



Our Lady's RC Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 116883
LEA Herefordshire
Inspection number 279932
Inspection dates 22 November 2005 to 23 November 2005
Reporting inspector Martin Kerly RISP

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary	School address	Boycott Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Hereford
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Herefordshire HR2 7RN
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01432 274814
Number on roll	212	Fax number	01432 276467
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Father Martin Donnelly
Date of previous inspection	22 May 2000	Headteacher	Mr Huw Evans

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 22 November 2005 - 23 November 2005	Inspection number 279932
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

There are seven classes in this average sized Roman Catholic voluntary aided school. Most pupils come from a residential area of Hereford with growing levels of social deprivation. The proportion of pupils entering school with learning difficulties and disabilities has recently increased to above the national average. Almost all pupils are from White British families with very few from minority ethnic groups. Five pupils who are learning English as a new language are given extra support.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school makes satisfactory provision for pupils and gives sound value for money. It has a broadly accurate view of its effectiveness but has been over-generous in its judgement on provision and leadership when considering the academic achievement by the pupils which is satisfactory. The school has improved well in many areas previously reported as weak and has secure capacity to improve further.

Pupils' personal development is good throughout and pupils are well cared for and supported. Provision in Reception is good and here children make good progress.

The achievement of pupils in Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory overall. Good progress is made by the significant proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. However, the progress by pupils of average and above average ability is not consistently as good as it should be. Teaching is satisfactory and has a number of good features. However, there are two aspects in need of improvement: the match of activities to different ability groups and the marking of pupils' work. These features slow the progress for average and above average attainers. By the end of Year 2 their achievement should be better in writing and in mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school has good partnerships with others to assist pupils' well-being. There are effective systems in place for checking the school's performance but the findings from these and other key decisions are not always carefully recorded. This makes further monitoring and consistent application of agreed procedures more difficult.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement in writing and mathematics, particularly of pupils of average and above average ability.
- Improve the quality of teaching by consistently offering a better match of work to pupils' different abilities and more detailed marking of their work.
- Ensure clearer records are kept to summarise findings from monitoring the performance of the school, the key decisions made and agreed ways of working.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Many children enter Reception with abilities below national expectations, particularly in personal, social and emotional development, and communication, language and literacy skills (CLL). They achieve well during the Reception Year in all areas so that their attainment on entry to Year 1 is broadly in line with national expectations, except in aspects of CLL where it remains below.

Achievement in Years 1 to 6 is steadily improving and is satisfactory overall. Results in national tests at the end of Year 6 show standards broadly in line with the national average in English, mathematics and science with most pupils attaining the expected levels for their age. The significant proportion with learning difficulties and those few

with English as an additional language achieve well in all three subjects. Relatively few pupils exceed national expectations and a significant proportion of more able pupils do not progress as fast as they should, particularly in mathematics in Years 3 to 6 and in writing in Years 1 and 2. Progress in mathematics is good by the end of Year 2 with standards above the national average. In writing too many pupils make limited progress by the end of Year 2 and in Years 3 to 6 progress by average and above average pupils is too variable, ranging from excellent to unsatisfactory.

Most pupils in Year 6 achieved their challenging targets in 2005. Targets for 2006 have been raised, and most pupils are on track to reach them, indicating an improvement in achievement.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development has improved significantly since the previous inspection and is good. The whole-school approach leads to good behaviour and sound attitudes to learning by all pupils, including the increasing numbers who arrive in school with challenging behaviour and a poor self-image. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. Their cultural development is satisfactory, although there are few planned opportunities to strengthen pupils' understanding of Britain's diverse cultures. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory and they enjoy lessons.

Pupils have a good awareness of diet and physical fitness to promote healthy lifestyles and are keen to improve the quality of school dinners. Almost all enjoy the extensive sports programme and the Healthy Week and 'Huff and Puff' schemes. The school has the Sports Active Gold Award. Pupils feel safe and are confident about whom to approach with a problem and that they would be listened to. They play an active part in the school. Many are given responsibilities to which they respond very well, for example, by being part of the very successful buddy scheme. The school councillors take their roles very seriously. These experiences are contributing well to the development of important personal skills needed for the next stage in their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. They are good in Reception. Here teachers and teaching assistants work closely with children's parents and carers. They effectively observe and assess children and provide a good range of stimulating activities carefully matched to the children's needs and interests.

In Years 1 to 6 teaching is satisfactory and has a number of good features. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well establishing a calm learning atmosphere in lessons. They frequently provide interesting activities linking several subjects. However, there are two aspects in need of improvement: the match of work to different abilities and how well it is marked. The match of work to the abilities of different groups, needed

to promote good learning, is not consistent. In a few lessons it is good, but in too many situations work is not sufficiently matched, with all pupils beginning at the same point and the more able pupils not being fully challenged, and, on rare occasions, less able pupils struggling to participate. The skilled teaching assistants work effectively, particularly when supporting pupils with learning difficulties and physical disabilities. Well chosen activities based on good assessment enable these pupils to progress well. Overall assessment is satisfactory during lessons, at the end of units of work and the end of each year. Teachers are involving pupils in assessing their learning but marking of work is frequently superficial with too few comments in pupils' books on how well they are doing and what they need to do next.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The reception curriculum is good with carefully planned and integrated activities that interest the children. Teachers make good use of the limited outdoor facilities to extend the range of activities.

The curriculum in Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory. Previously reported shortcomings have been addressed and there is sound coverage of the National Curriculum although an absence of clearly written guidance on agreed long term curriculum planning leads to some variation in approach between classes. A review of the curriculum is under way with good innovative developments being trialled that include extending work across different subjects to help pupils make better links between subjects and develop key skills such as problem solving. The use of information and communication technology across the curriculum is now satisfactory. A long period of difficulties with hardware had, until very recently, reduced pupils' opportunities to use computers. Provision for pupils' personal, social and emotional development is good throughout.

The extensive range of visits and visitors to the school, club activities for pupils in Years 1 to 6, and residential visits to London in Year 5 and France in Year 6, very successfully enrich the pupils' experiences.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

This aspect is a cornerstone of the school's philosophy and is much improved on that reported by the last inspection. The staff team knows the pupils and their families well and works effectively with them and outside professionals. Vulnerable pupils and those with particular problems are supported very well throughout the school day. Child protection and health and safety procedures are good and pupils feel safe and well supported. Pupils are encouraged to care for one another, which they do well. Annual reports to parents give a clear picture of their children's progress and steps needed to improve. Most pupils know their own short term targets although there are few references to these by teachers when marking work. Improved use of performance data supports the tracking of individual pupils' progress and is used to help guide their academic and personal development.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has successfully established a shared vision for the school where all pupils are valued for their individual gifts and helped to flourish emotionally, spiritually and academically. This promotes the pupils' good personal development and satisfactory but improving achievement. He has worked effectively to help those in leadership roles to develop their skills. The Foundation Stage and learning support teams are well led, leading to good provision and progress in these areas. The school works successfully in partnership with others to promote pupils' well-being.

There is effective monitoring of teaching by members of the leadership team with useful and constructive feedback. There is also improved use of performance data to help track the progress of individual pupils. However, the school does not formally confirm the focus for some monitoring nor always pull together the emerging patterns obtained, in order to strengthen decisions on how best to improve performance.

The school does not keep adequate records of all monitoring and planned actions. Consequently individual staff and the school are not always clear about key decisions and school policy. This results in a lack of clarity and some inconsistent application of procedures, and it makes monitoring of developments more difficult.

Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities satisfactorily. They are led well by a chair who has a detailed knowledge of the school community. He works closely with the headteacher in key decision making and is supported well by a core group of governors. The written records of their discussions and actions are not always sufficiently detailed to inform their subsequent work.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Our Lady's RC Primary School Boycott Road Hereford HR2 7RN

25 November 2005

Dear Children

As you probably remember, a team of two inspectors visited your school recently to find out how well the school is doing. Thank you for making us feel welcome. We enjoyed talking with you and seeing some of your work.

We are pleased to say there are many things that are good about your school, but there are also some things that need to get better. Here are some of the most important things that we found to be good.

- Children in the Reception class quickly settle into the school and do well in their work.
- You behave well and support and care for each other.
- Those of you who find your lessons difficult are helped really well so you can make good progress.
- All members of staff make sure you are safe and help you when you have problems.
- Teachers make sure you have lots of interesting visits and activities.
- Your headteacher has worked very hard to improve the school.

We have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to work on these things together.

- Help you to do even better in English and mathematics.
- Make sure that teachers give you work that is neither too hard nor too easy and when they mark your work show you how you can improve.
- Make sure someone keeps written notes of meetings and decisions about what needs to be done to make the school even better.

Yours sincerely

Martin Kerly Lead inspector