



# Our Lady's Catholic Primary School

## Inspection Report

---

**Unique Reference Number** 110479  
**Local Authority** Buckinghamshire  
**Inspection number** 288686  
**Inspection dates** 25–26 September 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Mary Sinclair

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Amersham Road
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Chesham Bois
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11		Amersham HP6 5PL
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01494 726390
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	215	<b>Fax number</b>	01494 726795
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr Peter Kirk
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Michael Corcoran
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	26 March 2001		

---

<b>Age group</b> 4–11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 25–26 September 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 288686
--------------------------	---	------------------------------------

---

---

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

This is a popular and oversubscribed school that draws pupils from a wide geographical area. Almost three quarters of its pupils are of White British heritage. Other pupils are from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. Very few pupils are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD) is below average. Many pupils are socially advantaged and no pupils receive free school meals. There has been a significant turnover of staff in the past two years including the appointment of a new acting deputy headteacher in September 2006. A substantial part of the school was destroyed by fire in 2005 causing significant disruption.

## **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 which confirms the school's view that it provides a good quality of education. The headteacher provides a clear view of the direction in which he wants to lead the school and is well supported by governors. This is a school that knows its strengths and where it needs to improve. Despite a major fire within the last year, standards at the end of Key Stage 2 have improved and issues from the previous inspection have been tackled, demonstrating the school's good capacity for improvement.

Our Lady's has a strong Catholic ethos and this creates a positive learning culture in which all pupils are known and valued as individuals. As one parent said, 'the school engenders a sense of family and community'. Pupils' personal development and well being are good because they are well cared for and feel secure and happy. Pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance is above average and improving. They are polite and hard-working. Basic skills in literacy and mathematics are well developed and contribute effectively towards pupils' future economic well-being.

Pupils achieve well and by the time they move on to secondary education standards are well above average. However, progress through the school is uneven. This reflects variations in teachers' expectations and the extent to which pupils are challenged in the tasks they are set. When given opportunities for independent work pupils respond well. However, teachers' expectations of pupils are not always high enough. The opportunities for pupils to develop their thinking skills are not so consistently in evidence in Foundation to Year 4 as they are in Years 5 and 6 where teaching is strong and expectations high. The identification and support provided for pupils with LDD is good and promotes their learning well. Provision and standards in the Foundation Stage are satisfactory but poor resources and the limitations of the outdoor learning area restrict the progress pupils make.

Standards are rising because there is a shared determination to succeed and a commitment to accelerate pupils' progress. This is monitored well by school leaders to ensure that the school meets its challenging targets. However, as a result of the many recent staff changes, the role and influence of subject leaders in improving teaching and learning is underdeveloped. Few subject leaders are equipped with the skills necessary to monitor and evaluate their subjects with rigour.

The overwhelming majority of parents are pleased with the work of the school and respond positively to opportunities to support their children's learning at home.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Accelerate children's progress in the Foundation Stage by providing more exciting environments for learning
- Ensure that pupils achieve as well as they can by ensuring that they are consistently challenged especially from Foundation to Year 4
- Develop the role of subject leaders in improving teaching and learning and raising standards.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Overall achievement and standards are good. Pupils enter the school with above average skills and understanding. In particular, many have good language skills and social development. They make satisfactory progress and almost all pupils achieve their early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1. Standards at the end of Year 2 are above average and those for Year 6 pupils are exceptionally high. These pupils exceed the ambitious targets set for them in English, mathematics and science.

By the time pupils transfer to their secondary schools they are achieving well. This is in response to good teaching and higher expectations. Pupils with LDD make progress in line with others in their class because they receive good support.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development is good because they benefit from the high priority the school places on its shared values. They are polite and responsive, although occasionally lapses in attention occur when pupils are insufficiently challenged. Pupils play and work well together. They form good relationships with teachers and other adults and develop good attitudes to school. This is reflected in their good behaviour and attendance rates. They feel safe and free from harassment. As one pupil explained, 'There just isn't any bullying here'.

Pupils' spiritual moral, social and cultural development is good. The high profile given to their cultural development helps pupils to value their own and other cultures. Pupils show good awareness of healthy issues. All know the importance of eating a healthy diet. Pupils are keen to take on classroom monitor and other responsibilities and contribute to the wider community through participating in plays and musical productions. Pupils' economic awareness is well developed. The strong focus upon developing literacy, numeracy and team working skills prepares pupils well for their adult lives.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Overall teaching and learning is good and ultimately enables pupils of all backgrounds and abilities to make good progress and achieve well. Teaching is strongest in upper Key Stage 2 because teachers know their pupils well and successfully pitch their lessons to continually extend learning and deepen understanding. The development of links between and across subjects is a particularly strong feature, as is the consistent thread of expectation that pupils take responsibility for their own wider learning. These features are not yet firmly embedded in classes throughout the school. Teaching in

Years 1 to 4 is secure, especially in the way that pupils are effectively taught the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. However, in a minority of lessons the pace of learning slackens because teachers talk at the class for too long, or their questioning of pupils lacks the necessary incisive qualities to probe pupils' understanding and accelerate progress. The work of teaching assistants and other adults makes a significant contribution to the quality of teaching, particularly for pupils with LDD. Teaching in the Reception class is satisfactory. Children are well cared for and supported.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The school's revised curriculum plan supports the provision of both breadth and balance in pupils' learning. The strength of this framework lies in the careful links that are suggested between different subjects already in evidence in some of the teaching in upper Key Stage 2. Wide ranging educational visits and visitors to school support the children's developing understanding of their place in society; locally, nationally and globally. The school's Catholic mission permeates the plan and especially the thorough provision for personal social and health education. A good range of clubs and extra-curricular activities are provided including those managed by local sporting and cultural organisations. The Foundation Stage curriculum is judged to be satisfactory because the emphasis placed upon the development of early literacy and numeracy skills is at the expense of the creative and imaginative aspects of early childhood.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The care guidance and support of pupils is good. Staff and governors create an inclusive community where all feel safe and well cared for. Teachers know their pupils well. Good systems are in to place to monitor pupils' behaviour and attendance.

Pupils' progress is carefully monitored and they receive good support to help them achieve challenging targets. They are also given guidance on setting targets for themselves. However, the setting of targets to help pupils progress in individual subjects, particularly mathematics and literacy, is not consistent throughout the school. Pupils with LDD receive good support. Older pupils receive guidance and feel well prepared for their secondary education. The school works well with other agencies. Parents appreciate the care and guidance provided by the school.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management is good overall. The headteacher, staff and governors successfully minimised the disruption to pupils' learning following a major fire. There is a positive ethos and a strong sense of teamwork in this inclusive school. The headteacher has an accurate understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and has

identified important issues to be addressed. The school's self evaluation is well founded and accurate and the views of parents are sought and acted upon.

Initiatives to bring about improvement and enhance pupils' achievement are beginning to have a positive impact and there is good understanding of how further improvement can be achieved. Although the school is working hard to develop these new initiatives, its processes for monitoring and reviewing their progress are not as well developed as they might be.

The senior management team is being developed satisfactorily following the recent appointment of an acting deputy headteacher. Subject leaders are not sufficiently involved in improving the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects. Leadership of the Foundation Stage is satisfactory, but outdoor facilities and resources for the Reception class are few and limit the scope of children's learning experiences. Governors fulfil their roles conscientiously and provide good challenge and support.

**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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**

## Inspection judgements

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

### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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	3
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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
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**

Thank you very much for welcoming me to your school and for telling me about your favourite activities. You are able to learn in a friendly school where adults take good care of you. You feel safe, behave very well and listen to each other's views carefully. You told me that you enjoy hard work that makes you think.

You are doing well in lessons. You listen carefully, concentrate well and make good progress. However, some of you could do even better. I have asked your teachers to teach you how to think things through for yourselves so that you can do more independent work. I have asked them also to make the Reception classroom and outdoor area more exciting places for children to learn. Your teachers take responsibility for the different subjects that you are taught. I have asked them to make sure that they know how well you are taught and how well you achieve in each subject, as well as making sure that you have the resources that you need.

I really enjoyed being in your school. I hope that in future your school will be even more successful in helping you to do as well as you can.

Yours sincerely

Mary Sinclair

Lead inspector