

Blessed Robert Widmerpool Catholic Primary and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122783
Local Authority	CITY OF NOTTINGHAM LA
Inspection number	314398
Inspection date	13 December 2007
Reporting inspector	Derek Watts

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	234
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Fr C P Thomas
Headteacher	Mrs Hilary Jackson
Date of previous school inspection	1 December 2003
School address	Listowel Crescent Clifton Nottingham Nottinghamshire NG11 9BH
Telephone number	0115 9152392
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: achievement and standards, personal development and well-being, teaching and learning, the curriculum, care, guidance and support and leadership and management. Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and documents. Parents' questionnaires and discussions with pupils, governors and staff also contributed to the judgements. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Blessed Robert Widmerpool Catholic is an average size primary school. About three quarters of the pupils come from a White British background. The remainder come from a wide range of other ethnic backgrounds with Indian being the next largest group. An increasing number of pupils speak English as an additional language and a few of these are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is about average. The school is popular and over-subscribed despite the falling pupil numbers in the local area.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Blessed Robert Widmerpool Catholic Primary and Nursery is an outstanding school. Pupils achieve exceptionally well because of outstanding teaching and a high quality curriculum. Excellent care, guidance and support and a very positive school atmosphere lead to outstanding personal development and well-being for pupils. Parents hold very positive views about the school and are extremely pleased with the care and education provided for their children. Typical comments from the parental survey were, 'I am very proud to say my children attend BRW Catholic School', 'Teaching is excellent', 'The atmosphere is always welcoming and the staff are very approachable' and 'I highly recommend this school'.

Outstanding leadership and management are the key factors behind the school's success and improvements. The headteacher, staff and governors successfully promote outstanding educational provision and this gives rise to outstanding outcomes for pupils. An established headteacher has formed a strong partnership with an experienced deputy headteacher. Together they have provided exceptional leadership over ten years and this has enabled the school to improve. Leadership responsibilities have been distributed more widely since the last inspection. Successful curriculum teams enable staff to develop their skills in monitoring and improving teaching and the curriculum. All leaders make a valuable contribution to the school's effectiveness. Governors are committed, supportive and have an extremely good understanding of the school's performance. The school's performance is systematically reviewed and findings are used very well to guide planning for improvement and to set challenging targets. Accurate self-evaluation, improvements to teaching and to Foundation Stage provision and better use of information and communication technology (ICT) demonstrate the school's excellent capacity to improve.

Stimulating and high quality teaching enables pupils to make outstanding progress. Pupils are inspired and motivated by teachers' enthusiasm and considerable subject expertise. They are enthusiastic learners who respond exceptionally well to their teachers' high expectations of learning and behaviour. Classrooms are attractive, with high quality displays of artefacts and pupils' work reflecting a varied curriculum. Teachers' clear instructions, demonstrations and explanations promote learning well. Very skilful questioning is used to challenge pupils' thinking and to check their understanding. Pupils respond well to their teachers' questioning and many are articulate and confident speakers. Assessment is used effectively to match activities to pupils' abilities and needs. As a result, pupils, including higher attainers, are challenged well, and make exceptional gains. Pupils work hard and take care and pride in their work. Teaching assistants are effectively deployed and make a valuable contribution to learning, particularly for pupils with learning difficulties or those at an early stage of learning English. ICT has improved significantly since the last inspection and is used well by teachers and pupils to support teaching and learning. For example, pupils in Year 6 created high quality multimedia presentations about the Blitz in World War II. The marking of pupils' works is effective because praise given for good work and constructive comments help them to improve.

Standards are well above average by the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. National data and the school's clear assessments show that pupils consistently make outstanding progress from Year 3 to Year 6. In the past, pupils' progress has been more rapid in these years than in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2. Effective action has been taken to ensure that pupils' progress is at least good throughout the school. Improvements to teaching and to the curriculum have contributed to greater consistency in pupils' progress. Effective strategies

are being used to raise achievement in writing in Years 1 and 2. Higher attaining pupils are being challenged and stretched more effectively in mathematics through problem-solving and investigations. In science, pupils plan and carry out investigations competently. Across the school, pupils apply and develop literacy and numeracy skills very well in a range of subjects.

An extremely well planned and exciting curriculum contributes exceptionally well to pupils' progress, enjoyment and to their personal development. While there is a very good emphasis on English, mathematics and science; art and design, ICT, performing arts and sport are also strong elements. There are good links between subjects, which add meaning and relevance to pupils' learning. For example, pupils in Year 4 studied the Tudors. Drama, art, design and technology and writing were effectively incorporated into the work. Provision for art is a consistently good feature and there are varied and high quality displays of pupils' work across the school influenced by a range of artists. A good range of additional activities such as visits and visitors enhance pupils' learning. Popular school clubs include basketball, football, gymnastics and cheer leading.

Care, guidance and support make an exceptional contribution to pupils' academic and personal development. There are very good systems to assess and track pupils' attainment and progress. Pupils are set clear individual learning targets in English and mathematics so that they know what they need to do to improve. Pupils are becoming increasingly effective in reviewing their own and other's work. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and this is reflected by their enthusiastic participation in lessons and their good attendance. Pupils are friendly, polite and show considerable care and respect for others. Behaviour is outstanding because of the high expectations by all staff, stimulating teaching and the outstanding relationships between adults and pupils. Pupils' extremely positive attitudes and behaviour contribute significantly to their outstanding achievement. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles and show an excellent understanding of the importance of healthy eating, taking regular exercise and keeping safe. Members of the school council take their responsibilities seriously and have contributed to improving outdoor playground equipment. Pupils contribute well to the wider community by raising money for charities such as Scottish International Relief. Pupils are extremely well prepared for the future because, by the time they leave, they have acquired very good literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. In addition to these, their personal and social skills are exceptionally well developed.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the Nursery with skill levels below that expected at this stage. A significant number have limited language and social skills. There have been considerable improvements to the Foundation Stage since the last inspection. Provision in this area is good. The accommodation has been modified effectively for a Foundation Stage curriculum and children are provided with a wider range of learning opportunities. Effective teaching and an interesting curriculum enable children to make good progress in all areas of learning. Teachers and teaching assistants provide an effective blend of direct teaching and allowing children to explore and work independently. Links between the areas of learning are not as well developed as the links between subjects in Years 1 to 6. Role-play opportunities are not always linked to the current topic or theme and this can reduce children's opportunities to be creative. By the end of Reception, children have acquired expected levels of knowledge and skills, which prepare them well for the next stage of learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Strengthen the links between the areas of learning in the Foundation Stage and increase opportunities for creative role-play.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

17 December 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Blessed Robert Widmerpool Catholic Primary and Nursery, Clifton, Nottingham NG11 9BH

Thank you so much for welcoming me into your school and showing me your work. I enjoyed my visit and would like to tell you what I have found. Blessed Robert Widmerpool is an outstanding school and one you can be very proud of.

These things are strengths of the school:

- You thoroughly enjoy school and take part in activities with enthusiasm.
- The school is a very friendly, caring and pleasant place to be.
- Behaviour is outstanding in lessons and around the school.
- Children in Nursery and Reception get off to a good start.
- Teaching is outstanding, which is why you make such exceptional progress.
- Standards are high in English, mathematics and science by the end of year 6.
- You show an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles and keeping safe.
- An outstanding range of learning activities are provided for you, including clubs and visits.
- Displays of your art, models, writing and other work are very impressive.
- The school is exceptionally well led and managed by the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other senior staff.
- You show considerable care and respect for other pupils and adults.
- Staff take excellent care of you and give you outstanding support.
- Your parents are very pleased with the care and education provided.

There is just one area that the school could work on to make it even better:

- Teachers in Nursery and Reception could provide more opportunities for role-play related to your topics.

Finally, thank you once again for all your help. I wish you all the best for the future.

With kind regards

Derek Watts

Lead inspector