

Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School (NC)

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103430
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	286657
Inspection dates	20–21 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Hazel Callaghan

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	313
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Vacant Position
Headteacher	Bernadette O'Shea
Date of previous school inspection	24 June 2002
School address	Trittiford Road Yardley Wood Birmingham B13 0EU
Telephone number	0121 4442684
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Our Lady of Lourdes is an average-sized school that takes its pupils from across the local parish. Most pupils are of White British origin but a growing number are from other countries and minority ethnic groups. An increasing number do not speak English as their first language. There is only a small number at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils identified as having learning difficulties and disabilities is slightly above the national average. Since the last inspection, the school has opened its own Nursery, which is combined with the Reception class to form a Foundation Stage Unit. Children begin school with a wide range of knowledge and skills but their standards are generally below those expected for children of Nursery age.

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 Lourdes is a good school that is steadily improving under the outstanding leadership of the headteacher. A strong Catholic ethos underpins all aspects of the school's work and is reflected in the good provision for pupils' care, support and guidance. Pastoral care is excellent and all pupils feel well supported, respected and secure. Their personal development is good. Spiritual, social and moral development is exemplary. Pupils enjoy their lessons and are well prepared for the next stage of learning and the world of work. They have a good understanding of how to keep safe and how to develop a healthy lifestyle. They readily take on exercise and sport, as can be seen from their many sporting successes, but they admit they are not as quick to make healthy eating choices.

Achievement is good. Children make a positive start to their learning because the provision in the Nursery and Reception classes is good. They make good progress in all aspects of their learning. This good progress continues through the school because of consistently good teaching and learning. Pupils reach above-average standards by the end of Year 6. Standards and progress in English are a real strength because positive strategies for developing good writing skills have been introduced and pupils now have a clear understanding of how to improve their written work. Standards in mathematics have not been as strong as in English but are improving rapidly as teachers' skills and knowledge are further extended. The curriculum is good and enhanced by many additional activities. The headteacher has enabled specialist teachers to lead the teaching of information and communication technology (ICT), art and physical education, which has raised standards in these subjects. The school has started to use the natural links between subjects in pupils' work but they recognise more could be done to further enrich pupils' enjoyment and skills. For example, ICT could be used more to support pupils' learning in other areas of the curriculum more effectively.

Leadership and management are good overall. The headteacher is well supported by a strong senior team. Well-established procedures for monitoring the work of the school support their accurate judgements about the school's effectiveness. Successful strategies are employed to address any concerns. Governors are well informed and manage the school budget well. They are not yet involved in directly monitoring the work of the school and over-rely on information from the headteacher and staff. This has been recognised as an area for improvement and plans are being made to extend the governors' monitoring role so they can then be more involved in strategic planning. The staff work very well together and there is a clear commitment to continue raising standards. Based on the good improvement since the last inspection and the strong commitment of staff, the capacity for further improvement is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Use the natural links between subjects to develop the school curriculum and further improve pupils' learning.
- Develop the monitoring role of governors so they have a clearer view of how the school works and can be more involved in strategic planning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well through the school. Children settle into the Nursery quickly and good progress is made in their personal and social development. Good progress continues through

the Reception year and most children are working within the standards expected when they enter Year 1, with the more able children often reaching above-average standards. For the last two years, standards have been broadly average by the end of Year 2. This represents good achievement in relation to pupils' starting points. Good progress continues in Years 3 to 6 and pupils reach standards that are above the national average. Standards in English have improved throughout the school because of the successful focus on this subject. In mathematics, standards have not been as strong but much-improved teaching is already having a positive impact and pupils are on track to meet challenging targets. Pupils with English as an additional language make similar good progress to their peers and those with learning difficulties and disabilities also make good progress towards their individual targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils greatly enjoy coming to school and one described it as 'outstanding'. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent, with particular strengths in the first three aspects. Pupils show good levels of care, support and empathy for others. Pupils' attitudes to their tasks are good. They work hard and they show very good levels of interest and motivation to learn. Attendance is slightly above average. Behaviour is good, especially in lessons and around the school. Pupils have no concerns about bullying, knowing that if incidents do occur, they are quickly addressed. Pupils readily accept responsibilities. In Year 6, for example, pupils confidently work as peer mediators, and in Year 5, pupils act as 'playground pals'. Pupils are proud of their school and they value the opportunity to improve it further. The school council, for example, has been instrumental in providing brown-bread toast at morning break, and new bicycle racks to support the new 'Travel Plan'. Pupils also respond readily to supporting numerous charities and parish initiatives. Their contribution to the community is good.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching is consistently good throughout the school, and is successful in promoting good achievement by most pupils. Excellent relationships between staff and pupils characterise much of the learning. Activities are based upon clear learning objectives which are tailored to the needs of individual pupils. Assessment and teachers' knowledge of their pupils are good, and teachers convey clearly to pupils how successful they are in their learning and what they must do to get better. This is more effective in verbal feedback than in teachers' marking, which is not yet consistent throughout the school. Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge and recent training in mathematics has enabled pupils to make better progress. Class management is good, and teachers use a combination of humour, good resources and high expectations to enhance learning. The majority of teachers are particularly successful in developing pupils' speaking and listening skills. This will improve even further when all teachers' questions encourage pupils to speak at greater length and more clearly. Teaching assistants are well trained and make a good contribution to all pupils' learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is being continually developed to take account of the needs of the pupils in the school. Personal, social and health education is a strength of the curriculum and continues to be improved. The recent formation of a Foundation Stage Unit has been successful in developing a well-balanced curriculum for these young children. The needs of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those learning English as an additional language are well met so they make good progress. The school has also made an effective start to the identification of and provision for gifted and talented pupils. The strategies used to extend pupils' thinking skills are having a positive impact on pupils of all abilities. Creative use of staff has led to the successful improvement of the provision for ICT, physical education and in art. A number of imaginative links are being made between subjects that stimulate pupils' interest but this is still in the early stages of development and ICT is yet to be a consistent factor in supporting and promoting pupils' learning across the curriculum. The range of additional activities, clubs and sports is also good and significantly enriches both pupils' knowledge and their personal and social development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils are highly valued as individuals and so feel safe, very secure and well cared for. All procedures for safeguarding the pupils are well established and effective. One parent wrote, 'It is clear that every child matters'. Any pupil who is vulnerable, unhappy or unsure is given tremendous support so they can succeed. It is not just the children who matter. The headteacher actively ensures the well-being of all her staff as well. This process underpins the excellent relationships throughout the school. The school has worked successfully with parents to raise the level of attendance and reduce the number of holidays taken in term time.

Academic support and guidance are good. The attainment of all pupils in reading, writing and mathematics is checked carefully and targets for future attainment are regularly set and reviewed. Targets are shared with pupils and this supports their good progress because pupils recognise what they have to learn next. When there is concern about any pupil's progress, additional support is provided. The work of pupils with learning difficulties is systematically monitored and effective targets for their next steps help them to achieve well. Although the current systems work well, the school is introducing a computerised system that will enable them to monitor the progress of groups of pupils even more effectively.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Managers at all levels through the school provide good leadership for their areas of responsibility. The headteacher provides very good levels of support and encouragement for all staff. The positive deployment of roles and responsibilities has resulted in the formation of a very effective team who have high expectations for themselves and the pupils. One parent wrote, 'The continuing striving for improvement is a real testimony of the dedication of the team'. Comprehensive systems for checking on pupils' progress and in monitoring the work of the school have provided senior leaders with a clear view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Successful initiatives have been introduced that are raising staff expertise and

improving both pupils' personal development and good learning. Governors are kept well informed by the headteacher. Some are developing a positive dialogue with co-ordinators and are gaining a greater insight into their management of subjects. Governors discuss the school improvement plan carefully and often ask challenging questions about its impact when evaluating its value for money but they are not observing for themselves how developments are progressing. The governors have recognised that this is the next step in their own development.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

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

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

I am writing to say thank you for making us feel welcome in your school and for helping us with our questions. We really enjoyed chatting to you and found everything you said very interesting. I thought you would like to know what we found out about your school.

- What we liked about the school.
- It is a good school where you are happy and enjoy your lessons.
- You get on exceedingly well with each other and with the adults in the school.
- You behave well and are very friendly and kind to each other.
- You try hard to do well in your work.
- Teaching is good and teachers do all they can to help you be successful in your work.
- You understand the importance of keeping healthy and safe and you make positive choices about exercise but not always about healthy eating.
- You are good at taking responsibility such as being 'playground pals'.
- All the adults in school look after you exceptionally well and help you feel safe.
- There are lots of activities for you to enjoy after school.
- The school is led exceptionally well by your headteacher.
- What we have asked the school to do now.
- To link subjects together as part of the same project so you gain better understanding and enjoy your lessons even more.
- For governors to try and find time to visit you in your lessons to see what you are doing so they understand more about the school and how it can improve even further.

Thank you again for helping us and for being so friendly and polite.