

Our Lady's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106114
Local Authority	Stockport
Inspection number	336620
Inspection dates	14–15 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Sheila O'Keeffe

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	180
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Catherine Gould
Headteacher	Mrs Christine Beswick
Date of previous school inspection	2 February 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited eight lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation and pupils' work. They also took into account the responses to questionnaires completed by older pupils, staff and 68 parents and carers.

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

- pupils' achievement and attainment, particularly in Key Stage 2 in mathematics and science
- the quality of teaching and assessment to improve progress and reach challenging targets
- pupils' personal development and the quality of care, guidance and support, to determine the accuracy of the school's self-evaluation of these aspects
- the quality of provision and outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and in particular their outdoor provision.

Information about the school

Our Lady's is a smaller than average school which serves a socially mixed area. The great majority of pupils are White British, with a few who belong to minority ethnic backgrounds although only a small proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language. Broadly average numbers are eligible to receive free school meals. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average overall although in some year groups it is slightly higher than average. The school provides for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage in one Reception class. The school has achieved awards including Healthy Schools, Activemark, Eco Silver and the Quality Mark.

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

Our Lady's is a satisfactory school which has some good areas, especially in the promotion of pupils' personal and social development, and in the Early Years Foundation Stage which is good overall. It provides a welcoming, caring atmosphere where pupils are helped to develop their social skills and respect for each other. Their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development ensures positive relationships, collaboration and a friendly, happy environment. Good-quality care and support is offered to pupils, and parents and carers, by the learning mentor and staff. Pupils' attitudes towards learning and behaviour are good although their attainment is average. Too few pupils attain the higher levels for their age in English and, in particular, in mathematics and science. The rate of pupils' progress has declined since 2007 and is now satisfactory rather than good. Teachers' planning does not always take full account of pupils' abilities to ensure that they make good progress and meet challenging targets. Assessment and marking do not always provide sufficient information on how pupils can improve their work.

Pupils enjoy school as there are many interesting activities to take part in. They have a good understanding of how to keep safe, fit and healthy. The curriculum is satisfactory. It is enriched by the many trips, visits, sporting activities and visitors to school. The partnerships with other schools, the church and a range of outside agencies have positive benefits for pupils' personal development. A rolling programme of special assemblies and workshops, for example, plays a part in ensuring that pupils are developing a good understanding of the diversity of the local and wider community. Teachers and pupils make good use of information and communication technology in their lessons. Improvements have been made to the outside provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage since the last inspection, strengthening children's learning and development and enabling children to make good progress and reach broadly average levels of the skills expected for their age by the time they enter Year 1.

The senior leaders and governors have correctly identified the strengths and areas of improvement for the school. The leadership reflects on all aspects of its work and tracks pupils' progress. It has correctly identified the need to raise standards in English and, in particular, mathematics and science. Leaders have addressed the need for improvement to outdoor provision since the last inspection but have not sufficiently addressed the need to develop subject leaders in order to monitor and evaluate some areas. The information from tracking is not used effectively enough to support planning and improve assessment in order to set challenging targets and accelerate progress. For these reasons, capacity to improve is satisfactory.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in English and, in particular, in mathematics and science by:
 - increasing the number of pupils who attain the higher levels
 - ensuring that better use is made of assessment and tracking information to adapt activities to pupils' individual abilities, particularly the more able
 - improving the quality of teachers' marking so that pupils are clear about what they need to do to improve their work.
- Increase the level of monitoring, evaluation and the analysis of data by senior leaders in order to highlight any weaknesses and take swift, effective action, particularly in Key Stage 2.
- Ensure that subject leaders play a greater role in monitoring and evaluating their subject areas, especially in mathematics and science.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

In lessons pupils are attentive and listen well. Sometimes they are not actively engaged in activities owing to the lack of challenge provided and, consequently, they do not always make the progress they are capable of. In the best lessons pupils are more enthusiastic, take initiative and respond to challenge. The support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities enables them to make satisfactory progress.

In 2006 and 2007 pupils reached average standards by the end of Key Stage 2. In 2008 and 2009 standards dropped. Year 2 pupils attained standards significantly above the national average in 2008. Although there have been good improvements in Key Stage 1, standards in Key Stage 2 have fallen, especially in mathematics and science. Over the past two years not enough pupils, particularly those capable of higher attainment, have made more than satisfactory progress.

Pupils are polite and are developing good self-confidence; for example, two pupils gave the inspectors an informative guided tour of the school. Pupils raise money for charitable causes and are proud of their work as playground friends with Reception children. They are developing a good appreciation of how to stay safe and how to be fit and healthy. Their appreciation of diversity is promoted through special activities and workshops, which help them to understand difference. Their well-developed personal and social skills assist them in their transition to secondary school and in later life.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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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?

Pupils and teachers have good working relationships which in turn ensures a good environment for learning. Teaching is generally satisfactory. In the good lessons teachers plan interesting activities that actively engage pupils and stretch their thinking and understanding. Teachers often make good use of interactive whiteboards. Teaching assistants offer satisfactory support to those who need extra help with their work. Lessons generally include a range of different activities and opportunities for pupils to discuss their thoughts and ideas. Sometimes there is not enough checking during the lesson of the work of different groups to ensure that they are fully engaged and making sufficient progress, especially for the more able.

Marking is encouraging but not clear enough in pointing out what steps pupils should take to improve their work.

The curriculum is satisfactory. The enrichment activities provide pupils with a range of opportunities to develop skills and interests, for example in sport and music. The school grounds have been improved through the school's partnerships; for example, the addition of an astroturf pitch and space to grow vegetables gives pupils increased opportunities for physical exercise and develops their ecological awareness. Sessions for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities provide them with activities to enable steady progress. All staff offer pupils good levels of care that help them grow, reflect and support each other.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
	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 headteacher and deputy headteacher are motivated to bring about further improvement. Recent improvements in the Early Years Foundation Stage, for example, ensure that pupils are provided with a good start to their education. The school adequately promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination. Systems identify areas of strength and those in need of improvement but the self-evaluation and subsequent action is not sufficiently rigorous. Subject leaders do not monitor and evaluate subject areas closely enough to identify strengths and weaknesses in order to promote pupils' progress; this is especially evident for instance in mathematics and science. This means any actions taken are not always as swift and effective as they could be. Observations by managers of lessons focus more on the activities than on what pupils are learning and whether some of the activities are set at the correct level to provide challenge for the more able. Governors are very supportive of the school and knowledgeable about its provision but they are not sufficiently challenging in their questioning when holding it to account, particularly as far as pupils' attainment is concerned.

The school engages well with parents and carers through, for example, the good communication links and the work of the staff and the learning mentor. This is borne out in the generally positive responses from meeting with parents and carers and through the questionnaires. Partnerships with outside agencies support the good work of the school in promoting pupils' well-being and enhance its provision. Safeguarding procedures ensure that pupils feel safe and understand how to stay safe and secure in their surroundings. The work the school does to promote community cohesion means that pupils are developing an understanding of different ethnicities and cultures. The leadership is successful in its promotion of pupils' personal development but leadership is satisfactory overall because it only adequately promotes their academic skills development.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
	3

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 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	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
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 join the Reception class with skills that are at a level generally expected for their age and below this level in some areas of development. Children settle well because of the good relationships that the staff form with them and the good communication with parents and carers to gather and share important information. The quality of provision has improved with the development of the outside space ensuring that all areas of learning are well catered for indoors and outside. Children's progress is tracked well through a good system of observation and assessment of what children can do, enabling them to take the next steps in their learning. Activities are well planned to suit children's different needs and abilities with the result that children make good progress by the time they reach Year 1.

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

The majority of parents and carers are very positive about all aspects of the school's provision. In particular, they are pleased with the care and support provided, and their children's enjoyment of school, as shown in the comment, 'Pastoral care is excellent.' Inspectors followed up a few negative comments made; taking into account their own observations, pupils' responses to the questionnaire, the school's documentation and

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discussion with the headteacher, they found no evidence to back up these concerns. Correct procedures are in place to respond well to any concerns or complaints.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Our Lady's Catholic 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 inspector received 68 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 180 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	72	53	62	46	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	78	58	54	40	2	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	34	26	82	63	8	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	46	36	70	55	4	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	50	39	68	53	4	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	36	28	76	58	12	9	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	60	45	68	51	4	3	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)	50	41	54	44	6	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	46	35	72	55	6	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	42	33	70	54	10	8	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	34	27	78	61	6	5	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	44	34	70	54	8	6	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	64	48	64	48	2	2	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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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.



Inspection of Our Lady's Catholic Primary School, Stockport, SK3 9HX

All the inspectors thoroughly enjoyed our recent visit to Our Lady's. I would like to thank all of you for making us feel welcome and, in particular, the two pupils who gave us an interesting guided tour of the school. Your good social skills and behaviour make the school a happy place. Many of you told us how much you enjoy school and spending time with your friends. We agree with you that the adults look after you well and that you have a good range of activities to take part in. We were impressed by your singing and the way you play well together. Here are the main things we found out about your school.

- Our Lady's is a satisfactory school. It is good at helping you to become thoughtful, confident and caring young people. It is giving you experiences to develop skills, such as information and communication technology.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress. Key Stage 1 pupils make good progress and achieve standards above average.
- In Key Stage 2 pupils achieve broadly average skills in English but standards in mathematics and science are lower than average.

What the staff now need to do is to make sure that you all:

- make good progress in your development of skills in English and in particular mathematics and science, especially those who find learning easier than others.

To do this we have asked your teachers and senior leaders to do the following:

- make better use of assessment of your work so they can adjust it to suit your individual needs and to give you clearer advice, when they mark your work, about how to improve it
- look more carefully at what the subject leaders do and the progress you make to help them decide what they need to change in order to help you improve.

I wish you all good luck for the future.

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