

Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School, Carnforth

Kellet Road, Carnforth, Lancashire LA5 9LS

Inspection dates

22–23 November 2016

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher provides strong, sensitive leadership and a clear vision of where she wants to take the school. She is ably supported by her deputy headteacher. Morale is high.
- Governors have an accurate understanding of the strengths and priorities for development. This is as a result of the clear and open information they receive from the headteacher and other external professionals.
- The curriculum is well planned to take account of the mixed-aged classes. In a wide range of subjects pupils receive appropriate challenges matched to their age and ability.
- Children in the Reception class make good progress due to a very engaging curriculum. As a result, they are well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- Pupils make good progress from their starting points due to good-quality teaching and careful checking of how well they are doing.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are good and leaders make sure that staff are constantly seeking to improve their practice.
- Pupils typically behave well. They look smart in their uniforms and they show great respect to visitors and other adults. They eat their lunch sensibly and get on well together at social times.
- Attendance is in line with national averages and is improving due to the effective actions leaders are taking.
- Parents are effusive in their praise for the school. They very much appreciate the openness of the senior leaders and teachers.
- Some aspects of British values, for example individual liberty, are not taught explicitly.
- Governors cannot accurately evaluate the value for money of the pupil premium spending as they do not receive an accurate breakdown of the impact of specific interventions.
- While pupils' use of spelling, punctuation and grammar in English lessons is generally accurate, this is not the case when writing in other subjects. Pupils' use of interesting vocabulary is limited.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' outcomes by:
 - continuing to provide the support and challenge that has brought success in the past where teaching occasionally dips in quality
 - ensuring that pupils consistently apply their knowledge and skills of grammar, punctuation and spelling in other subjects
 - developing pupils' use of interesting vocabulary when writing
 - promoting all aspects of British values equally.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that governors accurately monitor the impact of pupil premium spending.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since her appointment in 2015, the headteacher has created a positive culture within the school. She has wasted no time in identifying the key priorities for improvement and bringing about rapid change. This demonstrates good capacity for further improvement.
- The headteacher has the support of parents and the confidence of her staff. Parents report that she listens well to any concerns and always addresses them quickly and effectively.
- Senior leaders have incisively reorganised teaching so that teachers are in classes to best suit their abilities and meet the needs of their pupils.
- The good use which leaders make of the sport premium has resulted in pupils' greater participation in sport and in their adoption of healthier lifestyles. There is a wide range of additional sporting activities which children participate in after school. This is the case for all pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The leadership and management of teaching and learning are strong. Where any weakness in teaching is identified, there is a very comprehensive package of support and challenge in place. All staff report that they feel well supported through the focused programme of training and professional development. Leaders across the school are becoming highly skilled in measuring the impact of teaching on pupils' progress.
- Subject leaders have a clear understanding of pupils' achievement across the school in their subjects. This is as a result of careful monitoring and tracking of pupils' progress and robust moderation of assessments in reading, writing and mathematics. The development plans for individual subjects are having a positive impact on teaching and pupils' outcomes. The assessments which teachers have made at key stage 1 and key stage 2 match the inspection findings.
- The special educational needs coordinator proactively ensures that transition arrangements are in place for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Close liaison with local high schools enables individual needs to be met. As a consequence, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are prepared well for the next stage of their education.
- Leaders' good use of the pupil premium grant ensures that disadvantaged pupils, including those who are most able, achieve well. Additional support and sharply focused guidance ensure that pupils receive the help they need to make good progress from their starting points. Consequently, the differences in outcomes between these pupils and other pupils nationally are diminishing quickly.
- The broad and balanced curriculum equips pupils well for the next stages in their education. Work on British values is embedded in the curriculum. Pupils have opportunities to experience democracy and demonstrate a good understanding of, and tolerance for, those of other faiths and those with no faith. However, this is not promoted consistently across school, and pupils' understanding of personal liberty was less well developed.

- This is a caring school where pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is developed well through the school's faith ethos. The curriculum is broad and balanced and equips pupils positively for life in modern Britain.
- The local authority provides excellent support to the new headteacher in tackling any shortcomings in teaching and advising how to support teachers who are trying to improve their practice.

Governance of the school

- Governors have an accurate understanding of the strengths and priorities for development in the school. This is as a result of the clear and open information they receive from the headteacher, leaders and other external professionals.
- They ask questions and gain first-hand evidence to support their work. As a result, governors are clear about what the school is doing to accelerate progress further, particularly for middle-ability pupils in mathematics and writing.
- The governing body has been strengthened by recent appointments following an audit of skills. Governors have undertaken training specific to their roles which they use to good effect.
- Governors, however, have not probed deeply enough about the impact of the school's spending of the pupil premium. As a result, they cannot accurately evaluate the value for money of this spending.
- Some items of statutory information were missing from the school website. Action was taken to address this during the inspection.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The governing body ensures that the school meets all its statutory requirements for safeguarding. This includes the robust checking of the suitability of adults to work with children.
- Minor omissions from the single central record were dealt with during the inspection.
- All staff are vigilant and well trained and leaders ensure that staff keep their knowledge up to date, including how to protect pupils from the dangers of radicalisation and extremism.
- There is a secure culture of safeguarding as a result of the care and commitment of the headteacher. The procedures around safeguarding are ensuring that staff know to report, and act on, any concern. Leaders record and manage any concerns well. Effective relationships with other agencies and with parents ensure that pupils are kept safe and their welfare needs are met.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching is good in all key stages. The deputy headteacher provides an excellent role model for teaching.
- The teaching of reasoning through which pupils can deepen their understanding of mathematical ideas is variable. The most successful learning occurs when pupils have opportunities to talk about their strategies to solve calculations and problems. This is most effective in the Year 5 and 6 classes. Leaders are aware of and are taking steps to ensure that this is consistent across school.
- Teachers plan to meet the needs of all pupils. In most classes, this is adjusted to take account of ongoing assessment. Teachers also use this information to make swift adaptations to their teaching where necessary. For example, in a key stage 2 mathematics lesson, additional challenges were set for the most able pupils in written calculations.
- Teachers give pupils time to consolidate their learning but then move learning on quickly. In a lower key stage 2 mathematics lesson, the teacher quickly assessed that pupils understood how to multiply by 10 when using decimal numbers and moved learning on by giving pupils a challenge to complete. These challenges enable the most able pupils to deepen their knowledge and understanding.
- The systematic teaching of writing enables pupils to achieve well in this area. Pupils write clearly and legibly. However, pupils' use of interesting vocabulary is less well developed. Teachers give pupils opportunities to write in different areas of the curriculum, particularly during religious education. There are more limited opportunities in other areas, and pupils' writing in these areas does not reach the same standard as in English lessons.
- A strength of teaching across the school includes teachers and teaching assistants using precise questions to extend pupils' learning. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' progress. The support they provide to vulnerable pupils and those who need extra help with their learning is effective.
- Pupils told the inspector that they enjoy the variety of lessons and feel that the help they are given is enabling them to make especially good progress in English and spelling.
- Current pupils, including lower-ability pupils, are given the skills needed to read effectively. They confidently talk about their favourite authors and types of books and can use the text to talk about characters and events. They enjoy reading. Pupils are encouraged to read widely in school and at home. The most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, are given the opportunity to read a wide variety of challenging books both in school and when reading for pleasure. There is a systematic and consistent approach to the teaching of reading and, as a result, pupils make good progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Spiritual, moral and social development is supported by high-quality displays linked to the school's Catholic faith. For example, pupils' artwork and information about Mother Theresa focus on charitable work and equality.
- Pupils are proud of their school. This is evident in the way in which they share their work and talk eagerly about the activities that are on offer to them. They speak enthusiastically about the range of additional opportunities, including golf, dance and conservation. Pupils value the opportunities given to them to take on responsibilities, which include being sports leaders, conservation leaders, house captains and class helpers, in preparing them to be useful citizens.
- Pupils speak confidently and respect the views of others. For example, in a lower key stage 2 lesson, pupils shared their reading with one another. Other pupils listened attentively and gave sensitive feedback on how the reading could be improved.
- The school's work to encourage healthy lifestyles includes the daily mile challenge, which pupils participate in with gusto. Parents value the opportunity for pupils to engage in regular outdoor physical activity.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They know that if they are worried they can talk to an adult who will 'sort it out'. Pupils say that there is very little bullying but that 'every so often, there is a little argument'. One pupil talked about a bullying incident in the past which teachers had dealt with well. They struggled to recall any incidents of racist or homophobic bullying.
- Pupils know how to stay safe, including when online, due to the good-quality education they receive in this area.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Overall attendance is improving and is in line with national averages. Leaders' work to improve attendance, particularly for disadvantaged pupils, has led to an improvement in the rates of persistent absence for all groups of pupils currently in school. Parents receive regular letters, which detail their child's attendance for that half term.
- Pupils are polite and well-mannered as a result of the high expectations of all adults. This has not gone unnoticed by parents. One parent told me that, 'All the pupils are friendly and willing to hold a door open without being asked, as well as having lovely manners.'
- In this small school, pupils show high levels of care for one another, with older pupils playing with younger pupils at playtimes. Older pupils take great care to ensure that younger pupils stay safe.

- Behaviour for learning is strong in most classes. Pupils want to learn and, as a consequence, low-level disruption in lessons is rare. The few instances where pupils were off-task were dealt with quickly and in line with the school's behaviour policy.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils make good progress from their starting points and achieve well across a range of subjects. The number of pupils in each year group varies from as many as 18 to as few as eight, so published information about pupils' achievement varies greatly and is not comparable year on year. Nearly one quarter of last year's Year 6 joined the school in upper key stage 2 without any information about their prior attainment.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make strong progress in their learning and social and personal development. This is due to the high-quality support they receive. Their individual needs are well known and understood.
- Leaders have taken decisive action to improve the rate of progress of middle-ability pupils. Additional support for those pupils who did not meet the expected standard in phonics at the end of key stage 1 is leading to these pupils making accelerated progress towards meeting the standard.
- Disadvantaged pupils make progress in line with national expectations. In Years 3 and 4 there are small differences between the achievement of these pupils and their peers but the differences are diminishing.
- Progress at key stage 1 is much improved. The proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard at the end of key stage 2 this year was below the national average. Nearly half of the small cohort had special educational needs and/or disabilities. Analysis of individual pupils' progress shows that the vast majority made good progress from their starting points.
- The most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, often show a higher level of knowledge, understanding and skills. For example, in Year 6 the most able pupils solve problems in algebra that go beyond replacing letters with the correct numbers and require deeper reasoning skills. This level of challenge and opportunity for mathematical reasoning, however, is inconsistently provided. As a result, the most able sometimes make slower progress from their starting points.

Early years provision

Good

- Children in the early years get a good start to their education. The pre-school sessions which children attend before they start school enable teachers to get to know most children well before they start.
- The headteacher and reception teacher work closely together to improve outcomes for children in the early years. Careful recording and tracking of children's progress are used to quickly identify any gaps that might be emerging. Learning journals 'tell the story' and identify next steps in learning.
- There is good engagement with parents, who are extremely positive about the support children receive in the early years. One parent told the inspector that 'The amount she

has learned in the short space of time she has been there is beyond my expectations.'

- Children's skills and abilities on entry are broadly typical. Children, including the most able, make good progress and, as a result, they enter Year 1 with attainment which is above the expected level. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development has risen over the last three years and is now above the national average.
- Children demonstrate a growing independence and love of learning. Following a carpet session on addition, children chose to carry out a challenge activity where they counted beans into an envelope and found one more. They were able to record their findings independently as a result of high expectations and clear explanation by the teacher.
- Children are safe and well cared for in a stimulating environment. There are a wide variety of activities which are planned around children's developing interests. Particular emphasis is placed on developing children's early mathematics and literacy skills, including phonics.
- All statutory welfare requirements are met and children's safety and well-being are given a high priority.

School details

Unique reference number	119618
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10002871

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	89
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Edward Hart
Headteacher	Mrs Elizabeth Kendall
Telephone number	01524 732289
Website	www.olol.lancs.sch.uk
Email address	head@olol.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	29–30 May 2012

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The very great majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the current floor standards, which are the minimum standards expected by the government.
- A new headteacher has been appointed since the last inspection.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed a range of lessons or parts of lessons. Some of these observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher. The inspector looked at pupils' work, listened to pupils reading and talked with pupils about their lessons and school life.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, representatives of the governing body and representatives from the local authority.
- The inspector observed the school's work and scrutinised documentation relating to pupils' progress and to school management, including the arrangements to ensure that pupils are kept safe.
- The inspector spoke with parents and staff and took account of the 14 responses to the online parent questionnaire, Parent View.
- The inspector took account of the five responses to the staff questionnaire. There were no responses to the pupil online questionnaire.

Inspection team

Tanya Hughes, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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