

Our Lady and St Kenelm RC School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103850
Local Authority	Dudley
Inspection number	286788
Inspection date	14 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Linda Rockey HMI

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	214
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bruce Dutson
Headteacher	Jayne Brock
Date of previous school inspection	4 February 2002
School address	Bundle Hill Halesowen B63 4AR
Telephone number	01384 816880
Fax number	01384 816881

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school serves mainly children of Roman Catholic families from the parish of Our Lady and St Kenelm and other neighbouring parishes. A small minority of pupils travel from outside the local area. Most pupils are of a White British background, with small numbers who are Irish, Indian, Black African or of dual heritage. Few pupils are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils identified as having learning difficulties is below the national average. The school offers an on-site, before-and after-school club. This provision was inspected separately in June 2006.

The school gained the Healthy Schools award in May 2007. In 2006, it was re-awarded the Arts Mark Gold standard. It is a leading school in the Halesowen Networked Learning Community.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Our Lady and St Kenelm RC School provides pupils with an outstanding education. It is true to its mission statement: 'Bringing out the best in everyone for the benefit of all in the Spirit of Christ'. The school's distinctive Catholic ethos creates a caring, accepting atmosphere in which every child really does matter. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school and proud of its reputation for reaching the highest standards whilst providing individual care for their children. One parent's comment summed up many of those written on the questionnaires: 'This is an exceptional school with wonderful, caring leadership and staff who go beyond the call of duty. Our son has flourished here'.

The school has maintained its high standards since the last inspection. Pupils of all abilities make excellent progress as they move through the school, as a result of an excellent curriculum that stimulates pupils' interest, outstanding teaching, high expectations and detailed understanding of each pupil's background. When they start in Reception, most children have knowledge and skills typical for their age. They settle in very well and the large majority reach the goals expected of them by the end of their first year; a few exceed them. They do particularly well in their social and emotional development. By the end of Year 2, standards are well above the national average and they are exceptionally high by the end of Year 6. The quality of care, guidance and support is excellent. The school keeps detailed records about individual pupils' progress and uses them very effectively to identify any uneven progress during the year. Small group teaching arrangements, led by part-time teachers and well-trained teaching assistants, are used very effectively to provide additional support where necessary.

Leadership and management are excellent. Leadership is shared effectively and the headteacher actively seeks to make the most of individual staff talents, bringing the best out of each teacher and teaching assistant. The staff team is supported extremely well by the governing body. School self-evaluation, although understated in some areas, is secure and used effectively to drive improvement. As well as successfully tackling concerns about boys' writing, the school accurately recognised that standards in science dipped in 2005. Pupils at the end of Year 6 were not doing as well in the science national tests as they were in English and mathematics. The leadership team took action to address this. As a result, they improved in 2006 and, based on school leaders' ongoing assessment, the school is predicting a significant further improvement this year.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Children at Our Lady and St Kenelm develop into articulate, confident young people, well prepared for the next stage in their education and keen to make a contribution to the society in which they live. They have a growing understanding of diversity issues and show real respect to those classmates from different backgrounds. That said, the school acknowledges that more could be done to fully prepare them for life in a multicultural society.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase pupils' awareness and understanding of the implications of living in a multicultural society.
- Make more use of adults during whole-class sessions to develop partnership teaching

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

All pupils, whatever their background or ability, make excellent progress as they move through the school. Right from the start in Reception, their progress is tracked and targeted support is provided to meet their individual needs. As a result, by the end of Year 6, standards are consistently above average and exceptionally high in English and mathematics. Evidence of pupils' excellent progress was seen in the quality of work in their books and on display. Pupils who speak English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties and or disabilities make very good progress because of the quality of the focused teaching they receive. Pupils also demonstrate high standards, skills and confidence in art.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral and social development, is outstanding. Pupils really enjoy their time at school. As one remarked, 'We do a lot of fun things here'. They have exemplary attitudes to learning; they arrive on time, are keen to start work and behave impeccably. Their social skills develop very well and they have plenty of opportunities to take responsibility. The school acknowledges that children in Reception would benefit from more opportunities to choose from well structured activities to initiate learning for themselves. Older pupils act as Playground Pals and successfully organise activities for all pupils at lunchtime. They provide very good, responsible role models. Pupils approach them if they have any concerns and they play an important role in helping to sort out minor squabbles. Pupils show a well developed understanding of how to keep safe and move around the school maturely and safely. They understand about healthy lifestyles and the school council has made sure healthy eating is a priority, and this is consistent with the school's recent Healthy Schools' award. Pupils also talk with authority about the importance of exercise. Skills important for their future success, such as taking responsibility for their learning and showing initiative, develop very well and are reinforced through the school's expectation that pupils are actively involved in checking their learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Pupils are taught extremely well and make excellent progress. Lessons are very well planned and work is carefully matched to pupils' differing abilities. Teachers make learning fun by including plenty of practical activities. In Year 6, a practical science investigation was used very successfully to further develop pupils' understanding of light using work originally designed for Year 7. In Year 2, lively teaching challenged the pupils to interpret mathematical data and use the appropriate vocabulary to explain their findings. The high quality of individual assessment means staff know the pupils very well. They are quick to spot pupils who have not fully understood what is being taught. Additionally, pupils are encouraged to say if they do not understand and staff are quick to react; changing their teaching method or giving individuals extra time or support. Teachers have benefited from the Halesowen Networked Learning Community which has provided good professional development to augment their subject knowledge. A committed team of teaching assistants plays a significant role in fostering

consistently good learning, for example by effectively supporting pupils for whom English is an additional language. The school acknowledges that more use could be made of adults during whole-class sessions to develop partnership teaching. Relationships are very good, and pupils readily turn to adults for help and advice.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding and stimulates pupils' interest in learning a wide range of subjects, including French. Reception children benefit from a good range of learning activities, including those planned for the outdoor classroom. The curriculum is enriched by regular visits and visitors. Pupils throughout the school talked enthusiastically about their class trips to places such as a castle and an environmental zone. They remembered visits from a Roman soldier, a lace maker and a storyteller. Links between subjects are developed very well. For instance, history is used effectively to develop writing skills. In response to their concern about the standard of boys' writing, the staff purchased a new selection of non-fiction books which is successfully re-engaging boys in reading and writing. Following feedback from parents about sex education, the school has introduced a new published programme which is used in conjunction with parents. During the week of the inspection, the school received a local authority award for the high quality of out-of-hours provision for pupils in Years 1 and 2.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school cares for and supports pupils extremely well. Each individual is well known to the staff and this was borne out by the parents in their responses to the questionnaire. Children quickly settle into the Reception class, from several different settings, because of the effective induction arrangements. There are very robust arrangements in place for risk assessment, child protection and health and safety. Pupils are very clear about how well they are doing because marking and target setting are used consistently by all staff and include a meaningful dialogue with pupils about their next steps. Pupils are expected to evaluate their own work and this gives them a very good sense of how to improve. Detailed tracking of individual pupils means teachers know their individual strengths and weaknesses exceptionally well. Consequently, targets are precisely matched to pupils' individual needs and they make excellent progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. The key to the school's success is the way the governors, parents and staff work together as a team. The headteacher is a thoughtful, reflective leader committed to developing leadership at all levels to maintain high standards of education and care. She has very good knowledge of the quality of teaching and learning in each classroom. Ongoing assessment of each pupil is at the heart of the school's work and so any underachievement is identified early and acted on. This ensures the needs of all pupils, including the most vulnerable, are met. School self-evaluation is central to the school's development. The school is not complacent and continually strives to improve. An example is the plan to review and evaluate the race equality action plan in light of increasing numbers of pupils attending the school from minority ethnic backgrounds. The school improvement plan is sensibly focused on a few actions but lacks sufficiently measurable outcomes. Governance is of a high

quality. The chair of governors, who is the parish priest, knows the school and its community very well. He is well supported by a keen and able body of governors who successfully hold the school to account.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

15 June 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Our Lady and St Kenelm RC School, Halesowen, B63 4AR

Thank you for welcoming me into your school and for being so friendly. I enjoyed talking with you and finding out about what you think about your school. Your parents think you go to an excellent school and I agree with them. I have judged that Our Lady and St Kenelm RC School provides you with an outstanding education.

Here are some of the highlights.

- You really enjoy learning, work hard and make excellent progress.
- The adults know you very well and take extremely good care of each one of you.
- You are taught very well and adults are always ready to give you extra help and support if you need it.
- Playground Pals help you to enjoy good, fun activities at lunchtime.
- You behave exceptionally well and work collaboratively.
- Your art work is of a very high standard. I particularly liked the wall tiles and water colour paintings.
- You are part of one big family. Everyone helps to make your school special - cooks, cleaners, teachers, adult helpers, parents and governors.
- Worship is very important to you all. I was impressed by your contemplative singing!

What I have asked the school to improve.

- ?
- I think you should learn more about the range of cultures and beliefs of people who live in the United Kingdom. ?
- Make more use of adults during whole-class sessions.

Thank you for helping me.

Yours faithfully

Linda Rockey Her Majesty's Inspector