

# Our Lady's Catholic Primary School, Alcester

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	125704
<b>Local Authority</b>	Warwickshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	315288
<b>Inspection date</b>	10 February 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Barbara Atcheson

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.

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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 (total)	90
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Kiernan Cunningham
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sylvia Collins
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 May 2005
<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>	St Faith's Road Alcester B49 6AG
<b>Telephone number</b>	01789 762555
<b>Fax number</b>	01789 762336

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school is smaller than most primary schools. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage, with a few from minority ethnic groups. A below average proportion of pupils are entitled to free school meals. An above average number have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, which mainly involve speech and language difficulties. The school has provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage in a mixed Reception and Year 1 class.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school. Its great strength lies in the supportive atmosphere which encourages pupils to grow in confidence and is a constant thread throughout the work of the school. Parents appreciate this. One parent, reflecting the views of many, said, 'We are confident that our daughter is cared for and nurtured in the safest possible atmosphere.' Pupils' achievement is satisfactory because the quality of teaching and learning, the curriculum and guidance and support are satisfactory rather than good. Pupils usually join and leave the school with standards that are broadly average, having made steady progress as they move through the school. However, progress for the more able and progress in mathematics for all pupils could be quicker to help raise standards further. The reason behind this lies in the fact that there are inconsistencies in teaching and learning and also the fact that pupils are not always clear about what they have to do next to improve their work. Similar reasons underlie the pupils' slower progress in mathematics and writing by children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral and social and development, is good. This is because the curriculum promotes personal development well and the school provides good pastoral care. Pupils appreciate the many clubs that the school has to offer and talk excitedly about the benefits of residential weekends, archaeological digs and trips to places like Hampton Court. Relationships are good throughout the school. As a result, pupils enjoy coming to school and have positive attitudes towards school and their work. They say that there is a friendly atmosphere and teachers are 'nice' people but they don't enjoy 'rough arguments' on the playground, or when other pupils chat in class and prevent them from learning. Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of the importance of adopting a healthy lifestyle and being safe in all that they do.

Pupils' care, support and guidance are satisfactory. The care and welfare of pupils and their families is at the heart of the school's work and there is a close partnership with a range of outside agencies that supports the school in meeting pupils' needs. Academic guidance is less strong. Pupils have targets to improve their work, but are sometimes unclear as to whether they have met a target and what they need to do next to help improve their work.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher lead a team of staff who share a common vision to 'enable pupils reach their full potential within a caring and supportive environment'. Their secure leadership and management, along with a developing understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, are helping to raise pupils' achievement and standards. The pace of progress since the previous inspection has been steady and the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve. Checks on teaching identify strengths but do not focus sufficiently on what teachers need to do to challenge more able pupils and to help all pupils overcome any gaps and difficulties in order to accelerate their progress, particularly in mathematics.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

Children settle quickly into school because there is a warm, welcoming atmosphere and because good partnerships between adults ensure that children feel happy, secure and ready to learn. Children start school with typical skills for their age. They make steady progress in all areas of learning to start Year 1 with expected standards for their age in terms of both their academic and personal development. Care and welfare are good so that when children set out for a 'Bear

Hunt' on a wet, wintry morning, they are all warmly wrapped in coats, scarves and gloves. Children's social development is good and this is reflected in the positive attitudes they have towards their work and their good behaviour. Planning does not always provide enough learning opportunities in mathematics and writing, which are the weakest areas of learning. Children join in eagerly when learning their letter sounds and are most attentive to what the teacher has to say. They engage productively in the range of activities, including those led by the teacher and those initiated by the children themselves. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The staff work well together as a team. The school has a clear understanding of weaknesses such as the need to ensure that the outdoor learning area is improved to provide high quality outdoor activities, but has yet to ensure that all areas of the curriculum are planned to the same degree.

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

- Identify weaknesses in writing and mathematical development for children in Early Years Foundation Stage more clearly in order to plan work that accelerates their progress further.
- Make sure that all pupils have clear information about how well they are doing so that they understand what they need to do next to improve their work, particularly in mathematics.
- Improve checks on teaching so that staff have more guidance in teaching mathematics, particularly for the more able, so that all pupils make quicker progress in their learning.

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**

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. Children enter the school with typical skills and knowledge for children of their age. They make satisfactory progress to reach the expected standards by the time they enter Year 1. They then make steady progress to reach broadly average standards at the end of Year 2. National tests in 2008 show that at the end of Year 6, standards were broadly average. While progress overall is satisfactory it could be quicker, particularly in mathematics and for the most able pupils. The school recognises this and initiatives introduced recently are beginning to consolidate pupils' learning through the introduction of homework books. There are signs of improvement in pupils' progress in Years 4, 5 and 6; however, the school has not yet remedied all the weaknesses in pupils' knowledge or difficulties in their learning. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported well, enabling them to make satisfactory progress.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development is strength of the school. Their good spiritual, moral, social development means that behaviour is good and although some rough play is reported, pupils generally work and play harmoniously together and are polite and friendly. They enjoy attending. Pupils have a secure knowledge of other cultures but their understanding is more limited. They know how to eat healthily and enjoy sporting activities. Pupils say they feel safe in school and are confident that they could go to any member of staff if they were worried. Pupils enjoy their responsibilities, including the school council, and feel confident that they contribute well to school life. However, the school recognises that pupils' contribution within the wider community

is a weaker aspect of their development. Satisfactory achievement, together with the skills they learn that can be used in adult jobs, means that pupils are suitably prepared for their future.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Pupils are happy, confident learners because teachers foster good relationships between all. Pupils enjoy the brisk pace at the start of lessons but become passive when teachers talk for too long and the pace of the lesson drops. Learning is strengthened when teachers listen carefully to what pupils say and adapt the lesson accordingly. However, pupils do not always fully understand their learning objectives or their targets. This means that they are not always clear about what they have to achieve, and this in turn slows progress. In some lessons the work is not sufficiently challenging and pupils say that they sometimes find work too easy. They say that they would like to learn more and although they find marking helpful, it does not always indicate the next steps in their learning. Pupils enjoy their learning when they take an active part in the lesson such as planning a play script and are dismayed when the lesson comes to an end. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to ensuring that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are fully included in every lesson.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum supports pupils' good personal development through an effective programme of personal, social and health education and as a result pupils know how to lead safe and healthy lifestyles. Pupils enjoy the good range of extra activities such as the sports clubs to raise their activity levels and the many visits and visitors that enhance the curriculum. The school has started to make changes to the curriculum for Years 1 and 2 in order to make it more relevant to pupils' interests and abilities; however, this has yet to be extended fully into Years 3 to 6. Currently timetabling is not always sufficiently flexible to allow longer periods on one theme and this sometimes thwarts pupils' enthusiasm. Although the school has worked hard to implement many different strategies to overcome the weakness in mathematics, it has not clearly identified where the weaknesses lie, and consequently some initiatives have been more successful than others.

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

#### **Grade: 3**

Pupils feel well cared for and thrive in this nurturing environment. There is a good level of support for vulnerable children and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school works closely with parents and with other agencies to make sure that these pupils are fully included and make satisfactory progress. All staff are committed to promoting pupils' health and safety and all safeguarding procedures meet requirements. Academic support and guidance are satisfactory. The school keeps a helpful record on the progress of pupils and this gives a clear picture of the improvement being made by individuals across the school. It keeps suitable records and assessments are regularly undertaken, but guidance to pupils on how to improve their work or reach challenging targets is inconsistent. Pupils say that although targets are set and discussed, they are not always clear about what they mean.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

The headteacher and deputy headteacher lead a supportive team of staff who are united in their firm commitment to providing a safe and happy learning environment, where all pupils are valued. The quality of school self-evaluation is satisfactory, and the school development plan is based on the right priorities. Some of the actions and ways of judging how well they have been achieved lack the sharpness needed to quicken the pace of improvement. Systems to check on the quality of teaching are established and undertaken by senior leaders and other staff. However, they are not sufficiently rigorous in identifying, analysing and rectifying the underlying weaknesses in teaching and learning that slow progress in mathematics and for more able pupils. The governing body are supportive and endeavour to ensure that they are kept informed about the work of the school. The school's strong links with parents and other agencies have a positive impact on the creation of a strong, closely knit community. These links are beginning to extend further to support the school's currently satisfactory provision to ensure community cohesion. The school's work is strongest within its own locality, but weaker in presenting a more global picture and providing opportunities for pupils to experience other cultures.

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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?	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 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?	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/or disabilities make progress	3

<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	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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?	3

## 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 eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

**Annex B**

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

11 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Our Lady's Catholic Primary, Alcester B49 6AG

Thank you for the friendly way you welcomed us to your school for the recent inspection. We enjoyed talking to you and visiting your classrooms. You have given us lots of helpful information. We think your school is a satisfactory school and these are the things you do well.

- You enjoy coming to school.
- You behave well.
- You have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles.
- You have a good understanding of keeping safe.
- You enjoy your responsibilities, and know that you contribute well to school life.
- The teachers look after you very well.

The school is working hard to make things even better for you. We have asked the school to do three things.

- Find out how to help children the Reception class do even better in their writing and mathematics.
- To tell you clearly how you can improve your work and what you can do in order to move to the next level in your learning.
- Make sure that school leaders find out how to make teaching even better so that it helps you to improve even more, especially in mathematics.

We hope that you will all continue to enjoy coming to school and to try your hardest so that you are successful in the future.

Thank you again. We wish you continuing success.

Yours faithfully

Barbara Atcheson Lead inspector