

Our Lady's Catholic Primary School, Princethorpe

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 125721 |
| Local Authority | Warwickshire |
| Inspection number | 293342 |
| Inspection date | 12 June 2007 |
| Reporting inspector | David Driscoll |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | 104 |
| School | |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Ian Maltby |
| Headteacher | Margaret Patrick |
| Date of previous school inspection | 1 September 2002 |
| School address | Leamington Road Princethorpe Rugby CV23 9PU |
| Telephone number | 01926 632385 |
| Fax number | 01926 632385 |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This small Catholic school draws pupils from a very wide area, taking in parts of Coventry and Rugby as well as the rural areas in between. Around half the pupils are of the Catholic faith. The proportion of pupils from a minority ethnic background is similar to most other schools, but all speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is very high, and the proportion with a statement of special educational need is above average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Parents from far and wide send their children to Our Lady's, because they have high regard for the good education it provides. Children join the school with standards that are a little below average, but they achieve well and their standards improve to above average by the time they leave. Progress is satisfactory in the Foundation Stage, where activities are planned to meet the needs of differing abilities, but they are not always put into practice or supported by the teaching assistant. Overall though, the school's teaching and curriculum are good. Teachers expect pupils to work hard on the challenging tasks they are given, and pupils respond by concentrating well and playing a full part in lessons. Such attitudes to learning are representative of pupils' good personal development. They behave well, are polite, and take a keen interest in the welfare of others. They like coming to school because everyone gets on well with one another, and there are lots of extra clubs and activities in which to participate. The care, guidance and support available to pupils are good. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make the same good progress as other pupils because support is very carefully planned and their progress monitored well. The marking of all pupils' work is accurate, so pupils know where they have made errors. However, teachers do not always check that corrections are carried out, so pupils continue to make the same mistakes. Pastoral care is particularly strong. The headteacher has a remarkable knowledge of the pupils and ensures that all are well looked after. Staff keep a particularly careful eye on those with medical problems to ensure they come to no harm. The school is improving at a good rate because it is led and managed well. The checks made on what the school provides give an accurate picture of its performance and enable senior managers to clearly identify those areas that could be improved. These are dealt with swiftly, demonstrating that managers have all the skills necessary to take the school forward. All staff with management responsibility carry out their roles conscientiously and effectively. Governance is satisfactory. The governing body has only around half of its full complement, which weakens the role it can play and places a considerable burden on the existing governors. The school is not active enough in seeking governors, relying too much on word of mouth.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the progress made in the Foundation Stage by ensuring that activities are more closely matched to children's' abilities and making better use of teaching assistants.
- Improve progress in Years 1 to 6 by ensuring that pupils correct any errors pointed out to them.
- Improve governance by being more proactive in seeking new governors.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards vary considerably from year to year, as numbers in each year group are small. Some years have three times as many boys than girls, while others have exceptionally high proportions with learning difficulties or disabilities. One aspect does not vary, however, and that is the good achievement of all groups of pupils. The most common picture is one of children joining the Foundation Stage with standards a little below average, especially in writing. They settle in quickly and make satisfactory progress, so their standards remain a bit below average by the time they start Year 1. From then on, pupils make consistently good progress. Their standards improve to average by the end of Year 2 and above average by the end of Year 6. They leave school well equipped with the skills they will need in later life.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and are friendly, polite and considerate of others. They enjoy school and consequently attendance rates are above average. Pupils have a good understanding of their role in a community. They are keen to take on responsibilities and have influenced what has happened in school through their work as school councillors, for example, introducing the option for girls to wear trousers rather than skirts. They show concern for the wider community through their support for a good range of local and international charities and through their care for the environment. Pupils behave well as a result of teachers' high expectations and the school's positive behaviour policy. They are confident to 'have a go' in new situations because they know teachers will value their contributions even if they are wrong. Pupils demonstrate their good understanding of how to stay fit and healthy through the choices they make for their school dinners, although packed lunches are often filled with crisps and chocolate. They have a good understanding of the dangers of smoking, alcohol and drug abuse, and of less important issues such as the height of nettles in the playground.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress because teachers expect them to behave well, and to work hard at tasks that are very well planned to be pitched at just the right level for individual pupils. Every lesson is planned to have at least four levels of activity, aimed at higher, middle and lower attainers, plus special tasks to meet the needs of those with learning difficulties. Teaching assistants are very quick to support any pupil who needs help, but they are particularly good with pupils who have learning difficulties. They always encourage and tease out what the pupils can do for themselves, rather than providing them with answers or doing the work for them. Learning is not so effective in the Foundation Stage, because the planned activities are not always used, and teaching assistants do not take the initiative in supporting children, waiting instead to be instructed. Teachers' questioning is good throughout the school. It ensures that all pupils are paying attention and have to explain their answers. This helps to check that all understand the work, but other checks, to ensure all are keeping up, are not always frequent enough as the lesson progresses.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy an extensive range of enrichment activities. Large numbers attend one or more clubs, which cater for a broad range of interests. Where possible, teachers link subjects to make learning more relevant, such as work on reflection in science to measuring angles in mathematics. Detailed planning ensures the curriculum is well matched to the needs of pupils of the different ages and abilities in the same class, and particularly so in the case of pupils with learning difficulties. Gifted and talented pupils are identified, but the school does not yet provide specific opportunities for them to extend their learning. Personal, social and health education is well planned. It ensures pupils are aware of health and safety issues and makes a strong contribution to the development of their moral and social skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The welfare of the pupils is central to the work of this inclusive school. The caring and supportive ethos results in pupils who enjoy school. Effective induction procedures ensure that children in the Foundation Stage settle quickly. Parents have high regard for the help pupils receive, particularly for vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and disabilities. Rigorous procedures are in place to ensure the safety, security and health of the pupils. Pupils with medical needs are carefully monitored and receive a high level of care. Child protection procedures are robust. Pupils say they feel safe and there is always someone to help them if they have problems. Work is marked frequently and regularly. It points out errors very well, but does not always ensure these are corrected. Pupils know their personal targets and are helped to achieve them by good advice, although they are not always praised sufficiently for their efforts.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The very clear focus on improvement is at the heart of everything the school does. The headteacher makes clear links between what the school provides and how this affects its performance. Data are analysed well, and the causes for any shortcomings are quickly identified and rectified. Staff work well as a team, sharing responsibilities and carrying out their roles diligently. Several staff, for example, check the quality of teaching so the school's managers are very clear about where strengths and weaknesses lie. Communication between staff is good. For example, results from assessments, such as those in the Foundation Stage or of pupils with learning difficulties, are quickly passed on to help teachers plan effectively. Governors carry out their responsibilities satisfactorily, but find it difficult to go further because there are so few of them. The governing body is in desperate need of new governors, but the school is not doing all it could to attract them. Several parents have responded, but the school is not casting its net wider, into other parishes or local businesses, for example.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| 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

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| 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 | 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

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| 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

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|---|---|
| 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 | 2 |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 2 |

The quality of provision

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|---|---|
| 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

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| 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 | 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 |

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

27 May 2007 Dear Children Inspection of Our Lady's Catholic Primary School, Princethorpe, Rugby, CV23 9PU Thank you very much for helping us when we came to visit your school. Your teachers and parents can be very proud of the way you behaved, and of your good manners. You told us that you like coming to school and we can see why. You like all the extra clubs and have lots of friends. You are getting a good education and learning more, and faster, than we usually see. This is because your teachers give you work that is just hard enough to make you think, without it being too hard for you. They know how well you are doing because their marking is good, but they don't always check that you have done your corrections so you often make the same mistakes over and over again. They wouldn't need to check if you made sure you did them straight away. We think the children in Reception could do a bit better. So we have asked the teachers to make sure that the activities are just hard enough for them, too, and to make sure they get help when they need it. All the grown ups take good care of you, and do their best to make sure you are healthy, safe and happy. They are very good at spotting which of you are falling behind in your work, and giving you the bit of extra help that makes sure you catch up. The school has been getting better and better, because the people who run it are good at spotting things that they could improve, and then doing something about them. They all work very hard, but some of them, called governors, are doing too much because there are not enough of them. So we have asked all the people who run the school to try and find more governors. With all best wishes for your future. David Driscoll Lead inspector