

Our Lady's RC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116883
Local Authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	343762
Inspection dates	4–5 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Patricia Potheary

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	197
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Carol Thompson
Headteacher	Maria Woolaway
Date of previous school inspection	24 March 2009
School address	Boycott Road Hereford Herefordshire
Telephone number	01432 274814
Fax number	01432 276467
Email address	admin@our-ladys.hereford.sch.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2010

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Fifteen lessons were observed and seven teachers seen. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, the chair of governors, a local authority representative, the school improvement partner and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at local authority reports, information about pupils' progress, staff and pupil surveys and safeguarding procedures. The inspection team analysed 27 responses to parents' and carers' questionnaires.

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

- whether low attainment and slow progress are being sufficiently overcome
- trends in improving behaviour and attendance and their impact on learning
- the effectiveness of assessment and target setting in supporting pupils to make enough progress
- the work of school leaders in sustaining sufficiently rapid improvement.

Information about the school

Most pupils at the school are of White British origins with a few from other ethnic groups, mainly Polish. A very small minority are learning to speak English. A slightly higher than average proportion of pupils has a range of special educational needs and/or disabilities, particularly emotional, social and behavioural difficulties. The school has achieved Healthy School status and the Activemark. The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of one Reception class. There is a breakfast club, pre-school provision and after school care on site; all are privately run so are inspected separately.

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

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Our Lady's is a happy and improving school where pupils make satisfactory progress in their academic subjects. There is a strong spiritual and moral dimension to the work of the school which parents and pupils appreciate. Children have a positive start in Reception where they make good progress in most areas. Attainment in English, mathematics and science is broadly average, standards are rising in all age groups and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils enjoy school and they particularly appreciate 'the way teachers make it easy to understand.' Pupils' behaviour is increasingly mature and, in all classes, there is an atmosphere of enthusiasm as pupils try to do their best.

The quality of teaching has improved in the last two terms and is now satisfactory overall. In the majority of lessons teaching is now good but, in a few, learning is still too slow and pupils do not make expected progress. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported by staff and a host of specialist strategies, whether to support learning or behaviour, are used to ensure that they also make at least satisfactory progress. In addition there is good, effective help for those who are learning English. It is a pleasure to see that pupils value each other's differences and are very kind to one another.

There are several strengths in teaching including helpful marking which celebrates success and points out what pupils need to do next. Assessment and target setting in lessons is much improved and more accurate, enabling most lessons to meet the needs of different groups. However pupils' individual targets do not relate to all lessons in a subject, do not clearly show pupils how they can move to the next level and do not always change when they are achieved. For some pupils this slows their learning, and the lack of a clear identification of what they need to learn next leads to a lack of challenge.

Pupils are well cared for and the school has strong, effective links with parents and other agencies to help those who may need additional personal or academic support. The curriculum is rich in opportunities for pupils to take up sport and encourages them well to lead healthy and safe lives. Planning, to support raised attainment in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT), in other subjects however, is not well developed.

School leaders have worked effectively to overcome several barriers to learning following a period of transition. In addition to rising attainment, attendance is increasing from a low level. Nevertheless too many pupils still take holidays during term time or

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

simply take days off, without understanding how this can affect their future success. Rigorous collection and analysis of information on pupils' progress has enabled the school to accurately identify what needs to be further improved. Teachers are increasingly held accountable for the progress pupils make, although this is not yet consistent enough to fully overcome a legacy of underachievement. The capacity to improve is satisfactory.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and secure consistently good teaching by:
 - ensuring that all lessons provide enough challenge for every pupil
 - raising teacher expectations of how quickly pupils can learn
 - making all teachers fully accountable for progress in their groups
 - systematically supporting literacy, numeracy and ICT in other subjects.
- Improve the use of assessment for helping individual pupils move more quickly to the next stage in their learning by:
 - providing easy-to-understand steps in learning for each pupil, which change as soon as they are achieved
 - ensure targets are relevant to all strands of a subject.
- Increase attendance by keeping parents and pupils fully aware of the links between attendance and attainment.
- 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**

Lively and confident discussion in lessons demonstrates pupils' active involvement and keen attitudes to working hard and doing well. Pupils clearly enjoy their lessons often quoting them as the 'best thing about school.' By July 2009, attainment in Year 6 had dropped to well below average, but it has risen in the last two terms. The skills of pupils in the current Year 6 are much closer to average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory regardless of gender, ethnicity or ability. Although satisfactory overall, progress varies considerably between year groups and within subjects. A much higher proportion of pupils now make good progress and, for a few, progress and behaviour in lessons is outstanding. In one lesson, for example, pupils enthusiastically told their stories and had great fun ringing a bell where they thought the commas should go. They all helped each other and then listened very carefully to try and improve their punctuation. Pupils recognise that in lessons where they have up to date and relevant targets it helps them progress more quickly. However, in a few lessons insufficient progress is being made, although recent improvements, including a new scheme for teaching writing through phonics, are beginning to take effect. Pupils feel safe in school, in part due to the significant improvement in behaviour. Their good

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

understanding of how to keep healthy is demonstrated as they successfully grow their own vegetables. Pupils' sound contribution to the school and wider community includes some highly valued peer support and recycling schemes. Satisfactory preparation for the future is slowed by the lower attendance of a few, but enhanced by their strong team working skills, improving attainment and desire to do well.

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	3
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	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The considerable improvements to teaching include better strategies for teaching mathematics, good opportunities for extended writing and some specialist science lessons. Strong links with other agencies, including lead practitioners and other schools have improved curricular provision and the use of assessment in literacy and numeracy to identify and then meet different needs. Staff recognise that provision to enable pupils to practice basic skills, including ICT, in different subjects is less well developed. There are now careful procedures to ensure that anyone falling behind is guided and provided with additional support; parents are involved well in this work. The good care includes effective systems for significantly reducing persistent absence and supporting those with

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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

behaviour difficulties. Strong supportive relationships and greater involvement of pupils in working together and sharing ideas have contributed to a majority of good lessons, although a very small amount of inadequate teaching and learning remains. Here teachers do not match work well enough to what pupils need to learn next, nor expect them to do it sufficiently quickly. The school has a good range of clubs and visits to encourage lively and interesting learning.

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 head teacher and deputy head teacher have worked well in overcoming weaknesses, and although it is still too soon to see the full impact of this work improvement is established. The collection and use of performance data are now very thorough and increasingly effective in driving development. All staff are involved in raising performance and in using data to help them. Well-focused improvements to teaching are leading to a majority of good practice so that outcomes in all major areas are improving. There is still more to be done in securing good quality provision for every pupil and in ensuring that every lesson is effective. Leadership continues to demonstrate a satisfactory and strengthening capacity to improve since the last inspection. Good quality collaboration with the local authority and school improvement partner has effectively supported the beginning of the school's transformation. Governance is much improved and, although many are new to the role, governors are increasingly effective in ensuring that weaknesses are tackled.

The attention to detail in tracking performance, lack of any discrimination and the school's ethos which values individuals all contribute to its good promotion of equal opportunities. Safeguarding procedures are robust, are carefully overseen by governors and regularly reviewed. Community cohesion is promoted to a satisfactory degree and is particularly effective within the school, with parents, and locally. The school's evaluation and resulting strategy acknowledges that international links are developing but pupils do not have so many opportunities to mix with and understand people from the wider British society.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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 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	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
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 make good progress in Reception especially in numeracy. Strong links with pre-school providers and parents ensure they settle quickly. Their skills on entry in all areas are very low compared to those expected for their age. The lively, caring learning environment is busy with children investigating their surroundings, playing co-operatively together and practising their emerging communication skills. Good quality teaching ensures that learning is rapid; support is skilled and based upon a thorough knowledge of where children are and their individual needs. Those learning to speak English or experiencing difficulties with learning receive skilled, well focused help. Staff make the best of the outside spaces where painting, water, growing plants and other activities encourage children to involve themselves imaginatively and develop their language skills well. The school recognises that the outside space itself is too small and lacks a range of high quality equipment, and so there are plans for its development. Staff ensure a good balance between children exploring creatively for themselves and well-focused direct teaching in core skills such as reading, writing and number work. Children in one session were learning about space and were busy going to the moon in a rocket, painting aliens or baking cakes among a host of carefully planned activities. Good leadership has been effective in securing improved progress in all areas of learning, especially in children's personal development where they are increasingly learning to do things for themselves, take turns and get along well with others.

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

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

Parents and carers who returned a questionnaire are overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of the schools. They particularly appreciate how much their children enjoy school and how they are helped to keep safe and healthy, the quality of teaching and the way they are helped to support their child's learning. As one explained, 'The school cares about the children as individuals.' A very few mostly individual concerns were expressed which, where supported by inspection findings, are reflected in the report.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Our Lady's RC 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 27 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 197 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	14	52	12	44	1	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	12	44	14	52	1	4	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	11	41	14	52	1	4	1	4
My child is making enough progress at this school	10	37	15	56	2	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	12	44	14	52	1	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	9	33	16	59	2	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	9	33	16	59	2	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)	7	26	17	63	0	0	1	4
The school meets my child's particular needs	11	41	13	48	2	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	8	30	16	59	2	7	1	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	8	30	13	48	5	19	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	5	19	18	67	1	4	1	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	11	41	15	56	1	4	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.



6 May 2010

Dear Pupils

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

Thank you for being so welcoming when we visited your school. We very much enjoyed meeting you, joining you for lunch and seeing some of your lessons. Your school is a satisfactory and improving school, with many interesting things going on, just as you described. Senior staff work hard to keep developing the school and this is an important reason why your work is getting better each year.

Enjoyable teaching helps you to make satisfactory progress in your lessons and the rate of your progress is increasing. As a result, your work is improving. We like the way you always try to do your best. The attainment levels you reach are rising. To help this continue we have asked your school to ensure that all lessons are as good as the majority and to improve the way your targets are set and used, by:

- giving you a clear set of steps towards reaching the next level in your work, which change as soon as they are reached
- making sure each one of you works quickly enough in lessons and has things to do that challenge you
- helping you to improve your skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT through your work in other subjects.

We would also like to see attendance improve for those of you who have missed too much school. We are asking staff to make the links between attendance and success at school much clearer to you and to reduce the time some of you take for holidays during term time. We are sure that you will discuss these ideas with your teachers and help them by working hard and sharing your thoughts.

The responsibilities that you take on such as peer support and recycling are heartening. You were keen to tell us that the school keeps you safe and looks after you well. It is therefore very pleasing to see that you are helping yourselves by behaving well and considering others in lessons and on the playground. You show good respect and understanding towards those who have different beliefs and ways of living, which helps make your school a happy and welcoming community.

Yours sincerely

Patricia Potheary

Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.