

Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107751
Local Authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	324646
Inspection dates	24–25 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Peter Jones

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.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	204
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
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Fr I Smith
Headteacher	Mr Harry Rowan
Date of previous school inspection	13 September 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Bradley Boulevard Sheepridge Huddersfield West Yorkshire HD2 1EA

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	24–25 September 2008
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Telephone number
Fax number

01484 310700
01484 310707

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average sized primary school serves a residential area with signs of significant deprivation. Since the last inspection in 2005, the school has been led by five different headteachers and has experienced high levels of staff absence. Since March 2008 it has been federated with a neighbouring Catholic primary school, the headteacher of which now leads both schools. A well above average proportion of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds but an average proportion speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is high and an average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school holds the Activemark award.

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. It is improving rapidly. It is recovering strongly from the instability and lack of effectiveness it suffered as a result of circumstances that caused it to have five different headteachers during the last three years. This led directly to declining standards, poor behaviour and low morale among staff and pupils. Decisive action by the diocese working in partnership with the local authority led to the introduction of a new and energetic headteacher and governing body. The result was an immediate and dramatic impact that has seen behaviour quickly improve and achievement begin to recover. Staff, pupils and parents have rallied behind the new, vital leadership. Much has been achieved in a very short time and, as a result, the school provides satisfactory value for money and has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. Although the school now checks its work more closely, subject leaders do not all have the skills and expertise required to carry out this role to full effect. The school's provisional results in the 2008 national tests exceeded its expectations by a considerable margin, although they remained well below national averages for 11-year-olds. Current achievement and standards are good in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and satisfactory in the rest of the school. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and it has a clear picture of its strengths and weaknesses. Its strategic planning is realistic and practical, with raising achievement and the quality of the educational experience for all pupils at its core. Given its clear-sightedness, the success it has already gained and the determination of all parties to go forward, the school has good capacity for future improvement.

The school is welcoming; pupils are polite and are eager to tell visitors about their school and their restored pride in it. The school council is beginning to have a stronger profile in putting forward pupils' views. Pupils say they feel safe, and that bullying is increasingly rare and is very effectively dealt with by the school should it occur. Pupils say, 'Our school has improved and it's a really good place to be now.' The time and effort taken by staff to promote appropriate behaviour and thought for others has paid impressive dividends. The new behaviour policy has the support of the majority of parents and pupils, and the rewards system now in place is raising pupils' self-esteem and motivation. It is this improved behaviour and attitude that has made Our Lady's a more effective school where pupils are now able to learn. Parents and carers soundly appreciate the school's efforts and are pleased with its recent improvement. Pupils show good awareness of the need to lead healthy lifestyles and to take exercise. The award of the Activemark is an endorsement of the school's good work in this area. The school provides satisfactory opportunities for pupils to make a contribution to the school and wider community and to prepare for their future education and careers.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and, like other areas, is improving. Staff are taking advantage of the comprehensive professional development now available to them, and achievement is rising as a result. More and better resources are being made available, particularly books and computer equipment, and these are being used to make lessons more stimulating and enjoyable. There is still a tendency in many classes to pitch the lesson to the needs of the average learner. This means that the lesson and the work set is not always matched well enough to the abilities of individuals, and this limits their progress. The overall quality of teaching and learning and of the curriculum are not yet high enough to raise achievement and personal development above the satisfactory level.

The school provides good pastoral care for its pupils. There are good links with outside agencies to provide pupils with the specialist help they need. Safeguarding arrangements are in place

and meet current requirements. The Breakfast Club introduced this year is well managed and is used and appreciated by an increasing number of families. The academic guidance that pupils receive is only satisfactory. Pupils are not all familiar with their learning targets or the amount of progress they are making towards them. The marking of their work is rich in praise but it does not give them enough advice about how to improve their work further. As a result of these shortcomings, many pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the EYFS with skills and abilities in most areas that are below those typical for their age. As a result of the good care, guidance and teaching they receive, they make good progress and by the start of Year 1 most children are working at the expected levels. Good links are established with parents and these help children to settle quickly into school and forge friendships. Speaking and listening skills are encouraged and effectively developed by the sensitive and attentive staff. Children learn how to follow routines and to treat each other and adults with respect and kindness. Their personal and social development grows significantly as a result, as does their confidence as learners. Children have good opportunities to make choices and learn both in groups and independently. Activities are well matched to children's needs and abilities because their progress is carefully recorded and their next steps in learning provided for. The EYFS is well led and managed. The school's outdoor areas do not match the quality of its indoor resources. Children have satisfactory opportunities to play and learn but equipment is limited and the outdoor areas are not as exciting and stimulating as they might be. The school is aware of this and work begins on a new integrated EYFS unit very shortly.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning and the curriculum in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 to ensure that achievement, standards and personal development are improved for all pupils.
- Ensure that all pupils are aware of their learning targets, their progress towards them and what they should do to improve their work.
- Improve the skills and expertise of the school's middle managers in order to improve the school's overall performance.

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 overall is satisfactory. Pupils do not maintain the progress they make in the EYFS but all year groups in the rest of the school are currently making at least satisfactory progress. This is in contrast to the last two years where standards and progress in national tests fell to below average for seven-year-olds. The recent improvements in the school's leadership, its teaching and learning, and pupils' behaviour and attitudes have successfully addressed the situation and standards are rising steadily across the school. Currently, pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are working at just below average levels for their age groups. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language are also making satisfactory progress thanks to the improving support and guidance they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is satisfactory. Their enjoyment of school has increased of late, and this is reflected in their growing participation in the clubs and activities the school provides. Behaviour is good in classrooms and in the playgrounds, and pupils show a good awareness of what they must do to keep safe. They show an increasing respect and tolerance towards each other. There is a pleasing racial harmony among pupils from a variety of ethnic backgrounds and cultures. Attendance has remained consistently in line with national averages in spite of the school's difficulties. Pupils relish the meals of exceptional quality and also enjoy healthy activities and exercise. They learn about different religions and cultures in class and assemblies but are not taught in a planned way about living as a part of a wider community. They have few opportunities to hone their team-building skills. Their underdeveloped speaking and listening skills and limited opportunities to experience the wider world outside school also hinder their potential for success in later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are becoming more effective, and pupils say that lessons now have more varied and interesting elements. Most lessons move at a good pace and there are high expectations of work and behaviour. Relationships between pupils and adults are much improved. Pupils want to do well, and this new attitude has been the springboard for improved achievement across the school. Classrooms and corridors have lively, colourful displays that often celebrate pupils' work. Teachers are assessing pupils' progress adequately but they are not always providing tasks for individuals appropriate to their needs. The most able pupils become frustrated as a result, while the least able sometimes find the work too difficult. Opportunities for pupils to develop important research and independent learning skills are limited. In some lessons, pupils have to sit and listen for long periods when they would be better employed on individual tasks. As a result, they do not reach their full potential

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The satisfactory curriculum, like the school's teaching and learning, does not yet take sufficient account of the needs of individual pupils. The school has put more intervention strategies in place. These are improving the learning of those pupils who experience difficulties with basic skills. The school is aware of the need to extend this area and is training staff to this end. The school is working on extending the links between subjects and developing a thematic approach. It has had some success, as pupils say that lessons are more relevant and enjoyable, but there is still some way to go. Opportunities to experience educational visits and to meet people from outside school have been limited in the past. The school has now considerably increased these opportunities with a beneficial effect on pupils' personal development. Pupils' knowledge and awareness of their own health and safety and the need to cooperate with others have been particularly enhanced.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pupils are well cared for and the school knows all its pupils well. The quality of pupils' academic guidance means that this aspect is satisfactory. The school environment is safe and attractive. The site supervisor and his dedicated team take great pride in cleaning and maintaining the school to a high standard. Arrangements for safeguarding are understood well by staff, and health and safety procedures are thorough. Those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities enjoy improving support. Teaching assistants are receiving training to further their skills to boost pupils' progress and personal development. Pupils are not as involved as they might be in understanding how they are progressing in their work. Their knowledge and understanding of their learning targets is limited in all classes. The advice they receive does not clearly and consistently point out the next steps in their learning, and the pace of their progress slows as a result.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

In a short time, the school's leadership and management have made a measurable impact on the school's effectiveness. The headteacher and the hard-working staff and governors have succeeded in raising behaviour and relationships to a level where effective learning can take place. The close partnership with the local authority and the benefits of federation with a successful school have provided Our Lady's with a rich vein of support and expertise that is being used to raise the school's performance. Morale and teamwork have improved significantly and staff absence has stabilised. There are clear strategies in place to raise achievement and standards and improve personal development. New performance management arrangements have given staff more focus and urgency in their work. The school aims to check its effectiveness carefully. It is beginning to produce good data to inform this process. Not all managers have the skills and knowledge needed to make best use of this information to raise the quality of teaching and learning and improve

achievement. The school makes a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion. Its successful involvement in the Black Children's Achievement Project and the Black Children's Association is evidence of its commitment in this area, but the school is aware that it needs to do more to involve itself in the wider community. The new governing body contains a range of expertise and experience. Its members are well aware of the challenges the school faces. They deserve praise for the time and effort they have put into creating the federation and for their determination to make it a success.

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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?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ 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

¹Grade 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

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
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	3
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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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?	3

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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**

I am writing to thank you for being friendly and helpful when my colleague and I inspected your school recently. We enjoyed our visit very much. I would like to share with you what we found out.

You go to a satisfactory school that is improving quickly. We were pleased with your behaviour and the way that you get on well with each other and with adults. Many of you told us how much more enjoyable school has become over the last six months. You say you feel safe and that the school looks after you well. Most of you work hard in lessons and your work and progress has improved as a result so it is now satisfactory. The children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress. Your school council has improved your playgrounds and made school a better place. You appreciate the growing number of clubs and activities the school provides. We know that the Year 6 pupils are very excited about the residential visit that takes place later this term. The staff and governors want you to do as well as you can. They are working hard to make Our Lady's even better.

We would like you to do even better with your work and so we have suggested three things that will help. We would like your school to improve the quality of teaching you receive so you get the tasks you need to make better progress. Also, we feel that the ways in which the school sets your learning targets, checks your progress and marks your work could be better so that you understand more clearly how to improve your work. Lastly, we have asked the school to make sure that all staff with responsibilities check the school's work more carefully and take action so that they all help you learn as much as possible. You can help by always doing your best, asking for help and advice and by carrying on behaving as well as possible.

Keep looking after each other.