

# Our Lady's Catholic Primary School, Barnstaple

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	113448
<b>Local Authority</b>	Devon
<b>Inspection number</b>	338174
<b>Inspection dates</b>	4–5 February 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Rowena Onions

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

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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 of pupils on the school roll</b>	174
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	David Wright
<b>Headteacher</b>	Kelly Dunne
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5 February 2010
<b>School address</b>	Chanters Hill Barnstaple EX32 8DN
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Nine and a half hours were spent looking at learning during the inspection. Inspectors observed at least one lesson taught by each of the six teachers who were in school during the inspection. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, staff and governors. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at records of the school's monitoring activities, the school development plan, minutes of governors' meetings, reports from the school's improvement partner and a range of other documentation. Inspectors received 67 responses to the parental questionnaire.

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

- progress in English in Key Stage 1
- the progress of different groups of pupils
- the consistency of teaching across the school
- the impact of the curriculum and of care, guidance and support on pupils' learning and progress
- the impact of current initiatives on school improvement.

## Information about the school

This smaller than average-sized school serves its local area in Barnstaple as well as taking pupils from a much wider area. Most pupils are of White British origin but the school has 12% of pupils from a range of other ethnicities. Currently 10% of pupils speak English as an additional language. An average proportion of pupils have a range of special educational needs and/or disabilities. There are two intakes into the Early Years Foundation Stage in the autumn and spring terms.

**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?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

Our Lady's, Barnstaple, is a good school. From broadly average starting points, pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics and by Year 6 have above-average levels of attainment. Care for the individual is a strong feature of the school. Children in the Reception class are given a good start to their education and from then on pupils' progress is carefully tracked and any potential underachievement is quickly identified and actions taken either to support the individual or to improve the quality of the teaching they are receiving.

In combination with overall good teaching, in which teachers actively seek ways to interest and involve the pupils, the curriculum is instrumental in producing pupils who are anxious to learn and concentrate in class. Work is in progress to help teachers to use recently introduced assessment systems more productively and they are already successful in ensuring that work is well matched to the different needs of the pupils. Because some teachers are not quite clear in their own minds exactly what they wish pupils to learn by the end of the lesson, and thus have difficulty telling the pupils, pupils' efforts are not always used to maximum effect. While the linking of subjects under topic headings helps pupils understand the relevance of what they learn, topics in Key Stage 1 are sometimes not sufficiently appropriate for the ages and experiences of the pupils. This inhibits progress, especially in writing, where pupils' progress is only satisfactory. Although pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, they do not have as much opportunity as they should to learn about a diversity of cultures.

Pupils are very well aware of how to keep themselves safe and healthy and many take up out-of-class opportunities to be physically active. Although they honestly acknowledge that they do not always live up to their high expectations of themselves, they know what a healthy diet should be! The inspection questionnaire revealed that a small but significant minority of parents have concerns about behaviour. Behaviour observed during the inspection was good. Pupils, too, consider behaviour to be good, although they very maturely discussed the fact that the school works hard to help a very small number of their classmates to control some unacceptable behaviour. They understand the reason that some extra activities are provided for these pupils is to support their individual needs. They do, however, quite justifiably, want to be able to take part in these activities themselves.

Good leadership and management have enabled the school to make the improvements identified. Great care is taken to ensure pupils are safe, valued and supported. The headteacher has shown determined, thoughtful leadership and has been very successful in building a staff team whose members work together to check the effectiveness of their work and take successful action to strengthen the education provided. These

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strengths, which are successfully underpinned by active governance, mean that the school is demonstrating good capacity to sustain improvement.

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

- Ensure that teachers are precise about what they expect pupils to learn by the end of a lesson.
- Improve the curriculum by ensuring that:
  - topics and activities planned for pupils in Key Stage 1 are always appropriate for their ages and experiences
  - pupils are given more opportunities to learn about a diversity of cultures
  - pupils can be confident that access to special activities is fair to them all.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Levels of attainment in Year 6 have risen in the last two years and pupils are on track to do even better this year. Classroom observations reveal that pupils communicate increasingly well when talking and writing and show that they can apply their numeracy skills effectively. Older pupils, for example, demonstrate the ability to write for a purpose when writing to the BBC to defend Barnstaple against the way it was depicted in a television programme. In Years 1 and 2 pupils' progress in writing is, however, sometimes affected by their lack of knowledge of the subject about which they are being asked to write. For example, when asked to write about the rainforest, many had little knowledge of this subject, so wrote very little, preventing them from developing their writing skills as effectively as they should. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language now make outstanding progress. These pupils often exceed nationally expected progress, sometimes doubling it.

Pupils demonstrate how safe and secure they feel by the relaxed way in which they seek help from staff. They make a good contribution to the school community through the school council and through the maturity they show when supporting other pupils. They want to understand about other people's lives with one pupil summing up the general feeling by saying, 'All people must live in the way they feel is right'. However, their actual knowledge of the different ways in which people live is no more than satisfactory. Above-average basic skills, including in speaking and listening and information and communication technology, together with the empathy they show for others and the way they learn to work cooperatively and diligently, are preparing pupils well for their future lives.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

**How effective is the provision?**

The school has worked hard to develop the quality of teaching. This has improved the consistency of approach across the school and hence outcomes for pupils. Relationships are good so pupils wish to do well, initially to please their teachers but increasingly for their own satisfaction. The good skills of teaching assistants are utilised well, both to support teachers in lessons and to lead additional activities. The improvement in reading in Key Stage 1, for example, is in large part because a teaching assistant has been deployed to provide good-quality extra teaching. Systems already in place for providing pupils with oral and written feedback are good and although there remains some variability, these are used well in most classes.

Curriculum improvements have had impact in Key Stage 2 where the involvement of pupils in planning work is particularly productive as it ensures pupils are interested in what they are learning. The curriculum is successfully enriched by visits and visitors, events that are greatly enjoyed by pupils. Everyone is involved in caring for and safeguarding the pupils. The support for pupils with particular difficulties with their health, their attainment or their behaviour is outstanding and actively promotes their good and better progress. There are good systems for improving attendance, which is currently broadly average.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
The use of assessment to support learning	3

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<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

Improved and improving standards demonstrate the effectiveness of leadership and management. Honest and accurate school self-evaluation, by both staff and governors, has meant that development priorities have been, and remain, correctly identified. Although the school development plan is instrumental in driving improvement, its current format means that the impact of actions is not as easily evaluated as it might be. Governors play an important part in holding the school to account, in ensuring the good safeguarding of pupils and in ensuring that everyone aims to provide the best possible quality of education. Finances have been particularly well managed at a time when the numbers on roll are falling. A commitment to equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination is evident throughout the work of the school and promotes the good and better progress made by different groups of pupils. Governors and staff have begun to look in depth at community cohesion and the way it is promoted by the school. Good links have been developed with the church and some local and foreign schools. However, the school rightly identifies the need to extend and evaluate these initiatives.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

## Early Years Foundation Stage

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

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Last year, the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage made good progress and by the end of their Reception year, their levels of attainment were above the national expectation for their age. The curriculum has been developed very successfully and is now outstanding, providing children with a good mix of inside and outside activities and a good balance between those directly taught by adults and those where the children choose what to do for themselves. Teaching is good. Adults are appropriately deployed to provide support and guidance when needed and they use questioning sensitively to promote each child's development. Assessment processes provide an accurate picture of each child, but at present are over-complex, meaning that the system could not easily be used by another teacher should there be a need. Provision to ensure the all-round development of each individual mirrors that in the rest of the school and is equally effective. Good leadership has promoted improvement in the provision and has ensured that current national advice about provision for young children has been considered and implemented.

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

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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**

Most parents are highly supportive of most aspects of the school. They are particularly pleased with the quality of teaching and leadership. Inspectors agree with these opinions. Inspectors looked closely at the concerns raised by some parents about behaviour. This appears to be a new issue as the school's own questionnaire, completed just two months before the inspection, showed that 95% of parents felt that behaviour was good. Pupils reported good behaviour on the part of the vast majority and this was corroborated by inspection observations. Links with parents are good and the school already has plans to work with parents to try to allay any concerns.



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

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	47	70	19	28	0	0	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	42	63	20	30	4	6	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	36	54	26	39	5	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	32	48	27	40	4	6	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	36	54	27	40	2	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	32	48	27	40	4	6	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	32	48	29	43	5	7	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)	34	51	27	40	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	34	51	25	37	8	12	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	26	39	20	30	10	15	10	15
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	31	46	25	37	4	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	37	55	23	34	2	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	43	64	17	25	5	7	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

	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

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"> <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 pupil's 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.

**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.**



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