

Our Lady of Compassion Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104102
Local Authority	Solihull
Inspection number	286854
Inspection dates	16–17 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Martin James

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	329
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Farrell
Headteacher	Chris Bentley
Date of previous school inspection	15 April 2002
School address	Kineton Green Road Solihull B92 7EG
Telephone number	0121 7069508
Fax number	0121 7645415

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is larger than most primary schools. Most pupils are of White British heritage, although there is a small minority of pupils from other ethnic backgrounds. All are fluent in English. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is just below the national average, and the proportion of those with a statement of special educational need is broadly average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school, where pupils achieve well. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They enjoy school and their behaviour and attitudes are good, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school's care, support and guidance for pupils are good, with the safety of its pupils being a priority. Most parents are very positive about the school as illustrated by one who commented on how much she valued the work of 'a dedicated and caring staff'. Catholic values are emphasised at all times.

Standards are above average, and pupils achieve well. When children start in Nursery their knowledge and skills are broadly in line with national expectations. During their time in the Foundation Stage the children achieve well, reaching and sometimes exceeding the goals set for them. Pupils continue to achieve well in Years 1 and 2, with the result that standards are above average. By Year 6, standards are also above average overall, and this shows good achievement based on these pupils' starting points.

Good teaching is an important factor in pupils' good progress. Relationships are strong, teachers make good use of a variety of resources and strategies to make the lessons interesting and teaching assistants are used well. Most lessons are thoroughly planned, with careful allowance made for the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Similar allowance is not always made for the needs of higher attaining pupils, especially in English.

The good curriculum contributes well to both pupils' enjoyment of school and their learning. Improvements have been made in the provision for both science and information and communication technology (ICT) since the previous inspection, and the school is currently extending its provision by developing the use of cross-curricular links. The curriculum helps to ensure that the pupils are very aware of the need to follow a healthy lifestyle. Pupils are keen to say that they greatly enjoy the good range of visits and extra activities that the school provides.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher, the deputy headteacher and other senior members of staff are a dedicated team, committed to doing the best they can for their pupils. Self-evaluation is effective in identifying where improvement is needed, and this has contributed well to the improvements seen in standards since last year. The current initiative to improve the consistency of marking and target-setting, to provide pupils with better advice on improving their work, is seen as another step towards improving standards. Governors support the school well, and they are presently working to further develop their understanding of performance data. Good use is made of outside bodies, such as sports coaches, specialist science teachers and special needs advisers, in supporting the work of the school. The improvements that have been made recently, the quality of provision currently being provided and the improvements since the previous inspection show that the school has a good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teachers consistently provide challenging levels of work for the more able pupils, especially in English.
- Ensure that teachers use marking and target-setting consistently to help pupils understand how to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are above average and pupils' achievement is good. Children make a good start in the Foundation Stage, and by the end of Reception most attain the levels expected, with some children exceeding them. In Years 1 and 2, pupils continue to achieve well and attain above average and sometimes very high standards.

Present standards in Year 6 are above average overall, with English being broadly average. In 2006, standards overall were broadly average. The school carefully identified the weaknesses in pupils' performance, and addressed most of them successfully during the year, with the result that standards have improved. However, the school recognises that more could still be expected of higher attaining pupils, especially in English.

The school makes good provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, and this is helping them make good progress towards the targets set for them.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Their behaviour is good, and they also have good attitudes to their work. Pupils are courteous and polite, and they really enjoy school, as shown by their good attendance. Pupils feel safe in school, and they report that whilst bullying occasionally happens, the headteacher and other staff quickly 'sort things out'. One pupil typically said, 'We are all friends at OLC.'

Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the community. In school, pupils readily and confidently carry out a wide variety of responsibilities, and, for example, the school council has helped initiate improvements to pupils' toilets. The school is also involved in the wider community, with, for instance, pupils regularly taking part in national and international fund raising and being involved in parish activities.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to live healthy lives, and they benefit from the good opportunities provided by the school for exercise. Pupils' moral, social and cultural development is good overall. However, pupils' spiritual awareness is outstanding, benefiting greatly from the regular opportunities provided for prayer and reflection.

The school successfully develops in its pupils a range of personal skills such as confidence and independence. The good progress that pupils make in literacy and numeracy provides them with a good preparation for their next stage of education as well as later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good, and this helps to ensure that pupils achieve well. Teachers have good subject knowledge, and lessons are well organised, with effective management of both pupils and activities. Explanations and instructions are clear, so that pupils know what is expected of them. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to discuss their work. A particular strength of the teaching is the quality of relationships that are developed between adults and pupils. As a result, pupils are well behaved and keen to learn.

Good support is given to pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Work is adapted to suit their needs, and they receive well-directed help from both teachers and teaching assistants. This contributes well to their good achievement.

The school has a good range of assessment procedures, and the progress that pupils make is carefully checked. However, the information from assessment is not always used well enough to provide suitable work for more able pupils, especially in English. These pupils then find the work lacks challenge. This was also noted during the previous inspection. Teachers provide much ongoing help and advice to pupils about improving their work in class. However, they do not always replicate such advice in comments when marking pupils' books.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum enables pupils to study a broad range of subjects, and this contributes to their good progress. Improvements have successfully been made in the provision for science and ICT since the previous inspection. Links are beginning to be made between subjects to add both interest and relevance to the work covered.

In the Foundation Stage there is a suitable balance between independent learning and more directed tasks, and staff make good use of the improved outdoor facilities. A small number of parents raised a concern about the provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. However, inspection evidence shows that the needs of these pupils are carefully identified, they are provided with a good range of tasks, activities and adult support, and this enables them to achieve well.

There is a good emphasis throughout the school on developing pupils' personal and social skills. The curriculum also makes a good contribution to pupils' safe and healthy lifestyles. There is a wide range of outings, residential visits and clubs that pupils much appreciate and which they support with enthusiasm.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school's care, guidance and support for its pupils are good overall, and this contributes to their enjoyment of school. Adults ensure that there is effective pastoral care. For example, pupils are confident that they have an adult to turn to if they are worried. Child protection procedures are good, and staff are alert to signs that any pupil might be distressed or anxious. Outside agencies are used well to support pupils when a need is identified.

Staff ensure that pupils work in a safe, secure and clean environment. Safety checks and risk assessments are routinely carried out. Pupils are taught about the importance of healthy living, and they are regularly reminded of the need to take care, for instance when doing physical education.

Pupils have targets for improving their work. However, these vary in quality, and discussions with pupils confirm that they are not always clear enough about what they need to do to make their work better. Where this happens it detracts from the quality of guidance.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher leads the school with enthusiasm, expertise and a strong commitment to improvement. The roles of the deputy headteacher and senior leaders, and the responsibilities they are expected to undertake, are much clearer than at the time of the last inspection and senior staff now provide good support. There is a strong sense of teamwork, with an emphasis on sharing the workload. There is a clear desire to make the best possible provision for the pupils, to help them achieve as well as they can and to develop the school still further.

The school has good systems for finding out how well it is doing, including seeking the views of parents. Most parents in turn speak highly of the school, although a very small minority feel that communication with the school could be better. The self-review has accurately identified strengths and areas for development. For example, the work to improve standards in Year 6 has been successful, and the current focus on improving the consistency of marking and target-setting is well chosen. Senior leaders also recognise the need to make sure that the more able pupils are always sufficiently challenged in their work.

The subject leaders for English, mathematics and science demonstrate a clear understanding of their subjects, and they have actively initiated and supported strategies for making improvements, such as in the increased provision for practical work in science. The school is currently working to further develop the leadership skills of leaders of other subjects, for example by providing them with more time to monitor provision in their subjects. Governance is good, with governors, for instance, being fully involved in planning and monitoring the budget and school improvement plan. They are now working to ensure that they all have a secure understanding of school performance data.

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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?	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	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	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	2
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

18 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Our Lady of Compassion Catholic Primary School, Solihull, B92 7EG

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to visit your school. We enjoyed our visit and we enjoyed talking to you. My colleague especially enjoyed talking to the school council, and I enjoyed my visit to the Nursery. I am writing to tell you what we found out about the school, what we think is good, and what we think could be made better. You are in a good school, where you are doing well with your work and where the teaching is good.

Here are some of the highlights:

- You behave well and you help to make the school a happy place.
- You are confident in carrying out your different responsibilities, and you are sensible about making decisions on how to improve your school.
- You enjoy the wide range of extra activities that the school provides, such as visits and different clubs.
- All adults in the school care about you and look after you well.
- You know all about how important it is to eat healthy food and take exercise.

We have also asked the staff to do some things to make the school better:

- Make sure that the work teachers provide for you is hard enough for you all.
- Provide you with more comments in your books, and clearer targets, so that you have a good understanding of what you need to do to improve your work.

We wish you all good luck for the future.

Best wishes

Martin James Lead inspector