

Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123858
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	340443
Inspection dates	25–26 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Alex Baxter

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	120
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Susan Bosanquet
Headteacher	Jerome McCormack
Date of previous school inspection	8 February 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited seven lessons and an assembly, observed break and lunchtime activities and held meetings with governors, staff, pupils and parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at plans and policies, records of assessments and the tracking of pupils' progress. The provision and planning for pupils who are vulnerable or have special educational needs and/or disabilities were also evaluated. In addition, 88 parental questionnaires, 63 pupils' questionnaires and 13 staff questionnaires were analysed.

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

- pupils' progress, particularly in mathematics, and whether this is equally good for all groups, including an increasing number of pupils who speak English as an additional language
- the consistency and quality of teaching and learning across the school
- how effectively leaders and managers, including governors, monitor and evaluate the school's work to bring continuous improvement.

Information about the school

This is a small school. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds, but there is an average and increasing proportion of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds. Of these, an increasing proportion speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The number of pupils who join or leave the school other than at the usual times is above that normally expected. Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage in a mixed Reception and Year 1 class.

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

This is a good school. Under the strong leadership of a relatively new headteacher, the school is emerging well from a period of rapid change, which has involved significant building alterations, increased inward and outward movement of pupils and new leadership. The school has an exceptionally calm and warm ethos. This promotes the pupils' excellent attitudes to learning and this is aided by the very considerate and respectful relationships between staff and pupils in the school. The school has embraced the task of inducting an increasing number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, many of whom arrive with very limited English language skills, in an exemplary way and they do very well.

Overall, almost all pupils make good progress from their average levels of attainment when joining the school. This leads to above average standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. The school has worked effectively to ensure that the outcomes for pupils are often at least good. This has been aided by the introduction of a more precise system for tracking pupils' achievement and the provision of an exciting curriculum. The school continues to improve at a good pace as teachers target individual pupils at an earlier stage if they appear to be making slower progress. As a result, they bridge gaps in their previous learning and accelerate their progress. This process lies at the heart of the school's effective self-evaluation, the good quality of the teaching and learning and the good capacity for improvement.

As a result of leaders' accurate self-evaluation they know that aspects of mathematics require further development in the drive to lift achievement towards outstanding in the future. At the moment, teachers do not give pupils enough information about how to improve their work in mathematics when they mark their work. In addition, more able pupils in Years 3 to 6 do not always have sufficient practical opportunities to extend their own strategies for solving mathematical problems; these inconsistencies hamper even faster progress.

The school cares for its pupils well, and the needs of the most vulnerable pupils are very effectively supported. Pupils show enthusiasm and enjoyment in their learning and contribute outstandingly well to the community. They take their responsibilities seriously. Links with the church are especially strong. The school's good curriculum and its very welcome inclusion of pupils from other backgrounds also make a significant contribution to the pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. As one pupil said, 'We like having a mixed school community.' Although most pupils attend well, despite the school's increasingly rigorous attempts to bring about improvement, attendance is reduced to broadly average by the persistent absence of pupils from a few families. This remains an area for development. Opportunities to reward good

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attendance are missed.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' mathematical skills, especially for the most able learners by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to learn and solve problems by devising their own calculation strategies
 - giving pupils more information about how to improve, especially when marking their work.
- Improve the pupils' attendance by:
 - sustaining firm action to reduce persistent absence
 - developing strategies to reward good attendance.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

The school has worked hard to improve standards. Pupils' attainment is above average and reflects good achievement from a range of starting points and in relation to a variety of needs. Inspectors carefully examined the progress of groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and found that all pupils are making at least good progress. The progress of pupils at an early stage of learning English is sometimes very good as a result of the high quality of support they receive.

Many pupils show particularly good skills in speaking and listening, using computers and when investigating in science. Discussions with pupils and photographs of educational visits, such as those undertaken by 'Nurture Group' pupils to woodland environments, show the pupils' enthusiasm for practical activities. Pupils enjoy working in groups, and make good progress, for example, when writing play scripts. They also enjoy using handsets to record their quick-fire answers during mental mathematics sessions. Although attainment continues to rise, some pupils, especially the more able, still have difficulty formulating their own strategies to solve mathematical problems.

Pupils' behaviour is consistently good. Pupils say that behaviour has improved due to the care given by adults. Pupils make very willing contributions in lessons. They readily take on responsibilities as school councillors, helping with equipment at play times and in assemblies or as 'Buddies' to help pupils new to the school. Pupils show a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and welcome the much improved outdoor facilities. Pupils' very positive attitudes to learning and good academic achievement prepare them well for the future. However, a few families do not ensure that their children attend as regularly as they should and this is not helping them to understand the importance of good attendance.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	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	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	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 ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Teachers have good subject knowledge and create a positive ethos for learning in all lessons. Pupils show a very enthusiastic commitment to learning. Teachers and their assistants know the pupils well, generally present an effective level of challenge and support those with special educational needs and/or disabilities effectively. Pupils at an early stage of learning English receive exemplary guidance. Pupils who need it get good support from teaching assistants. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils. Teachers use resources such as information and communication technology (ICT) well. For example, they used these resources to help them to assess pupils' responses accurately during mental mathematics sessions. Teachers give good oral advice and have worked hard to improve their marking and this is evident in the good feedback given to pupils on how to improve their writing. Such good quality guidance, however, is less consistently evident in the way teachers mark pupils' work in mathematics. This means that pupils, especially some more able pupils, are not clear about what they have to do to improve. Teachers provide some good research and investigation activities in science and sometimes in mathematics, as seen when pupils worked hard to find the difference in numbers on dominoes. However, opportunities for pupils to devise their own calculation strategies are underdeveloped. For example, during mathematics lessons in Years 3 to 6, pupils sometimes spent too long in whole-class discussions. This constrained their independence and ability to develop their own problem-solving

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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strategies.

The curriculum is enriched by a good range of clubs and links with the church and local community. In particular, the pupils' speaking and listening skills are developed successfully throughout the range of subjects. Music is also well promoted. Pupils say they feel safe in school, and parents agree that their children are cared for well. The good care pupils receive in school is also underpinned by the diligence of experienced staff and by the willing support of parents. Parents are made aware of the educational and legal consequences of any poor attendance. The school is continuing to focus on this and recognises that more could be done to celebrate pupils' good attendance.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

In the relatively short time that he has been at the school the headteacher has moulded a staff team that is united in promoting an inclusive ethos and in bringing about improvement. The governing body, which shares very strongly the values evident throughout the school, has given good support to the staff in steering the school forward. The headteacher has introduced an effective way of tracking pupils' progress and this aspect of self-evaluation is especially strong. The continued development of the school is now securely underpinned by accurate evaluation and clear priorities for improvement. Excellent links with partner organisations, such as local authority specialists, enable staff to provide high quality support for vulnerable pupils and for those who speak English as an additional language. Safeguarding is satisfactory. The school is effective in sustaining equal opportunity and freedom from discrimination for its pupils. The teaching of French, exploration of culture through music, consideration of other faiths such as Judaism in assemblies and awareness of the school's increasing multicultural mix of pupils foster all aspects of community cohesion well.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2

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	
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
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	3
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 on entry vary from year to year, but generally they match those expected for their age. Good leadership and close links with parents help the children settle confidently into school life and provide a boost to their successful learning. By the time they enter Year 1, the children's skills are above average in their personal and creative development and in speaking and listening and broadly average in other elements of their learning. Children make good progress across the areas of learning because provision for teaching and learning are consistently good and children's care and welfare are promoted well. Staff ensure that children benefit from an effective blend of adult-led activities and those chosen by the children themselves. For example, children enjoy whole-class stories such as 'The Giant Turnip' and readily choose to play in the class shop. The Reception and Year 1 classroom is well equipped with a good range of equipment and displays. There is a good supply of play equipment in the outdoor area; however, the school recognises the need to make the outdoor learning area even more accessible for the children.

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

The very large majority of the parents who responded in the questionnaire are happy and have confidence in the work of the school. They agreed that teaching, pupils' enjoyment and safety at school are good. Other common threads within parents' comments expressed the view that the school is improving after a period of great

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change. There were a number of parental criticisms, which stemmed from a minority of parents who expressed disagreement with the way the school helps parents to support their children's learning, promotes healthy lifestyles and deals with unacceptable behaviour. Other concerns mostly related to the management of the school and the degree to which the school takes account of parents' suggestions and concerns. Inspectors observed mostly good behaviour, healthy lifestyles and good communication with parents during their visit, including the informative newsletters and termly parents' evenings. Numeracy and literacy evenings, planned for the spring term, reflect the school's intention to give parents more guidance on how to help their children learn. Inspectors also welcome the efforts of leaders and managers to strengthen partnerships and the stated desire of all parties that the pupils' excellent attitudes and enjoyment of school should be sustained.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Our Lady of Mount Carmel 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 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 88 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 120 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	42	48	44	50	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	46	52	40	46	2	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	29	33	51	58	8	9	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	35	40	48	55	5	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	49	56	37	42	2	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	30	34	44	50	14	16	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	35	40	41	47	8	9	4	5
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)	25	28	61	69	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	37	42	46	52	5	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	30	34	46	52	6	7	6	7
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	30	34	46	52	10	11	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	38	43	39	44	4	5	7	8
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	41	47	42	48	5	6	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 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.



27 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Primary School, Wincanton, BA9 9DH

Thank you for the warmth of your welcome during our visit to your school. We enjoyed seeing you at work and talking with you. I would like to thank those of you who took the time to talk to us, particularly members of the school council. We were particularly impressed by your excellent attitudes and contributions to your learning. We agree with you, most of your parents and with your teachers that Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Primary School is a good and improving school.

These are the main things we found.

- The standards that you reach in Year 6 are generally higher than expected. They show that teaching and your achievement are good. Many of you make particularly good progress and this is especially so in science and English. Some of you who are learning English for the first time make very good progress.
- You are very well mannered and considerate and say that you feel safe at school.
- You enjoy an interesting range of activities, which includes strong links with the church and community events.
- Staff provide good care for you, work well with your parents and develop some very good links with other schools and specialist staff to give you extra support when you need it.
- The headteacher, senior staff and governors are helping you to make better progress than you have made previously.

To help the school to improve further, we have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to:

- help you to become better at solving mathematical problems, especially those of you who find learning easy, and give you more information, when marking your work, about how to improve
- improve the attendance of those pupils who do not come to school regularly enough.

Keep giving of your best and best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Alex Baxter

Lead inspector

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