

# Our Lady of Walsingham Catholic Primary School

Occupation Road, Corby, NN17 1EE

**Inspection dates** 15–16 January 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- This is an improving school. Standards have risen and teaching has improved since the last inspection.
- Pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- Disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs, speak English as an additional language and who attract extra government support all make good progress because of the effective provision for them.
- Teaching is good and some is outstanding. Teachers have high expectations, and careful planning helps pupils of all abilities to do well.
- All staff show a positive commitment to helping pupils do the best they can.
- Behaviour in lessons and around school is very good. Pupils get on very well together and bullying is rare. Parents, staff and pupils are very positive about behaviour and safety.
- The school's leadership is very effective. Teachers get good support but are also challenged to work at a consistently high level.
- The governing body is well informed and effective, playing its full part in raising standards.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The outside facilities are not sufficient to help children make the most of their learning through play. There are not always enough adults to make sure children learn and play together effectively.
- The rate of absence remains too high even though the school has worked hard to address this and has made progress in reducing the numbers who are persistently absent.

## Information about this inspection

- During the inspection a total of 14 lessons taught by 10 different teachers were observed.
- Inspectors listened to pupils reading and looked at some of the work done by pupils in every class.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, pupils, and representatives of the governing body and of the local authority. The views of staff were gathered from discussions and from the returns of the staff questionnaire.
- The views of the eight responses to the on-line Parent View were taken into account, together with the responses to the school's own parental survey undertaken in November 2012 and conversations held with parents during the inspection.
- A range of documents were studied, including information on the progress made by pupils, teachers' planning and assessment, schemes of work and curriculum planning, the school's self-assessment and development plan, together with a range of policies and procedures including those for keeping pupils safe.

## Inspection team

Martyn Groucutt, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Carol Worthington

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Although the school is a little below the average size for primary schools, it has increased its numbers dramatically and numbers are continuing to rise.
- Since the last inspection just under two years ago, the number of pupils has nearly doubled. This has been as a result of the arrival of new families from abroad and from other parts of the country.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is well above average. However, the proportion at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who are from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language are well above average. In recent years, there has been a large influx of pupils whose families have arrived from Eastern Europe.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional government funding) is broadly average.
- There is on-site childcare provision that is not managed by the governing body and which is inspected separately.
- The school exceeds the current government floor standards, which represent the minimum acceptable levels of achievement and progress.

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

- Develop the outside area used by Reception children and ensure there are always sufficient adults to keep the children gainfully occupied.
- Further promote attendance of the minority of pupils who have considerable time out of school by:
  - working with parents to end the practice of taking extended visits to their countries of origin during term time
  - developing strategies, including legal sanctions, to establish meaningful consequences for keeping children away from school.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils make sustained progress from their starting points, and their work shows that they are achieving well. There has been a marked improvement since the last inspection.
- When children start in Reception, they often have skills and knowledge well below the levels expected for their age, particularly in their personal and social skills. Good teaching enables them to make progress in all areas of learning, although attainment when they move to Year 1 is still below average.
- To an extent, progress is held back in Reception by limited outdoor facilities. There are also occasions when the number of adults is not sufficient to engage with all the children, so activities lack focus.
- By the end of Year 2, attainment of pupils who have been at the school from the start shows good progress in English and mathematics. These pupils reach or exceed the standards expected nationally. Many pupils have been in the school for a far shorter period and, while they make good progress, they perform below the standard expected in the national tests.
- Pupils develop increasingly good skills in reading. The skills of reading and the ability to understand letters and the sounds they make, and ways in which these can be made into words, are taught well right from Reception. This was reflected in the national test for skills in phonics (the ability to recognise letters and the sounds they make). Results were low, but when the school retested the pupils six months later they had made good progress.
- Good progress is maintained through to the end of Year 6. The latest figures from the national tests show that the proportion gaining the higher grades in English and writing were above average.
- Pupils' good progress from their starting points in English and mathematics enables them to leave for the next phase of their education with confidence. Pupils who have been in the school since Year 3 achieve standards that are above average.
- Because large numbers enter during the course of the year, care is taken to monitor their progress. There is strong evidence of good progress, although sometimes they have not been in school long enough for this to be reflected in scores in national tests.
- Many of these pupils arrive with little or no English, but with good help they settle quickly and are integrated effectively into school. The learning mentor gives good support and targeted help ensures good progress.
- The same careful monitoring of disabled pupils, those who have special needs and those who are known to be eligible for free school meals enables them to make good, and sometimes outstanding, progress. They narrow the gap in their performance with their classmates as a result.
- Teachers are held to account through termly meetings with the headteacher to discuss pupils' progress. This has had a big impact in raising standards and helping pupils to gain knowledge and understanding in a range of subjects, including reading, writing, communication and

mathematics.

- Pupils' skills in reading, writing and mathematics are often developed in other lessons. For example, pupils in Year 6 focused on developing writing skills in a lesson that was part of a wider project they were doing on the space race and man landing on the moon.

### **The quality of teaching is good**

- Good teaching underpins the progress made by pupils, including those who are disabled, have special educational needs, speak English as an additional language or attract the pupil premium.
- The additional funding from the pupil premium is targeted very effectively. For example, the funding of the inclusion manager and the learning mentor enables them to support these pupils so they make significant gains.
- Teachers have high expectations and the majority of teaching is good; some is outstanding. However, a little remains in need of improvement so overall teaching is not yet outstanding.
- Careful planning and good teaching enable teachers to address the differing needs of pupils. Pupils are challenged at the right level and learn effectively.
- Learning support assistants work effectively alongside teachers, supporting group work for example. They also give pupils with additional needs individual help, supporting the teacher and helping these pupils to make good progress. This includes good support for those pupils who do not speak English as their first language.
- Teachers use questioning skilfully, checking that pupils understand their work. Pupils say that teachers will always help if they do not understand something.
- Technology is often used well. For example, a lesson in Year 4 on using the compass to provide directions saw pupils using small robot cars to follow a 'track' using directions they created.
- Assessment is regular and accurate. Marking often includes advice on how work could be improved, but opportunities to correct or improve the work are not always taken. Targets (the 'I can...' statements) are not always used effectively to improve progress.
- Pupils enjoy the theme-based approach to learning. Teachers try to make learning exciting and challenging, and most pupils are engrossed in their learning. Themes, such as Alice in Wonderland in Year 2, provide many opportunities to develop skills of reading, writing and mathematics.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Pupils, staff, parents and carers all agree that behaviour is excellent in and around school. This creates a very positive ethos and learning environment in which pupils can thrive. Pupils say they feel safe in school, and their parents and carers share this view.
- The learning mentor supports pupils facing challenges of various kinds very effectively. Since many families, including those new to the country, are in potentially vulnerable situations, this often extends to supporting families as well as their children.

- Pupils have a good awareness of bullying in all its forms, but they say that it is rarely a problem. When incidents do occur, pupils say that they are dealt with quickly and decisively.
- A continuing difficulty for the school is the attendance and lateness of a significant minority. A lot of work has been done to address this since the last inspection and several pupils who were once notable absentees are now attending well and making rapid progress in learning as a consequence. The attendance of pupils who travel considerable distances to school is good because they have a daily taxi.
- A specific issue is the extended holidays taken during term time in their home countries by the families of pupils who are from minority ethnic communities. This has a negative impact on the learning of their children, and the school continues to seek ways in which this can be addressed.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- Sustained improvement since the last inspection is in large part due to effective leadership, including incisive leadership from the headteacher. All leaders have clear job descriptions and there are clear expectations of what they are to achieve, for which they are held accountable.
- The biggest development has been in the enhanced role of middle leaders. They play a positive role in driving up standards and supporting good teaching. They have also been instrumental in the development of the curriculum so that it is now more challenging and engaging for the pupils.
- The effectiveness of teaching is linked closely with the setting of targets for teachers, supported by good opportunities for training. These take into account the needs of the teachers and those of the whole school. The introduction of the Teachers' Standards has led to changes, including teachers evaluating their own performance. There are clear expectations that more is expected of experienced teachers and that those who are on the higher pay scale are expected to carry out additional responsibilities in return.
- The creation of teaching and learning teams enables teachers to meet together with a school leader to discuss best practice and to observe their colleagues in school, learning from them. This, together with a range of effective policies and procedures, is supporting rising standards and sharing expertise.
- The curriculum is well organised and provides opportunities for all, including those with additional needs, to enjoy their learning and do their best. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong, reflecting the positive ethos of the school.
- Self-evaluation is strong and effective and underpins the focused and effective school development plan. Careful financial management ensures that resources are targeted at promoting learning.
- The way in which pupils who have a range of additional needs are included fully in the life of the school and the progress that they make reflect a strong commitment to the promotion of equal opportunities.
- This is also true of the very strong relationships that exist with parents who are seen as partners in their children's education. The school works hard to promote these links since the school has

so many pupils who have entered over the last two years.

- The local authority has provided good support. For example, the support for the headteacher when she was new in post two years ago has helped her to become a very effective school leader.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body is very effective. It carries out all its legal responsibilities, and its duty to keep an effective check on the quality of teaching through specific governors linking with subject areas. It checks the performance of pupils carefully through a specific committee and has a very good understanding of the data which compare the school's performance with that of other schools. They understand the system for managing the performance of teachers and for evaluating the quality of teaching and how this relates to teachers' pay. Similarly, they understand the school's finances, including the way in which the additional funding from the pupil premium is specifically used to support the pupils for whom it is intended.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	134877
<b>Local authority</b>	Northamptonshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	406572

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

<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>	230
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Eamonn McAuley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Maire Hayes
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 March 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01536 203805
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