

# Our Lady's RC Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	116883
<b>Local Authority</b>	Herefordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	326474
<b>Inspection date</b>	24 March 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Alison Cartlidge

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)	209
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>	Carol Thompson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Maria Woolaway
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	22 November 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>	Boycott Road Hereford HR2 7RN
<b>Telephone number</b>	01432 274814
<b>Fax number</b>	01432 274814

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following.

- Provision and progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Pupils' progress and standards in Years 1 to 6.
- How well teachers use assessment information to meet pupils' differing needs.
- The impact of leaders in driving up standards and school improvement.
- Pupils' personal development and response to pastoral care, especially in enjoying learning.

Evidence was gathered from: discussions with pupils and members of staff and governors; observations of teaching and learning; views of parents; and scrutiny of pupils' work and school documentation. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors 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 this report.

## Description of the school

Pupils come to this average-size primary school from the city of Hereford. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in one Reception class. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The school has a broadly average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, although they are not evenly distributed across the school. Most of these pupils have specific learning, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language is broadly average but is increasing rapidly. Most of these pupils speak Polish and some are at the early stages of speaking English. There have been many changes in teaching staff in the last two years, including a new headteacher. The breakfast club, Stay and Play after-school club and the Merry-Go-Round nursery are run by private providers, and were not part of this inspection.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to the pupils' achievement and standards.

Children make a good start to their education in the Reception Year because they have access to a wide range of relevant and exciting activities that help them to learn quickly. Between Years 1 to 6, pupils do not make enough progress. Standards are now exceptionally low by the end of Year 2, and below average and declining by the end of Year 6, when compared with national averages. The headteacher, other members of staff and governors have a clear understanding of what works well and what needs to be done to halt this downward trend in standards. Work already started to improve the school has led to satisfactory teaching and progress across the school this academic year, although this is not good enough to compensate for previous underachievement. Newly arrived pupils with English as an additional language are being given specific language support, enabling them to make at least satisfactory progress in learning to speak English.

Pupils' personal development is satisfactory overall. Whilst most pupils behave well there are a few pupils in each class who have emotional and behavioural difficulties and require considerable support from members of staff. A few parents expressed concern about behaviour at the school. The inspection found that systems to support pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties have recently been expanded and have enabled these pupils to be given skilful support when needed. As a result, the school has become a calmer place for pupils to work and learn. The school works well with outside agencies and parents to support pupils and families who are finding home or school life difficult.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall. Pupils' spiritual development is a particular strength and pupils write their own prayers and make decisions about special promises to keep during Lent. Pupils' awareness of the diversity of cultures in Britain is less strong than other aspects. Nevertheless, the school makes a satisfactory contribution towards understanding other communities in Britain and globally by providing special cultural weeks and activities. There are clear plans to extend links with other schools, including a school in Tanzania. Most pupils are polite and friendly and show respect for the views of others. They make a sound contribution to the community. Pupils take responsibility in school for various tasks and raise funds for charity. The school and eco councils are pleased with their achievements. For example, eco councillors check that lights have been turned off in empty rooms. The pupils' above average rate of absence is due to parents choosing to take their children on term-time holidays and does not reflect the pupils' willingness to attend regularly or the school's persistent efforts to encourage good attendance. Despite pupils' satisfactory personal development, they underachieve academically and are therefore not prepared well enough for the next stage of their education and the world of work in later life.

Teachers prepare lessons carefully and include practical activities to make learning interesting. They use interactive whiteboards well to help provide clear explanations for tasks and effectively organise resources to support learning such as information cards and punctuation guidelines. They manage pupils' behaviour well but do not make enough use of assessment information

to check that work is pitched at the right level for all pupils. Consequently, work is not always matched closely enough to pupils' differing needs and when this happens the learning of some pupils is too slow. The school has started to set challenging targets across the school and has put in place suitable intervention plans to support pupils who are not learning quickly enough. These procedures are in the early stages of implementation and have not been in place long enough to have had a significant impact on learning. Teaching assistants provide valuable support for groups of pupils, especially those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, enabling them to take a full part in school life and to make satisfactory progress towards their individual targets.

There is a satisfactory curriculum. Basic skills are taught in a structured way but this is not enough to make up for previous underachievement. Senior leaders are rightly developing more opportunities for pupils to develop these skills further when working in various subjects. Pupils' personal development is catered for well and helps pupils to lead safe and healthy lives. For example, pupils take frequent exercise in lessons and clubs and often make healthy choices at lunchtime.

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall. The good pastoral care and support provided by all members of staff is a particular strength in provision and contributes well to the pupils' thorough enjoyment of school. Pupils show much appreciation for the level of pastoral support they receive from members of staff and procedures for safeguarding pupils are fully in place. They say that they feel safe at school and are confident that they can approach any member of staff if they have a worry. Pupils have a good awareness of potential dangers and the importance of staying healthy. They can explain the negative impact various drugs have on the body and know which foods are healthy and why. Academic support and guidance are satisfactory. Teachers use praise well to encourage pupils and build their confidence but they do not always make it clear through their marking or target-setting what pupils need to do to improve their work.

Satisfactory leadership and management ensure that there is now a clear focus on raising standards and improving pupils' achievement. Systems for self-evaluation are satisfactory. Methods for tracking individual pupils' progress have been developed to help members of staff identify those who are falling behind, but this information is not presented sufficiently clearly to help leaders evaluate and compare the progress of different groups of pupils over time. This means that they are not able to respond quickly enough to underachievement as it arises or to tackle effectively the fall in standards since the last inspection. Governance is satisfactory. Governors realise that in the past they have not been sufficiently aware of emerging weaknesses in provision. They are supportive and have recently improved their knowledge of how the school needs to improve. A close working partnership with the new headteacher has resulted in them strengthening their role in school improvement planning. The school has not improved enough since the last inspection because issues from that time remain and standards have dipped. Nevertheless, recent improvements in pupils' progress in the current year and in their behaviour now that there is a more settled staff, demonstrate the school's satisfactory capacity to improve. Most parents are pleased with the provision for their children, especially the pastoral care provided. They make comments such as, 'In my opinion it seems a very friendly and happy school to attend' and 'Staff are very approachable and welcoming and our child is growing in confidence every day.' These comments reflect what the school is doing well.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Nearly all children are working below the expected levels for this age group on entry to the school. They make good progress from their differing starting points although standards are below average when children start in Year 1. Good induction arrangements help children to settle into school routines quickly and to become confident and happy individuals. Adults work together closely, planning a wide range of interesting and purposeful activities. Consequently, children thoroughly enjoy learning. For example, children were seen enjoying being part of a role play counting game about Little Red Riding Hood, and sorting parcels in the well-resourced role play post office. Adults work alongside the children providing valuable individual support. Occasionally, opportunities are missed to extend the learning of more-able pupils when they are working on activities they have chosen for themselves. Children's personal development is satisfactory. Most children become independent, play together happily and make sensible choices as they work. However, a few children require considerable support and encouragement and find it hard to concentrate for any length of time. Members of staff are successful in promoting the children's welfare and assess the children's learning well. Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. Senior staff have clear plans to make the already good outdoor provision even better by ensuring that all activities provided indoors are replicated outside.

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

- Accelerate the pupils' progress and raise standards.
- Increase the proportion of good teaching by ensuring that pupils' differing needs are consistently being met well in all classes and ensure that teachers make better use of marking and setting targets to help pupils know how they can improve their work.
- Improve the way information on pupils' progress is recorded and evaluated so that leaders have a clear knowledge of the relative progress of various groups of pupils and can act swiftly to remedy weaknesses in provision.

## **Achievement and standards**

Grade: 4

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

Grade: 3

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

Grade: 3

### **Curriculum and other activities**

Grade: 3

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

Grade: 3

## **Leadership and management**

Grade: 3

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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?	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No
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?	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?	3
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?	4
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
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>	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	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
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	4

## 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?	Yes

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

Dear Children

Inspection of Our Lady's Roman Catholic Primary School, Hereford HR2 7RN

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and for sharing your work with us. We found that your school is not doing as well as it should to help you learn quickly.

Here are some points about your school.

- You learn quickly in the Reception class. I was pleased to see you enjoying the counting games and working in your class post office.
- Your school does not help you to learn quickly enough during your time in Years 1 to 6.
- Most of you behave well and those of you who find this difficult are helped well by teachers and teaching assistants.
- You are good at learning about prayer. You made some good wishes for Lent.
- Teaching is satisfactory. Teachers work hard to make lessons fun by giving you interesting things to do.
- You study a suitable range of topics, and particularly enjoy the visits and clubs.
- Members of staff care for you and want you to do well.
- The leaders in the school know what to do to make the school better.

What we have asked your school to do now.

- Help you to learn more quickly by always giving you work that is just right for you and is not too easy or too hard.
- Make clear how you can improve your work by writing helpful comments and helping you to remember your targets.
- Make sure that information about how well you are doing is clear so that the headteacher and staff can see at a glance if some pupils are not doing well enough and can then put things right quickly.

What you can do to help your teachers.

- Make sure that you take notice of your targets and the teachers' marking.

We thoroughly enjoyed talking with you about your work and watching you learn. We are glad that you enjoy coming to this school and wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Alison Cartlidge

Lead inspector