

Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103461
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	363676
Inspection dates	4–5 July 2011
Reporting inspector	Mike Thompson

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The registered childcare provision, 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 of pupils on the school roll	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Peeney
Headteacher	Carol Martin
Date of previous school inspection	29 January 2008
School address	Winchfield Drive Birmingham B17 8TR
Telephone number	0121 429 2900
Fax number	0121 434 4212
Email address	enquiry@olfatima.bham.sch.uk

Registered childcare provision

Number of children on roll in the registered childcare provision	A maximum of 22 in the morning session and 32 in the afternoon
Date of last inspection of registered childcare provision	Not previously inspected

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	4–5 July 2011
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 16 lessons taught by eight teachers, including observations with a specific focus on the support provided for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders and members of the teaching staff, representatives of the governing body, and pupils. They looked at a range of information, including data showing the progress made by pupils and samples of pupils' work. Inspectors analysed responses to questionnaires returned by 91 parents or carers, 100 pupils in Key Stage 2 and 25 members of staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How effective is the school in ensuring challenge for the higher-attaining pupils in Key Stage 1?
- How effective are teachers in providing all their pupils with consistently challenging targets and monitoring their progress toward reaching them, and in developing pupils' skills as independent learners?
- How effectively has the school responded to the findings of the previous inspection and broadened pupils' horizons in respect of their awareness and understanding of other cultural traditions?

Information about the school

This is a one-form-entry primary school with seven classes and, as such, it is slightly smaller than average. The large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds and the proportion from minority ethnic backgrounds is broadly average. These pupils are mostly from Irish, Caribbean or Asian heritage. A very small minority of pupils have English as an additional language, but almost all of these start school with skills in English appropriate to their age. There are few pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Most of these have general learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is steadily rising year-on-year, but is below the national average.

The school has achieved Healthy School status and the Activemark accreditation for its promotion of physical education and sport.

In term-time, the school provides childcare both before and after the school day in the 'Early Birds' and 'Evening Owls' sessions.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Our Lady of Fatima is an outstanding school which has improved significantly since its previous inspection and ensures that its pupils achieve exceptionally well. It provides its pupils with high-quality care, guidance and support and a curriculum that meets their needs and interests extremely well. One of the school's many strengths is the outstanding progress made by pupils in their personal and social development. Pupils are tolerant, feel exceptionally safe, and blossom into confident individuals who demonstrate impeccable manners and behaviour and excellent skills in working either independently or within groups. The strong work ethic in all classes results from pupils' clear understanding of the targets that they are expected to attain.

A further key factor in the school's success is its outstanding partnership with parents and carers, based on excellent channels of communication. Most of the parents and carers who returned the inspection questionnaire had positive views about all aspects of the school's performance. Typical of the many positive comments appended to questionnaires was, 'I am grateful to the staff at the school who ensure that my children are not only nurtured to achieve their full potential academically, but are encouraged to be independent, caring individuals with respect for others.'

When children join the Reception class, they have skills that are similar to those expected for their age. Pupils make good progress in each key stage and by the end of Year 6 their attainment is consistently high. Progress in Year 6 is exceptionally rapid because of the outstanding teaching in this class. Pupils' excellent skills in reading, writing and mathematics, together with their competence in using information and communication technology (ICT) contribute strongly to their learning in all subjects. The few pupils who speak English as an additional language are fully integrated, make progress at the same rate as all other pupils, and attain equally high standards.

Although teaching is good, teachers do not always ensure that their lessons provide consistently high levels of challenge for all groups of pupils at all times. This occurs for two reasons. Teachers do not always use assessment information well enough when planning lessons and, when evaluating their own effectiveness, do not focus sharply enough on their impact on pupils' learning. The assessments in the Early Years Foundation Stage are of good quality, but are not recorded regularly enough.

In the five years since her appointment the headteacher, with effective support from her deputy, has transformed the school. The governing body and the whole staff

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share an ambitious vision for the school and are partners in a clear plan of action to further strengthen the school's performance. Good-quality monitoring of teaching, combined with very thorough tracking of pupils' progress and analysis of data, has enabled the school to pinpoint exactly where it needs to improve, and detailed planning underpins developments. The improvements made since the last inspection provide clear evidence of the school's outstanding capacity for sustained improvement. Pupils' achievement, the curriculum, the quality of care, guidance and support and all aspects of leadership are better than they were. Although teaching remains good, it is more securely so. Improvements in learning stem from the teachers' good development of pupils' skills in assessing their own work and evaluating the progress that they make.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Eliminate inconsistencies in the quality of teaching by disseminating existing good and outstanding practice to ensure that all teaching is good or better by:
 - fine tuning teachers' use of assessment so that they always provide achievable challenges for all their pupils
 - ensuring that assessments in the Early Years Foundation Stage are recorded more regularly
 - ensuring that teachers focus sharply on the impact of their teaching on pupils' learning when evaluating their lessons.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

All pupils work hard in lessons and are keen to learn. For example, a focus in Year 6 on devising 'branch' diagrams, which require yes/no answers in order to sort items according to their properties, provided high levels of challenge for all. The activity required that pupils made effective use of previous learning, such as knowledge of multiples or properties of shapes. Pupils responded extremely well and showed great resilience in tackling a demanding task. The school has improved the level of challenge for higher-attaining pupils in Key Stage 1. Current data show that the percentage of pupils exceeding the nationally expected level 2 has increased in reading and mathematics and has been sustained at 2010 levels in writing.

Pupils from minority ethnic groups make good progress. They display the same levels of skill in reading, writing and mathematics as their White British classmates and their performance in national tests and assessments is significantly better than that of their peers nationally. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. This is because their needs are quickly identified and they are offered carefully tailored support. For example, in an English lesson in which pupils were required to answer questions about passages of text, the teacher provided a carefully customised task for a pupil with severe learning difficulties. This also promoted skills in comprehension, but at an appropriately lower level, and provided a structure for the written answers required. Consequently, this pupil was not only fully included in the class activity, but also given work that provided suitable challenge.

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Pupils contribute to school life with enthusiasm. They play an important part in moulding the decisions made by school leaders through their discussions in school council meetings. For example, the school council has been instrumental in improving the quality of school meals and has brought about the establishment of a choir. Pupils' good understanding of how to live healthily is recognised by the school's Activemark and its Healthy School status. Their strong commitment to being healthy is evident in the high levels of participation in the sporting activities provided. Pupils say that instances of unacceptable behaviour are extremely rare, and when they occur they are quickly dealt with.

Pupils are exceptionally well prepared for the next phase of their education. They are keen to come to school and are punctual. Levels of attendance are high. In addition to their competence in oracy, literacy, numeracy and ICT, the school provides pupils with essential 'life skills' through an excellent personal, social and health education curriculum. Its impact is evident in the demeanour of the pupils, for whom qualities of respect, honesty and consideration for others are an everyday feature of school life. Pupils' spiritual awareness, as demonstrated in their understanding of their own development and appreciation of that of others, is outstanding. Pupils show great empathy for the wide range of cultural traditions celebrated within the school.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	1
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	1
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	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Lessons are well organised and carefully structured, and resources are used well to

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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support learning. Teachers have good questioning skills, which they use effectively to extend pupils' thinking, and ensure that pupils develop good skills in working independently. When introducing tasks, teachers focus closely on the targets that pupils are expected to attain. The exceptional relationships between the teacher and pupils ensured high quality learning in science teaching in Year 6. The teacher demonstrated high levels of skill and sensitivity when teaching single-sex groups about the changes that occur as people grow. Pupils' responded maturely and their thoughtful questions were skilfully answered. In a very small number of lessons teachers do not take enough account of previous learning when planning tasks for their pupils. When this occurs, the pace of learning becomes uneven.

The curriculum helps make learning exciting. Many subjects are taught through topics which have an international dimension. These topics provide distinct learning goals and many opportunities for pupils to apply the skills learned. The use of many local resources successfully enriches pupils' experiences. For instance, a visit by pupils in Year 2 to Sarehole Watermill in Hall Green helped bring history to life, while pupils in Year 3 effectively developed an appreciation of the baroque style of decoration through their study of Birmingham Oratory church.

The school is an extremely caring community in which pupils' welfare is given a high priority. The individual needs of every pupil are very well understood, and excellent support is given to all. For instance, the school provided striking examples of the beneficial impact of its actions on both family life and the achievement of pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. Procedures for the induction of pupils into the Reception class help them to settle quickly, and similarly effective arrangements enable pupils to transfer confidently to a range of secondary schools. The high quality of childcare provided is a direct result of the school's response to needs expressed by parents. The purpose-built accommodation provides excellent, secure facilities. The adults providing care are also members of the school staff and are, therefore, suitably qualified and subject to the same security checks as all other adults working with children. Systems for ensuring good communication with parents are straightforward. The school gives the highest priority to the welfare and well-being of children.

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 clear direction provided for the school is strongly driven by the headteacher's

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ambitious vision, which is shared by staff and the governing body. All aspects of the school's work, and particularly the quality of teaching and learning, are regularly and rigorously monitored and evaluated. Leaders make their expectations clear, and provide intensive programmes of support where needed. The impact of their actions is seen in greater consistency of practice and more outstanding teaching in the years since the previous inspection. Targets are challenging, and the school is successful in meeting them. The Chair of the Governing Body is highly committed, constantly seeks ways of improving governance, and plays an important role in moving the school forward. Through an effective committee structure, the work of the school is closely monitored. The governing body has high aspirations. Its members possess a good range of skills, and use these to very good effect when monitoring, for example, the school finances or the impact of provision.

The school has embraced a wide range of partnerships. These include links with other local schools, outside professional agencies and the Birmingham Catholic Primary Partnership. These are used very successfully to extend the range of opportunities that are available to pupils. A successful link with a local high school has enhanced pupils' skills in performing arts. The school promotes equality of opportunity effectively; for example, the gap between pupils' performance in English and mathematics has been closed. The pupils' overwhelmingly positive views about all aspects of provision demonstrate their appreciation that this is an inclusive school in which discrimination has no place and which gives them a sense of belonging. The vast majority of parents and carers who returned the inspection questionnaires felt that the school is good at looking after their children. The safeguarding of pupils is given an extremely high priority and permeates the whole ethos of the school. Procedures are robust, rigorously applied and regularly checked.

The school is a highly cohesive organisation and has an excellent understanding of the community it serves, both in the immediate locality and within the wider parish context. It is highly effective in broadening pupils' horizons. There are regular opportunities for pupils to celebrate and appreciate the rich diversity of cultural heritage within the school community and in other areas of the United Kingdom. The curriculum provides a strong international dimension. Pupils' global perspective is enhanced through support for the Rwanda Schools' Project and activities such as a book collection for a school in Zambia.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1

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The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make rapid progress in their personal, social and emotional development, and in developing their skills in literacy and numeracy. In other areas of learning, their progress is good. By the time they transfer to Year 1, children’s skills in reading, writing and mathematics, together with their good independence as learners, provide a secure platform for continued good progress.

The children have good access to a range of interesting and enjoyable activities which encourage independence and initiative both indoors and out. However, the design of the premises makes it difficult for the school to provide seamless integration of indoor and outdoor learning. A very strong emphasis is placed on developing key skills in literacy and numeracy, although some of this provision is more formal than is normally found for children of this age. The high quality of the letters written by children to well-known people, such as Pope Benedict and the Prime Minister, is testimony to the impact of provision. There are opportunities for children to practise their skills independently through a range of imaginative activities which promote their understanding of the wider world. For instance, children greatly enjoyed their role-play ‘veterinary surgery’ as they carefully made appointments and tended to their patients. Good opportunities for writing were provided for the ‘receptionist’, while the ‘vet’ kept a careful count of the animals treated. Adults are good at questioning the children to help develop their learning. Assessment records of what children can do and understand do not provide a clear enough picture of the progress being made.

The caring and inclusive ethos of the school permeates all activities. For example, children were observed busily making cards for their ‘special friends’ in Year 6 to mark their confirmation as full members of the Catholic church. Good leadership and management ensure that children are encouraged to learn through purposeful play. Adults interact well with children. They have high expectations of what children should achieve, give clear explanations and ensure that children are safe and secure.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	2

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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly appreciative of the school. About one fifth of the questionnaires returned had comments appended, and the vast majority of these were entirely positive. A common theme among the positive comments was appreciation of the success of the school in promoting children's personal development. This view is fully endorsed by the inspection findings.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Our Lady of Fatima 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 inspection team received 91 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	53	58	36	40	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	71	78	18	20	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	48	53	36	40	5	5	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	48	53	35	38	5	5	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	57	63	28	31	4	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	49	54	37	41	5	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	47	52	41	45	2	2	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)	51	56	35	38	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	44	48	41	45	3	3	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	40	44	39	43	9	10	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	32	35	50	55	5	5	3	3
The school is led and managed effectively	60	66	30	33	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	55	60	29	32	4	4	3	3

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 all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



6 July 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Primary School, Birmingham, B17 8TR

Thank you for the welcome you gave the inspection team when we visited your school. We really enjoyed our time with you. We particularly enjoyed talking with you all and listened very carefully to what you had to say. You told us that you think that your school is excellent, and we agree.

Here are some of the many good things about your school.

- By the time you leave at the end of Year 6, you are exceptionally well prepared for your future education.
- You are much better at reading, writing and mathematics than children of your age in most other schools.
- You learn well in lessons and make good progress because you are taught well and you are really interested in the exciting things teachers plan for you.
- We were impressed by your excellent manners and behaviour.
- You feel very safe because all of the adults in your school make sure that you are very well looked after.
- The people who run your school are doing an excellent job.

To help you to make even better progress, I have asked your teachers to think hard about how well they help you to learn and to make sure that they check carefully on what you already know before they plan their lessons. Then they can make sure that you always have work that makes you think hard. I am sure that you are ready for this challenge.

You all can help your teachers to make your lessons even better by always letting them know how well you are getting on with your work.

I wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Mike Thompson
Lead inspector

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