

# St Brigid's Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	104474
<b>Local authority</b>	Knowsley
<b>Inspection number</b>	377087
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 March 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Barbara Flitcroft

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	176
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Chris O'Connor
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rachael Tyler
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 October 2008
<b>School address</b>	Waterpark Drive Stockbridge Village Liverpool L28 7RE
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## Introduction

Inspection team

Barbara Flitcroft  
Chris Maloney

Additional inspector  
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspection team observed teaching and learning in 13 lessons taught by nine teachers, as well as visiting sessions to observe the teaching of the sounds that letters make (phonics) and reading. Inspectors held meetings with some parents and carers, members of the governing body, staff, and groups of pupils. Inspectors took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding practices, its self-evaluation and development planning. Inspectors took account of the views of parents and carers in 74 returned questionnaires.

## Information about the school

The school is slightly smaller than an average-sized primary school. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. A small minority of pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is above average. A very high proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals.

The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for attainment and progress. It has achieved International School status and Healthy School status. The school operates a breakfast club.

The school became part of a hard federation with a neighbouring Catholic primary school in September 2009. Currently, the headteacher of St Brigid's is also the executive headteacher of the other school in the federation.

**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

<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

### Key Findings

- This is a good school where pupils achieve well from their very low starting points. They make good, and sometimes outstanding, progress across the curriculum, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics. This is because senior leaders have effectively given high priority to improving the quality of teaching and pupils' learning in English and mathematics. The school is not outstanding because teaching is not outstanding overall and more-able pupils do not consistently make good progress.
- Pupils are keen and enthusiastic to learn. They feel safe and well cared for due to the exceptional quality of relationships with adults in school. Pupils' behaviour and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. The vast majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire, and those who talked to inspectors, confirm these positive views and engage well with the school.
- The quality of teaching is good. The best lessons are fast-paced with much interaction from pupils. In a few lessons that are only satisfactory the pace slows due to activities not being precisely matched to the needs of the pupils, especially the more-able pupils.
- Leadership and management are good. Key to the school's success is the fact that it is a cohesive, focused, hard-working and well-led community. The dynamic partnership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and this has impacted positively on the school's performance. However, some leaders, including the governing body, who are very supportive and ambitious, do not have enough involvement in monitoring and evaluating the school's work, relying too heavily on obtaining this information from the headteacher. The effective management of teaching has led to improvements since the previous inspection.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement, especially for more-able pupils, throughout school by:
  - further improving the quality of teaching so that it is always at least good or better
  - ensuring that learning activities are always closely matched to the pupils' learning needs
  - ensuring that teachers make consistent and judicious use of continuous assessment, including marking, to provide verbal and written feedback to help pupils further improve their work
  - embedding the improved system for tracking the progress of pupils so that this information can be used effectively by all staff to aid pupils' learning and accelerate progress.
  
- Strengthen the monitoring and evaluating of leaders and managers at all levels, including governors, so that they produce and implement detailed action plans which contain precise, measurable outcomes for pupils in order to fully evaluate the impact of their work.

## Main Report

### Achievement of pupils

When children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage their skills and abilities are well-below age-related expectations in all areas except for physical development. Well-established links with pre-school settings and with parents and carers enable children to settle happily, enjoy school and benefit from opportunities to access the well organised breakfast club and the family learning sessions. In this early stage of their learning high priority is rightly given to developing an understanding of letter names, the sounds they make and numbers. Furthermore, well planned opportunities to learn through play help the children to make good progress in all areas of learning in the well organised indoor area and in the recently developed outdoor area. This overcomes the limitations resulting from the lack of adequate covered space outdoors. On entry to Year 1 children's skills are still below the level typically expected; however, they have made good progress during their first year at school. Pupils' attainment is broadly average in reading and mathematics by the end of Year 2 and in writing slightly below this, but this is now improving due to the promotion of writing across the curriculum.

Lesson observations, previous test results, hearing pupils read and scrutiny of pupils' work show that attainment in reading and writing is average by the end of Year 6 and slightly above average in mathematics. Pupils, especially the more able, are not consistently catered for in all year groups and activities do not always match their needs. Consequently, they do not consistently make good progress. Disabled pupils

and those with special educational needs are provided with good levels of care and academic support by all teachers and a team of dedicated teaching assistants. Individual learning programmes and constant review of their learning needs narrow the gaps in learning successfully and enable them to make the same good progress as others in the school. Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals also make good progress and narrow the gap with the average for all pupils nationally. The vast majority of parents and carers agree with the findings of the inspection and are pleased with their children's achievement.

### **Quality of teaching**

In the vast majority of the lessons seen pupils were enthusiastic, eager to learn and their behaviour was good. They were keen to join in discussions and activities, particularly when learning had an exciting, imaginative or practical focus. At these times they were fully engrossed and their learning was accelerated at a good, and occasionally outstanding, pace. In a Key Stage 2 English lesson pupils learnt at a rapid pace how to use historical language in dialogue. They were successfully challenged to use thinking and reasoning skills to describe and write dialogue spoken by characters from stories they had read. They used role play with high-quality communication skills to share their ideas.

The quality of teaching has a positive impact on pupils' good behaviour and achievement. Teaching assistants provide an effective layer of extra support, particularly for those pupils who find learning difficult. Staff know when to intervene and how to interact with pupils to enhance their learning because exceptionally positive relationships between adults and pupils are fully established and this is one of the school's many strengths. Pupils have regular opportunities to discuss and share their ideas with their classmates and to check each other's understanding. The best marking informs pupils accurately how to improve their work. The best planning and teaching seen in a mathematics lesson had an outstanding impact on the pupils' progress. The teacher's very clear explanations and accurate knowledge of the abilities of each pupil led to all pupils making rapid progress in their work with fractions. The quality of teaching is good rather than outstanding because, in some lessons, pupils' concentration is lost when the pace slows due to the lack of sufficient pace or challenge, especially for the more able, in the planned activities. There is some inconsistency across the classes in the quality of teaching. This includes the use of focused questions and using ongoing assessment in the lesson to provide verbal feedback, and targets in teachers' marking to inform pupils of the next steps in their learning.

The planned curriculum is taught well. Teachers enable pupils to practise and develop their numeracy and literacy skills in meaningful contexts across the curriculum. Teachers ensure pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is accelerated effectively through thought-provoking assemblies, curriculum topic work, art and music lessons, where pupils learn to appreciate the feelings and talents of others, and to celebrate differences. This, together with their good achievement, means that they are well prepared for the next stage in their education. Most of the parents and carers who spoke to the inspectors and those who responded to the inspection questionnaires are pleased with the quality of teaching the school provides.

## **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Pupils enjoy school, as reflected in the increasing attendance figures, now broadly average due to school's extensive work with pupils and families. Exceptionally strong relationships promoted by all adults contribute well to pupils' personal development and academic progress. Pupils respect and value one another's differences due to good spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision. There have been no racial incidents or exclusions. Behaviour in the breakfast club and around the school is good, with outstanding behaviour in the best lessons. Pupils get on very well with one another and they know which values they want to live by. The school is a racially harmonious community where the uniqueness of each child is valued. The school does not tolerate bullying in any form. Most parents and carers feel that behaviour is good at the school. Pupils are confident that, on the rare occasions when bullying occurs, it is swiftly dealt with by school staff. Pupils are aware of how to make healthy lifestyle choices and how to keep themselves safe, including online safety, due to the skilled teaching and guidance about these issues. Pupils' safety is given a high priority by school leaders.

Pupils speak highly of the work of the learning mentor in supporting their personal development well and especially for helping pupils with their social skills, anger management and emotional well-being.

## **Leadership and management**

The headteacher, very ably supported by the deputy, has been instrumental in bringing about improvement and consistently communicating high expectations. She has galvanised the support of the staff and governors in sharing her ambition and drive to move this school forward. The recently formed governing body of this hard federation has been working hard to support key leaders in the school. They are eager and enthusiastic to develop their work further. Professional development opportunities are well focused on school improvement; however, some improvement plans lack measurable outcomes. All safeguarding requirements are met. The school promotes equality and tackles discrimination effectively.

Key leaders model good practice and have been successful in their planned actions so far to raise attainment and accelerate progress. As a result, teaching is mainly good with some outstanding practice. Gains in pupils' achievement have consolidated previously good performance. Leaders have introduced a new system for tracking the progress of pupils and identifying those making less than expected progress. At present, only school leaders can access the data and share findings with teachers. However, all teachers need access to it in order to put in place the best support for pupils.

The curriculum is well organised and enhanced by the introduction of the international primary curriculum. It is broad and balanced and meets the needs of pupils well. Pupils speak enthusiastically of visits, visitors, residential trips and clubs which enrich the imaginative opportunities on offer for all groups of pupils including those with special educational needs or disabilities. Spiritual, moral, social and

cultural development is well promoted throughout the school, providing good opportunities for reflection, personal development and enjoyment in learning.

The school works exceptionally well with parents and carers. The learning mentor, parent mentor and coordinator for pupils with special education needs play significant roles in meeting the needs of pupils and their families. Parents and carers speak highly of the excellent opportunities provided by school for developing their skills in supporting the learning of their children at home. The school's regular newsletters and texts provide excellent lines of communication on a range of issues. School also has strong partnerships with outside agencies to acquire the best expertise and support for pupils and their families. One appreciative parent, typical of many, told inspectors, 'This school is like my extended family'. The school provides a valuable service to the local community, encouraging cohesion through its on-site facilities and playing a pivotal role in the life of the parish.

Considering the good improvements made since its previous inspection, along with its other strengths, the school has good capacity to improve.



## 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	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**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.**



15 March 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Brigid's Catholic Primary School, Liverpool, L28 7RE**

I shall remember for a long time the warmth of your welcome when inspectors visited your school. We found that you believe your school is a good school with good teaching and an interesting curriculum which helps you to make good progress...and you are correct!

Inspectors were really impressed with your good manners and behaviour which we found outstanding in some lessons. Your headteacher and the adults in school are so proud of you because they value each one of you. Your relationship with the adults in school is exceptional.

We have asked your school leaders and governors to make your school even better by working together on plans to further improve your school and by helping you to make more rapid progress. We would like them to closely check and plan work to quickly take you to the next steps in your learning, particularly for those of you who work quickly. We have also asked teachers to make sure you know how to improve your work through detailed marking comments. Please make sure you read these and act on them.

Your school has worked hard to encourage you to attend school more frequently and arrive on time. You have done this. Now all of you must try to keep up being in school on time, every day of term.

With your enthusiasm to do well and your super attitudes to school life, I know you will be able to achieve your challenges.

With very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Barbara Flitcroft  
Lead inspector

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