

# Our Lady of Lincoln Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 120618            |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Lincolnshire      |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 313697            |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 6–7 May 2008      |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Rajinder Harrison |

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>                | 4–11   |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                   | Mixed  |
| <b>Number on roll</b>                     |  |
| School                                    | 189  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>              | The governing body                                 |
| <b>Chair</b>                              | Mr John Mcloughlin                                 |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                        | Mr Michael Donoghue                                |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b> | 15 September 2003                                  |
| <b>School address</b>                     | Laughton Way<br>Lincoln<br>Lincolnshire<br>LN2 2HE |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                   | 01522 527500                                       |
| <b>Fax number</b>                         | 01522 546043                                       |

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|--------------------------|--------------|
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a smaller than average sized primary school. While most pupils are of White British backgrounds, the school has a significant proportion of pupils from a wide range of ethnic origins including pupils from traveller communities. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is higher than in most schools as is the proportion with a statement of special educational need. High numbers of pupils leave or join the school at times other than the start and end of the year. Most children start school with knowledge and skills that are below the levels expected in most areas and well below expected levels in their literacy and numeracy skills.

The local authority (LA) has supported the school through its Intensifying Support Programme since 2005.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The school's leadership is accurate in its assessment that this is a satisfactory school and that pupils' personal development is good. In the very caring and supportive environment the school provides, pupils form good relationships and show kindness to others. They trust the adults that work with them and take on responsibilities enthusiastically. They make an outstanding contribution to the school and the wider community. Pupils understand well the importance of staying fit and healthy and enjoy the many clubs and events the school organises. Parents are very positive about the school and say it is a happy, welcoming place.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Children start school with skills and knowledge that are below the levels typically expected in most areas, and well below in literacy and numeracy. These areas are addressed well through the good activities that teachers plan to help children make a good start to their education. Children achieve well and attain average standards in all but their literacy and numeracy by the end of reception. Pupils in Years 1 to 6, including the many that join part way through the year, make satisfactory progress. Progress is not better because some lessons do not provide enough challenge for the more able and are too demanding for those who are less confident. Standards in literacy and numeracy remain below average at the end of Year 2. In Year 6, standards are below average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils who find learning difficult receive the help they need to achieve satisfactorily. Teaching quality is satisfactory. Pupils enjoy learning and work hard, but in weaker lessons, the work is not appropriately matched to all their needs, which slows their learning. The curriculum, although satisfactory, has too few opportunities for pupils to work actively and independently and this reduces its appeal. Many out of class activities enhance pupils' learning well. Care, guidance and support are good. Staff know the pupils well and pupils know who to go to if they are worried or upset. Teachers give pupils clear guidance on how to improve their work.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The decline in standards following the last inspection has been arrested. With effective support from the LA, the headteacher and senior leaders have ensured pupils' improved progress through more careful monitoring of their standards. Pupils' attendance has been raised and the recent focus on developing pupils' writing has started to impact on standards in literacy. Astute financial management ensures priorities, such as assessment activities and staff training, are resourced adequately. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. The school's leaders have not had enough impact on improving teaching quality to enable pupils to achieve more because planning and systems for monitoring and reviewing the school's work are not rigorous enough. Governors support the school well and check its performance carefully. The quality of care is good and pupils are now making satisfactory progress. The capacity to make further improvements is satisfactory.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Good teaching and a lively curriculum that considers individual needs carefully, help children to achieve well in the Foundation Stage. Because children's literacy and numeracy skills are weaker areas, more time is devoted to promote these skills. Adults intervene effectively to encourage children to explore new activities.

Children experience a good balance of adult-guided activities and those that they choose themselves, and this helps them gain confidence and independence. Frequent visits, for example,

to explore the local area, help children experience the wider world. Children participate enthusiastically, enjoy learning and have fun. They work and play together safely within a well-ordered environment. Occasionally, they spend too much time listening to lengthy presentations and this results in some becoming restless and inattentive. Good leadership ensures effective teamwork between teachers and support staff. All adults demonstrate good levels of care, which results in children feeling secure and happy. Teachers check children's progress regularly and provide additional help to those who need it. The outdoor area is attractive and designed well to encourage independent learning.

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

- Improve teaching by making lessons more exciting and matching work more accurately to pupils' needs.
- Develop the curriculum in a way that stimulates more active and independent learning.
- Improve the rigour of monitoring and evaluation so that they focus more sharply on raising pupils' achievement.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Achievement is satisfactory. Pupils enter Year 1 with below average standards and this is how standards remain until the end of Year 6, showing that they make satisfactory progress. To address the well below average standards in writing seen in the test results in 2007, the school adopted a programme that provides pupils with more opportunities to write. As a result, standards have improved. Improved provision in mathematics, particularly problem solving and calculation skills, is helping to raise standards and pupils particularly enjoy the practical activities that help them learn more effectively. Standards are improving as these strategies take effect but the more able pupils could achieve more through greater challenge. Pupils who need extra help with their learning, those from Traveller communities and those new to learning English, achieve well when supported individually, but less so in whole class situations where teachers do not always accommodate their needs.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are polite and friendly. They generally behave well, listen attentively and are keen to learn. Most work hard in lessons, even when these are uninspiring. They willingly undertake projects at home to extend their learning. While most attend regularly, the attendance of a few is poor and this hampers their progress. Through events such as community activities and sports fixtures, they develop team spirit and by working alongside pupils from other cultures and traditions, they learn to respect others. Many visitors and visits help them to gain a good understanding of the wider world. Their excellent contributions to the community include helping to organise fairs and supporting church events. They are very kind and considerate and, through an effective 'buddy' system, they befriend those who have no one to play with or are upset. They enjoy many responsibilities. For example, school councillors decide on fundraising events, recycling projects and new playground equipment. Through links with the church, they develop a good

understanding of citizenship. Pupils are very aware of safety issues and the dangers of drugs. They know that staying healthy is important. Many attend sports clubs, and select healthy lunches. The progress pupils make in their key literacy and numeracy skills prepares them satisfactorily for secondary education.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teachers have good relationships with pupils and encourage them well. In most lessons, they plan suitable activities to ensure pupils attain the learning targets. Teaching assistants are used effectively to support pupils facing various kinds of challenge. Teachers use up-to-date technology with confidence to develop pupils' skills. Activities that involve drama or practical tasks hold pupils' interest more effectively. Homework is set regularly and action taken if it is not done. However, the school agrees that the quality of teaching does need to improve. Many lessons, while generally satisfactory, are unexciting. Teachers frequently talk for too long. The emphasis is too much on giving the pupils information rather than encouraging enquiry and independence. Too often, all pupils do the same work, regardless of their ability, and as a result, some do not achieve as well as they could. Pupils, although well behaved, become inattentive too quickly and this results in pupils learning too slowly.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum ensures that pupils cover the work that they should. Many visitors, for example Young Enterprise, enhance pupils' experiences, and projects such as road safety around the school, develop pupils' knowledge and understanding well. Provision for literacy and numeracy has improved and the impact is reflected in the improved standards, particularly in writing. Pupils who need extra help with their learning are provided with appropriate additional activities. Provision for information and communication technology has improved since the last inspection but pupils still have too few opportunities to work independently. To improve this, the school is planning a more topic-based approach which would allow pupils to explore and research on their own. Provision for personal, social and health education supports pupils' good personal development by boosting their confidence and self-esteem and providing a good insight into the world beyond school. Many interesting out-of-class activities enrich the curriculum well, with particular strengths in the arts and sport.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

Child protection, health and safety and safeguarding procedures are all secure. Staff know the pupils well and take prompt action should any problem arise.

Pupils know who to go to in the school for help if they are worried or upset. Pupils new to the school, often with specific social or educational needs, are supported sensitively with external agencies involved where appropriate. Good links with secondary schools ensure Year 6 pupils feel confident to move on. Parents speak highly of the school partly because it supports them as well as their children.

Procedures to monitor pupils' progress and identify any who need additional help are effective. Pupils know their group learning targets and this is helping them to achieve more. However, as targets are not matched precisely to individual learning needs, some pupils, particularly the more able, are not always challenged enough. Teachers mark work regularly and offer helpful advice as to how to improve.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The headteacher has provided effective leadership, after a time of some turbulence and change, marked by long-term sickness absences and staff changes. A senior management team has been established and it works effectively to support improvements. Staff feel supported and those with management responsibilities feel enabled to lead their areas of work. Recognising the need to improve rates of progress, the school now has appropriate systems in place to set targets and track pupils' achievement more closely. However, planning and systems to review and evaluate the school's work lack clarity as to who is responsible and accountable for specific activities. The roles of subject leaders are developing. They regularly review their subjects but their actions lack rigour, particularly in checking that staff challenge pupils fully by planning accordingly. The leadership team knows that teaching is currently satisfactory but has not focussed enough on what needs to improve. Governors support the school well and have an accurate understanding of its strengths and the challenges it faces. They make regular visits to check its work and ask probing questions regarding developments.

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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 |
|---|----------------|

### Overall effectiveness

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 3   |
| 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   | 3   |

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

|   |   |
|---|---|
| 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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles   | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices   | 2 |
| How well 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                                    | 1 |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 3 |

### The quality of provision

|  |   |
|--|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?          | 3 |
| 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?   | 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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| <b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>                                       | 3   |
| 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  | 3   |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation  | 3   |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can                     | 3   |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money  | 3   |
| 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  |

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

8 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Our Lady of Lincoln Catholic Primary School, Lincoln, LN2 2HE

I am writing to tell you what we found out when we came to your school recently to look at the work you do and to talk to your teachers. It was lovely meeting you. Thank you for making us feel welcome and for being so friendly and polite. We enjoyed talking to you about the many clubs you can join and all that you know about healthy eating. We particularly liked the way the older pupils help to look after younger children and how much you do to help others by raising funds and organising projects such as looking at road safety in the area.

Your school is satisfactory and there are many good things too.

- You enjoy being at school, work hard and make satisfactory progress.
- Your lessons are satisfactory, but some of you could do harder work.
- All the visitors and trips help you learn more and you have many interesting and fun clubs, like 'Monkey Business' that you attend.
- Your behaviour is good. You know about staying safe, fit and healthy.
- You make good friends and can go to someone if you are worried or unhappy.
- The headteacher and all the staff take good care of you and help you.

These are things we have asked the school to do to become even better.

- Make sure your lessons are more exciting and that teachers give you the work you need to do really well, especially those of you who could do harder work.
- Make sure that teachers plan work that gives you more opportunities to explore by yourselves and choose topics you will find more interesting.
- That your headteacher and staff do all that they can to help the school improve quickly so that you do really well in your work.

There are things you could do to help too. For example, you could try to come to school everyday and ask for harder work if you need it.

I hope that you will all do well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Rajinder Harrison

Lead inspector