

Our Lady and St Rose of Lima Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 103443 |
| Local Authority | Birmingham |
| Inspection number | 308322 |
| Inspection dates | 8–9 October 2008 |
| Reporting inspector | Doris Bell |

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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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 | |
| School (total) | 200 |
| Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS | 56 |
| Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years | 0 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | David Murphy |
| Headteacher | Suzan O'Meally |
| Date of previous school inspection | 22 November 2004 |
| Date of previous funded early education inspection | Not previously inspected |
| Date of previous childcare inspection | Not previously inspected |
| School address | Gregory Avenue Weoley Castle Birmingham B29 5DY |
| Telephone number | 0121 4642283 |

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| Age group | 4–11 |
| Inspection dates | 8–9 October 2008 |
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Fax number

0121 4642371

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Children start the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in this average sized primary school with limited skills and knowledge. The proportion of pupils in receipt of free school meals is well above the national average. A significant proportion of pupils come from a range of minority ethnic groups. The proportion for whom English is an additional language is average. The proportion of pupils that have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is higher than found in most schools. The school has a 'healthy eating' breakfast club.

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

This is a good school. It has improved significantly since its previous inspection because good leadership and management, elements of which are outstanding, have successfully improved pupils' progress. As a result, all pupils now achieve well throughout the school. Standards are average by Year 6. The test results for 2008 show that they are beginning to nudge ahead of this.

Teachers carefully check how well each pupil is doing. Senior managers and subject leaders check the accuracy of teachers' assessments, observe lessons, examine pupils' work and offer good support and guidance on how to improve teaching and learning. Exciting, practically based lesson activities provide the right level of challenge for each pupil. The emphasis on individual learning is successfully closing the gaps that are evident when children start school. The school sets itself challenging targets for literacy and numeracy, which it then translates into equally challenging targets for individual pupils. Pupils are becoming increasingly involved in assessing their own learning. However, teachers' marking does not always identify for them the small steps they need to take to reach their targets. Nor does it guide them on how they might focus on their literacy and numeracy targets when they do work in other subjects.

The recently reviewed, well planned curriculum is starting to make a real difference to the rate at which pupils learn. This is because it helps pupils to see how they can use what they learn in one subject to benefit another. The pastoral care, support and guidance given to pupils and, where necessary, their families are excellent, as is pupils' behaviour in lessons and inside school. However, behaviour, particularly that of some older pupils, is not always as good in the playground. The school works closely with individual pupils and their families on improving behaviour. It also works hard to bring its diverse communities together. As a result, pupils from all cultures and backgrounds work together well and successfully learn from each other the importance of creating a harmonious community in and outside of school. Its excellent partnership with a whole range of external agencies helps in all of this.

Governors provide sound support for the headteacher in her drive, enthusiasm and very strong determination to help pupils achieve as well as they can. They recognise that they are not as actively involved in checking the school's work or in contributing to decision making as they might be. They aim to improve the situation as new governors are appointed and the governing body reaches full strength. Nevertheless, the school's evaluation of its own work is rigorous and accurate, and contributes greatly to the recent improvement seen. This and the strong teamwork felt throughout the school give it good capacity for further improvement, and the potential to reach its aim of becoming an outstanding school.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Good leadership and management ensure that, from the moment they enter Nursery, children are cared for well and given a wide range of interesting things to do to help them learn. Children are successfully encouraged to develop personal skills that give them a good grounding for later life. As a result, they quickly learn to follow established routines and to listen carefully to adults and to each other. They also learn to share, take turns, work with each other and with adults and pursue well planned, exciting tasks on their own. There is a good balance between

teacher led and independent activities. Children develop a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe and healthy, and their welfare is strongly promoted in all activities.

Staff are vigilant about assessing how well children are doing and they use the information effectively in their planning. Children behave well. They are keen to learn and they respond eagerly to the many opportunities presented to them. All children make good progress in Nursery and Reception. As a result, standards are broadly average when they start Year 1. Reading and writing skills are slightly weaker than other areas. A recently introduced early reading project is beginning to accelerate progress in communication, language and literacy, but it is too early to see the full impact of this. Access to outdoor learning, although planned for well, is restricted at present because the outdoor area is being refurbished.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make sure that when pupils' work is marked, teachers always identify what pupils need to do next to reach their targets, whatever the subject.
- Extend the governors' involvement in checking how well the school is doing and in determining what it needs to do next.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

All pupils make good progress and overall, standards are average in Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. Here, as in Years 3 to 6, pupils do particularly well in writing. The full impact of the school's drive towards helping pupils achieve well is very evident by Year 6, where standards are beginning to rise above national averages. This is more apparent in English and science than in mathematics. The school met its target for mathematics, but standards dipped slightly in 2008 in this subject. There are secure indications of improvement for pupils currently in Years 5 and 6 as a result of well focused practical work and the links now being made between mathematics and other subjects, including literacy.

In Years 1 and 2, the school is building well on the successes of the early reading project introduced in Reception. Alongside the daily phonics sessions, this contributes to the greater progress pupils are now making throughout the school. By Year 6, pupils write competently in different styles, for different purposes and audiences, including in other subjects. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress too. The test results show that the gap between them and other pupils is narrower than that found nationally. The same is true of pupils from minority ethnic groups, including those for whom English is an additional language.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils have an impressive awareness of right and wrong. They are open and honest about each other's behaviour and most find some of the poorer behaviour, including the occasional racist comment that occurs in the playground and outside of school, quite abhorrent. Some parents also voiced concerns about these things. The school is robust in dealing with any inappropriate behaviour. Pupils acknowledge this, saying that the teachers 'quickly sort it out'. In class, pupils' excellent behaviour benefits their learning.

Attendance is satisfactory. The school works very hard to improve it, but holidays taken in term time limit its efforts. Nevertheless, pupils very much enjoy school. They have a good awareness

of how to keep themselves safe, fit and healthy, for example by eating healthily and participating wholeheartedly in the many opportunities they have to take regular exercise. They say they 'get fun things to do', that 'the school is friendly', and that the staff are 'kind and helpful'. The majority of parents echo these views, saying that they find staff approachable and helpful at all times.

Pupils make a good contribution to the community. In school, they readily accept responsibility, for example as playground leaders and school councillors. They raise money for local, national and international charities, and readily celebrate each other's cultures. The school involves parents well in this. The pupils' good progress in basic skills and in personal development prepares pupils well for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Across the school, teachers plan a good range of well targeted activities that build securely on what pupils already know. They teach in different ways depending on how pupils respond. Focused teaching maintains a good pace in lessons, successfully meets the needs of individual pupils and supports them well in gaining new skills or consolidating those already learned. Those new to the profession have made a good start in following these well established strengths, thereby contributing to the good teamwork evident across the school.

Some teaching is outstanding. In such lessons, staff demonstrate an exceptionally well developed understanding of how to combine highly motivating practical work with the solid teaching of basic skills. For example, one excellent literacy lesson very successfully consolidated pupils' mathematical skills as they plotted on a graph the rising tension, and subsequent resolution, in a narrative. This really stretches pupils' thinking. Throughout the school, well briefed teaching assistants contribute effectively to pupils' learning.

The tracking of pupils' progress is robust. Teachers use the information well to ensure work is at the right level of challenge for pupils of all abilities and backgrounds. In their marking, they regularly ask questions that consolidate pupils' learning. However, they rarely give pupils pointers on how to take that learning forward. Teachers also miss opportunities to show pupils how they might reach their literacy and numeracy targets in different subjects by commenting on these skills wherever they are used.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school's measured approach to curriculum change ensures that pupils' learning benefits at every stage. For example, the EYFS curriculum is extended into Year 1 for pupils who need it. More able pupils in Years 1 to 5 sometimes work alongside older pupils to ensure their work is sufficiently challenging. The curriculum rightly focuses on developing basic skills as much as possible. It has recently extended the teaching of these skills across different subjects, such as science and religious education. However, teachers are not yet taking full advantage of this to show pupils how to reach their literacy and numeracy targets faster.

The school focuses strongly on promoting pupils' understanding of their feelings and their roles in learning. It works very closely with parents and external agencies to do this. Its success is evident in the pupils' developing ability to rationalise their thinking and their feelings as they

contribute to making the school a harmonious community. A wide range of well attended activities, visits and visitors in and outside the normal school day broadens pupils' experiences. These opportunities also extend their understanding of life within and beyond their immediate environment.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The outstanding personal care, guidance and support raise pupils' self esteem and open up a range of pathways to the future for them. As part of a wider project involving several schools, the school works tirelessly to bring different agencies together to help families give their children a good start in life. The pupils' health, safety and welfare are at the heart of this and safeguarding procedures, including those for child protection, are very robust. The procedures for assuring pupils' academic progress are good. Pupils know their targets and are becoming increasingly involved in assessing their progress towards them. However, they are not yet sufficiently involved in agreeing their targets or the areas they need to concentrate on in order to achieve them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and senior leadership team direct the work of the school with a very strong vision built on ensuring that every pupil achieves as much as he or she can. They successfully create a stimulating and friendly environment in which the learning and personal development of each pupil are of paramount importance. The common purpose they have established across several different agencies contributes effectively to this. This is all part of the school's strong determination to promote community cohesion at all levels and to resolve tensions and difficulties within the local community. All leaders use an extensive range of ways to check pupils' progress and to identify how to improve teaching and learning further. The school improvement plan is clear, comprehensive and well founded. The links between it and the school's self-evaluation are particularly strong. Taken together, they provide a secure scaffold for further improvement. Governors support the school well in all of this, but their involvement in setting the direction and monitoring the school's progress towards its challenging targets is underdeveloped. The school has had difficulty recruiting parent governors, an issue that the new chair is working hard to resolve.

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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 |
| 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? | 1 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 2 |

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

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| How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS? | 2 |
| How well do children in the EYFS achieve? | 2 |
| How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS? | 2 |
| How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop? | 2 |
| How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted? | 2 |
| How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed? | 2 |

Achievement and standards

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| How well do learners achieve? | 2 |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 3 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 2 |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress | 2 |

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

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|---|---|
| How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 2 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 2 |
| The extent to which learners enjoy their education | 2 |
| The attendance of learners | 3 |
| 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 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 |

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 | 1 |
| How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards | 1 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 1 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated | 2 |
| How well does the school contribute to community cohesion? | 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**

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Our Lady and St Rose of Lima Catholic Primary School, Weoley Castle B29 5DY

Thank you very much for the very warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school this week. You told us how much you enjoy school because you 'get fun things to do'. It is clear to us that you go to a good school that helps you to make good progress and instils in you an impressive awareness of right and wrong. Those responsible for leading and managing the school do a good job. They and your teachers make sure that what you are given to learn is at exactly the right level for you. They give you lots of opportunities to work with each other and on your own, and they keep a close eye on the progress you make. All of this prepares you well for life beyond this school.

You behave really well in lessons and around the school building, and this helps you to learn. Some of you are concerned about the boisterous behaviour in the playground, particularly that of some older pupils, and we did see some of this. You older pupils could help by taking more care, especially as the play area is restricted at the moment because of the building works. We did find that the school does everything it can to ensure your safety, health and well-being, and that you all know how to keep yourselves safe. You clearly have a lot of confidence that the staff will help you in this.

We have asked your school to do two things to help you learn even faster. They are:

- make sure that when teachers mark your work, they always tell you what you need to do next to help improve your learning and reach your targets faster
- extend the governors' role in checking the school's work and helping it to improve further.

Yours sincerely

Doris Bell Lead inspector