

# Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School, Witney

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123205
<b>Local Authority</b>	Oxfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	292610
<b>Inspection dates</b>	22–23 November 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Bernice Magson

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	190
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr David Norris
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Joy Nelson (Acting Headteacher)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 March 2003
<b>School address</b>	Curbridge Road Oxfordshire OX28 5JZ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01993 702480
<b>Fax number</b>	01993 705657

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a small Catholic primary school, which admits children from Witney and surrounding villages. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. On entry, children join the reception year on a part-time basis for their first term. A small number of pupils speaking English as additional language and Travellers attend the school. The headteacher and deputy are temporary appointments. Catholic nursery education is provided on the same site.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school, which has some good and some outstanding features. A team of dedicated staff and governors promotes Catholic values very effectively. Parents appreciate the school's ethos and, as one parent commented, they are 'glad that children are taught Christian values, which are carried with them throughout their time at school'. Pupils greatly enjoy all the school has to offer and their personal development is good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Attendance is above average.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall, and good in Years 3 to 6, for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, and Travellers. From average starting points, pupils attain well above average standards by Year 6. In the latest national tests, more than two thirds of pupils reached the higher Level 5 in English. This is because some teachers address the needs of individuals very well and set challenging tasks. However, there are inconsistencies in pupils' progress across the school. In Years 1 and 2, although most pupils reach national expectations, few are attaining the higher Level 3 in national tests, particularly in writing. As a result, standards by Year 2 are just below average.

Pupils have very good attitudes to their learning and work hard in lessons. Their behaviour is good. Most teaching is satisfactory, although of a good quality or better in Years 3 to 6. In the most effective lessons, teachers use assessment information to engage and challenge pupils appropriately in a variety of learning experiences. In an excellent lesson in Year 5, pupils worked enthusiastically on laptops to complete a quiz about the life cycle of plants. The teacher questioned all pupils extensively and, through her efficient preparation of resources, the learning moved on at a rapid pace. In some lessons, particularly in Years 1 and 2, teacher expectations are not high enough, because assessment information is not used with enough rigour in lesson planning. Pupils spend too much time on whole class activities and opportunities for independent work are insufficient, particularly for the more able. The curriculum is satisfactory. In some year groups, opportunities for physical exercise are too limited. Out of school activities, including sporting clubs, are popular with pupils and extensive.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The temporary headteacher and her deputy have nurtured and sustained the school's values and aims, and staff morale remains high. Governors and parents are supportive, and procedures are in place for a smooth transition in headship next term. Self-evaluation and planning for the future direction of the school has been limited. Current improvement targets are broad and lack sufficient challenge. Leaders and managers recognise that the school needs to focus more rigorously on monitoring of its actions and evaluating their outcomes. The school has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

Children have positive attitudes to school and are eager to attend. Very good links are established with the adjacent nursery school, and as a result, induction procedures are effective. Children enter the reception year with attainment at expected levels for their age. Their personal development shows rapid improvement. Relationships between children and with adults are good. For instance, children assisted others with pastry cutters, or worked amicably together on junk models. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The teacher plans a suitable range of child-initiated and adult-led activities in all areas of learning. Basic reading skills develop

successfully, because the curriculum is structured well. A recent review of the teaching of phonics has led to the introduction of a new and more appropriate scheme of work. Parents give good support by hearing their children read at home. In other areas of learning, rates of progress are slower because learning tasks are not always matched sufficiently to children's levels of ability, particularly for the more able. By the end of the Reception, most children reach expected goals in all areas of learning. Monitoring of provision is limited, and the Foundation Stage has only a limited sense of direction. This is because the development of the Foundation Stage is not integral to overall improvements in the school.

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

- Raise standards in writing by Year 2 particularly for the more able.
- In the Foundation Stage, and Years 1 and 2, increase the level of challenge by making greater use of assessment in planning lessons.
- Develop the roles of leaders and managers at all levels in monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning and the curriculum.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Achievement is inconsistent across the school. Progress by Year 2 is satisfactory and standards reached by pupils in reading, writing and mathematics are just below average. The more able pupils do not always reach standards of which they are capable, because teacher expectations of them are insufficient. In Years 3 to 6, pupils make rapid progress, because teaching is good or better. By the end of Year 6, standards overall are well above average. Achievement is good for those pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and Travellers, because of high quality adult support.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils are enthusiastic learners. They enjoy school and attend regularly. Pupils say that they feel safe and secure. They know that adults will listen to their concerns and respond fairly. The spiritual, moral and social development of pupils is excellent, as the Catholic ethos supports these areas of learning extremely well. Cultural development is good. Pupils are gaining rapidly in their understanding of differences and similarities of various faiths and backgrounds. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and safe. They drink water regularly and eat fruit. An active group of elected pupils from Years 3 to 6 represent their peers as school council members. They have purchased play equipment for use at breaktimes and lunchtime. In their fundraising they show an awareness of the wider community. All pupils enjoy monitorial roles. Older pupils are effective in their roles as and;quot;Buddiesand;quot; to younger pupils, for example. Skills of teamwork and cooperation are developing satisfactorily and, along with good basic skills pupils are well prepared for their future life and learning.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

There are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and, as a result, progress is satisfactory overall. Pupils respond enthusiastically when learning is fun and the challenge exciting. In all lessons, relationships are outstanding and pupils are eager to succeed. All teachers explain lesson objectives clearly and pupils have a good understanding of improvement targets. Good and excellent lessons are characterised by high teacher expectations and brisk, lively teaching. All teachers use information and communication technology (ICT), as an effective tool to widen pupils' experiences. In better lessons, pupils have lengthy opportunities to work independently. Some lessons lack organisation and learning is less well managed. As a result, pupils spend too much time on the carpet and opportunities for individual work are too limited. In Years 1 and 2, teachers' expectations are often too low and pupils find work easy to complete. Marking gives good praise and encouragement, but limited guidance.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

Good links with local schools and the community enrich a broad curriculum. Religious education and ICT are important priorities. The curriculum has an appropriate focus on the teaching of basic skills in reading and numeracy, but too few planned opportunities to improve early writing skills. Excellent planning is in place for the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. Visits and visitors enrich pupils' experiences. Good opportunities are provided for the more able in Year 6 to join similar pupils for extended mathematical activities. Unobtrusive and sensitive support is given to all pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Additional support in early reading and writing is organised for less able pupils in Years 1 and 2, and most achieve national expectations. However, the curriculum in this key stage does not address sufficiently the needs of more able pupils.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

Pastoral care and support of pupils is a strength of the school. Good procedures are in place for child protection, health and safety and risk assessment. Vulnerable pupils are helped and guided extremely well by a skilled staff team, including teaching assistants. Very good use is made of outside agencies to enhance the care provided for individuals. Academic standards are analysed and intensive support is targeted to less able pupils who are underachieving. Most pupils know how to improve their work in writing and numeracy, because individual and group targets are set. However, not enough use is made of assessment data to ensure that targets have sufficient challenge. In Years 1 and 2 and in the Foundation Stage for example, the more able pupils are not always achieving well enough, because teachers do not consider prior attainment sufficiently when planning learning tasks and setting targets.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

During the recent changes in leadership and management, the acting headteacher, key managers and governors have successfully maintained the school's Catholic ethos. Integral to their vision, is the belief that children learn best in a happy and safe Christian environment. Mutual support and teamwork is strong. Self-evaluation procedures are satisfactory. Strategic planning, monitoring and review of outcomes lack rigour. Targets for improvement are not robust enough and do not include all aspects of the school. Nevertheless, the school has shown a capacity to improve as good developments have been achieved in English and ICT. As a result, pupils now achieve well above average standards in these subjects. There is excellent leadership of provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. However, most leaders at all levels are at early stages in the development of their roles.

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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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
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

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

6 December 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School, Witney, Oxfordshire, OX28 5JZ

You may recall we visited your school recently. We enjoyed meeting you and finding out about all the exciting things you are doing. We hope that your special Children's Mass went well including the Liturgical Dance by Year 5. Thank you for being so friendly and helpful. We think that you have a satisfactory school but with some good features.

We liked these things about your school:

- you achieve high standards by Year 6, particularly in English and ICT
- you are enthusiastic learners and participate very well in all school activities
- your teachers care and support you well, particularly those pupils who find learning more difficult
- you show good respect towards others, including those less fortunate than yourselves
- your parents and carers are glad that you go to this school.

To make your school even better we have asked your headteacher, staff and governors to make lessons more challenging for pupils in Years 1 and 2, and in the Foundation Stage. We think that standards in writing could be higher by Year 2. Also, we think that the headteacher, staff and governors could improve how they check on the school's performance and your progress.

We hope that you continue to enjoy your time at Our Lady of Lourdes School.

Best wishes for the future.

Yours truly,

Bernice Magson

Lead Inspector