



# Our Lady's Catholic Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 106114  
**Local Authority** Stockport  
**Inspection number** 287420  
**Inspection dates** 12–13 February 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Clare Henderson

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Old Chapel Street
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Edgeley, Stockport
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–11		Cheshire SK3 9HX
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 4805345
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	175	<b>Fax number</b>	0161 4801086
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Catherine Gould
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Catherine Beswick
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 October 2001		

<b>Age group</b> 5–11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 12–13 February 2007	<b>Inspection number</b> 287420
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Our Lady's Catholic school is below average in size and serves a socially mixed area. The proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals and of those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are slightly below average. Most pupils are of White British heritage. A small and increasing number are from minority ethnic families, some of whom speak English as an additional language. The school has gained the Active Mark award.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Our Lady's Catholic school provides a good standard of education and gives good value for money. Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Parents agree with this, with the words of one parent summing up the views of many, that 'the sense of belonging and the way pupils care for one another is tangible'. This ethos has been promoted well through the good leadership and management of the acting headteacher. With drive and determination, she and her recently appointed senior management team have set about ensuring that morale and teamwork amongst staff is high. The school knows its strengths and weaknesses well, through thorough evaluation of its work. Staff are strongly committed to, and involved in, moving the school forward. However, subject leaders do not contribute enough to the tracking of pupils' achievements in order to accurately identify the areas requiring improvement.

Pupils' achievement is good. From a well below average starting point, particularly in language and social skills, pupils make good progress in the Foundation Stage. However, progress is slowed by the weaknesses in the outdoor provision. Pupils continue to make good progress throughout Years 1 to 6, so that, by the time they leave the school, they reach average standards in English, mathematics and science. Since the last inspection, as a result of consistently good and occasionally outstanding teaching, standards have matched or surpassed the national average.

Exemplary behaviour and positive attitudes to learning enables pupils of all abilities to take advantage of the good curriculum. Their experiences are effectively enriched through the exciting and varied range of out of school activities provided for them. The level of care and support given to pupils is good. The work done by the learning mentor and bilingual support staff is significant in helping all groups of pupils and, in particular, those who are at an early stage of learning English, feel welcomed and included well within the school. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their learning because lessons are lively and delivered with good and, at times, outstanding pace and challenge. They know the importance of keeping fit and healthy and how to keep safe. Effective systems to prevent bullying and racism help them to feel secure. Their good social and basic literacy, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) skills provide a secure basis for their future lives. Many of them serve their school and the local community well in a whole range of different ways. The school shows a good capacity for improvement.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Create an appropriate outdoor environment to support all areas of learning in the Foundation stage.
- Ensure that subject leaders contribute fully to the tracking of pupils' achievements in order to enable them to play a stronger part in school improvement.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' achievement is good. They start school with skills that are well below those expected for their age, particularly in their personal and social skills. As a result of the good teaching they receive, they settle quickly and, by the time they move to Year 1, they have made good progress. This is particularly noticeable in their social and emotional skills. However, because of the low starting point, children are still below the level expected of them when they leave the Reception class. Good progress is made between Year 1 and Year 6 as a result of the consistently good and, at times, outstanding teaching pupils receive. Standards reached at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are broadly average. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, with English as an additional language and vulnerable pupils make similar rates of progress to other pupils.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' outstanding personal development contributes significantly to their learning. They take immense pride in their work and achievements. Pupils develop into thoughtful, considerate young citizens with very strong values by the time they leave. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also outstanding. Behaviour is exemplary because of the ample opportunity and encouragement pupils are given for reflection. The school works closely with parents to improve attendance, which is satisfactory overall. Pupils make an excellent contribution to their community by taking part in many worthwhile activities, including charitable fund-raising and giving performances for the community, including the elderly. The school council is keen to pursue school improvements and enables pupils to develop their debating skills and understanding of good citizenship. Most pupils have good attitudes towards healthy living, thoroughly enjoying the 'wake up and shake up' which takes place before school. Through working together in groups on enterprising activities, pupils develop life skills which will be helpful to them in the future.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning throughout the school is good and, on some occasions, outstanding. An extra sparkle characterises the outstanding lessons. They are carried out at cracking pace and challenge pupils to the absolute limit. This enables them to make excellent progress. In all lessons, relationships are good. As a result pupils are keen to work hard and do their best. Questioning is used well to check pupils' understanding and to develop their confidence in speaking and listening. Good support for those pupils at an early stage of learning English enables them to make good

progress in learning a language that is new to them. Teaching assistants are skilfully deployed and well briefed to ensure that vulnerable pupils, and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are provided with tasks that cater well for their individual needs. Teachers are confident in the use of ICT and good use is made of these skills to extend pupils' learning effectively.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The school provides a good curriculum overall. It meets the needs of most pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However, although children make good progress in the Foundation stage, the curriculum presented to them to support all areas of learning is limited because of the lack of an appropriate outdoor learning environment.

Good partnerships with other schools help the school with its work: for instance, an environmental improvement group did much work with pupils to design a local boundary. Regular visits and visitors, including links with the local parish, contribute well to pupils' outstanding personal development. An extensive range of additional activities during and after the school day, such as for the arts and sport, thoroughly captures pupils' interest and fosters enjoyment. This is reflected in the achievement of the Active Mark award.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Care, guidance and support are good. Typical pupils' comments include, 'Adults help us to learn, they are nice and friendly and very patient in explaining when you don't understand something.' Pupils receive individual guidance on how to improve in their learning: for instance, targets are clearly stated in English and mathematics books. Personal development is monitored particularly well and support is very well focussed to give appropriate guidance, particularly to those vulnerable pupils. The school is particularly successful in providing outstanding support to those minority ethnic pupils who join the school, with special input from the ethnic diversity team and the school learning mentor. Child protection and health and safety procedures are in place and reviewed regularly, ensuring pupils are safe at all times. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve as well as others because of the positive support they receive, especially from teaching assistants. The tracking of pupils' progress from year to year is not always sharp enough to fully identify some pupils who could make even faster progress.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Since her recent appointment, the acting headteacher has succeeded in improving staff morale and empowered senior staff to develop fully their roles and responsibilities.

As a result a highly effective senior leadership team is now in place. However, subject leaders do not play a strong enough part in school improvement because they are not fully involved in the monitoring of the achievements pupils make as they move through the school. All staff take good care of pupils and make an effective contribution to the smooth running of the school. Because of this, equality of opportunity for each pupil is good. Governors are very committed to the school and fulfil their responsibilities effectively. They are both supportive and challenging and do not hesitate in questioning the day-to-day procedures and practices of the school.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

We really enjoyed our visit to your school. It was wonderful to talk to so many of you and to see what a happy time you have there. We especially enjoyed talking to members of the school council, to play-leaders and to hearing about how much you love your school and how much you help one another to make Our Lady's such a special place.

Other things we felt were good about your school included:

Your teachers and teaching assistants are good at teaching you and they know exactly what each of you needs to learn. This helps you to learn lots of things. Your mums, dads and carers think that your school is a good place to be and we agree with them.

You get lots of exercise in your morning 'wake up and shake up' and taking part in the sporting clubs you attend helps you to be healthy. You are very good at sharing and taking turns and you behave very well. We enjoyed listening to the lively and tuneful way you sang in your worship times.

We hope that you carry on enjoying your school and doing such good work. We have asked your teachers to do two things to improve your school:

- make the outdoor play area outside the Reception class better
- make sure they check how well you are doing when you move from one class to the next, so as to help you do even better in your work.

We hope that you will continue to work hard in school and help the teachers so that Our Lady's becomes an even better school.