this is the monitoring and development of teaching and learning. The school is well aware that the areas for development identified in this report need to be addressed.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses all resources available to it very well and successfully applies the principles of 'best value'.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers expect their children to try their best Teaching is good Their children are making good progress Behaviour is good The school is well led and managed The school is helping their children become mature and responsible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Levels of homework The range of activities outside lessons Information they receive about their children's progress

As will be seen in earlier sections of this summary report, the inspectors wholeheartedly agree with the parents' positive comments. With regard to the areas that some parents would like to see improved the judgement of the inspection team is that:

- levels of homework are satisfactory and homework makes a good contribution to the pupils' learning
- there is a very good range of activities outside lessons
- parents receive satisfactory information about their children's progress

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The school is very well led and managed

- 1 The headteacher, who has only been in post for just less than a year, gives excellent leadership to the school. She has a very clear view of what needs to be done to raise standards and her excellent management skills have ensured that the staff share her vision for the school. The comparatively new senior management team is an excellent support, offering a range of expertise and experience, and considerable enthusiasm and determination to improve. Procedures have been put in place in the last year, which are already beginning to have a positive impact on standards. For example, the needs of the higher attainers have been a focus and some very good work has been done to ensure that these pupils are now achieving very well. Standards in science have also been identified as an area for development and the judgement of the inspection is that standards in science have at least caught up those in English and mathematics.
- 2 Curriculum coordinators have been given considerable responsibility for standards in their subjects. Both coordinators and management have carried out a great deal of monitoring to evaluate and raise standards of teaching and learning. This monitoring has been very focused on raising standards of teaching and learning; to quote one coordinator, "We do not carry out monitoring for monitoring's sake, it has to have a purpose and an impact." This is all part of the evaluative culture within the school, which ensures that all that is done is examined for effectiveness. The staff work very much as a team towards this end and the school's strategy for performance management has aided this drive towards improvement. The fact that the school is very aware of all the areas for development identified by the inspection team is further evidence of the quality of leadership and management within the school.

The quality of teaching and learning is very good

- 3 The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. In over half of all lessons observed from a range of classes throughout the school, the teaching was very good or better. The teachers have particularly high expectations of the pupils' performance. The pupils respond very well to this and almost always try their hardest and maintain high levels of concentration. For example, in a literacy lesson in Year 2, the teacher had planned her questioning with high expectations of the pupils of all ability levels. When they moved on to their written task, she continued these challenging questions as well as providing stimulating tasks for the various ability groups. The pupils responded to these challenges very well and put in a lot of effort, concentration remaining high through the lesson.
- 4 The teachers make very good use of resources in their lessons. This is not just true in practical subjects such as science, but also in other subjects. For example, in a history lesson in Year 4, the teacher had brought in from her home a wide range of her own china and pottery mugs, plates and dishes. She used these very well to help the pupils to realise that a great deal can be learnt about the owners from artefacts. For example, her family's love of cats and their participation in golf and tennis. This activity was then very well linked to the task for the lesson which was to see what could be learnt about the Greeks from artefacts. The interest and enthusiasm of the pupils ensured that very good learning took place in this lesson.

- 5 The teachers manage their classes very well. This classroom management stems from the excellent relationships that exist within the school. The teachers create a calm and purposeful working environment in which the pupils find it very easy to learn. This was observed in almost all lessons seen. Another common feature of almost all lessons was the involvement of the pupils in their own learning. In every lesson seen, the teacher displayed the objective for learning for the lesson on the board, and attention was drawn to it at the beginning of the lesson. In almost all lessons the teachers returned to the objective at the end of the lesson and, in some, even expected the pupils to evaluate the quality of their own learning.
- 6 Lessons almost always progress at a very good rate. The pupils take up the pace set by the teachers and their learning also progresses quickly. The introductions to lessons are almost always carried out slickly, with questions and answers snapping back and forth. In many lessons, the teachers give their pupils opportunities for brief and focused discussion times. For example, in a science lesson observed in Year 1, the teacher gave the pupils several opportunities to have 30 seconds discussion with their neighbours. These brief sessions not only gave the pupils independence in their own learning, but the time limits set increased the pace of both teaching and learning.

The curriculum

- 7 The school offers a particularly broad, rich and relevant curriculum for its pupils. Although a proper emphasis has been placed on the core subjects of English and mathematics, this has not been at the expense of other subjects. For example, the quality of work seen in subjects such as art and design, geography and history is ample evidence of the breadth of the curriculum offered. The freedom that the teachers are given to teach subjects in depth, without the constraints of a rigid weekly timetable, ensure that skills and knowledge are taught thoroughly. This gives the pupils a depth of knowledge and understanding that ensures that this is retained. The system of setting for English, mathematics and science ensures that the teachers are more easily able to suit work to the abilities of the pupils that they are to teach. However, they do not treat their groups as being of equal ability, ensuring that all pupils receive work appropriate to their needs. A particular strength of this is the provision made for those pupils with particular gifts and talents. A number of pupils in each year group have been identified as having these special needs and a very well planned programme has been put in place to meet their special needs, resulting in their achieving very well in relation to their abilities. The provision for those pupils with special educational needs has also improved significantly in the last two years and their needs are now met well.
- 8 A further strength of the curriculum provision is the termly art and design and design and technology week. This enables the pupils to tackle a project in depth, and complete and evaluate it in a short time span. The quality of the art seen around the school is ample evidence of the success of this initiative. The work in art and design is enhanced by a number of opportunities to work with resident or visiting artists. The product of these experiences has significantly enhanced the quality of the environment in the school. For example, the playground has been decorated with some most attractive murals created by the pupils in conjunction with a parent. In one of the main corridors there is an impressive wall hanging, created with an artist who had spent a long time in Kenya. The curriculum for the pupils in the reception classes is equally rich, the teachers work together to develop a very varied range of experiences for these children.
- 9 A very good range of extra curricular opportunities enhances the curriculum. These include a wide range of sporting opportunities for both boys and girls, and the school is

very successful in inter school tournaments in a variety of sports and games, such as Gaelic football and sailing. There are also clubs in a range of creative areas, such as drama, art and music. Trips out of school and visitors into school give pupils further opportunities to extend their learning and experiences. For example, this term each year group has been to a science exhibition in Birmingham. The curriculum is also enhanced by links with schools in other countries, for instance as part of the Globe project, which is an international project with European countries on weather.

The pupils' personal development

- 10 The school makes very good provision for the personal development of the pupils. This results in the pupils' very good behaviour and their very good attitudes to their school and their work. The atmosphere of mutual respect and care that exists in the school is evident from all members of the school community, the school's Catholic ethos underpinning all. The very clear discipline policy is fully understood by all the pupils and the school was an extremely happy and very orderly place during the time of the inspection. The school has introduced a number of procedures to enhance the pupils' social development. For example, as well as introducing a school council, the school has also put in place a programme of lessons in personal, social and health education and lessons in citizenship. These are all helping to create responsible young citizens.
- 11 The pupils take a pride in their school and have very good attitudes to their work. Their pride in their school was exemplified by the way in which they spoke of the opportunities they are given and of the care and concern shown to them by the staff. Their attitudes in almost all lessons seen were very good. They work very hard and are keen to do well. In more than one lesson seen, there was genuine disappointment amongst the pupils, and the teachers, when the bell went for the end of a session.

Assessment in English and mathematics

- 12 There are excellent systems for assessing the attainment and progress of the pupils in English and mathematics. These systems have been developed by the relatively new assessment coordinator, and give the school very valuable management information, as well as enabling the teachers to monitor the progress of their pupils very closely. The teachers record very clearly the attainment of each pupil each term, referenced to the levels of the National Curriculum. This enables them to see which pupils might be in need of more help and which are making better than the expected progress. These records, although only in place this academic year, have already been used to target specific help for some pupils and raise their standards of achievement.
- 13 The records of assessment have enabled the teachers to set clear targets for improvement for the pupils. In a number of classes, these targets are referred to in the teachers' marking of the pupils' books. The best practice is seen when the pupils are also involved in the evaluation of their progress towards these targets. As, for example, when one sees in a book, "I am able to adapt the vocabulary that I use." The teachers are also setting individual targets for the pupils' progress each term, and these targets are sent home so that parents are kept informed of what their children need to work on.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The targets on the individual education plans of pupils with special educational needs

- 14 The targets in the individual education plans for those pupils with special educational needs are not sufficiently specific. In many cases, they do not give the teachers clear guidance on the specific skills that these pupils need to work on next. The individual education plans do not contain any criteria by which the teachers can measure the progress towards the targets; neither do they contain any short term review dates. This all makes it difficult for the teachers to measure the progress of the pupils with special educational needs.

Assessment in subjects other than English and mathematics

- 15 There are no formal recorded systems of assessment for science such as; for example, a simplified version of those used for English and mathematics. The teachers therefore find it more difficult to keep track of the pupils' progress in this subject. Similarly, there are no systems that record the skills learnt in other subjects. This means that teachers in the pupils' future classes are unsure of exactly what the pupils have achieved in terms of their development of skills in these subjects.

Provision for physical development for those pupils in the reception classes

- 16 Although the school has recently made an outside space available for the children in the reception class, this is not big enough to enable the teachers to plan effectively to enhance their physical development. There is insufficient space for large equipment, or for the children to engage in ambitious play projects.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to continue to raise standards, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- (1) ensure that the targets in the individual education plans for those pupils with special educational needs are specific, achievable in the short term, and measurable
- (2) continue to work towards producing systems of assessment so that the pupils' progress can be monitored in all subjects
- (3) in conjunction with the Diocese and the Local Education Authority, ensure that outdoor facilities are available to enable the teachers to plan effectively for the physical development of the children in the Foundation Stage.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	31
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	13

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	15	9	6			
Percentage	3	48	29	19			

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than three percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	316
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	90

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	52

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	4

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	16
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	17

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.1
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.5
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2001	23	18	41

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	19	20	23
	Girls	16	15	18
	Total	35	35	41
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (88)	85 (93)	100 (98)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	20	23	19
	Girls	16	18	15
	Total	36	41	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (91)	100 (95)	83 (95)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2001	27	26	53

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	24	23	26
	Girls	25	20	26
	Total	49	43	52
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	92 (76)	81 (67)	98 (84)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	19	23	25
	Girls	20	20	25
	Total	39	43	50
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	74 (76)	81 (78)	94 (78)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	
Indian	3
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	297
Any other minority ethnic group	13

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	15.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.1
Average class size	26.3

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	138.75

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White		
Other minority ethnic groups		

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	742,461
Total expenditure	770,823
Expenditure per pupil	2,336
Balance brought forward from previous year	45,362
Balance carried forward to next year	17,000

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1.3
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	316
Number of questionnaires returned	140

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	62	30	7	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	63	35	1	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	51	42	4	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	36	37	21	4	3
The teaching is good.	71	28	1	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	54	29	16	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	65	26	5	3	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	88	12	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	46	39	13	1	1
The school is well led and managed.	65	24	4	1	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	72	22	6	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	37	30	17	9	7

Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding