

Our Lady of Compassion Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104102
Local Authority	Solihull
Inspection number	336234
Inspection dates	10–11 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Linda Rockey HMI

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

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	323
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Steve McCabe
Headteacher	Chris Bentley
Date of previous school inspection	6 May 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 18 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils, parents and carers. They observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation; including teachers' planning, schemes of work, pupils' books, and the school improvement plan, monitoring and evaluation records, minutes of various meetings and the safeguarding of pupils. Inspectors also looked at the responses from parents and carers, staff and pupil questionnaires.

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

- how teaching enables all pupils, especially those of higher ability to make expected progress, particularly in science
- whether curriculum planning in the Early Years Foundation Stage identifies specific areas of learning to meet the needs of all pupils and boys in particular
- how target setting and marking is used to help pupils to improve and make good progress.

Information about the school

Our Lady of Compassion school is larger than average. It serves the parish of Olton Friary and its neighbouring parishes. Most pupils are of White British heritage. However, there is a growing number of pupils from minority ethnic groups. Few pupils who speak English as an additional language are at an early stage of English language development. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average but there are more pupils with a statement of special educational needs than is found nationally. After much consultation, it was decided to group Key Stage 1 pupils into mixed-age classes. The school has gained a silver Eco award.

A private provider operates childcare for pre-school children on the school premises. This provision was inspected at the same time and a separate inspection report is available.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

'Our Lady of Compassion is a lovely school. The children are happy and well cared for.' This comment is typical of those who responded to the parents' questionnaire. The school provides a caring, nurturing and accepting environment. Pupils say they feel safe in school and that there is always an adult in whom they can confide if they have any concerns. They make healthy choices at meal and snack times and the wide range of sporting activities on offer means that they can be active and energetic. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Since the last inspection, the school has worked hard to raise attainment from the dip in 2007. The school's most recent unvalidated data for the end of Key Stage 2 indicates some success. The data show that pupils' attainment was significantly above average in the core subjects and specifically in English. However, in their classroom observations, inspectors identified that staff do not track pupils' progress well enough to ensure pupils are doing as well as they are capable. This is especially true of the higher attainers in science. Teaching is satisfactory because teachers' use of assessment is not as good as it should be. This was an area for development following the last inspection and still remains a weakness. The leader for assessment has introduced a detailed system for tracking progress; however, there has been a lack of urgency to implement it across the school.

The curriculum is satisfactorily planned to meet the needs of the pupils. However, the school is aware that there are not enough opportunities for pupils to practise and consolidate their basic skills across the curriculum. A wide range of extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities are taken up by the pupils, including opportunities to play musical instruments and take part in exciting residential trips.

Throughout the school, effective teamwork is evident but shared leadership and management is under-developed and this leads to an over-dependence on the headteacher. School self-evaluation is satisfactory. Governors and staff are involved in regular reviews and have a clear grasp of those areas which require further improvement. The leadership team has sound plans in place and is keen to implement them. However, the focus on time-related priorities is too limited to secure the necessary improvements. The school's capacity to improve is therefore satisfactory.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the assessment of pupils' learning by January 2010
 - ensuring that teachers' marking lets pupils know how well they are doing and

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gives clear steps to aid their progress

- tracking pupils' progress and intervening swiftly to ensure no-one slips behind
 - making sure that lesson planning builds on pupils' prior learning and is sufficiently differentiated so that it extends learning for all pupils.
 - Develop a model of distributed leadership by April 2010
 - making clear all leaders' roles and responsibilities and providing time for tasks
 - setting realistic yet challenging targets to ensure pupils make good progress
 - implementing a robust system for tracking , monitoring and analysis of the impact of teaching.
 - Design a broad, balanced and creative curriculum taking into account pupils' views by July 2010
 - providing well-organised, imaginative and active opportunities to meet the needs for all groups of pupils
 - ensuring cross-curricular links which help pupils to use and consolidate their basic skills.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Children start Nursery with knowledge and skills in line with expectations for their age. Progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Children leave Reception with attainment that is generally in line with expectations for this age, but with slightly lower levels of attainment in aspects of communication, language and literacy. Although pupils' attainment is above average at the end of Key Stage 2, and pupils enjoy school, progress through the key stages is uneven. Where learning is planned to meet the needs of all pupils, including the higher ability, pupils make better progress. In one Year 6 science lesson, pupils were engaged and motivated to learn because the science was relevant and clearly based on previous learning. In another lesson, Year 3 pupils were challenged to develop their knowledge and understanding of measurement. The effective use of support partners and careful questioning of girls helped to build their confidence in this area of mathematics.

The school recognises that there is a gender difference across the school. Boys tend to do less well in English and girls in mathematics. This issue has been addressed successfully in the Nursery where boys have improved in communication, language and literacy. The latest unvalidated results for Year 6 in 2009 also show an improvement in boys' attainment in English. Pupils with special educational needs perform similarly to their peers. This is a result of the careful targeting of additional staff support. That said, inspectors identified times when learning support assistants are under-used and did not play an active part in lessons.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
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 ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Care, guidance and support are strong features of the school. Parents are positive about the 'buddying system' designed for children when they start. Pupils are well supported during their time in school. Transition arrangements from the Early Years Foundation Stage into Year 1 run smoothly and children in Year 6 are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

The curriculum is sound and most teachers use technology with confidence to make learning interesting. Where lesson planning is built on previous learning, and the teacher has good subject knowledge, high expectations and provides clear and helpful marking, pupils progress well. However, lessons are too often organised around activities and there is insufficient use made of up-to-date assessment information. As a result, teaching is not always well matched to individuals' learning needs.

Particularly effective lessons often include stimulating and engaging practical activities. For example, Year 3 pupils were eager to take part in 'hot-seating' at the end of a literacy lesson. Role-playing a 'fierce pirate' was helping to develop their writing skills. This was a good example of harnessing the enthusiasm of the pupils through lively

¹ 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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teaching alongside learning through a practical activity.

Pupils like the positive comments in their books but these do not inform them of how they might improve. Their written work is not marked thoroughly enough to provide clear guidance on how to take the next step. Pupils' progress is not monitored carefully enough to enable staff to intervene early when, for instance, a pupil is at risk of falling behind. Despite being mid-way through the autumn term, the majority of pupils are unaware of their personal targets in the core subjects. This delay in communicating personalised targets does not allow pupils to understand precisely what they need to improve. This, together with increased, detailed marking is an urgent area for improvement.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher leads by example in sharing his vision for the school. Together with the governors, who are supportive and knowledgeable about the work of the school, there is a clear commitment to the school's aim 'to live as Jesus taught us'.

The headteacher recognises the importance of having more systematic and regular monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning. The governors hold the school to account for important areas of development but realise they need to be more influential in determining a strategic direction.

At the time of the inspection, safeguarding arrangements were met and in line with current government guidance. A strength of the school is the strong partnership it has developed with parents, carers and the local community. For example, pupils regularly undertake shared activities with a local special school. Pupils are actively involved in a partnership with schools in Uganda and Sri Lanka. This engagement contributes to satisfactory community cohesion.

Equality of opportunity is taken seriously. Boys and girls are expected to take an active part in a range of sports, including tag-rugby. The gender difference and planning for higher attainers are specific issues in which the school is beginning to demonstrate some success.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children in both the Nursery and Reception classes are happy, well-behaved and co-operative. They are eager to engage adults in their conversations and involve them in their learning experiences. Children in both settings work independently, follow instructions and make appropriate choices. Practitioners accurately assess children on entry to the Nursery. These assessments are carefully recorded and used to make activities more interesting for specific groups of children. Inspectors saw an example of this where a pirate theme was used to ensure boys were fully engaged.

In the Reception classes, children enjoy the interactive approach to learning phonics (linking letters and sounds) and show good progress in this area, making a confident attempt at spelling words such as 'nurse'. An inspector observed children engrossed in making models of emergency vehicles. They showed good cutting skills and understood the care needed when using scissors. Boys in the Nursery were particularly enthusiastic when dressing up as fire officers and pretending to use hosepipes. In a Reception class, the circle-time session about Poppy Day showed the children to be sensitive and responsive when thinking about a difficult subject.

The Nursery and Reception class practitioners plan their curriculum independently. The Early Years Foundation Stage manager does not have sufficient time to monitor and evaluate this key stage to ensure that provision is as exciting as it should be. There are not enough opportunities for children to use their investigative and enquiry skills fully. In addition, teaching is not always precisely matched to the focused area of learning. There is an appropriate balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Although limited, the outside areas are used well. The children have opportunities to paint, build and ride bikes. In the Nursery, children particularly enjoyed forming an outside orchestra using

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all sorts of equipment. They were able to explain how different sounds were made. Children develop personal independence and responsibility well and this is reinforced by parents who speak positively about how quickly their children settle in. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Recent staffing changes mean it is too early to see the full impact of any new practice. Nevertheless, a good start has been made to create a welcoming and stimulating learning environment for children.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Most parents and carers, who responded to the questionnaire, were positive about the school overall. However, a few expressed some negative views. The inspection team investigated these and found no cause for concern.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Our Lady of Compassion Catholic 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 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 85 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 323 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	55	68	23	28	2	2	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	60	74	20	25	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	41	51	31	38	6	7	2	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	37	46	37	46	5	6	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	46	57	31	38	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	49	60	26	32	4	5	2	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	47	58	34	42	0	0	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)	42	52	30	37	0	0	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	40	49	38	47	1	1	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	40	49	37	46	2	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	33	41	40	49	5	5	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	47	58	31	38	2	2	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	56	69	22	27	2	2	1	1

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 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	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

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

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"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



12 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Our Lady of Compassion Catholic Primary School, Solihull B92 7EG

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. We thought you were all friendly and well-behaved. We really enjoyed talking to you and thank you for showing us your work. We thought your school was satisfactory. Here are a few highlights.

You behave well and have a good understanding of how to keep healthy.

Your school council and those of you who take on extra responsibilities are doing a good job.

You have many opportunities to develop your interests, including sports, music and visits to places of interest.

Your school works well in partnership with other organisations to help you learn.

Your headteacher and staff really care about you and work together well with parents and carers.

In order to make your school even better, we have asked your headteacher and staff to do the following.

To make sure you know how well you are doing and what you need to do to improve by

- clear and detailed marking showing you the next step
- using what they know about you to set you challenging targets at least every half-term.

To share out the leadership jobs which need to be done to run your school.

To listen to your ideas as they develop a more active, investigative and exciting curriculum.

You can do your part by finding out what you need to do to improve and trying hard to reach your targets.

Yours sincerely

Linda Rockey

Her Majesty's Inspector

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