

Our Lady of Lourdes RC School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114544
Local Authority	Brighton and Hove
Inspection number	338395
Inspection dates	15–16 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Eileen Chadwick

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	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Domenica Maxted
Headteacher	Elizabeth Prior
Date of previous school inspection	9 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Fourteen lessons were observed and nine teachers were seen. Inspectors also held meetings with pupils, staff with key responsibilities and representatives of the governing body, the local authority and the diocese. In addition to observing the school's work and evaluating documentation such as policies, the school improvement plan and records of pupils' learning and progress, the inspectors examined 128 completed questionnaires from parents and carers.

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

- children's attainment on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage and standards at the end of Reception
- pupils' current attainment in Key Stages 1 and 2 and learning and progress in reading, writing and mathematics
- the evenness of good teaching and learning from Reception to Year 6 and the impact of the new creative curriculum on pupils' learning
- the quality of leadership and management at all levels and their impact on raising achievement.

Information about the school

This school, average in size, is situated in the centre of Rottingdean and serves a large mixed area including several parishes further afield. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. While the proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average, most of these pupils have higher forms of need. Their difficulties are mainly concerned with language, literacy, and behaviour. Since the previous inspection, there have been significant changes in staffing, including some at senior level. Most children join the school in the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, the number of pupils entering or leaving the school other than at the normal time is above average in Key Stage 2 and this is particularly evident in Year 6.

A daily breakfast club is managed by the governing body and is provided for Reception to Year 6 pupils at the school and for those attending the neighbouring St Margaret's CE Primary School. There is a plan to supply after-school care next term when extensions to the school building are completed. The school's national awards include Healthy Schools and Activemark.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school which has some exceptional features. Pupils thrive and feel very safe in the warm, nurturing and family atmosphere. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They do well academically and have strong opportunities for developing their creative, practical and sporting skills. The outstanding curriculum encourages them to love school and learning. Music is an important feature and pupils' singing is excellent. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and behaviour are exemplary as a result of the school's strong Catholic ethos and outstanding care, support and guidance. Pupils work hard and their positive and welcoming attitudes contribute to the great sense of purpose throughout the school. They contribute exceedingly well to the community of which the school is very much a part. Central to the school's success is the very good leadership of the headteacher, who is ably supported by senior staff and the governing body.

Children enjoy learning in Reception where they make good progress from their starting points. Their good progress continues across the rest of the school so that their attainment is above average in English, mathematics and science by Year 6. Actions taken to improve the quality of teaching and learning in mathematics are having a good impact on raising attainment in this subject. Exciting learning experiences, where subjects are linked, bring learning to life and enhance pupils' skills in literacy. There is excellent enrichment of the curriculum through outside visits, visitors and after-school clubs. Pupils write well for different purposes and there are many striking examples of creative and factual writing. However, occasional spelling, punctuation and handwriting mistakes limit pupils' written work to an extent. Now the new curriculum is established, the school has stepped up the teaching of these basics but is aware that teaching approaches are not yet fully consistent in each class.

The quality of teaching is good overall. Relationships are excellent and teachers manage their pupils well. They carefully match pupils' work to their range of abilities during group work. However, occasionally, lesson introductions are too long and do not enable pupils to take an active enough part. There are also instances when the whole class is taught together, when teachers' explanations and questions are too easy for the most able pupils or too hard for those who do not find learning as easy.

New leadership roles are developing well and everyone shares the headteacher's ambitions for pupils. Through honest and accurate self-evaluation, leaders have brought about good improvements since the last inspection with the new curriculum leading to more inspiring teaching and learning and broader writing opportunities. The improved systems for checking pupils' progress are rigorous and school leaders are vigilant about the use of assessment data to see where pupils can be moved on more quickly. The

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good range of catch-up programmes help pupils who are in danger of falling behind. The school's systematic self-evaluation helps to set clear and achievable priorities for the future and, together with recent improvements, this shows it has a good capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' spelling, handwriting and punctuation by:
 - developing a consistent approach to teaching these basics throughout the school.
- Improve the consistency of good teaching during lesson introductions by:
 - teachers using assessment more effectively to make sure questions and explanations better meet the needs of lower and higher attaining pupils
 - ensuring lesson introductions are not overlong
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to take a more active part in their learning at such times.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils develop a thirst for reading high-quality literature because teachers link subjects and use practical subjects such as art and design, and drama to bring relevance to classical texts. For example, in an outstanding literacy lesson in Year 6, pupils were captivated about London life in Victorian times as revealed in extracts from 'Oliver Twist'. Pupils really enjoyed identifying Dickens' devices for creating mood before skilfully creating some of their own. Excellent opportunities for them to share ideas in groups enabled them to learn from each other as well as learning individually, and cross-curricular links brought their learning alive.

Pupils apply their basic skills for a broad range of purposes and use their computer skills to present their work creatively. However, irregularities in spelling, punctuation and handwriting occasionally mar standards of written work. Observations of lessons show how motivated pupils have become since the introduction of the new topics. The new approach also helps them to become more independent as they help to plan their work and research information on areas they are studying. Small group work for vulnerable pupils in English and mathematics contributes to pupils' good achievement. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities also make good progress throughout the school. Pupils who have emotional and behavioural difficulties, including some later entrants, are helped very well and incidents of poor behaviour are rare.

Pupils show respect for cultural differences and other people. They are inquisitive and keen to solve problems as shown in recent work when Year 4 pupils studied the Egyptians and designed and made shadoofs. Pupils contribute much to the life of the school and the community and show great thoughtfulness when raising funds for charities. They are very proud of their school and older pupils provide excellent role models for younger ones. Reflecting the school's national awards, pupils are keen

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advocates of healthy lifestyles and enjoy sport. Pupils' good attendance and good achievement in basic skills means they are well prepared for the future.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is mainly good and occasionally outstanding. Teachers are skilled at making learning interesting for pupils, who understand and accept their high expectations for behaviour and work. Classrooms are rich with imaginative activities and displays which capture pupils' interest and build on their learning. Teachers have good subject knowledge, their explanations are confident and they ensure pupils are clear about their learning purposes. New technology is used well to make lessons interesting. Teachers' careful planning and assessment ensures work usually builds on pupils' previous learning, and teaching assistants provide good support during group work for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The excellent curriculum is broad and enriched very well with opportunities for after-school clubs, guest speakers and visits that widen pupils' experiences. These,

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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together with excellent cross-curricular links, and opportunities for design and technology and music, underpin academic learning. Pupils' understanding of other cultures is greatly enhanced through international themes such as 'Africa', well-developed links with some African countries and subsequent practical art and design work. Very strong partnerships with the community, including other schools, enhance the development of the curriculum. The breakfast club provides pupils with a happy and secure start to the day and is really appreciated by parents.

The school has a very clear understanding of the circumstances of pupils and their families. This, and the improved use of assessment data, is particularly valuable in enabling leaders to identify the precise difficulties faced by pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and to carefully tailor programmes for withdrawal and intervention groups. Excellent induction arrangements when pupils join and when they move on help to ease the transition from one stage to the next. Later entrants, including the sizeable number who join with learning or behavioural difficulties, are helped to adjust very well.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and other senior leaders give a very clear direction and improving pupils' learning is always a priority. The school is now settled after several staff changes, including at senior level. Support provided by the local authority for improving mathematics has been welcomed and well managed by the school. Strengths in the quality of education seen during the last inspection have been sustained while more emphasis has been placed on enlivening the curriculum. Close attention to evaluating pupils' assessments enables school leaders to pinpoint how well individuals, groups and classes are attaining and progressing towards their challenging targets. Senior leaders rigorously monitor the quality of teaching and learning and middle leaders are developing their roles well. They have recently enhanced their ability to evaluate data, although staff changes mean that several are still receiving training to equip them to play their full part in observing teaching.

The governing body is very well led, has a clear understanding of the school's qualities and is fully involved in planning for its future. It provides strong support and good levels of challenge. The governing body evaluates assessment data but is aware it needs to probe the progress of different groups more rigorously.

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Systems for safeguarding and risk assessment are good and these areas are given high priority with clear responsibilities so the school provides a safe environment for all. Staff and governors take their duties to promote equal opportunities seriously and leaders successfully ensure that discrimination of any sort is not tolerated. Community cohesion is good. There is very strong engagement with local issues and well-developed global links, but the school has rightly evaluated that further work is needed to reach out to the wider British community.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Strong links with parents and carers help children to settle very quickly into the Reception class. Children are very happy and secure because of the excellent relationships and attention given to their welfare, safety and well-being. Their attainment on entry is wide-ranging but, overall, at the levels expected. They make good progress, and by the end of Reception, their attainment is above average in all areas of learning, including in literacy and numeracy. Children make rapid strides in developing their personal, speaking and thinking skills because of staff's exceptional focus on these areas. Children's literacy and numeracy development is well supported in the context of a broad, practical and interesting curriculum. Attainment on entry to Year 1 has risen in mathematics in recent years due to improvements in teaching. The overall quality of teaching is good and adults strike a good balance between more formal, adult-led activities and those children select for themselves. An outstanding lesson was seen when the teacher very skilfully used a mixture of methods, including games, for teaching sounds and letters (phonics) to the whole class. Her questioning techniques

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and activities were very well matched to the range of children's attainment, enabling all to make fast progress. Topics such as 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears' are supported by good role play, literacy and designing and making opportunities that really interest the children. Good use is made of the small outside play area, although outdoor mathematical play activities do not always extend more capable children. Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good with very close and effective teamwork between all staff. Assessment is rigorous. Children from Reception attending the breakfast club are very well cared for and have worthwhile activities to enjoy.

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

Inspectors' findings agree with the overwhelming majority of parents and carers who responded saying they are very pleased with the school. Parents and carers agree that the school keeps their children very safe, their children enjoy school and the school is well led and managed. Nearly all are happy with their children's experiences at school. A minority of concerns centred on the behaviour of a few pupils. The inspection team finds behaviour is excellent and the strong support for the few pupils who have emotional and behavioural difficulties means that classrooms are calm and happy places for learning. Several parents told us how pleased they were with the new exciting curriculum 'Learning Journeys' and inspectors also find the curriculum is an excellent feature of the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Our Lady of Lourdes RC 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 inspection team received 128 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 210 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	71	55	55	43	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	80	63	46	36	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	57	45	66	52	4	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	52	41	66	52	7	5	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	61	48	60	47	5	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	48	38	74	58	4	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	53	41	68	53	7	5	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)	48	38	70	55	5	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	41	32	73	57	8	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	45	35	63	49	9	7	5	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	40	31	73	57	7	5	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	64	50	57	45	5	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	63	49	58	45	6	5	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.



16 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Our Lady of Lourdes RC School, Rottingdean,
Brighton BN2 7HA

Thank you for making us welcome when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed finding out about the interesting things you do.

Firstly, you need to know your school is a good one. Here are some of the many things your school does well.

- You make good progress and do well in reading, writing, mathematics and science by the time you leave.
- Those of you in Reception get off to a good start.
- Your teachers are good at making your lessons interesting.
- You make your school such a special place because you are kind, friendly, work hard and behave extremely well.
- You have many exciting opportunities for sport, music, design and technology, art and outside visits.
- You understand how important it is to keep fit and healthy and enjoy sport. You know you should not eat too many sweets and cakes.
- Your headteacher leads you all extremely well and all the staff and governors think very carefully about what is best for you.
- Staff take very good care of you and you told us how safe you feel.

This is what we are asking your school to do to improve.

- Help you to improve your spelling, handwriting and punctuation.
- Make sure, during lesson introductions, your work is never too easy or hard.
- Make sure lesson introductions do not go on too long and you can play a more active part at such times.

We hope you will continue to enjoy school and carry on working hard in all you do. Well done for doing so much for the community. Please keep this up!

Yours sincerely

Eileen Chadwick

Lead inspector

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