

# Our Lady's Catholic Infant School, Wellingborough

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	122049
<b>Local Authority</b>	Northamptonshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	314204
<b>Inspection date</b>	30 April 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Peter Callow

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>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4-7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	148
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Peter Griffin
<b>Headteacher</b>	Clive Robinson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 October 2004
<b>School address</b>	Henshaw Road Wellingborough NN8 2BE
<b>Telephone number</b>	01933 224900
<b>Fax number</b>	01933 224902

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<b>Age group</b>	4-7
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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 impact of work to raise standards and achievement in reading; the quality and consistency of assessment, target setting and tracking of pupils' progress; and the effectiveness of leaders, particularly subject coordinators, in evaluating the performance of the school. Evidence was gathered from discussions with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject coordinators, a governor, parents and pupils; lesson observations; scrutiny of teachers' planning and pupils' work; analysis of assessment data; and a review of the school's monitoring and evaluation records. 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 its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

## Description of the school

Pupils come from a wide area and considerably varied backgrounds. The large majority are from Catholic families. The proportion of pupils who are of minority ethnic background is above average and increasing, as is the proportion of pupils with English as an additional language. Approximately one third of pupils have learning difficulties. The headteacher is relatively new in post, having taken over responsibility for the school in January 2007.

## 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. It owes its success to the extremely good teamwork of the staff and the very effective leadership of the headteacher, who with the support of governors is taking the school from strength to strength. Through thorough and accurate self-evaluation, staff and governors have a clear picture of the school's strengths and areas for development. There have been some significant improvements in the last year and the school has good capacity to improve further. Above all, everyone strives towards the school's mission statement and it is, as one pupil described, 'a loving, caring school'.

Pupils' great enjoyment of school is very evident. Parents say how happy their children are to go to school and pupils talk about the friendliness and kindness of adults, as well as other pupils. One pupil was keen to say, 'The best thing about this school is the adults help us learn.' Pupils' genuine enthusiasm for school life shows on their faces, both at work and at play. They particularly enjoy a wide range of practical activities, including the use of information and communication technology (ICT), which helps them to be motivated in their approach to learning.

The outstanding pastoral care given to pupils contributes significantly to their enjoyment of school and to how safe and secure they feel. It also supports the school's good efforts to improve the irregular attendance of a few pupils. Pupils' spiritual development is a strength and the oldest pupils confidently talk about the school's mission statement and how they should try to put this into practice in their daily lives. Acts of worship are well linked with what pupils are studying in class, so that their work on themes such as 'frogs' or 'mini-beasts' is reinforced by reflection on, and respect for, the natural world. Daily worship also emphasises how much each child is valued, and the part each one can play in contributing to the school community.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle and even those in the Foundation Stage know the importance of eating fruit. The early morning session of 'Activate' not only contributes to pupils' daily exercise, but also helps their understanding of the need to be mentally alert when they begin their learning. Pupils are aware of the importance of staying safe in school and talk about why they must not go beyond the fences. The involvement of visitors, such as the school nurse, the police and fire services, supports pupils' personal development well. Visits outside school also contribute, such as those by the talented choir to local events.

The levels of skill when children start in the Foundation Stage are very varied, but overall they are broadly in line with those expected at this age. Generally, there are weaknesses in children's communication and language skills and a small minority of children have poorly developed personal and social skills. Pupils, including those with learning difficulties, achieve well. By the time they leave at the end of Year 2, standards are above average overall, and significantly above average in writing.

There has been a determination this year to raise standards in reading to match those in writing, particularly for boys and the more able, who have done less well in this area. The school has put a range of good strategies in place to improve reading, including working more closely with parents and providing more adult support in lessons. A wider range of reading material has been purchased, including non-fiction to encourage boys to read more and play-scripts and novels to extend the more able. Although the full impact of these strategies has yet to be seen, there are already some encouraging signs. Higher standards in reading in the Foundation Stage

are now evident because of a more structured approach to the teaching and learning of phonics. The school recognises that there is more to be done to improve reading, including extending this structured approach to phonics into Years 1 and 2. Excellent provision is made for pupils who do not have English as their first language to learn to read, so that they make good progress.

Good teaching helps to ensure that pupils of all abilities and backgrounds achieve well. Effective use is made of assessment to ensure that tasks are very carefully planned to build on what pupils already understand and can do in mathematics and writing, and increasingly this is happening in reading. Pupils are highly engaged in all their lessons as a result of positive relationships and a well-balanced curriculum. Art and music are strongly promoted and pupils reach high standards in these subjects. Pupils of all ages get good verbal feedback on how well they are doing in their work and what they need to do to improve. Pupils' written work is regularly marked with positive comments and the school is taking action to ensure that these comments more frequently identify the next steps in learning.

The headteacher is taking steps to ensure that there is consistently good practice in the setting of targets for pupils to attain and the tracking of pupils' progress, both by individual teachers and at a whole-school level. He recognises that this is necessary to raise standards further, to identify and support any pupils at risk of underachievement more quickly, and to raise the quality of academic guidance to match that of the pastoral care. The headteacher has correctly identified the effective practice that currently exists in Year 2, on which the school can build. In addition, he is aware that not enough attention has been given to the tracking of children's progress in the Foundation Stage. Currently, this is not sufficiently rigorous to clarify those aspects of the six areas of learning in which pupils perform less well.

In the last year, subject coordinators in English, mathematics and science have begun to take greater responsibility for monitoring the performance of the school. Their observations of lessons and scrutiny of pupils' work are leading to improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and the curriculum. For example, they are developing more accurate procedures for assessing pupils' performance in practical activities, in areas such as mathematics and science. However, so far, they have not been involved enough in the tracking of pupils' progress across the school.

Pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education because of their good attitudes to learning and good basic skills. Pupils' progress is strongly supported by the positive relationships that exist with parents and a range of different agencies. As one parent said, 'Our Lady's is a fantastic place for children to learn and grow.'

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Parents acknowledge that the welcome and care given to each child when they join the Foundation Stage ensures that they settle quickly and begin to enjoy school. Adults are very responsive to each child's personal and academic needs, enabling them to achieve well. Those with learning difficulties and the most vulnerable receive extremely good support, with the result that their communication, language and social skills develop particularly quickly and well.

Improvements in the Foundation Stage provision have taken place rapidly in the last year, following a thorough evaluation and an effective action plan. Standards in literacy and numeracy are higher than in previous years because of a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Greater use is being made of the outside area to promote learning. However, there

are still insufficient opportunities taken to ensure this resource promotes children's ongoing interest and engagement in the various topics and themes that are being explored.

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

- Raise standards in reading, particularly for boys and the more able.
- Ensure that there is consistently good practice across the school in setting targets for pupils to attain, and in tracking pupils' 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?	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?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### 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	1
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 the 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

<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>	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	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	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

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

1 May 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Our Lady's Catholic Infant School, Wellingborough NN8 2BE

Thank you for being so friendly to me when I visited your school recently. Lots of you were keen to talk to me about why you enjoy it so much, and I can see why. It is a good school, where you are looked after extremely well. I was amazed by how many of you know the school's mission statement and the part that you can play in ensuring that everyone in the school community feels happy, safe and loved.

These are some of the other good things that are happening:

- you work hard and make good progress
- you are taught well and all the adults give you a great deal of support, particularly those of you who find your work difficult
- you are given lots of opportunities to think about life and the world you live in
- you are learning to be responsible and caring people and to think about the needs of others as well as yourselves
- the headteacher, governors and other leaders consider carefully what is going well in school and what needs to be improved.

The two things that I have asked the adults to do to help you to do even better are:

- raise the standards of your reading, particularly for boys and those of you who find learning quite easy
- ensure that there is good practice across the school in setting targets for you to reach, and in checking how well you are doing.

You can help by continuing to have the same enthusiasm for your work that I saw when I visited.

With best wishes Yours sincerely

Peter Callow Lead inspector

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Lead inspector