

St Oswald's Catholic Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104658
Local Authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	355611
Inspection dates	6–7 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	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	288
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Fr Mark Madden
Headteacher	Mrs Mary Walsh
Date of previous school inspection	21 May 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 14 lessons taught by 13 different 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 108 returned inspection questionnaires, and the responses of staff and pupils were analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- Whether all pupils and, in particular, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve their full potential in mathematics.
- The effectiveness of assessment and tracking systems in ensuring all pupils make, as the school indicates, good progress in English and mathematics.
- The impact of pupils' 'appreciation of cultural diversity' on their attitudes to cultural differences.
- Whether leaders and managers, at all levels, including members of the governing body, provide, as the school indicates, an outstanding capacity for further improvement.

Information about the school

This school is larger than the average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. Most pupils are of White British heritage; a small minority are from minority ethnic groups. A few pupils are at an early stage of learning to speak English. The school has gained International Schools and National Healthy School status, Artsmark, Activemark and the Eco Silver awards. The acting headteacher and the acting deputy headteacher, having previously been the deputy headteacher and a senior teacher respectively, took up their present roles in September 2010.

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 welcoming, highly inclusive and the hub of its local community. Central to its success are pupils' very positive attitudes to learning and their outstanding behaviour. These are significant factors in the good progress all pupils make to attain above average standards of attainment in English and mathematics by the time they leave in Year 6. Furthermore, pupils make an outstanding contribution to their school and wider community and show an outstanding understanding of what is needed to lead healthy and safe lifestyles. All staff are very attentive to pupils' personal needs and contribute to the outstanding care, guidance and support provided. As a result all pupils and, in particular, those whose circumstances make them the most vulnerable and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities or are at an early stage of learning to speak English, enjoy very high levels of self-esteem and confidence.

An excellent partnership between home and school, coupled with pupils' above average attendance rates, contribute well to their enjoyment of school. Comments such as, 'My child has always been supported and encouraged to develop into a caring and considerate young person.' reflect the very positive views about the school of most parents and carers.

The quality of teaching is good and, in a small minority of lessons, outstanding. However, when staff plan lessons, they do not all consistently make the best use of previously gathered assessment and tracking information to ensure tasks set meet and extend pupils' individual learning needs. The good quality curriculum engages pupils' interest well and is enhanced by a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.

The school is a vibrant community which provides excellent value for money. It knows its purpose and how to aspire to further successes well because its self-evaluation is rigorous and accurate. However, senior leaders are relatively new to their roles and have not had time to show the full impact of their work on pupils' achievement. Members of the governing body support the school well, particularly in ensuring that safeguarding of pupils is good. Outstanding community cohesion ensures that all pupils are given many opportunities to succeed. This, coupled with rising standards of attainment, demonstrates the school's good capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' achievement to outstanding by:
 - ensuring all staff consistently make the best use of assessment and tracking information to ensure tasks set in lessons meet and extend pupils' individual learning needs.

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Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Pupils' achievement is good because they concentrate well and work hard in all lessons. Pupils enjoy learning particularly when lessons involve drama or role play. For instance, in a Year 4 history lesson, pupils enjoyed being challenged to use the skill of engaging an audience, which they had previously learnt in an English lesson, to act out what life was like in the Roman army. They work well, taking turns and listening attentively to each other's answers. Discussion with pupils and scrutiny of their books show that overall progress, from a broadly average starting point when they begin Year 3, is good throughout the school. However, in a few lessons, pupils' individual learning needs are not consistently met and, at these times, progress is not as rapid as it could be. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those at an early stage of learning to speak English make good progress. Their work with specialist support staff and in small groups with teaching assistant support develops their self-esteem effectively and has a positive impact on their learning.

Pupils develop an excellent understanding of safety. They say peer advocates are an excellent source for advice if needed and that bullying and racism are given, 'zero tolerance in our school'. Pupils have an excellent understanding of why they need to lead a healthy lifestyle. 'You need calcium, from drinking milk, to keep your bones strong.' they explain confidently. Pupils say they value the responsibilities they have to contribute to the school such as by becoming prefects or members of the school council. Such experiences enable them to develop good workplace skills and prepare them well for the future. Meaningful assemblies accelerate pupils' understanding and reflection on right and wrong actions. Pupils meet children from different religious and ethnic backgrounds on a daily basis in their class groups; through gaining the International Schools status, pupils engage regularly with those from different religious, ethnic and cultural backgrounds in the wider world. Similarly, through links with the local school for the blind, they become extremely caring and sensitive to the needs of other pupils.

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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	2
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	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

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?

Teachers and support staff use questions skilfully to enable pupils to work things out for themselves and to encourage teamwork and independent thinking. Such good quality teaching has contributed to pupils' consistently above average, and in some years high, attainment in English. A stronger focus on extending pupils' calculation and problem solving skills has paid off and mathematics attainment is above average for all groups of pupils. Pupils' enthusiasm for learning is further enhanced by the many positive comments made by teachers in their marking; the quality of marking is good. Presentation of pupils' work is excellent.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and provides, for instance, pupils from minority ethnic groups with good opportunities to share information about their culture with classmates. The strong focus the school places on making links across subjects is helping pupils to apply their literacy and numeracy knowledge and skills increasingly well. Pupils' enjoyment is enhanced further by an excellent range of extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors. Such opportunities enable them to develop their talents well.

Pastoral care for all pupils and their families is given a high priority. Most parents and carers understandably speak positively about the outstanding care and support their children receive from all adults, and how this contributes well to their children's excellent personal development. Well thought out resources include a quiet room where pupil massage is provided by qualified staff. Excellent work with external agencies takes place

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ensuring, for example, that those pupils at an early stage of learning to speak English are enabled to make good progress in their learning. 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	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The recently appointed senior leaders are rapidly adjusting to their new roles. Team work and dedication from all staff and a shared vision provide good leadership and a clear educational direction and ambition to improve. Senior leaders have successfully maintained the culture established in the school of care and ensuring equal opportunities for all. This is evident, for instance, in pupils narrowing the gap in attainment in English and mathematics. The governing body provides good leadership and makes sure that all statutory requirements are met. It ensures that all safeguarding requirements are fully met and that pupils' safety has a high profile in all of the school's work. The management and monitoring of teaching are shared by all staff; the school knows itself well and has a clear picture of how it can improve further. Partnerships with others are outstanding, particularly in promoting pupils' social and emotional development. The quality of community cohesion is outstanding. Pupils are ambassadors for this as they confidently explain about the benefits gained from the many links they have made with pupils within the United Kingdom and the wider world.

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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	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
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	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Views of parents and carers

Most parents and carers responding to the questionnaire are happy with all aspects of the school's work and its effectiveness. Parents and carers clearly appreciate the outstanding quality of relationships and care. They all agree that the school keeps children safe and that their children enjoy school. A tiny minority felt that: the school does not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour; teaching is not good; the school does not meet their child's particular needs or take account of their views; 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 very well. However, in a small minority of lessons, tasks are not always planned well enough to allow all pupils to achieve their full potential. The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement is good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Oswald's Catholic Junior 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 108 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 288 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	63	58	44	41	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	73	68	35	32	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	58	54	46	43	3	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	56	52	47	44	4	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	64	59	42	39	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	51	47	52	48	4	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	54	50	49	45	3	3	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)	52	48	50	46	2	2	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	54	50	52	48	2	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	55	51	48	44	3	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	42	39	59	55	4	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	57	53	47	44	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	60	56	47	44	1	1	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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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.



8 October 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Oswald's Catholic Junior School, Liverpool L13 5TE

I would like to thank you for the help you gave to the team when we inspected your school. We especially enjoyed chatting to some of you at lunchtime. Now I would like to share with you what the inspection team found out about your school. It is a good school. These are some of the best things about it.

- You make good progress and reach above average attainment levels in English and mathematics by the time you leave Year 6.
- All adults take outstanding care of you, and you told us that you feel very safe and that adults are always there to listen and help you if a problem arises in school.
- You have an outstanding knowledge of how to lead a healthy and safe life.
- You make an outstanding contribution to your school and the wider community.
- You have an excellent knowledge and respect for pupils from other religions and cultures.
- Your behaviour is outstanding and your attendance rates are above average.

The school provides some exciting things for you to do and learn such as chess and playing a musical instrument. To make the school even better, I have asked teachers to:

- check that each one of you is given work in lessons which will enable you to achieve as well as you can and to see that you make enough progress in each class.

I hope you will play your part by continuing to work hard and do your best to help St Oswald's become an even better school.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Clare Henderson

Lead inspector

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