

# Our Lady of Hartley Catholic Primary School, Hartley, Longfield

Inspection report - amended

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118863
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	313125
<b>Inspection date</b>	7 October 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Robin Hammerton HMI

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.

<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 (total)	172
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	30
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	David Coffey
<b>Headteacher</b>	Margaret Baynes
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 October 2004
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Stack Lane Hartley Longfield DA3 8BL
<b>Telephone number</b>	01474 706385
<b>Fax number</b>	01474 709757

<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection date</b>	7 October 2008
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## Amended Report Addendum

Report amended due to a change to the report following a complaint

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and, in order to help the school's further improvement, investigated the following questions:

- How ambitious and well structured are the curriculum and the guidance and support offered to pupils?
- How well managed and effective is the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)?
- The school evaluates itself as good. How ready is it to move from 'good' to 'great'?

Inspectors gathered evidence from discussions with staff, pupils, a representative of the local authority, the chair of governors and another governor; scrutiny of school documentation and pupils' work; parental questionnaires; and observations of lessons, a hymn practice and the school at breaktimes. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation form, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

This is an average sized Catholic primary school in an area of some social advantage. Pupils enter the school from a range of pre-school providers, with attainment that is generally above the level expected and good dispositions to learning. Most pupils are White British. The school roll is stable, with relatively few pupils entering or leaving the school other than at the usual times. A much smaller than average number of pupils take free school meals, whilst an average proportion of pupils are identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD). The school has the Activemark and Safe Schools awards.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school which is very popular with parents. One parent summed up their prevailing view: 'A friendly, caring school that gives a great start to children's education.' Inspectors saw clearly that all pupils are exceptionally well cared for and valued. The staff know them and their families very well. Parents strongly appreciate the school's excellent work in guiding, encouraging and supporting their children throughout their school career. This contributes much to the pupils' resilience, accomplished social development and outstanding behaviour. These strengths and the high standards in basic skills mean, as the parent quoted above suggests, that pupils are especially well prepared for the next stage of education and later life.

By the time they leave at age 11, as a result of good teaching, pupils achieve well in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Staff build effectively on the pupils' high attainment on entry. Standards in these subjects are consistently well above the national average for the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 and have recently improved further at the upper attainment levels at Key Stage 2. The school is aiming to reach higher standards still in mathematics and science in Key Stage 1. Work set in the core subjects is generally well matched to the needs of all pupils, especially in Key Stage 2, and this supports their good progress. Staff track pupils' progress very carefully. Their setting of challenging academic targets for pupils, and the use of these in lessons, are outstanding. Older pupils especially understand and apply their targets very well. Some of the marking of pupils' work in the core subjects seen by inspectors was good, giving clear guidance about how the work could be improved. Children with LDD or any emotional needs are well identified, included and provided for in consultation with parents and, where necessary, external agencies. They make good progress.

Pupils enjoy being in school and feel safe. Their attendance levels are above average. They say there is bullying very occasionally but, if it takes place, it is dealt with effectively. Pupils act as peer mentors and playground buddies. The school's procedures for safeguarding pupils are robust. The role of the school council is growing and its members have contributed well to decision making about issues such as playground development. However, its remit is not as wide as it might be.

The headteacher and her deputy work well together and complement each other's skills. Together, they ensure the school is well placed to maintain its current strengths and successes. They provide fresh and innovative thinking and ensure very successfully that adults and children are well cared for, the focus on standards in core subjects is maintained, and that the school is a happy and friendly place. Very strong community links, including through the impressive School Association, help the school to achieve its nurturing atmosphere and sense of togetherness, as well as assisting its work on projects such as developing the pleasant outdoor environment. The school is itself a very cohesive community. It also teaches pupils about people in other places, cultures and circumstances, although it is not clear that pupils understand enough about how this knowledge may be important to them in their own lives in multicultural Britain and the twenty-first century world.

The school is aware through its sound self-evaluation that it has weaknesses as well as strengths. For example, the curriculum, whilst being effectively planned in the core subjects, also has some gaps in some other subjects and areas, such as geography, and is, at times, not as challenging and exciting as it could be in these subjects. The school is rightly beginning to address these issues. Staff are working hard on implementing a new 'creative curriculum' but

there is much still to do to ensure this is both rigorous enough and exciting. Subject leaders are enthusiastic. However, their remit and accountability within the creative curriculum are not clear enough, so their contribution is limited, as the school has correctly identified. An undue reliance is placed on paired class teachers' planning, with too little whole-school guidance, or structure, to help them. The activities planned are often rather routine and do not yet provide the levels of ambition and interest for which the pupils are certainly ready. Although the school monitors aspects of subjects outside the core, it cannot say how high the standards are. The contribution made by the wider curriculum to standards in core subjects, and to helping the pupils to see how they could apply their literacy and numeracy skills, is limited.

The school operates a sound range of day visits, to which parents are invited to contribute financially, and an annual residential visit. A reasonable number of extra-curricular activities are available to all year groups. Many pupils enjoy these activities but the school does not analyse whether any pupils, or groups of pupils, are under-represented in them, or ask pupils systematically why they do or do not attend. This makes it harder to help overcome any barriers to participation particular pupils may experience.

Teaching is good overall, and its quality is suitably monitored by senior staff. Pupils have good opportunities to work collaboratively and independently. Staff have warm relationships with their pupils and lessons are fast paced and usually presented in a fun way. Therefore, pupils enjoy most lessons.

The school development plan shows the school's sound capacity to build on its many strengths and improve further. It identifies some aspects of provision needing improvement, based on sound self-evaluation. The actions it outlines are bringing some useful change in these areas. However, the plan does not evidently identify or link with a 'big picture' of why and how the school is seeking to improve, or show strategic cost and resource implications. It does not show how actions taken are monitored and evaluated, nor does it show clearly the intended impact on pupils of the actions taken. This all makes it hard for the school to measure with rigour how much success has been achieved.

The governing body is well organised, full, and efficient in most areas. It contributes well, for example, to the school's premises development, sense of community and the thoroughness of its budgetary processes. Nevertheless, in practice, the governing body has overrated the school. Whereas the school's formal self-evaluation rightly evaluates the school as good overall, the governors met by inspectors during the inspection felt the school was clearly outstanding. Governors have not sufficiently benchmarked the school with others, particularly similar schools, noting what outstanding practice elsewhere can be like. Hence, whilst they ask pertinent questions in their meetings and work hard, they do not provide enough challenge to the school to improve further.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils start school in the reception class with good speaking and listening skills and can share and take turns. They are confident, well behaved and motivated to learn. They make satisfactory progress and achieve a good level of development overall by the end of the EYFS. In 2007/08, their attainment in all six areas of learning exceeded the national average for age-related expectations; this is in line with their strong starting points.

A committed and hardworking new teacher has just begun work in the Reception class. With the teaching assistants, she is beginning to establish and revise planning and assessment

systems. However, at this stage, planning is brief and does not make links between areas of learning; neither does it identify clearly enough how intended learning relates to the pupils' assessed needs. The staff rightly believe assessment should be integral to planning the next stages in pupils' learning, but this process is at an early stage of development. The school's senior staff have not yet formally monitored or evaluated the emerging quality of provision and outcomes in the class. Adults have high expectations and provide a secure and safe environment for them. Whereas the indoor area is developing well as a place for learning, the outdoor learning area is crowded with resources but underdeveloped as a setting for well-structured activity. It does not provide the full range of learning opportunities.

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

- Improve development planning, so that it shows more clearly how the actions within it contribute to the school's strategic aims, and includes better success criteria which are related to outcomes for pupils, as well as improved monitoring and evaluation systems.
- Improve the curriculum, so that pupils have better opportunities to excel in a wider range of subjects and skills, and so that it contributes more to pupils' application of skills in the core subjects.
- Improve further the provision in the Reception class.



## 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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
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?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	1
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

<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.



## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	2
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	2
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?	1

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
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	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
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	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**

8 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Our Lady of Hartley RC Primary School, Hartley, DA3 8BL

- We really enjoyed meeting with so many of you when we came to inspect your school recently. Thank you for making us so welcome, for showing us what you do and talking with us so positively and honestly. What you said to us was very useful and interesting. It was good to see many of you enjoying Book Week and to hear how you raise money for charity. Would you also thank your parents if they returned the questionnaire to us
- The questionnaires were also very helpful.

We found that your school is a good one. It teaches you well about English, mathematics and science, so that by the time you leave school, standards in those subjects are very high. You help with this because you know your targets well and your behaviour and attitudes to your learning are outstanding. You all get on very well together and can work in groups and by yourselves – both very important. Well done! All of this means that the school prepares you very well to go on to secondary school and that you develop important skills you can use all the way through your lives. You told us the school is a very caring place and that you enjoy being there. We could see that for ourselves too.

There are things the school can do to become even better. To help with this we made three main recommendations. These are:

- for the school to be clearer in its future planning about what it wants to improve and why, what actions it will take and how it will check how successful it has been in making the improvements
- to give you a more exciting and well-planned curriculum in all the subjects
- to help the children in Reception class do even better.

We wish you all very well for the future. We're sure the school will want to ask you how you think it can improve in these areas, especially the curriculum, so be ready to consider carefully what you might say.

With our very best wishes for the future

Robin Hammerton

Her Majesty's Inspector