

Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School

Manchester Drive, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex SS9 3HS

Inspection dates

6–7 December 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The new interim executive headteacher, an external team and governors are supporting senior leaders well. It is too early to see the full extent of impact on staff and pupils' outcomes.
- The quality of teaching is inconsistent because not all staff use the recently introduced strategies to improve teaching. As a result, pupils across the school do not make consistently strong progress. Teachers do not ensure that teaching assistants are used well.
- Although children in the early years achieve well, the leadership of this area has not secured consistently good teaching.
- Teachers do not use assessment information well enough to ensure that middle- and higher-ability pupils are consistently challenged to make strong progress.
- Middle leader development is in its early stages. As a result, understanding of the expectations of the new curriculum in subjects such as humanities, art and science is not well developed.
- Handwriting and presentation of pupils' work is inconsistent. Some teachers do not insist on pupils producing their best work.

The school has the following strengths

- The interim and existing leaders, know the school well and what steps need to be taken to improve. They and leaders from the supporting school work extremely well together. They are a united team who are committed to improving the school.
- Some of the aspects of the school's curriculum, such as sports and music, develop pupils' skills and abilities very well. Pupils enjoy and excel at the opportunities they are offered.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are very strong, as are those between all adults.
- Historical end of key stage results show that pupils achieve well from starting points.
- The small group of pupils across the school who are disadvantaged or those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are well supported and make good progress.
- Pupils are extremely courteous, polite and well behaved. They are respectful of adults and of each other.
- Parents are very positive about the school. They say that their children are happy, enjoy going to school, and that behaviour is good.

Full report

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

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that it is consistently good by ensuring that all teachers:
 - use assessment information well to plan work that consistently challenges pupils so that they achieve as well as they can, particularly those pupils who are middle and higher ability
 - make good use of teaching assistants to support pupils' learning and progress
 - adhere to the school's marking and feedback policy to ensure that pupils are clear about the steps they need to take to improve their work
 - make clear their expectations of pupils' handwriting and presentation so that pupils' work in their books is of a consistently high standard
 - plan learning that enables the development of pupils' skills and knowledge in subjects such as history, geography, science, art and computing.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - leaders regularly check that all staff adhere to and apply recently introduced strategies to improve teaching, learning and assessment
 - development of leaders within the school, including in early years, ensures sustainable leadership which is less reliant on external support
 - middle leaders clearly understand the part they play in whole-school improvement and the impact of the decisions they make on pupils' achievement
 - development of the school's curriculum enables teachers to teach and pupils to develop the appropriate skills and knowledge in line with the expectations of the new national curriculum in all subjects.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The new interim executive headteacher has been in post since September 2017 following the retirement of the long-serving previous headteacher. The interim executive headteacher, deputy headteacher, and leaders from the local supporting primary school, are working hard to create a consistent culture of high expectations and aspirations for all pupils and staff. Although parents who responded to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, said that the school is well led and managed, leaders recognise that there are still many areas to improve.
- The interim senior team's evaluation of the school's strengths and areas of development is accurate. They have put in place detailed plans to address the identified weaknesses. However, the implementation and impact of these actions is not sufficiently in place for outcomes across the school to be as consistently good as they have been, for example at the end of Year 6.
- Leaders have been honest in recognising that the current quality of teaching is inconsistent. They have not shied away from making difficult decisions to improve the quality of teaching. They recognise the need to invest in training and development of staff, many of whom have been at the school for some years and have not had sufficient development opportunities. Professional support is beginning to have an impact on teachers' practice, but it is too early to see any direct impact on pupils' progress. Some teachers do not yet consistently adhere to recently introduced strategies.
- Middle leaders in the school have not previously been provided with good leadership role models. They have not been developed to enable them to lead their subjects well, particularly since the previous inspection. Current leaders recognise that there is a willingness and thirst for development in many leaders in the school. Many middle leaders have expressed their gratitude to the current interim leadership for the opportunities that are now being afforded them. For example, middle leaders are now going to view other schools, working with other professionals and enrolled on leadership development courses. There is, however, limited current capacity for substantive leadership within Our Lady of Lourdes.
- Staff are fully supportive of the changes in leadership. Staff discussed this with inspectors during the inspection and with governors during their visits. A survey carried out by the school showed that staff welcomed recent developments, and feel that pupils are safe and well cared for.
- The leadership of SEN is very effective because leaders have high expectations of pupils' progress and are passionate about their role. As they said about pupils, 'They only get one go in each year group. We have to get it right.' The recent transition from one leader to another has been well organised, with the two leaders working very closely together. As a result, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress from their varying starting points.
- Staff prepare pupils effectively for life in modern Britain. Pupils demonstrate their understanding of fundamental British values, such as respect and democracy. Pupils

elect their classmates to make decisions and take actions as part of the school council. School assemblies, trips out and visitors to the school ensure that pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is appropriate. Some cultural opportunities are offered, for example to celebrate Chinese New Year, 'Filipino night', Irish dancing and Diwali. Pupils' cultural development, however, is less well developed than others.

- The school provides a physical education (PE) and sport curriculum which maximises use of the additional funding schools receive for sports and PE. The 'daily mile' is in place to improve pupils' health and well-being. Pupils also benefit from high-quality music tuition, offered to all, which pupils clearly love. The choir's moving rendition of 'Oh Holy Night' in three-part harmony will remain with inspectors for many years to come. However, despite such experiences and enrichment, the curriculum for subjects like science, geography and history is limited. As a result, pupils do not make the good progress in these subjects that they are capable of during their time in Our Lady of Lourdes.
- Governors and the interim leadership team are focused in their drive to improve the quality of teaching, and the opportunities and experiences they offer pupils. In this endeavour, they are working together with the diocese and local authority to explore more sustainable leadership for the school and its community.

Governance of the school

- Since the school was judged to require special measures, governors have acted swiftly and decisively to address the identified areas for improvement. They have sensibly and strategically engaged support from a variety of sources.
- With the aid of the local authority, diocese and local schools, governors took the decision to appoint an interim executive headteacher from a local Catholic primary school. The close links that this leader maintains with her substantive school have been very beneficial to Our Lady of Lourdes.
- Governors' regular visits to the school are focused on validating the information provided by the newly formed leadership team about the effectiveness of the school's provision. For example, governors have a clear understanding of where teaching in the school is currently weaker and what leaders are doing to support and challenge staff.
- The governing body has a good range of skills and expertise, and has provided strong support to the interim executive headteacher and staff. Governors are not afraid to challenge leaders and do so regularly. They ensure that leaders hold staff to account and have put in place an appraisal process for the interim executive headteacher.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and governors have ensured that appropriate safeguarding systems are now in place and fit for purpose. The few remaining shortcomings identified at the monitoring inspection in May 2017 have therefore been addressed.
- Leaders, governors and staff take their responsibilities to keep children safe seriously and prioritise the safety of pupils. Governors make regular visits to the school to check

on this important area of the school's work. Staff are well trained in the most up-to-date child protection and safeguarding guidance, including the 'Prevent' duty.

- Leaders ensure that any staff concerns about the welfare of pupils are followed up quickly and appropriately. The school's record-keeping is detailed, with appropriate referrals made to relevant external agencies when necessary.
- The vast majority of parents who responded to Parent View said that their children are safe at school and are well looked after. They say that the school deals effectively with bullying. These views were echoed by the pupils themselves.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching is inconsistent across the school because some teachers do not use assessment information well enough to plan sufficiently challenging work for pupils.
- Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve and work is too easy. Pupils say as much. Pupils spend too long going over content they already know, or waiting to move on in their learning and say: 'I already know how to do this. But I guess it makes me practise.' Where teachers have higher expectations of what pupils can achieve, they make better progress.
- Teachers do not consistently follow the school's feedback policy and do not accurately assess pupils' progress. Pupils are not guided as to how to improve their work, and their misconceptions are not routinely addressed. Teaching assistants are not sufficiently clear about how to support groups of pupils. As a result, pupils do not make as much progress as leaders expect or pupils are capable of.
- Senior leaders are supporting teachers' planning with new resources and specific expertise, for example in mathematics and early years. However, the impact of this recent work is not yet evident in pupils' progress. Considerable numbers of very able and articulate pupils do not show their full potential in their work.
- Where teaching is more effective, teachers have a secure understanding of pupils' needs and good subject knowledge. Such questions as 'explain that to me' ensure that pupils are encouraged to think hard about their learning. Teaching assistants are well directed, resulting in the vast majority of pupils making good progress in these lessons.
- The teaching of phonics is effective. As a result, pupils are able to make sensible guesses at unfamiliar words when reading and writing. Achievement in phonics at the end of Year 1 has been above the national average for some years.
- The teaching of reading has been developed effectively. Pupils enjoy reading and will often challenge themselves with such books as 'Huckleberry Finn' or a Dickens novel.
- As a result of a focus on reading, pupils' writing is largely developing well. Inspectors saw examples of pupils writing for different purposes. For example, using 'bossy words' to write instructions on how to make gruel as part of their class topic. Pupils are given some opportunities to develop their writing in subjects other than English. However, they are not routinely encouraged to write at length and therefore their stamina for writing is not developed well.
- The teaching of mathematics is developing. Where it is taught well, teachers have a good understanding of the demands of the new national curriculum and develop pupils'

skills and abilities well. However, this is inconsistent across the school. As a result, pupils do not make the best progress they can, and the work planned for them is not challenging enough. For example, their problem-solving and reasoning skills are not strong enough.

- Teaching of some areas of the curriculum is not as well developed as others, for example geography, history, art. Although pupils are offered some opportunities to explore learning in history, for example with celebration of a day in Victorian times, this does not appear to build on previous skills or knowledge. Learning is not consistently well planned to ensure progress across the school or within subjects
- The environment and the culture in the classrooms and around the school, support pupils' learning well. Relationships between adults and pupils are very strong. The small group of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, are supported well by teaching assistants.
- Parents are extremely positive about and supportive of the school. They say that communication between the school and parents is good. Those who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, say that they are happy with their children's progress. As one parent said of her daughter, 'She is nurtured and treated lovingly.'

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils show respect and care for each other. They value their classmates' opinions and work happily and cooperatively in lessons. They regularly raise money to help those who are less fortunate than themselves, for example children helped through the NSPCC.
- Pupils thrive in the positive, well-ordered and caring school environment. Displays throughout the school are bright and attractive. In classrooms, pupils are encouraged to use the many prompts that are on the walls, which many do well.
- Pupils say that they feel safe at all times and know whom to go to if they have any worries. When using computers online, pupils know how to keep themselves safe and what to do if they have any concerns. When asked, for example, if they would accept someone they do not know as a friend online, all pupils spoken to were adamant that they would not. 'No, they might be a bad person,' said one Year 1 pupil.
- Pupils enjoy the many roles of responsibility they have been appointed to. They carry out their duties as prefects, ambassadors or school councillors, for example, fastidiously and take their responsibilities very seriously.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is developing. Inspectors saw pupils sharing their views on Advent during an assembly and being encouraged to say what they think. This was skilfully done by asking, 'Who thinks something different?' Many pupils went on to describe their 'hopes and wishes' for this time of year. As one said, 'I hope everyone is happy,' which was valued by the teacher and pupils alike.
- Pupils like the breakfast and after-school clubs that the school operates. This has

helped some pupils' attendance. The vast majority of pupils attend school regularly and on time.

- Parents say that their children enjoy coming to this 'friendly and happy school', one saying: 'I really love the school.' As one among many said, 'My children have all enjoyed it here and done very well.'

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The strong relationships that are nurtured in school ensure that pupils conduct themselves well in lessons and around school. Pupils are extremely polite, courteous and have good manners. They hold open doors and greet visitors very maturely.
- Pupils enjoy playtimes and lunchtimes. Children and pupils play happily together and make sure that no one is left out. Pupils from Year 5 act responsibly as 'young leaders' to support younger pupils and children.
- Where teaching is well planned, and activities are fun, pupils have good attitudes, enjoy their learning and work conscientiously together or independently.
- Every opportunity is taken to reinforce acceptable behaviour, both inside and outside the classrooms. Pupils have high expectations of themselves and their classmates, recently giving their views to leaders about behaviour. As a result, revised behaviour systems, such as swapping blue cards for green ones, encourage positive attitudes to learning.
- Pupils say that there is very little bullying. They know whom to go to if they see any bullying or experience it. Parents are satisfied that the school deals effectively with bullying where they have had any experience of it.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' outcomes across the school require improvement. Current pupils do not make consistently strong progress in a range of subjects, including reading, writing and mathematics.
- Over a number of years, standards in attainment and progress at the end of Year 6 have been above the national average. Attainment at the end of Year 2, in the past, has been equally high.
- Attainment in the phonics check at the end of Year 1, is above the national average. Pupils tend to use their phonics skills well to help them read with a degree of fluency and to make sensible spelling guesses when writing.
- Children enter the Reception Year with skills and abilities that are at least typical for their age and many with skills and abilities above typical. Most make expected progress or better during their time in Reception, although the majority of most-able children make expected progress from their starting points.
- The most able pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6 attain well, with many achieving the higher score. However, progress of this group of pupils in subjects other than English and mathematics, and across the rest of the school, is not as good as it could be.

- At the end of key stages 1 and 2 in 2016 and 2017, the disadvantaged pupils made good progress and achieved well in comparison with others nationally. However, pupils currently in the school make progress which is similar to that of their classmates and requires improvement.
- The pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are supported effectively and make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Leadership of the early years requires improvement. Leaders have not acted swiftly enough to ensure that children receive the best education they can. The current quality of teaching in the two classes is inconsistent.
- The majority of children enter the school with skills and abilities that are typical of their age, with approximately a third who exceed those expectations. The proportion of children that achieve a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year is above the national average. However, only a very small number exceed expectations.
- Even at this point in the autumn term, the vast majority of children speak confidently to adults and to each other. They were keen to tell inspectors about what they were learning, explaining themselves articulately. Inspectors watched children rehearsing their Nativity play speaking their roles confidently and moving seamlessly between scenes, singing at the top of their voices.
- Children move freely between the many activities that are provided for them. They love the 'ice-play'. 'We're playing with ice and getting really cold!' said one child. Where teaching is most effective, children's learning is extended, and their interest is sustained. For example, a teaching assistant asked, 'Why is the ice melting?' On another occasion a boy was supported to write an exclamation mark in his writing at his own request. However, adults do not challenge children sufficiently to think about what they are learning.
- Children willingly initiate their own learning in the well-resourced indoor area. Senior leaders have recently ensured that children have more access to the outdoor learning space which the two classes share. Plans are in place, with the support of the local authority, to develop this area further.
- Children learn and play well together. When two girls had independently drawn a large picture of Bethlehem, they proudly told inspectors, 'We did it ourselves.' Other children were then quick to congratulate the girls' efforts. 'Wow! It's amazing!' they chorused.
- Children have well-developed social skills. They will happily help each other, for example, if they are struggling to put on their coats. They sit beautifully in the dining hall and enjoy this sociable time with their classmates. Their use of cutlery to eat hot food, however, is still developing. Many children were picking up meat and vegetables with their fingers.
- Parents are very happy with how well their children settle in the early years. They are starting to have more involvement in their children's learning through the new, online system of communication. The interim executive headteacher is establishing much closer links than before with the outstanding nursery provision on the school's site, from where most children come.

- Children in the Reception classes know how to keep themselves safe and take risks appropriately when playing, for example, on outdoor equipment. Statutory welfare requirements are met.

School details

Unique reference number	115148
Local authority	Southend-on-Sea
Inspection number	10043199

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	Community
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	421
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	James Johnson
Interim executive headteacher	Sally Nutman
Telephone number	01702 475689
Website	www.olol.co.uk
Email address	s.nutman@ourladyoflourdes.southend.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	4–5 October 2016

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the curriculum on the school's website.
- Our Lady of Lourdes is almost double the size of the average primary school. It is a Catholic school and operates within the Diocese of Brentwood. The school is very popular with parents and oversubscribed.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. The vast majority of pupils speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below the national average, including those who have an education, health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs.

- The school meets current government floor standards. These are the minimum standards set by the government for pupils' progress and attainment.
- Governors have entered into an informal arrangement with a local Catholic primary school. The executive headteacher began her role at the school in September 2017. Several of the leadership team from her substantive school are supporting Our Lady of Lourdes.
- An academy order is in place for the school to be a part of a Catholic multi-academy trust.
- In October 2016 the school was judged inadequate and placed in special measures. In May 2017, a monitoring inspection took place and judged that the school's safeguarding arrangements were effective.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all classes, many jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors held discussions with the interim executive headteacher, members of the school’s leadership team and those from the local Catholic school that is supporting the school. The lead inspector met with three governors, including the chair of governors, and representatives from the local authority and diocese.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils during lessons and met with a randomly selected group of pupils. An inspector also listened to some pupils read.
- Inspectors and members of the school’s leadership team, scrutinised a range of work in pupils’ books from all year groups.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents including the school’s latest self-evaluation and school development plan. Documentation related to child protection, safeguarding, behaviour, minutes of governing body meetings and attendance were also scrutinised by inspectors.
- The lead inspector took into consideration pupil and staff views from the school’s own recent questionnaires, and the views of 49 parents who responded to Ofsted’s survey, Parent View.

Inspection team

Ruth Brock, lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Paula Masters	Ofsted Inspector
Parv Qureshi	Ofsted Inspector
Paul Copping	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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