

# Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

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Unique Reference Number	103430
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	336080
Inspection dates	15–16 September 2009
Reporting inspector	Lois Furness

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Canon Sean Grady
Headteacher	Bernadette O'Shea
Date of previous school inspection	20 March 2007
School address	Trittiford Road Yardley Wood Birmingham B13 0EU
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Age group	3–11
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 23 lessons or parts of lessons, and held meetings with the chair of governors, staff, pupils and parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation including teachers' planning, pupils' books, the school improvement plan, monitoring and evaluation records, assessment records, individual educational plans, minutes of meetings, safeguarding information and the termly reports of the school improvement partner. The responses from the pupils' and staff questionnaires were analysed, as were the responses from the 90 parents' questionnaires received during the inspection.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. They looked in detail at the following:

- the learning and progress of more able pupils especially in writing, to determine if teaching is sufficiently challenging
- the effectiveness of strategies to accelerate the progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities
- the use of assessment information to inform planning and how marking is used to help pupils improve their work
- the effectiveness of safeguarding policies and procedures.

## Information about the school

In this average size primary school, the majority of pupils are White British although sixteen other ethnic backgrounds are represented. There are no pupils at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. There are nine classes for Years 1 to 6 pupils, of which six are made up of pupils from two year groups. These mixed year classes are grouped according to ability. Since the previous inspection, the school offers full-time Nursery education. The school has attained a number of awards including the Healthy School Award, Active Mark and the Basic Skills Quality Mark.

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

## Main findings

Our Lady of Lourdes is a good school. Its pupils are at the very heart of everything it does. They are cared for, guided and supported outstandingly well in a nurturing environment that enables them to thrive. Safeguarding procedures are exemplary. Pupils, parents and carers are rightly proud of their school and this comment made by one parent typifies the views of many, 'Everyday my children wear their uniform with pride. They are happy, confident, caring individuals and much of this is due to the headteacher and her team of hard-working, dedicated staff.' Pupils also are very appreciative saying, 'The teachers think of us before they think of themselves,' and, 'This school goes the extra mile to take care of us'. Such comments indicate how safe pupils feel, very confident that the staff will listen to them. Pupils whose circumstances render them vulnerable state unequivocally that adults are always there for them. Behaviour throughout the school is outstanding and pupils say the very few instances of bullying that occur, are dealt with quickly and fairly. Pupils' understanding of keeping safe is outstanding, as is their knowledge of the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle. Many pupils enthusiastically take part in the extensive range of sporting activities available, recognising the importance of regular exercise.

Pupils love school and this starts in the good provision found in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Induction procedures are excellent, resulting in children who are happy and eager to learn. Throughout the school both staff and pupils are enthusiastic and, combined with good teaching, this results in consistently good learning and progress. Relationships are excellent and pupils spontaneously help each other with their work. By the end of Year 6, attainment is above average in English, mathematics and science. Attainment in reading is well above average. However, writing attainment is not as high as more able pupils do not consistently attain as highly as they should in this subject. Teachers do not consistently use assessment information to help them plan the next steps of learning and marking does not always provide pupils with sufficient advice about how to improve their writing. Those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because of carefully tailored support.

Excellent self-evaluation procedures ensure that the leadership team and governors are clearly aware of strengths and priorities for development. The staff use the school improvement plan very well to identify the right priorities, and this leads to a rigorous and successful programme of actions aimed at rectifying weaknesses. For example, the weaknesses in writing have been identified. Although the school has

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done much to promote community cohesion through studies of world religions, there is scope to improve pupils' knowledge and understanding of cultural diversity in Britain. The thoroughness of self-evaluation, and the very strong determination of the senior management to drive the school forward, demonstrate that the school has good capacity to improve further.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate the progress of pupils in writing, especially the more able so that more pupils attain the higher Level 5 at the end of Year 6 by:
  - providing teachers with support in knowing exactly what to teach to secure higher level attainment
  - sharpening the use of assessment information to ensure planning is matched closely to pupils' needs
  - ensuring marking consistently refers to the intended learning, clearly identifying the positive features of pupils' writing and providing guidance about how to improve.
- Extend pupils understanding of other communities and cultures within the United Kingdom by:
  - auditing the curriculum to check coverage of the diversity
  - enabling pupils to experience working with people from a variety of ethnic, religious and social backgrounds.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils' are well motivated and enthusiastic learners who enjoy their education. Overall attainment by the end of Year 6 has been above average over the last three years and achievement is good. Pupils' performance in science has been a consistent strength. In English and mathematics, pupils' attainment has fluctuated. However, as a result of strategies, such as grouping pupils by ability, and a focus on the teaching of reading and writing, pupils' attainment in reading and mathematics has risen. Pupils' current work shows the majority are working at levels above those expected for their age in these subjects. Learning and progress throughout the school are good. In reading, progress is outstanding and more able pupils are challenged well in this subject. In mathematics also, the more able are suitably challenged. However, in writing too few pupils attain the higher level. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well resulting in good learning and progress.

Despite pupils' enjoyment, attendance is broadly average, as a small minority of pupils do not attend regularly enough. Pupils value their school and relish the chances to take on responsibility such as peer mediators, school council members or playground friends. All pupils spoken to and the questionnaire returns show pupils take an active part in decision-making. They are keen to improve the environment and pupils told inspectors how they work hard to keep the 'Dingle' free from litter. Pupils are respectful and kind and their spiritual, moral and social development is

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outstanding. Throughout the school there is a sense of enjoyment and interest in learning about the world. Year 1 pupils for example, speak excitedly about how God made the 'world, us and dolphins, oh and sharks!' However, their cultural development is not as strong as the pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to engage with others from communities different from their own. Pupils' good skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology alongside their strong personal skills ensure that they are prepared well for the future.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

## How effective is the provision?

During the inspection the teaching seen was consistently good with much that was outstanding. Features of the outstanding teaching included the very effective use of a range of different strategies to ensure the active involvement of all pupils throughout lessons. Lessons included probing questioning, as staff checked carefully pupils' knowledge and their understanding of specific subject vocabulary. Good use is made of interesting resources such as film in English, to inspire and engage pupils' interests, especially that of boys. Pupils know exactly what is expected of them and what to do to succeed through the precise sharing of the learning objectives.

In all lessons, praise was used very effectively, encouraging pupils to feel safe to answer questions, building up self-esteem and encouraging their excellent behaviour. Information about what pupils know already is used carefully by teachers to plan the next steps of learning in most subjects. However, in writing, observations of lessons and the analysis of pupils' work show that assessment information is not used as

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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effectively so that teachers are not specific enough in their planning about the learning expected for the range of abilities within the class. In some writing lessons the activities planned are not always relevant for more able pupils. Although there are some good examples of very informative marking and feedback to pupils about the quality of their pieces of writing, with comments clearly linked to the learning intended and steps for improvement, this is not consistent across classes.

The curriculum is broad and meets the needs of most pupils. It is especially well adapted for the needs of the pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Extra-curricular activities are varied, and the excellent link with the local specialist sports college means an extensive range of sporting activities are available. Pupils thoroughly enjoy these opportunities and the take-up rate is good.

Care, guidance and support are of the highest order. Pupils needing additional help are supported very well and benefit from effective strategies to meet their specific needs. The nurture group is particularly effective in supporting pupils with emotional or social difficulties. Strong links with outside agencies ensure the school is able to offer the right support at the right time.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account:	
The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

## How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders have a very clear vision for how the school should develop and this is shared by staff at all levels of responsibility and experience. Morale is high as confirmed by the overwhelmingly positive responses from the staff questionnaires. As one member of the support staff wrote, 'This is a very happy place to work. I feel a really valued staff member, and I am very proud of our school.' Monitoring and evaluation, including tracking of pupils' progress and the setting of targets, are rigorous. Consequently, the leadership has embedded a culture of striving for improvement. A high priority is to involve parents and carers in their child's learning. The work of the parent support adviser and learning mentor, as well as strategies such as inviting parents to take part in school self-evaluation and involving them in parent-workshops, have been highly effective in ensuring an excellent partnership with parents. Equality of opportunity is promoted well, and the staff work hard to foster the personal and academic progress of each individual pupil in their care. The school's contribution to community cohesion is good especially at school and local community level. The excellent partnership with the local sports college has resulted in pupils' outstanding understanding of healthy lifestyles. However, as the school

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improvement plan identifies, there are developments needed in pupils' awareness of different communities within the United Kingdom. Governors are fully supportive of the school but are never afraid to challenge the leadership when they feel it necessary to do so. They fulfill their statutory duty towards the promotion of safeguarding outstandingly well. The school monitors its spending carefully to benefit all pupils and provides good value for money.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children's skills and knowledge when they start in Nursery are similar to those expected for three-year-olds nationally. There are a minority of children with marked weaknesses in social and communication skills. Induction is excellent leading to the vast majority being happy, settled and eager to learn. Children thrive in this key stage and make good progress, not only because of high-quality care, but also because of good teaching. All staff regularly make notes about what children do and achieve during each session, and the information is used productively to determine what should happen next. This ensures that learning is continuous and planning meets the needs and interests of children well. As a result, children make good progress so that by the time they start Year 1 they are working at levels above those expected of five-year-olds. Although there is an appropriate balance between activities directed by adults and those chosen by the children, there are times when children in the Reception year are asked to sit listening for too long, resulting in restlessness and a loss of concentration. Children know that good behaviour is important. They follow routines and respond well to instructions as was seen as children tidied away their paint aprons and swept up the sand. Teachers and support staff display good team work as a result of good leadership and management. The leader has a good understanding of strengths and development areas knowing that,

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although indoor provision is good, the small restricted area for outdoor learning prevents the same quality of provision to be offered.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## Views of parents and carers

Almost all parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire were positive about the school's work and the efforts of the staff. Comments such as, 'Any problems are always addressed as quickly as possible,' and, 'You are always welcomed with time taken to speak to you,' confirm that parents find the school approachable. They are especially pleased with the safeguarding arrangements, the quality of teaching and the progress their children make. A few responses indicated the school did not always deal effectively with incidents of unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors found no evidence to support this view, either in the school's records or in discussions with pupils during lessons and break times.



## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 12 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 90 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 288 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	51	57%	37	41%	1	1%	1	1%
The school keeps my child safe	66	73%	21	23%	0	0%	0	0%
The school informs me about my child's progress	51	57%	38	42%	1	1%	0	0%
My child is making enough progress at this school	51	57%	36	40%	0	0%	1	1%
The teaching is good at this school	61	68%	27	27%	0	0%	0	0%
The school helps me to support my child's learning	52	58%	35	39%	2	2%	0	0%
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	49	54%	38	42%	2	2%	0	0%
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	52	58%	30	33%	2	2%	0	0%
The school meets my child's particular needs	51	57%	34	38%	1	1%	0	0%
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	57	63%	24	27%	2	2%	4	4%
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	46	51%	35	39%	2	2%	2	2%
The school is led and managed effectively	62	69%	24	27%	1	1%	3	3%
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	59	66%	28	31%	3	3%	0	0%

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.



17 September 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School, Birmingham  
B130EU

Thank you for your valuable help during the recent inspection of your school. We were very impressed by how friendly and helpful you are, and all inspectors said how much they enjoyed talking to you about your life in school.

It is clear that you greatly enjoy it here, and so many of you expressed your satisfaction with your school when completing the questionnaire. You made some very helpful comments such as, 'It is a great school,' and, 'We learn a lot here.' We agree, and think yours is a good school and you are so right to be very proud of it! Your teachers teach you well. You make good progress in your learning, so that by Year 6 your attainment is higher than in many other schools. We think your teachers take excellent care of you, and it is very good to know you feel safe in school and adults will always help if you are worried about anything. We think your behaviour is outstanding and during our classroom visits we saw how you willingly helped each other and eagerly shared ideas. You have an excellent understanding of the importance of leading a healthy life style and welcome the opportunities to take part in a variety of different sporting activities. You told us you are keen to take responsibility and we think those of you who are peer mediators and playground pals do a great job. You make sure problems are sorted out quickly, and everyone has someone to play with. Well done!

Even though your school is good, your headteacher, staff and governors are determined that it will get even better. To help them to achieve this, we have suggested that they do two things. We have asked your teachers to do all they can to make sure that more of you reach the higher National Curriculum Level 5 in writing. We have also asked them to give you more opportunities to develop an understanding of cultures which are different from your own.

Thank you again for your kindness and your contribution to the inspection. Please keep looking after each other and enjoying life at Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School. Finally, we would like to congratulate you on your excellent manners and say your parents and carers must be very proud of you.

Yours faithfully

Lois Furness  
Lead Inspector

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