

Our Lady of Walsingham Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134877
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	294199
Inspection dates	1–2 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Alison Cartlidge

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 on roll	
School	205
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Vacant Position
Headteacher	John Duggan
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Occupation Road Corby NN17 1EE
Telephone number	01536 203805
Fax number	01536 200702

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This school was formed in September 2005 when an infant and junior school on a shared site were combined. A new headteacher and governing body were appointed at that time. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is average and most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is broadly average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13(3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Pupils' achievement is inadequate because progress is inconsistent across the school. Children make a sound start to their education in the Reception Year. They make satisfactory progress and by the time they move into Year 1 are working at the levels expected for their age. Reception children make good progress in personal development because members of staff provide sensitive support when children are developing their social skills. Pupils' satisfactory progress continues in Years 1 and 2 and standards remain broadly average.

Pupils do not make enough progress from the end of Year 2 to Year 6 in English and mathematics. Consequently, standards are exceptionally low by the end of Year 6. Teaching and learning are inadequate because teaching is not adapted to ensure that all pupils learn quickly. This is most noticeable for more able pupils who are not challenged to complete hard enough work. Positive features of teaching, such as good relationships and the clear explanation of tasks, help pupils to enjoy school.

The school runs smoothly and members of staff are friendly and welcoming. As a result, pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory with several good features. The school's caring family atmosphere supports the pupils' good behaviour well. Pupils work and play together harmoniously. They gain a good understanding of the difference between right and wrong but the weak basic skills of older pupils do not prepare them well for the next stage of their education.

A satisfactory curriculum ensures that pupils have lessons in all subjects and take part in a suitable breadth of additional activities including a range of sports. The school has established sound partnerships with the Church and other external agencies and these contribute appropriately to the pupils' well-being. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Good pastoral care enables pupils to feel safe and secure. Academic guidance and support have recently been improved and are satisfactory. There is a growing understanding of what pupils have learnt but assessment information is not used fully to plan work that meets the needs of all pupils. This results in pupils' progress being inconsistent, especially in Years 3 to 6.

Leadership and management of the school are inadequate because many developments are too recent to have produced evidence of sustained improvement in provision and standards. In addition, where pupils have made insufficient progress in previous years, the school has not taken swift enough action to enable these pupils to catch up quickly. There is a clear understanding of what needs to be done to make the school better and, with support from the local authority, action is being taken to tackle weaknesses. The monitoring of teaching and learning does not provide teachers with sufficient guidance on how they can become more effective because procedures for their professional development lack rigour.

Most parents are positive about the work of the school although some are right to be concerned about the progress their children make in Years 3 to 6. Parents are particularly pleased that their children like school. One parent spoke for many others by saying, 'The children are well behaved and seem very happy.'

What the school should do to improve further

- Make more effective use of assessment information to increase the rate of pupils' progress in Years 3 to 6 and to raise standards particularly in English and mathematics.
- Ensure that teachers provide sufficient challenge for all pupils, especially the more able.
- Strengthen leadership and management by ensuring that teaching and learning are monitored more effectively and by taking swift action to tackle underachievement.
- Meet statutory requirements in providing teachers with targets and guidance on how they can improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Pupils' achievement is inadequate and targets set for pupils at the end of Year 6 were not reached in 2006. Pupils make satisfactory progress in the Reception Year with good progress being made in developing personal skills. By the start of Year 1, most pupils are working within the levels expected for their age in all areas of learning. Children are confident and work sensibly with each other. Satisfactory progress continues in Years 1 and 2 and standards by the end of Year 2 are broadly average.

Standards by the end of Year 6 are exceptionally low in English and mathematics because progress is unsatisfactory in Years 3 to 6. More able pupils in particular make too little progress because they are not sufficiently challenged. Standards in science and in speaking and listening are satisfactory because these skills are promoted more effectively.

Throughout the school, pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are given suitable support in lessons and make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Children in the Reception class settle into school well and select activities independently. Throughout the school pupils behave well and show good consideration for each other's needs. Pupils say they enjoy coming to school and feel safe. As one pupil said, 'Teachers look after us well.' Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe and healthy. They eat sensibly and take frequent exercise. Rates of attendance are satisfactory. However, too many parents take their children on term-time holidays. Pupils show responsibility towards the community by carrying out an appropriate range of tasks within school and by supporting several charities. Pupils are keen to expand their responsibilities within the newly formed school council. Pupils are not prepared adequately for secondary school and the future because their literacy and numeracy skills are not developed well enough.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Good relationships are evident in the way that pupils of different ages get on well together and play safely. Pupils co-operate with each other well when discussing topics with 'work partners' and this has a positive impact on the way their speaking and listening skills develop. As a result, older pupils are articulate, confident and polite.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

Teaching is inadequate because pupils make inadequate progress as they move through the school. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in the Reception Year. Members of staff work together closely and provide sensitive support, particularly in personal, social and emotional development. In Years 1 and 2, teaching is satisfactory although there are occasions when more able pupils are not challenged enough in their writing. In Years 3 to 6, there are inconsistencies in teaching and therefore it is not always good enough to prevent underachievement or help pupils to catch up if they have made insufficient progress in the past.

Throughout the school teachers are hard-working, explain tasks clearly and have good relationships with the pupils. They do not always expect enough from the pupils, particularly the more able, and the work planned does not always meet their needs. When this happens, these pupils wait for their peers to catch up and do not learn quickly enough. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities receive appropriate support from teachers and teaching assistants, enabling them to make satisfactory progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

In the Reception Year, children are given a suitable range of activities, although occasionally a few tasks provide limited learning opportunities and therefore do not engage their interest fully. In Years 1 to 6, there is variety in the curriculum and all subjects are covered satisfactorily. There are some missed opportunities to extend pupils' literacy and numeracy skills when working in other subjects and pupils' progress slows when planning is insufficiently adjusted to meet differing needs. This affects the more able pupils in particular. In the last few weeks the school has changed teaching groups in English and mathematics to make greater use of teachers' specific strengths to improve provision. It is too soon to be able to see the impact of this strategy on raising standards. There is a satisfactory range of additional activities such as clubs and visits to enrich the curriculum and these add to the pupils' enjoyment of school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pastoral care is good enabling pupils to behave well and enjoy school. The school has secure procedures for safeguarding its pupils. As one parent rightly said, 'I feel confident that my child is well looked after in a caring environment.' There are good arrangements for supporting children when they first join the school in the Reception Year.

Arrangements for assessing pupils' academic progress have improved recently and are satisfactory. Teachers are now able to see how well pupils are doing and when they have not made enough progress. Pupils are given targets in literacy, although assessment information is not used consistently enough to ensure that they are given suitably challenging work or clear guidance on how they can improve. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are given satisfactory support towards the targets in their individual education plans.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

Leadership and management have not ensured that pupils make enough progress. The day-to-day running of the school is carried out well and a calm atmosphere pervades the school. The headteacher and governors have a realistic understanding of the areas that need to be developed, although their self-evaluation has not brought about the required improvement and is therefore inadequate. Priorities are correctly identified as strengthening leadership and management and teaching and learning and in improving pupils' achievement. The school has recently improved the way pupils' progress is being monitored so that dips in progress can be identified and tackled more swiftly. These systems are too recent to have had a sustained impact on raising standards and improving pupils' progress. The role of subject leaders is being developed but they have a limited role in monitoring provision. The required procedures to ensure members of staff are set targets for their development, provided with support to achieve them and monitored for their effectiveness are not securely in place. As a result teaching is not improving quickly enough.

Governance is inadequate and the governing body is aware that it needs to become more challenging so that it can hold the school to account for its actions. However, the new governors are keen and committed and have carried out an audit of their skills. They have undertaken relevant training to enable them to fulfil their roles and have started to take up their responsibilities. There is a shared understanding of the need to improve provision and standards at the school.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	4
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

¹ 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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	4
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	4
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	Yes
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

3 May 2007

Dear Children,

Inspection of Our Lady of Walsingham Catholic Primary School, Corby, NN17 1EE

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and for sharing your work with us. We found some good things in your school, but we also found some things that could be done better.

Here are some other things about you and your school:

- Many of you make satisfactory progress up to the end of Year 2 but not enough progress between Years 3 and 6.
- You are polite and friendly and help each other by talking about your work.
- Teachers work hard and explain what they want you to do clearly but do not always give you hard enough work.
- You have a suitable range of interesting things to do such as visits and clubs.
- All adults in school are kind and caring and help you to behave well.
- Your headteacher, other teachers and governors are keen to make your school better. We have asked for your school to be given some extra help to make sure that it improves.
- Most parents and carers are pleased that you enjoy coming to this school.

What we have asked your school to do now:

- Use the information about how well you are doing to help you all make enough progress in English and mathematics in Years 3 to 6.
- Help teachers plan hard enough work for those of you who are quick at learning.
- Ensure that the leaders of your school check that teachers are doing well enough and take successful action to help you do better.
- Make sure that your teachers are helped to do a better job.

We thoroughly enjoyed talking with you about your work and watching you learn. We wish you all well for the future. We hope you continue to help your teachers by listening carefully and trying your best.

Yours sincerely,

Alison Cartlidge Lead inspector