

Our Lady's RC Primary School Wigan

Holly Road, Aspull, Wigan, Greater Manchester WN2 1RU

Inspection dates

14–15 February 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- Every day, pupils look forward to attending this school. They are happy, safe and full of enthusiasm. They have fun during breaktimes and during lessons. They are constantly learning and developing rapidly.
- In this school, pupils' very strong personal development is at the core of learning. From the moment they start in this school, adults very carefully nurture pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are curious and enthusiastic about learning.
- The curriculum is broad and taught in a very engaging way. Excellent teaching ensures that pupils make rapid progress. Teachers plan lessons and activities that make pupils think deeply, work quickly and build learning systematically. Pupils rightly have great confidence that their teachers will do the very best they can to ensure that they learn. There is an extensive range of rich and rewarding additional activities for pupils that broaden their experiences. The whole curriculum, including the enrichment, provides an excellent range of learning and personal development opportunities.
- This is a harmonious school where respect is a core value shown by all adults and pupils. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary throughout the school. They are attentive and enthusiastic in lessons. They are caring and thoughtful when at play.
- The headteacher has driven this school from providing a satisfactory level of education to providing an outstanding one. He has developed considerable leadership capacity and high-level leadership skills in all staff in the school. He is the beacon that gives direction. He inspires others to do their very best, and when they need it, he provides them with excellent support.
- Leaders were quick to identify a slowing of pupils' progress in Reception Year and have taken effective action. Children are currently making good progress in Reception Year. Teaching is good and improving.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that children in Reception Year achieve as well as pupils across other year groups by:
 - raising expectations of how quickly children can learn
 - planning activities and tasks that always challenge children to make the best possible progress
 - ensuring that adults frequently check on children's learning and use incisive questioning to deepen children's understanding.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The headteacher and governors have worked hard and very successfully to ensure that they have developed a school that enables pupils to grow into model citizens who have a love of learning. Pupils are very well cared for and are very happy at school.
- With great skill, the headteacher has developed confidence and talent in staff across the school. Teaching assistants play a critical role in both educating pupils and caring for them. The headteacher and governors have supported and developed teachers to become excellent practitioners through advice from experienced professionals and high-quality training. Leadership at all levels in the school is excellent. The headteacher has recognised potential and then systematically developed strong leadership qualities in others. All adults working in the school believe strongly that the headteacher is doing an excellent job.
- There is no sense of complacency in the school. Governors, leaders, teachers, teaching assistants and other adults are constantly striving for improvement. Leaders have well-established plans to enable the school's continued improvement.
- School leaders carefully and accurately evaluate the quality of all that the school does. This enables the headteacher and governors to identify quickly areas in need of improvement. The body of expertise around this small school is extensive. Consequently, high-quality improvements are now achieved very efficiently.
- The school's system to appraise the performance of teachers and teaching assistants, and then to support their development, is very effective.
- Teachers frequently monitor the progress that pupils make and set aspirational targets. The school has a history of accurately monitoring the progress of pupils throughout the year. Teachers use this to modify what and how they are teaching each pupil. If pupils need short-term individual support, then this is given and results in pupils quickly catching up on any lost ground.
- The school's curriculum provides an excellent framework for learning. Pupils say that there are no subjects they dislike. Teachers choose topics and activities that interest and fully engage all pupils.
- The range of additional activities available to all pupils is extensive. Pupils' spiritual development is excellent. They learn how people of other faiths, and no faiths, develop their spirituality. Through topics, activities and visits, pupils broaden their understanding of their heritage and of other cultures. Sporting, artistic and cultural activities help pupils learn to socialise well in different contexts and environments. Pupils demonstrate through their excellent behaviour that they live by a firm moral code.
- The combination of the taught curriculum and enrichment activities fully prepares pupils to participate actively and positively in British society and to achieve economic well-being.
- The school makes excellent use of the additional physical education and sports funding it receives. The school offers a wide range of sports and activities, so there is something for everyone. Pupils who were once reluctant to take part in sport can now

find something they enjoy. Sports coaches take gifted pupils to a high level of sporting achievement. Fitness and healthy lifestyles have a high priority around the school. Teachers are constantly improving their competence and confidence in promoting healthy sporting activities.

- Additional funding to support pupils who are disadvantaged provides excellent value for money. These pupils attain higher levels than other pupils nationally. Their personal development is excellent and they are encouraged to have high aspirations for the rest of their schooling and beyond. Similarly, the school spends well any additional funding it receives for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Clear analysis is made of their needs. This enables a skilled team to give excellent support to these pupils. This team also give good guidance to teachers on how to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make strong progress from their starting points.
- The school makes extensive use of a very wide range of local professional partnerships. These support teachers in improving their practice, including the teaching of the new mathematics curriculum and of reading, as well as in checking teacher assessments are accurate. At senior-leader level too, collaborative work underpins excellent developments in evaluating school performance and improvement planning.
- Parents who contacted inspectors and who have completed surveys about the school are very complimentary. They say their children are happy and safe. They are impressed about how quickly their children are learning. Most parents feel fully involved in their child's education. Some say that children do not get enough homework, others say that it is about right.

Governance of the school

- Members of the school governing body provide expertise in a wide range of essential skills. They ensure that the school is financially secure. They offer considerable challenge to the headteacher on all matters and in particular the safeguarding of pupils and their levels of achievement.
- Governors are very well informed because they all confidently ask good questions to establish just how strong performance is and where improvements need to be made.
- Governors offer considerable support to the school by freely and generously giving of their time, encouraging staff and rightly congratulating them. They consult well with parents, pupils and staff.
- Governors and the headteacher have also been able to encourage many other adults, some of whom are parents, with considerable expertise to help the school. This includes finding additional grant funding and broadens the ranges of activities available to pupils.
- The ambition of the governors and the headteacher to continue to provide their community with the very best ensures that there is no complacency.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

- Relationships between pupils and adults in the school are very strong and positive. Pupils will confidently seek guidance from staff and confide in them because they know that staff have their very best interests at heart. Adults are highly professional in caring for pupils. All staff have a clear understanding of their responsibilities and the procedures they should follow because they are very well trained. All staff know what to look for and how to react to ensure that pupils are safe.
- Those responsible for the leadership of safeguarding within the school have an excellent understanding of how to manage difficult situations skilfully to ensure that all pupils are safe. They have close relationships with other agencies who are responsible for children's safety and protection.
- The site is secure and safe. However, despite many requests, a few parents still do not follow the school's requests to drop off and collect their children by car safely. Some persist in causing obstructions by stopping in unsuitable areas, including stopping on pavements. Staff have to spend too much time managing this situation in order to make it safe. This takes time away from teachers' other responsibilities.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Pupils learn quickly and securely because teaching across key stages 1 and 2 is excellent. Teachers make learning fun and interesting. Pupils engage quickly and easily with topics and show an increasing hunger for learning. Teaching strategies are consistently developed across the school. Teachers know well what has already been taught and how it has been taught. This enables them to build systematically on pupils' prior learning, using similar teaching techniques. This avoids confusion in pupils' minds and builds their confidence.
- Teachers are highly skilled in adopting a wide variety of sometimes innovative practices. They use computer technology in interesting ways to enhance communication in the classroom. They help pupils understand basics, before moving on to getting them to think more deeply about topics. Teachers create an excellent climate for learning where pupils feel secure and will experiment with ideas and explore. Pupils trust their teachers to guide them and trust their fellow pupils to support them. Through this very positive culture, pupils become self-assured and develop skills early to enable them to start to learn for themselves.
- Teachers are coping very well with the recent changes in the curriculum, including in mathematics. The deputy headteacher has researched teaching strategies, decided upon which are most suitable for pupils at this school and helped teachers to adopt these approaches across all classes. For this reason pupils are both confident about and competent in using numbers. Teachers systematically support pupils in applying basic mathematical skills to solve problems. Pupils use key mathematical terms to explain their reasoning.
- The most able mathematicians excel. Their skills are enhanced and their confidence is developed through additional challenge and support from a secondary school mathematics specialist who focuses on exploring, discussing and explaining mathematical concepts.

- Teachers, throughout the school, teach reading and writing very well. Teachers adhere to a systematic programme to develop pupils' phonic knowledge. This provides them with an excellent foundation from which they build reading and writing skills. Talking and listening skills are actively promoted very well. Effective teaching enables pupils to develop their ideas, become more creative and communicate very effectively. Teachers prompt pupils to think deeply and explain concepts through carefully crafted questions.
- Teachers know their pupils very well and so they are able to pitch learning at precisely the right level for them to learn quickly and confidently. Very well-trained and knowledgeable teaching assistants support individuals and small groups very effectively. This support helps pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to progress quickly.
- Skilled use of high-level teaching strategies are applied across the whole curriculum, so pupils excel in all subjects, including in science and humanities.
- Teachers and teaching assistants provide a bright and stimulating environment both indoors and out. Pupils' work is celebrated around the school. Resources are of high quality and there is an extensive range of high-quality books in the library.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Teachers and teaching assistants promote pupils' highly positive attitudes through excellent encouragement, praise and support. As a priority, they ensure that pupils feel secure and are happy before they start to learn. There is a highly positive nurturing culture throughout the school. Those pupils who lack confidence or need to improve the way they socialise with others are provided with excellent support.
- Pupils' physical and emotional health are promoted through frequent vigorous exercise, outdoor playing and learning, and an extensive range of additional activities. For those pupils who need more than this, support is subtle and highly effective. Pupils say that they are happy and feel very safe. Standards of pupils' welfare are excellent.
- Pupils' personal development is excellent. It is promoted through high standards of behaviour, a high moral code and an extensive range of enrichment activities. These include sports, cultural visits, music and art sessions and public-speaking events. There is an excellent programme of after-school activities that broaden pupils' learning. Recently they have included cooking, three-dimensional printing and laser cutting. 'Super-learning days' give all pupils a chance to experience topics like archaeology. Older pupils readily accept responsibilities which develop their leadership skills. One example is the school's sports council, which promotes sporting events for all pupils. This includes producing a detailed development plan and presenting a report to governors. Pupils raise considerable amounts of money for a range of charities. For instance, during Lent, pupils ran a number of enterprise activities and presented all money raised to the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD).

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- All staff are excellent role models for pupils. Staff have very high expectations of pupils' standards of behaviour, to which pupils respond very positively. Staff promote excellent behaviour through ensuring that learning and play are always rewarding and fun. Staff also promote pupils' positive attitudes to others who are from different cultures, religions or backgrounds.
- Pupils readily take responsibility for their own behaviour. They are prepared to take positive action when, on rare occasions, someone does not live up to their own high expectations.
- Excellent teaching and learning motivate pupils. Pupils work enthusiastically and always take pride in their work. Teachers place great importance on developing the skills that pupils need to communicate well. Pupils are courteous when listening to the ideas and opinions of others. They are also keen to make positive contributions themselves to class discussion work or when working in pairs or groups. In doing so, they develop the very good social and communication skills they will need in their futures.
- During break and lunchtimes, pupils play happily and without any signs of poor behaviour. They play harmoniously in groups in the wooded area, with play equipment or during a game of football. While in school, pupils move calmly and in an orderly way. Pupils say that incidents of bullying do not exist. They say that there is no teasing. Pupils also say that if they were unhappy with anyone's behaviour they would report it to an adult, and are very confident that staff would deal with it very well.
- Last year pupils' attendance overall was good. This year it is similar. A very few disadvantaged pupils were persistently absent last year. This year, this aspect of attendance has improved significantly.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Pupils make excellent progress throughout key stages 1 and 2. Pupils' high levels of attainment, their highly positive attitudes to learning and their excellent personal development ensure that they are very well prepared for secondary school.
- Pupils' development of phonic skills early in their schooling is excellent. A much larger proportion of pupils reach the expected phonics standard by the end of Years 1 and 2 than do nationally. Their success provides a very firm foundation for the rest of their learning, particularly reading, writing and English.
- Pupils read very well and are keen to read for pleasure. The school's monitoring information is accurate and it shows that pupils in all classes from Years 1 to 6 are excellent readers. Pupils also love writing. Throughout the school and in all subjects, pupils write clearly and interestingly, use grammar accurately. They are able to write at length. Pupils of different abilities make consistently very strong progress in English.
- Pupils of all abilities excel in mathematics. Their levels of understanding are very high. They have a very firm command of arithmetic. This gives them confidence and an excellent grounding to enable them to use mathematics to solve problems. Their

excellent speaking and writing skills help them to communicate their high-level mathematical ideas and reasoning.

- Excellent achievement is not limited to English and mathematics. Pupils of all abilities progress very well across all subjects. For example, pupils not only learn about science, but they also use this understanding and well-developed scientific skills to investigate their theories and ideas.
- Pupils who are disadvantaged make similar excellent progress to that of other pupils in the school. They also attain much higher levels in reading and writing than other pupils nationally. Levels of attainment in mathematics made by disadvantaged pupils in this school are close to those of other pupils nationally.
- Pupils who have special education needs and/or disabilities achieve just as well as other pupils with similar starting points. Support for this group of pupils is very strong. Their needs are clearly identified and support is precisely targeted. The school's provision for nurturing pupils who lack confidence or social skills is seen as an example of best practice by the local authority. Our Lady's staff are supporting other schools in the development of their nurture provision.

Early years provision

Good

- Leadership in Reception is good. The main areas of improvement have been identified accurately. Well-focused support for staff is further improving provision. As a result, the quality of teaching and children's progress are good and improving. Children are very well looked after.
- Teachers accurately assess children's levels of development and needs on entry to Reception. This assessment suggests that children start with levels of development which are broadly average. Children's development is then accurately tracked throughout Reception.
- Activities and tasks are designed to interest children, such as the spaceship which recently landed in the play area. Children have enjoyed writing to 'Sporkle', the alien, and helping him work out some mathematical problems.
- Expectations that adults have of how quickly children can learn are not consistently high enough. Consequently, activities do not always challenge children fully to make rapid progress.
- The questions that adults use are good and help keep children on task. However, they do not inform staff well enough about how well children have understood. Nor do staff use questioning to make children really think and deepen their understanding.
- Children make good progress from their different starting points. Improvements to the quality of teaching have ensured that progress has improved over this year. This is particularly evident in phonics, where children are learning quickly how to associate sounds and letters and building on this to read simple words.
- Behaviour in Reception is good and sometimes exemplary. Children can listen attentively and respond well to directions. Occasionally, when tasks are too easy or too difficult, children become distracted and behaviour wavers.

- Overall, children’s personal development is strong and they are well prepared for starting Year 1.
- Despite Reception being judged as good, the overall quality of education throughout the whole school is outstanding because it is clear that early years provision is improving quickly through strong leadership and highly effective support.

School details

Unique reference number	106490
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	10024136

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	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	163
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew Brown
Headteacher	John Rushton
Telephone number	01942 832299
Website	www.aspullourladys.wigan.sch.uk
Email address	enquiries@admin.aspullourladys.wigan.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	13–14 September 2012

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than most other primary schools.
- Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups who attend the school is lower than average and very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is smaller than that found in most primary schools.
- The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is smaller than that found in most primary schools.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' achievement.

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher and a group of staff. They spoke to parents as they brought their children to school.
- Inspectors also met with groups of pupils and six members of the governing body.
- The lead inspector met with a school improvement partner representing the local authority.
- School documents were scrutinised, including: safeguarding checks; information about pupils' achievement and records of checks on the quality of teaching. Inspectors also visited classrooms with leaders to speak with pupils, look at their books and observe their learning.
- Inspectors visited a sample of the enrichment opportunities that were taking place during the inspection.
- Inspectors examined child-protection information, procedures and practice.
- Inspectors considered 34 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. They took account of 10 staff responses to an inspection survey. Inspectors considered the views of the 32 parents who texted their comments.

Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector

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