

Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School

Inspection report - amended

Unique Reference Number	106346
Local Authority	Trafford
Inspection number	309103
Inspection date	22 April 2008
Reporting inspector	John Ashton

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	228
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Joe Moore
Headteacher	Mr Paul Gibbons
Date of previous school inspection	5 July 2004
School address	Lock Lane Partington Manchester M31 4PJ
Telephone number	0161 775 2847
Fax number	0161 912 5422

Age group	3-11
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Amended Report Addendum

I have asked your headteacher to ensure that the quality of some of the learning in the infants is improved to match that of the juniors and that the long-standing plans to improve provision for the children in the Nursery and Reception classes are finally completed.

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the school's capacity to improve as demonstrated, for example, by its improvement since the last inspection in 2004; the relative strengths and weaknesses in the quality of teaching and learning across the school; patterns of attainment on entry and exit into and out of the Foundation Stage; and evidence of pupils' progress across the school, particularly across Key Stage 1. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but were explored sufficiently with the school as to come to agreement over the judgements in the report. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation, national assessment data and the school's own assessment records. School policies and the headteacher's reports to governors were examined, along with a range of pupils' written work. There were interviews with members of staff, pupils, governors and an officer from the local authority. A sample of lessons was visited and parents' questionnaire returns were scrutinised.

Description of the school

Our Lady of Lourdes is a below average sized primary school with a 52-place Nursery class. The school draws its pupils, the majority of whom are girls, from an area where levels of social and economic disadvantage are high. An above average proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The large majority of pupils are of White British origin. A lower than average proportion of pupils are from a minority ethnic background - one third the proportion for schools nationally. A small number of pupils are at an early stage of learning English; their home languages are either French or Polish. A below average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, mostly moderate learning difficulties.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Cheerful staff and enthusiastic children are the first impressions the visitor receives of this school, which provides a good level of education for its pupils and has some outstanding features. Chief among these are the excellent academic progress pupils have made in recent years, pupils' excellent personal development and the outstanding curriculum they enjoy.

Standards in the last two years have been significantly above average at the end of Years 2 and 6. Children generally make good progress from a low skills starting point on entry to the Nursery through to the end of Reception and then on through Years 1 and 2. Although results overall at the end of Year 2 in 2007 were significantly better than average, results in science were comparatively low compared with pupils' success in other subjects. Progress across Key Stage 2 (Years 3 to 6) has been outstanding in recent years, particularly in 2007 and especially in mathematics. This has resulted in significantly better than average results overall. Although science results at Key Stage 2 in 2007 were well above average, especially in the proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels, the results in the writing element of English fell short of pupils' targets. This still adds up to outstanding progress overall.

Overall the quality of teaching and learning is good. In Key Stage 2, teaching and learning are generally good and much is outstanding. Here the work is well paced, lively, well organised, keeps the pupils active and thoroughly absorbed, always challenges and often delights them. The assessment of pupils' work is a strength. It is generally positive and supportive and, at its best, gives reasons why the standard of pupils' work is good along with ways in which it could be even better. Teaching and learning quality is more variable from Nursery through to Year 2. Although some of it is excellent, some is too slow, not well organised and not well enough matched to pupils' individual abilities. As a result, pupils make slower progress during the early part of Key Stage 1 than during Key Stage 2.

The pupils interviewed spoke of how they much they appreciated the good teaching they receive, and the help they are given when they don't understand something. They love the way the school keeps challenging them with interesting activities, is never boring, expects them to work hard and is excellent for sport. A typical comment was, 'Here they push you and it makes you really clever.'

Pupils also say that they feel safe and they think their school is healthier than it used to be and that bullying doesn't happen. Relationships are excellent. Attitudes to learning are very positive. Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is a considerable strength. Their awareness of the variety of other religions and other cultures is an increasing strength. The very successful integration of some pupils from Africa and a large number of non-Catholic pupils from a nearby closing school attest to that well. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, especially in their above average basic skills, by the time they leave the school. Their contribution to the school community is good.

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. Typical comments include praise for the quality of the teaching, as in 'The teachers care and take pride in what they do', and the approachable and effective leadership. Others spoke of how happy their children are at the school, its excellent range of clubs - 'Everyone has a chance to participate' - its sporting strength, the 'brilliant' PTA, the cultural awareness of pupils, the welcome recent improvements to the school building and the curriculum, which was described as 'not just about 'academics'.

The school's curriculum is outstanding. It is a more personalised curriculum, developed to be more cross-curricular, more visual and aimed at being more suited to the preferred learning styles of pupils than it used to be. Information and communication technology (ICT) is increasingly well used by staff and pupils alike. Pupils' command of French has benefited especially well from regular sessions with a native speaker but also from the influence of some wonderful French speaking African pupils who at lunchtime trade tuition in French for help with developing their English expertise. Sport is a real strength of the school, as the full trophy cabinet shows. Visits out and key visitors into school are essential parts of the curriculum. A recent highlight was the day visit of a gold-medal winning sports athlete.

Pupils are exceptionally well cared for. Staff safeguarding checks fulfil government guidelines. Playground supervision is exceptionally good and playground assistants take a very active role in refereeing football, playing mixed cricket and supervising a quiet area where a large-scale chess board is the most notable feature. The school's learning and special needs mentor is a real asset to the support staff. The monitoring of pupils' academic progress is well established, with easy to understand and manageable systems.

The school is well led by an excellent partnership of headteacher and deputy headteacher. School self-evaluation is generally accurate. School development planning is good in parts but not as sharp, concise or clear as it could be. Monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning and of pupils' progress across the school is good. That the school has a good capacity to improve is demonstrated clearly by recent developments in the school playground, the modernising of the school's curriculum and especially by the improvement in pupils' achievement, especially in Key Stage 2.

Governors are supportive of the school but also challenge the leadership rigorously. The school's finances are relatively healthy and after years of neglect the school's internal and external environment are gradually being brought up to par. The joining of the two halves of the Foundation Stage and a fenced off activity area for the Nursery and Reception classes has been planned for some considerable time but these improvements have not yet taken place, and this impacts upon the quality of provision for these children.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage has improved since the last inspection. It is well led and developing into a notable strength, although delays to improving the environment have hindered further development. The lack of a fenced off and dedicated external play area make it hard for the staff to bring about a truly Foundation Stage approach across the Nursery and Reception classes. Yet, despite this, children make good progress from a low skill base on entry to the Nursery class, especially in communication and language skills. This is mainly due to the excellent teaching children receive in the Reception class, by the end of which they achieve most of their early learning goals.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the overall consistency of teaching and learning in Key Stage 1.
- Bring to fruition the long-standing plans to improve the provision for the Foundation Stage as a whole.

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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?	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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
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	1

The quality of provision

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?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
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

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

Inspection of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School, Partington, M31 4PJ

Thank you for making me so welcome on my recent visit to inspect your school. As I dropped in to each classroom in turn, I was very impressed by how hard you all were working, how well behaved you were and how thoroughly absorbed you were in the activities in the lessons. I think you discuss things particularly well with your talk partners. This is really helping you to learn well.

A very special thank you should go to the interesting and lively group of pupils who gave up part of their lunchtime to talk to me and tell me how happy they are at Our Lady of Lourdes School and of some of the interesting changes made since they began at the school. They mentioned, especially, the improvements to the school buildings, the good use in lessons of the interactive whiteboards, how much harder they were now asked to work in class and how good they thought this was for them. They were full of praise also for the arrangements at break times. I was impressed with how hard you play in the playground, at basketball, football, cricket and even chess.

I can see why you are so pleased to attend Our Lady of Lourdes School. You attend a good school, which has some outstanding features. You are exceptionally well cared for and receive effective teaching and well planned activities. It was pleasing to see the good progress you are making in almost every area of your work. The results in last year's national tests were especially good. I hope this year's Year 2 and Year 6 classes can do as well.

I have asked your headteacher to ensure that the quality of some of the learning in the infants is improved to match that of the juniors and that the long-standing plans to improve provision for the children in the Nursery and Reception classes are finally completed. You can play your part by continuing to work as hard and always taking your learning as seriously as I saw you doing.

I wish you all continued success in the future.