



# Our Lady of Ransom Catholic Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 115163  
**Local Authority** ESSEX  
**Inspection number** 290149  
**Inspection date** 30 November 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Helen Ranger

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>	Little Wheatley Chase
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Rayleigh
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11		Essex SS6 9EH
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01268785741
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	388	<b>Fax number</b>	01268785167
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr J Sinclair
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr J F O'Brien
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 June 2002		

<b>Age group</b>	<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>Inspection number</b>
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector over one day.

## Description of the school

This is a large primary school serving three Catholic parishes, with about 90% of its pupils coming from Catholic families. A lower than average proportion of the pupils have learning difficulties or disabilities. About 90% of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The remainder come from minority ethnic families and a very small number do not speak English as their first language. When pupils join the school in the Reception classes, their attainment is generally above the levels expected for their age.

The school has recently had an unusually high turnover of staff and seven teachers joined the school this term, but it has been unable to recruit suitably experienced staff to fill two vacancies for senior leaders.

## 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 that has outstanding features in several important areas. Of particular note are the excellent leadership of both the headteacher and the chair of governors, pupils' exceptionally good personal development and the very successful partnership that the school maintains with its parents. The strong bonds between home, school and church ensure that pupils are very well supported in their learning.

Pupils achieve well throughout the school. They make a good start in the Reception classes. By both Year 2 and Year 6, overall standards are generally much higher than the national average, although there was a dip in writing standards in Year 2 this year with fewer pupils than expected reaching Level 3. Pupils of all ages and capabilities make good progress because they are taught well and the curriculum is good. Their personal development and general well-being are outstanding. They have very positive attitudes to learning and their enjoyment of school is reflected in their good attendance. Pupils behave extremely well and most are mature and confident. They have a first rate understanding of how they can lead safe, healthy and fulfilling lives. They take full advantage of opportunities to contribute their views and skills to the school community and are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Teaching and learning are good. The staff turnover this term has been managed well by the school and new teachers are benefiting from being teamed with experienced senior staff. The curriculum is enriched well by activities such as clubs and visits, and staff are increasingly forging links between subjects to make learning more relevant and purposeful. The senior staff make effective use of information on pupils' performance to determine the school's future priorities for action. Revised systems for tracking individual progress have recently been introduced. These systems are not yet established securely enough across the school to give teachers a manageable way of checking even more thoroughly that all pupils are doing as well as they can. The quality of pupils' care, support and guidance is good. Pastoral care is of a high order and the academic guidance for pupils has improved with the introduction of better target-setting and arrangements that involve pupils more effectively in assessing their own learning than in the past.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher is highly respected and provides stability and a very clear vision for the school, assisted well by a good deputy and senior team. The governors do an excellent job. They are active, supportive and questioning and very well informed about how the school works. The new teachers are being trained and encouraged very well by more established staff, many of whom have taken on an extra workload as a result. The school provides good value for money. It has effective systems for checking how successful it is and shows a good capacity to maintain its high standards and to improve further.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Ensure that pupils reach Level 3 in writing by the end of Year 2 if they are capable of doing so.

- Ensure the effective implementation of the improved systems for tracking pupils' achievements in all year groups.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils do well in all areas of learning in the Reception classes, reaching standards considerably higher than those expected nationally for this age group. In Years 1 to 6, pupils also make good progress. The assessments at the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics in recent years have mostly been exceptionally high compared with national averages. However, in 2006 there was an unexplained fall in writing standards when fewer pupils than expected reached Level 3. The school has responded rapidly to this and is monitoring pupils closely to check that they realise their potential. The performance of the Year 6 pupils in the national English, mathematics and science tests has been consistently well above average for the past few years and especially high in English. The school's records for its current oldest pupils indicate that they are continuing to reach standards that are substantially above average.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is an outstanding strength of the school. It results from a caring, purposeful ethos and the staff's high expectations of pupils' conduct. Pupils generally enjoy school, although at times they would like to be more active in lessons and do less passive listening to their teachers. This is an indicator of their zest for learning. They help to organise events enthusiastically, recently running charity fundraising and stalls at the Christmas bazaar and training as play leaders. The school council is a valuable forum for them to share their views and has, for example, helped to spread the message of healthy lifestyles successfully. Pupils' very good academic standards, combined with their mature social skills, give them an excellent foundation for their future lives. Attendance rates are consistently above average but adversely affected by holidays taken during term time. The school is currently working with parents to minimise the disruption this causes to learning.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Good teaching and learning start in Reception where activities are tailored well to the age group and make very good use of both indoor and outdoor space. The staff teams within all year groups work well together. Interesting activities are planned according to pupils' varying needs. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have good quality individual education plans and often receive good additional support from

teaching assistants. Teachers assess pupils' work effectively, particularly in English and mathematics, and use the information gained to inform their planning. The new arrangements for more regular tracking of individual progress have been welcomed by the staff and are contributing to the good quality of education.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum maintains an effective balance between subjects. In addition there is a wide range of themed weeks, extra clubs and visits that pupils enjoy and which add to the quality of their learning. There is good attention to the needs and interests of pupils with particular gifts or talents. There is a very effective programme of activities to promote pupils' personal, social and health education and to develop them as young citizens. High quality outdoor resources are used well, including the swimming pool. The school has rightly identified that it can continue to forge links between subjects to make learning more creative, practical and exciting.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils and parents are justified in speaking highly of the quality of care provided. The school is rigorous in safeguarding its pupils. Those with learning difficulties or disabilities are supported effectively by well-focused teaching and excellent links with parents and relevant outside agencies. The school's extremely successful partnership with parents ensures a continuity of care between home and school. The improving arrangements for assessing pupils' progress have led to good target-setting and feedback systems, so that pupils are clear about how well they are doing and what needs to be tackled next.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Effective leadership and management underpin the school's success. It is especially creditable that the induction of so many new staff has been achieved with minimal disruption to pupils. It is also a tribute to the commitment of the senior team that they have been prepared to increase their workload to ensure that all aspects of the school run smoothly, in spite of the vacancies that remain in two key posts and following the loss of some experienced subject leaders. The spirit of teamwork is strong and staff work well together to ensure pupils' continuing well-being. The systems that the school uses to check its strengths and weaknesses and to plan further developments are rigorous and effective. School governance is outstanding. The governors are very capable and hard working. They carry out their role as 'critical friends' diligently and play a full part in identifying and supporting initiatives. The school has maintained high standards since its last inspection and shows no complacency about the future. It is well placed to continue to thrive and to carry on offering its pupils a good quality of education.



## Inspection judgements

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

<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>	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	2
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

<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	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	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

1 December 2006

Dear Children

Our Lady of Ransom Catholic Primary School, Little Wheatley Chase, Rayleigh, Essex, SS6 9EH

This letter is to thank you for your welcome and help when I visited your school recently. Special thanks go to the group of Key Stage 2 children who gave up extra time to talk to me.

Here are some of the best things I discovered about your school:

- You enjoy school, behave extremely well and get on very well with the adults and other children.
- Your teachers are good and help you all to make good progress in your work.
- By the time you get to Year 6, you are very well prepared for your next school.
- You are lucky to have Mr O'Brien as your headteacher and Mr Sinclair as the chair of governors because they make sure your school keeps doing well.
- You are very good at organising events and learning to be independent.
- You know lots of ways to keep yourselves safe and healthy.
- You told me that you enjoy the ways your teachers set targets with you and help you to find out how well you are getting on with your work.
- Your families and the local churches work extremely closely with the school and that makes sure you are all cared for well.

Your school wants to carry on improving and we have agreed that there are a couple of things the staff should do next:

- Make sure that the children in Year 2 do as well as they can in their writing.
- Your teachers have started to use some new ways of checking how well you do in your work and I would like them to keep using this information when they plan your lessons.

I hope that all your Christmas events went well. Keep on enjoying all your school offers you.

Best wishes,

Mrs Helen Ranger Inspector