

Inspection of a good school: Our Lady's RC Primary School

Boycott Road, Hereford, Herefordshire HR2 7RN

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 January 2022

Outcome

Our Lady's RC Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and confident at Our Lady's RC Primary School. They have enquiring minds and enjoy learning. Bullying is extremely rare. Pupils know that there are always adults to talk to and that any problems are resolved straight away. Parents and carers appreciate how effectively staff address any concerns. They share their children's enthusiasm for school.

Pupils dress smartly and behave very well, both in the classroom and around the school. They have positive attitudes towards their work and take care to present it neatly. They can explain how the school's Christian values encourage them to care for others and treat everyone with respect.

Pupils learn a wide range of different subjects at this school. Teachers have high expectations of pupils. Staff encourage pupils to express their opinions in an appropriate way. Older pupils, including those with English as an additional language, are confident and express themselves well. Pupils study a range of cultures and traditions in subjects such as history and religious education. Visits to places of interest, such as Hereford Cathedral, add to pupils' enjoyment and understanding of the curriculum. Pupils enjoy a good variety of after-school clubs.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Senior leaders have designed a well-structured and broad curriculum. In each subject, they have set out how a sequence of activities must build up learning over time. Pupils learn some subjects in short blocks of time. They study geography or art, for example, on most afternoons for a few weeks, before switching to another subject. Pupils enjoy this approach. They say it increases their interest, as they become immersed in the topic. Inspection evidence shows that they are well able to recall their learning in the following weeks and months.

Teachers have a secure knowledge of the subjects they teach. They carefully choose activities that engage pupils' interests. These activities deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding of important ideas. For example, in history, pupils learn about similarities and differences in the past. This develops their knowledge of how and why things change.

Staff make sure that work matches pupils' abilities. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities learn well. Staff have a detailed knowledge of these pupils' abilities and any barriers to learning.

Leaders make reading a priority. From the start of the Reception Year, children follow a structured programme that introduces them to letters and their associated sounds. Staff show pupils how to pronounce these sounds accurately. However, some staff are new to the school. These members of staff are not yet familiar with the school's approach to teaching phonics. This leads to inconsistencies in the way some lessons are taught. The school provides children with books to read in class and at home. Leaders ensure that these books match pupils' reading ability well. Staff encourage pupils to read every day, and most do. Many are enthusiastic readers.

Leaders place emphasis on pupils having a secure basic understanding of mathematics. They expect pupils to recall number facts and use them fluently. For example, in the early years, pupils benefit from daily activities that build their knowledge of numbers and shapes. Staff use practical equipment and diagrams to help pupils grasp difficult concepts. Teachers explain new ideas clearly and make sure that pupils use the correct mathematical vocabulary. They ask pupils questions to check how well they understand key information.

Pupils know the school's values very well and demonstrate them in the way they act. They are curious and keen to find out more. Pupils are courteous. They consistently demonstrate respect for each other and adults. Behaviour that disrupts learning is very rare.

Senior leaders set high expectations for staff. They check on how well pupils are learning. Senior leaders know what works well, and how to improve learning further. However, there is more work to do to ensure that the new curriculum is fully embedded, including checking how effectively it is implemented.

Leaders have worked hard to limit the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff have identified the gaps in pupils' learning, and are helping them to catch up. Many staff have joined the school recently and settled well. Staff appreciate the effective support that they receive from senior leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that staff are well trained in the school's safeguarding procedures. Staff are vigilant and know how to manage the risks that pupils face. When there are any concerns, leaders take the right steps to involve other agencies so that children receive

the help that they need. Leaders make the necessary checks on the staff who join the school. The school keeps accurate records. Governors provide effective oversight of safeguarding arrangements.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to avoid risks, including those they may face online. They feel safe in school and have full confidence in the staff to resolve any difficulties.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Several staff are new to teaching phonics in the school. This leads to some inconsistency in the way lessons are taught. Leaders should ensure that all staff who teach early reading are fully trained in the approach that the school uses.
- This is the first year of the school's current curriculum. The school should build on the success of its introduction by ensuring that all subject leaders have the skills and the opportunity to check on how effectively staff are implementing the subject for which they are responsible. This will enable them to make any amendments to the curriculum and to provide staff with additional guidance.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in February 2013.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	116883
Local authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	10212432
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Number of pupils on the school roll	185
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mark Slane
Headteacher	Kathy Weston
Website	www.our-ladys.hereford.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	22 February 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Our Lady's Catholic Primary School is a Roman Catholic faith school within the Archdiocese of Cardiff. The religious character of the school was last inspected in April 2019.
- An above-average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in his evaluation.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. Meetings were held with curriculum leaders and the special educational needs coordinator.
- The chair and another two members of the governing body met with the inspector.
- The inspector spoke with pupils at social times and with groups of pupils more formally.

- When inspecting safeguarding, the inspector looked at the school's procedures for recruiting and checking on staff. He also considered the effectiveness of staff's training and the procedures to keep pupils safe.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation, including leaders' plans to improve the school, records of governing body meetings and evaluations of the school's work by those working in support of it. The inspector also reviewed the school's attendance and behaviour records.
- The inspection took account of responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's questionnaire for parents. The inspector reviewed a small number of items of correspondence from parents. He met with parents in the playground at the start of the second day of the inspection. The inspector also considered responses to the survey for staff.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. In these subjects, the inspector considered the school's curriculum plans, visited lessons and scrutinised pupils' work. The inspector also met with pupils and teachers to discuss learning in these subjects.
- The inspector listened to a sample of pupils from Years 1, 2 and 3 reading to an adult.

Inspection team

Martin Spoor, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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