

# Our Lady of Good Counsel Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	108030
<b>Local Authority</b>	Leeds
<b>Inspection number</b>	309576
<b>Inspection date</b>	26 September 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Ross Parker

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	230
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr S Walpole
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Stephanie Flaherty
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 July 2003
<b>School address</b>	Pigeon Cote Road Seacroft Leeds West Yorkshire LS14 1EP
<b>Telephone number</b>	0113 2144123
<b>Fax number</b>	0113 2256006

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

The following issues were investigated: pupils' achievement; pupils' personal development; and the elements of teaching and learning, the curriculum and care, guidance and support which were most influential in supporting these. Evidence was gathered from observation of lessons, pupils' work, discussions with the staff, some parents and governors, and the scrutiny of school documents and parent questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in the self-evaluation form, were not justified.

## Description of the school

This is an average sized primary school. A small number of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds though none is at the early stage of learning to speak English. A larger than usual proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is above average.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

Our Lady of Good Counsel Primary School provides an outstanding education which supports excellent achievement and superb personal development for its pupils. This is because there is an admirable ethos of what parents describe as 'friendly, welcoming care' which really values each individual, combined with a very rich and stimulating curriculum.

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. Children start school with skills which are below expectations, particularly in communication and language. By the end of Year 2, standards are average and pupils have established a sound basis for further improvement. They reach above average standards by the end of Year 6, having made particularly good progress in English. Children from different backgrounds do equally well and pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make the same excellent progress. Standards are especially high in science where three quarters of pupils exceed the nationally expected level. The school is committed to continuous improvement. Teachers have been working successfully with local authority consultants to ensure that what works so effectively in science also helps drive up standards even more in mathematics and English, including for the most able pupils.

The inspection confirmed the school's judgement that the outstanding progress is as a result of good and often outstanding teaching linked with outstanding care, and an exceptionally motivating curriculum. High quality relationships and the right mix of challenge and stimulation mean that pupils really enjoy their work, and behave superbly in lessons. This was seen when Year 6 worked rapidly to draft a radio script for a science fiction comedy. Teachers offer a range of individual, paired and group activities that enable pupils to develop a variety of different learning and working skills. This flexibility provides extremely good preparation for pupils' future learning and employment. Teachers have high expectations and pupils reciprocate by taking great care with their work. They also respond very well to the consistent way in which teachers set targets. Pupils feel it is their own responsibility to ask for new challenges when they think they have met their current goals. In addition, there is a consistent approach to setting learning targets which pupils understand and recognise as a real partnership between them and adults.

Pupils' exceptional personal development and achievement are underpinned by the outstanding curriculum. A concerted approach to 'Investors in Pupils' empowers children to establish their personal targets and values. The school's ethos also supports extensive opportunities to appreciate and contribute to other people's well-being and fulfilment. The range includes support for a school in Peru, pen pals across the city and coffee mornings held in aid of charity. An extensive variety of challenging, eye-opening and enjoyable extra-curricular activities is available to a wide age range. Well developed links with other schools support the curriculum in offering Spanish, technology and sports development. There are many productive links with business and the voluntary sector which bring material and emotional benefits as well as a glimpse of the world of work.

The result of these remarkable opportunities is that pupils enjoy their learning and their play in equal measure. They know how to develop a healthy lifestyle, and put this into action by making excellent use of the extensive opportunities for sport and playtime games. They quickly gain maturity and independence within the school's very clear expectations. The outstanding quality of care creates a culture where individuals clearly understand how much they are valued.

This all-embracing ethos gives exceptional support to each individual's spiritual development. Rigorous attention to all aspects of safety runs through all of the school's work.

Pupils are highly supportive of each other and contribute significantly to other people's welfare and happiness as councillors, play buddies, fundraisers and learning partners. They develop extremely positive attitudes and several parents commented that this really pays off when their children move on to secondary school. Attendance remains below average, as it was at the time of the last inspection. Most pupils attend well but a small minority do not. This caused the school to miss its local authority target. Vigorous and imaginative work to dissuade parents from taking children on holiday in term time has not yet paid off.

Beneath all this exceptional provision lies outstanding leadership and management at all levels, with good support from the governing body. Leaders are constantly reflecting, evaluating and seeking feedback to maintain improvement, which has been good since the last inspection. The school has good capacity to improve further and gives outstanding value for money.

### **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

#### **Grade: 2**

Children make good progress because of the good range of carefully planned and managed activities, though the outside play area is somewhat limited by its size and slope. Teachers and support staff provide a good level of challenge and track children's progress very carefully. The school is developing its assessment techniques to enable adults to judge even more precisely the right time to move individuals on to the next stage of learning. Children are well cared for and supported. For example, when they are playing, they receive individual support provided by older pupils.

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

- Raise levels of attendance to enable all pupils to make rapid progress.

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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?	1
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 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 <sup>1</sup> 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	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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

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

<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>	1
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	2
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	1
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



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

Thank you all for the very friendly welcome you gave me when I came to visit your school. I really enjoyed meeting you and having the chance to talk to you. The school gives you an outstanding education.

Here are some of the really good things about your school.

By the time pupils are in Year 6 they are making excellent progress, and are well prepared for secondary school. I was impressed by your very considerate behaviour and by the extremely friendly atmosphere in the school. You have lots of opportunities to help each other and you use them exceptionally well. You make your views clear about how the school can be improved. You understand well how the right food and the right amount of exercise will keep you healthy, and work and play with great enthusiasm. You also really appreciate the fantastic efforts that the teachers and other adults make to ensure that you are safe and enjoying yourselves. You value the target setting, and the way that you are encouraged to take responsibility for your learning.

The adults in school are always looking to improve. Currently they are working to help you to reach the same very high standards in mathematics and English that you already achieve in science. They are also developing new ways to challenge pupils who are already reaching higher levels, and building on some of the approaches that you say makes learning most interesting.

I have asked the school to do something else which will make it even better.

The school has worked extremely hard to improve attendance but this is still not good enough. I want the school to carry on helping more parents understand that by taking their children on holiday during term time, this interrupts and slows the learning of those children. You can help here by making sure that you miss as few days as possible so that you can get the most out of what this tremendous school has to offer.