

Our Lady of Walsingham Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134877
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	329617
Inspection dates	11–12 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Timothy Bristow HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	142
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	14
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Eammon McCauley
Headteacher	Philip Sell
Date of previous school inspection	2 May 2007
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Occupation Road Corby NN17 1EE
Telephone number	01536 203805

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	11–12 November 2008
Inspection number	329617

Fax number

01536 200702

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector. When Our Lady of Walsingham Catholic Primary School was inspected in May 2007, it was judged to require special measures.

Description of the school

The school is below average in size. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language has risen considerably since the previous inspection and is now average. The proportion of pupils who have free school meals is below average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures. The overall effectiveness of the school is satisfactory.

The headteacher, staff and governing body are equipped with a clear and determined agenda of continuous improvement. The local authority and diocese have successfully supported the school's improvement. Good use is now made of self-evaluation procedures and challenging targets are set which have led to a number of important improvements. For example, the achievement of pupils is now satisfactory because their progress has accelerated and teaching is now satisfactory with some good and outstanding elements. Consequently, the school's capacity for improvement is good. Governance has improved considerably since the previous inspection, but it is only satisfactory because insufficient attention has been paid to ensuring that all statutory requirements are fully in place.

Standards achieved by pupils are average. The progress made by pupils has accelerated so that, by the end of Key Stage 2, standards in English and mathematics have risen considerably and are broadly average. In most years, standards are above average by the end of Key Stage 1. However, standards in Year 2 in 2008 were below average because of pupil mobility. The pupils that are more able make slower progress than they could so that by the end of Year 6 the proportion of pupils that reach the higher level is below average.

The personal development and well-being of pupils have improved since the last inspection and are now good. The behaviour and attitude of pupils are good. This is underpinned by good spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Most pupils are considerate and caring towards each other. They demonstrate good attitudes to learning and where teaching is good they demonstrate excellent teamwork skills. For example, in one lesson, Year 6 pupils helped each other very successfully to understand how the earth travels around the sun. The school provides a caring and nurturing environment in which most pupils are happy. They report that they think school is much better than it used to be and that they now have many more exciting things to do. Attendance has risen and is now average. Most pupils have a responsible attitude to their own safety and their development of a healthy lifestyle is adequate. Pupils make a good contribution to the community and willingly become involved in charity events, such as raising money for the Lakelands Hospice. Pupils have a satisfactory preparation for education in secondary school because of an acceleration in progress in acquiring basic skills.

Teaching and learning have improved considerably because of the determination of the teachers to work together to improve lessons. Although teaching is satisfactory overall, the proportion of lessons that are good and outstanding has increased considerably since the previous inspection. In the satisfactory lessons, pupils that are more able make slower progress than they could because the work is insufficiently challenging. The curriculum is satisfactory overall. Pupils report that they appreciate a much wider range of enrichment activities and after school clubs that add enjoyment to their education. The curriculum for science is inadequate. Insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to carry out experiments and investigations. The good care, guidance and support successfully foster pupils' personal development and well-being. Academic care, guidance and support are satisfactory.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children usually join the Reception class with knowledge and skills that are typical for their age. They make good progress in all areas of learning and usually start Year 1 having exceeded the expected goals for learning at the end of Reception. However, this term the proportion of children who entered Year 1 having reached the expected goals for learning was below average. This still represented good progress given the higher than usual proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or those who were at the early stages of learning to speak English. The Reception class has a happy and purposeful atmosphere, where children gain confidence in their skills and learn to play and work with others harmoniously. The well planned curriculum provides a good mix of activities led by the teacher and those initiated by the children themselves. The accurate and detailed assessment ensures that children take part in tasks that build on skills that they have already developed. The measures taken to ensure the welfare of children are adequate. Leadership and management are good. The staff have successfully implemented the new Early Years Foundation Stage requirements.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the curriculum for science by providing regular opportunities for investigation and experiments.
- Ensure that the more able pupils make faster progress by making their work more challenging.
- Ensure that the governors comply fully with all statutory requirements.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory, but which have areas of underperformance, will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Progress is maintained in Key Stage 1 so that in most years standards at the end of Year 2 are above average. Although pupils made satisfactory progress in Year 2 in 2008 standards were below average. This was because half of the year group left the school after the last inspection. The school then admitted a number of pupils who speak English as an additional language. In addition, a much higher proportion than is usual has difficulties with English and mathematics.

Progress at Key Stage 2 in English and mathematics lessons was judged inadequate at the last inspection. Since then, progress has accelerated and is now at least satisfactory in all lessons. In the current Year 6, standards have risen and they are now broadly average in English, mathematics and science. However, the proportion of pupils who achieve the higher levels at Key Stages 1 and 2 remains below average because the progress made by the more able child is slower than it could be. The progress of pupils who speak English as an additional language is similar to their peers because of the growing expertise demonstrated by the teachers and teaching assistants. Pupils who find learning difficult make progress that is similar to other groups of pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy coming to school because they get on well with their many friends, reflecting their good social development. They establish very good relationships with each other and the adults they work with. Pupils behave well both in and out of lessons. They have a good understanding of right and wrong, and put this into practice in their everyday lives. They have good attitudes to learning and want to do well. Most feel safe in school and only a few are concerned about the possibility of being bullied. Pupils are very active and many take part in the sports clubs on offer. Their understanding of a healthy diet is less well developed as many pupils prefer to eat crisps and sweets at break time. Pupils make a good contribution to the school and wider community. The school council members take their role in representing others very seriously, and other pupils show a good understanding of the need for fair elections. The pupils show concern for others less fortunate than themselves. For example, during National Adoption Week, pupils planted 30 daffodil bulbs to represent the number of children that the St Francis Society is helping to find homes and carers. Overall, pupils' progress in basic skills ensures that pupils have a sound preparation for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The pupils respond well to high expectations of staff and work cooperatively with their peers. Pupils particularly like solving problems in mathematics, but say that they do not enjoy science because there is insufficient practical work.

Where teaching is outstanding all pupils make very rapid progress because work is very accurately pitched at the correct level for them and the guidance and support they receive is excellent, providing challenge and encouraging independence.

In satisfactory lessons, teachers use the information gained from their accurate assessment to plan lessons. This is effective for most pupils, but less so for the most able. The same task is often given to the whole class. Pupils that are more able often finish early and have to wait for others to catch up. Less able pupils find the tasks challenging, but they receive good support from teaching assistants, with whose help they are able to complete work successfully.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school provides a good range of enriching activities. For example, the recent whole school project on wild animals involved visits to the zoo and resulted in high quality work which successfully exploited the links between different subjects. Curriculum provision in English and mathematics is now good. However, provision for science is inadequate because pupils carry out too few investigations and so have insufficient opportunities to learn and practice important scientific skills. The good example set by teachers, together with the school's Catholic ethos, ensures that pupils develop well spiritually, socially and morally. However, there are only a few opportunities for pupils to learn about other faiths and cultures.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils are well cared for by their teachers and other staff. The school is rigorous in carrying out the necessary safety checks on staff and ensuring that child protection requirements are in place. Recent actions have successfully reversed a falling trend in attendance. For example, the school started contacting parents immediately a child was absent emphasising the importance of regular attendance. Procedures for promoting good behaviour are successful. The learning mentor works successfully to include pupils who find it difficult to engage in some activities. The school's tracking of pupils' progress is accurate and allows the swift identification of pupils who need extra support in English and mathematics lessons. This term the school has introduced many initiatives to support such pupils, but it is too early to judge their effectiveness. The school's provision to support the pupils who speak English as an additional language, particularly Polish pupils, is good. Marking has improved since the last inspection but, in some lessons, pupils still get insufficient guidance on the next steps they need to take to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The leadership of the headteacher is very good. Since his appointment, he has successfully developed a dedicated team of staff who work tirelessly to improve the pupils' education. Consequently, there is an excellent team spirit amongst the staff. As one teacher reported, 'The hard work and improvements we have made mean that I feel very proud to work in this school.'

Rigorous procedures for checking the quality of lessons and the progress made by pupils have led to the considerable rise in standards at Key Stage 2 in English and mathematics. Performance management procedures are now well established and have driven improvements in teaching and subject leadership. The senior leadership team and subject leaders demonstrate that they are now well equipped to lead the work of the school. Governance has strengthened considerably since the last inspection. Governors regularly hold the school to account for its work. The school successfully ensures the equality of opportunity of all groups of pupils and its contribution to community cohesion is satisfactory. For example, the school has forged strong links with outside agencies to host English classes for its growing minority of Polish parents. However, governors have paid insufficient attention to ensuring that their policies to promote equality are regularly revised and, consequently, they do not yet comply with statutory requirements. The school is rapidly regaining the trust of parents and the local community. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

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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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	3
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3
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?	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

13 November 2008

Dear Children

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

Thank you for the help you gave us when we visited your school. We felt very welcome. If you remember, we came to look at the work that you were doing and to talk to you and your teachers. We enjoyed meeting you and thought you were friendly and polite. We think that you are kind and considerate to each other and we agree with you when you say that you feel safe in school. You try hard in lessons and you are doing much better in English and mathematics this year. You appreciate and enjoy taking part in the wide range of exciting and interesting activities that the school now provides. You enjoy taking part in games and sports, but many of you ignore advice about healthy eating preferring to eat crisps and sweets. We think that you take your responsibilities to the school and to the wider community seriously and your contribution is valued.

Your headteacher, all of the staff and school governors are successfully working very hard to make your lessons better and to help you to learn more quickly. Considering everything, we decided that yours is a satisfactory school.

To make things even better, we have asked the school to do the following.

- Make sure that there are more experiments for you to do in science lessons.
- To make the work more challenging for those of you who find it easy.
- To make sure that the school governors keep up to date with all of the work they have to do.

You can help the school by continuing to work hard in lessons and by acting on the advice you receive about a healthy diet.

Yours faithfully

Tim Bristow

Her Majesty's Inspector