

St Christopher's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133615
Local Authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	360545
Inspection dates	20–21 October 2010
Reporting inspector	Clare Henderson

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 of pupils on the school roll	340
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Fran Stoddart
Headteacher	Mrs Collette Denby
Date of previous school inspection	19 September 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 16 lessons, taught by 16 teachers. The inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and pupils, observed the school's work and looked at documents relating to safeguarding, pupils' progress and attainment, the curriculum, the school's development plan and the way in which the school evaluates its own performance. The views of parents and carers, through 53 returned inspection questionnaires, and the views of staff and pupils were analysed.

- The progress pupils make from Years 1 to 6 in English and mathematics.
- The quality of teaching and assessment to enable all pupils, including those identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities or the more able, to achieve their full potential.
- The quality of curriculum provision and the impact it has on pupils' achievement and enjoyment of school.
- The effectiveness of leaders and managers in addressing the issues raised at the last inspection and the school's capacity to improve further.

Information about the school

This school is larger than others of its type. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for a free school meal is high. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. Most pupils are White British. A few pupils are from minority ethnic groups. The school has gained Activemark, Artsmark Gold, International Schools and Healthy School's status. The headteacher took up her position this term.

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

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. It is extremely welcoming and held in high regard within the local community. Furthermore, pupils say it is 'a fun place to learn'. This is because the good care, guidance and support provided enables all pupils, and in particular those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and others whose circumstances make them vulnerable, to thrive personally, to feel safe and well looked after. Pupils make a good contribution to their school and community and show a good understanding of how to lead a healthy and safe lifestyle.

When children join the school, their starting points are typically well below that expected for their age. By the time they leave Year 6, pupils' attainment is broadly average. This indicates good progress through the Nursery and Reception classes and good progress by the end of Key Stage 2. A good partnership between home and school contributes effectively to pupils' good behaviour. However, although the rate of pupils' attendance has improved rapidly this term, it remains low overall. This is because a few pupils are persistently absent and their absence impacts negatively on the rates of overall attendance.

Pupils are taught well and generally enjoy their learning. However, staff do not consistently use assessment information well enough to plan and set work in lessons which challenges and enables all pupils to achieve their full potential in English and mathematics. Neither are pupils sufficiently involved in evaluating and improving their own learning. The good quality curriculum with a highly creative focus is providing pupils with some memorable experiences and it is enhanced by a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development overall is good. Cultural development is not as strong as the other aspects because pupils have limited opportunities to engage with pupils from the range of religious, ethnic and cultural backgrounds that exists within the United Kingdom.

The school has a good capacity to continue to improve. Senior leaders and the governing body have ensured good improvement since the last inspection. Pupils' attainment has steadily improved and their safety is paramount. Leaders and managers are very clear about the school's effectiveness through perceptive self-evaluation and as a result of rigorous checks on pupils' outcomes and the quality of provision.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate rates of pupils' progress and raise attainment in English and mathematics by:
 - ensuring staff consistently use assessment information to plan and set work which challenges and enables all pupils to achieve their full potential

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- enabling pupils to become more involved in evaluating and improving their own learning
- working with pupils, parents and carers to raise rates of pupils' attendance and
- reduce the number of pupils who are persistently absent.
- Enhance the promotion of community cohesion by providing pupils with more opportunities to engage with pupils from different religious, ethnic and cultural backgrounds in the United Kingdom.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Key to pupils' good achievement and enjoyment of learning is their enthusiasm to join in discussions and activities particularly when learning has a creative or practical focus. At these times, pupils are fully engaged in learning and their behaviour is good. On occasion when learning is overly dependent on the teachers' contributions or pupils are insufficiently involved in evaluating and improving their own learning, their concentration slips and progress is not as rapid as might otherwise be expected.

Pupils' keenness to learn and their overall good progress mean that, by Year 6, all groups of pupils attain average standards in English and mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the more vulnerable thrive both academically and personally because work with specialist support staff and teaching assistants develops their self-esteem effectively and has a positive impact on their learning.

Pupils have a well-developed understanding of the need to lead healthy and safe lives. Most eat sensibly in school and take an active part in the many clubs and extra-curricular activities on offer. They contribute effectively to local and global communities through initiatives such as fairtrade and raising funds for international charities. The very active school council has taken good steps to improve healthy eating at lunchtime and has introduced exercise trails to keep their classmates active at play. The skills that pupils develop and use in lessons, such as teamwork, listening and negotiation, all provide good evidence of the effort the school takes to prepare pupils for life. However, because attendance rates are low a few pupils miss out on this preparation and skills for their future lives are adequate rather than good. Pupils are provided with good opportunities to learn about differences in cultures and religious beliefs, to learn to make responsible choices and reflect on right and wrong actions. Even so, they have too few opportunities to engage with those from different religious, ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Relationships between pupils and adults are extremely positive. Good humour and skilful questioning encourages teamwork and independent thinking. Such good quality teaching contributes to pupils' good progress in English and mathematics. Teachers and other adults who support learning and pupils' personal development use resources imaginatively and effectively, and employ information and communication technology well to inspire pupils' interest and to challenge their thinking. On those few occasions where teaching is less than good, teachers do not use assessment information well enough to set work which is sufficiently challenging or matched to pupils' individual learning needs. Consequently, the pace of progress of some pupils slows. Teaching further enhances learning by the many positive comments made by teachers in their marking. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to evaluate or improve their own learning.

The good curriculum meets pupils' needs and succeeds very effectively in enabling pupils to apply and practise their basic skills across a range of subjects. A rich range of visits and visitors enhances pupils' learning. Lots of out-of-class activities cover a broad spectrum of pupils' interests. Pupils and their families receive good care, support and guidance from staff including the highly effective learning mentors who ensure specialist help is available when needed. The school has strenuous strategies to improve attendance, including addressing the absence of the few pupils who are persistently absent which have yet to fully impact. Pupils who miss school through absence are given individual support on their

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return to enable them to make up what they have missed. This close attention paid by staff contributes well to pupils' good academic progress. Arrangements to prepare pupils for high school are well-planned and help to ensure a smooth transition to their next stage of education.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The effective senior leadership team, well led by the highly experienced headteacher, has been successful in leading improvements in teaching and learning and in instilling high morale and ambition for the school among staff and pupils. As a result the school is a harmonious and inclusive community in which equality of opportunity is promoted well, exemplified by the full participation in school life of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the more vulnerable. Harassment of any form is not tolerated. Governance is effective, with the governing body ensuring that good safeguarding procedures are embedded throughout the school. Governors provide good support and challenge to the school's work. Leaders and managers have the confidence of parents and carers and work well with them to enable pupils to be effectively supported in their learning at home. Strong partnerships with a good range of outside providers and support services contribute effectively to pupils' learning and well-being. Leaders and managers understand that, for the impact of their work to be judged outstanding, they have even more to do to improve attendance rates, pupils' attainment and to build on strengths in the school and local community that have been extended globally but not yet in detail in the United Kingdom. Secure improvements since the last inspection, pupils' current outcomes and the quality of provision all indicate that value for money is good.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children are happy and secure within this active environment. As a result of good leadership and management, children make good progress. Adults provide children with effective support to help them learn and develop because they have a good knowledge of their individual needs. They use their observations and assessments of children's work and play to plan enticing tasks which promote well their development in all areas of learning. Children mostly have good opportunities to learn through an appropriate diet of activities they have chosen for themselves and by adults. On occasion activities are overall adult directed which at times inhibits pupils' independence. A good range of opportunities is provided, both indoors and outside. The good quality outdoor areas develop children's physical, social and imaginative skills well.

Adults are particularly adept at modelling language which, together with the effective teaching of letters and sounds, lays the foundation for the confidence with which Reception Year children talk about their work and make good progress in reading and writing. Within the well planned learning environment children learn to take turns, listen and cooperate. Welfare requirements are met and children know how to be healthy and to stay safe. Good liaison with parents and carers is well established to ensure ease of transition and support for children's learning.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

About 15 per cent of parents and carers completed the questionnaires. Of these the vast majority were highly positive in their responses. They were particularly pleased with how the school keeps their children safe and healthy and feel that teaching is good. A few felt that the school does not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour, does not meet their child's particular needs, take account of their views, inform them of how well children are progressing in their learning, prepare children well enough for the future, and that leadership and management could be better. Inspectors followed these issues up and found that the needs of all pupils are considered carefully and are managed well. The learning needs of each child are considered and reported regularly to parents. However, in a few lessons, tasks are not always planned well enough to allow all pupils to achieve their full potential and, at times, pupils are not fully involved in improving their own learning. The quality of leadership and management is good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Christopher's Catholic Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 53 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 340 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	37	70	15	28	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	37	70	16	30	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	27	51	22	42	2	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	36	68	14	26	2	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	41	77	12	23	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	29	55	21	40	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	34	64	19	36	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	27	51	22	42	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	32	60	18	34	2	4	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	22	42	23	43	5	9	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	23	43	24	45	3	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	33	62	19	36	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	38	72	11	21	3	6	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

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.



22 October 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Christopher's Catholic Primary School, Liverpool, L24 0SN

I would like to thank you for the help you gave the inspectors when we inspected your school. We especially enjoyed talking to you.

Now I would like to share with you what the inspection found out about your school. It is a good school. These are some of the best things about it.

- Nursery and Reception children have lots of fun and enjoy learning through play.
- Adults take good care of you and you told us that you feel safe. You have a good knowledge of how to lead a healthy life.
- You make good progress and reach average standards in English and mathematics by the time you leave Year 6.
- You enjoy having responsibilities in school and care for one another and the needs of others well.
- The school provides some exciting things for you to do and learn and your behaviour is good.
- Your headteacher, other senior leaders and members of the governing body are good managers.

To make the school even better and make your attainment even higher, I have asked the school to:

- check that the work you are given in each class always challenges you to reach your full potential and enables you to become more involved in evaluating and improving your own learning
- work with you and your parents and carers to improve your rates of attendance
- provide more opportunities for you to meet with pupils from different religious, ethnic and cultural backgrounds in the United Kingdom.

I hope you will play your part by continuing to work hard, attend well and do your best to help your school become even better.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Clare Henderson

Lead Inspector

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