



Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic First School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 116909
LEA Worcestershire
Inspection number 279942
Inspection dates 12 July 2006 to 13 July 2006
Reporting inspector Brian Holmes AI

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

Type of school	First	School address	Downsell Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Webheath
Age range of pupils	4 to 9		Redditch, Worcestershire B97 5RR
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01527 546398
Number on roll	284	Fax number	01527 404523
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	
Date of previous inspection	8 May 2000	Headteacher	Mr Tony Tamburro

Age group 4 to 9	Inspection dates 12 July 2006 - 13 July 2006	Inspection number 279942
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Our Lady of Mount Carmel is a larger than average Catholic first school in Redditch. It is a popular school and pupils come from all over the town because of its distinctive Christian ethos. There are lower than average levels of mobility in and out of the school. Similarly, there are lower than average proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and of pupils with learning difficulties. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is broadly at the level normally expected on entry to the Reception year.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Our Lady of Mount Carmel is a good school with outstanding features, which provides good value for money. The inspectors' agree with the school that overall effectiveness is good. However, pupils' personal development and well-being, provision for the curriculum and pupils' care, support and guidance are all outstanding. The school has excellent links with other schools and outside agencies in promoting pupils' academic and personal well-being.

Pupils' progress is good and the standards they attain are above average and improving. Progress and standards are good in the Foundation Stage because of the good quality of provision. Standards and progress are also good in the rest of the school. Teaching and learning are good across the school which, together with an outstanding curriculum, ensures pupils achieve well. Information and communication technology (ICT) and literacy are both well developed in other subjects helping to make learning opportunities relevant and stimulating. These strong features of provision result in pupils' clear enjoyment of school and excellent attitudes to learning as well as outstanding behaviour. However, pupils' knowledge and understanding of other cultures is not as well developed as it might be. Whilst pupils achieve well and attain above average standards, not enough boys reach the higher levels in writing. In mathematics, not enough pupils reach the higher levels in Year 4 compared to reading and writing.

Leadership and management are good. Self-evaluation procedures are accurate and focus clearly on raising pupils' standards and achievements. The effective systems for checking the performance of the school and tracking pupils' progress towards their targets are having a direct influence on pupils' standards and achievements. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection and the capacity to improve further is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to focus on improving the proportions of pupils attaining the higher levels in mathematics throughout the school, and of boys attaining the higher levels in writing in Year 2.
- Continue to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of other cultures.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils enter the school with levels of attainment that are broadly in line with those normally expected for their age. In all stages of their learning, pupils make good progress and achieve well. Almost all children reach the standards expected at the end of the Reception year and a good number exceed them. Standards are also above average at the end of Years 2 and 4. These standards represent good progress in relation to the pupils' starting points in Years 1 and 3 respectively. In the national assessments in Year 2, standards are consistently above average year on year. Standards

in reading are a particular strength of pupils' attainment throughout the school. Although pupils are doing well at the end of Year 2, fewer boys than girls attain the higher levels in writing. At the end of Year 4, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher level in mathematics is not as good as in reading and writing. Pupils with learning difficulties, and the few who are from minority ethnic groups, make good progress and achieve well.

The school sets itself challenging targets, which it meets well. Rigorous target-setting is having a significant impact on improving all pupils' progress and achievement. Targets are shared well with pupils and translated into measurable steps that enable them to know what to do next.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have a clear understanding of how they should behave and care for others to create a happy and purposeful community. Whilst there are many outstanding features to their spiritual, moral and social development, their knowledge of modern multi-cultural society is a less well developed area.

'School is fun and I enjoy learning' is a view expressed by many pupils. This is seen in their excellent behaviour and attitudes to learning, and the fact that no pupil has been excluded from school. Attendance and punctuality are both good. Pupils are also very clear that bullying is rare and are sure that they feel safe. They have regular opportunities to talk about their feelings and know that any concerns raised with adults will be listened to.

Through the strong promotion of sport and the healthy eating policy pupils have a good understanding of how to live healthily. They make a good contribution to the school community. Members of the recently established school council have already made improvements to playtime games and facilities. The pupils' gain confidence from feeling valued, the strong sense of community, and the very good relationships they form all help to prepare pupils well for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good, with outstanding teaching in Years 3 and 4. The very good relationships with pupils and good use of teaching assistants enhance pupils' learning well. There is a good balance in lessons between teacher-led and pupil-focused activities. The use of ICT by teachers is a strength of many lessons. A sufficiently broad range of teaching and learning approaches is used to engage pupils and sustain their interest; for example, when pupils talk through different story beginnings with a partner. Teachers plan well to meet a range of

different abilities in lessons, a good example of which was seen when higher attaining pupils were challenged to use 'powerful words' in their poems.

The use teachers make of assessment to help pupils to improve their learning is outstanding. In all classes, teachers refer to pupils' learning targets both in lessons and through their marking. This helps pupils to improve their work and has a positive impact on their attitudes to learning because they can see the progress that they are making. The school itself has recognised the need to sharpen aspects of teaching to improve pupils' achievement further, particularly boys' writing and in mathematics, where efforts are being made to improve the effectiveness of teaching problem solving skills.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school provides an outstanding curriculum which fully meets all requirements. The needs of all pupils, including those who are gifted and talented, are well met and the quality of support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is outstanding. In the Foundation Stage, a very good range of activities and strategies helps children develop independent learning and build up their personal and social skills, although there is no secure outdoor area yet. However, opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding of other cultures are less well developed.

Personal, social and health education feature prominently in the curriculum and this makes a strong contribution to pupils' personal development and well-being. The activities that resulted in a recent healthy schools award coupled with the wide range of sports opportunities ensure that pupils are encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyles. National awards in arts, sport and healthy schools contribute to the richness of the curriculum and the provision and take up of extra-curricular activities are excellent. There is very good provision for literacy, numeracy and ICT across the school. The use of literacy in other subjects to give pupils opportunities to write at length, such as history, is outstanding.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, support and guidance are outstanding. This outstanding provision begins before the youngest children start school, with home visits for children with learning difficulties and disabilities. A real strength is the way the school works with other education and health professionals and the parish to provide consistency and to meet families' needs. The school's mission 'Everyone is welcomed and feels valued' is evident in all its practice. The procedures for pupils' health, safety and security are all fully in place. The school is fully accessible to disabled pupils.

All pupils are given effective support to adopt healthy lifestyles and are taught about healthy eating. Pupils feel safe and have trusted adults to whom they can talk about any worries. There are very good arrangements to support academic progress. All pupils

have targets for English and mathematics. They clearly understand their targets and say that having the targets helps them to improve by knowing what to do next.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management of the school are good. A strength is the outstanding work of the headteacher, supported by a committed and effective leadership team. All staff share a clear vision of how the school should develop and improve further. The school leadership has led the way in tackling the issues from the previous inspection, continuing to raise standards and improve pupils' progress. It has contributed well to the school's capacity to improve. The initiatives to raise standards are having a positive effect on pupils' achievements and personal development. There is good equality of opportunity for all pupils to succeed and achieve well. The thorough checking of pupils' performance and target-setting for individual pupils are particularly successful. The impact that these systems are having is particularly evident in pupils' achievement in reading and writing in Years 3 and 4.

The school does a lot to gain the views of both parents and pupils and acts positively on the information gained; for example following pupils' suggestions to improve playtime games. Parents have very positive views of the school and they have confidence in its work. The school makes accurate judgements about its own performance and areas for improvement based on clear evidence from monitoring and evaluation. The governing body performs its duties well. All statutory requirements are met and governors are actively involved in checking the work of the school and in its planning for the future.

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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?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	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?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	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?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	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?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	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

Thank you for being so welcoming and helpful when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking with you and hearing what you had to say about the school. You told us a lot about what you like and what you would like to see improved. We really liked looking around the wooded area with your dens, 'Blackbeard's Revenge' and the haiku poems pupils were writing in Year 4. We were really impressed by how well all of you know your learning targets in English and mathematics.

These are the main things we found that your school does well:

- You behave extremely well and enjoy your time in school.
- You have excellent attitudes to your learning.
- The school provides you with a lot of interesting activities.
- You achieve well in your lessons and make good progress.
- Your teachers teach you well and take extremely good care to keep you safe and healthy.
- Your headteacher is helping the school to get better all the time.

In addition, there are a couple of things that we have asked your headteacher and the rest of the staff to improve so that the education you receive at Our Lady of Mount Carmel is even better than it is now.

- To help some of you to reach even higher standards in your work in mathematics.
- To help some of the boys to do even better in their writing.

With best wishes for the future.