

St Aloysius Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131332
Local Authority	Knowsley
Inspection number	373149
Inspection dates	27–28 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Melvyn Hemmings

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	299
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Fr John Ealey
Headteacher	Mrs Belinda Basnett
Date of previous school inspection	19 June 2008
School address	Twig Lane Huyton-With-Roby, Liverpool Merseyside L36 2LF
Telephone number	0151 477 8110
Fax number	0151 477 8111
Email address	belinda.basnett@knowsley.gov.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors who visited 18 lessons or parts of lessons. The inspectors observed 11 teachers and held discussions with members of the governing body, staff, parents and carers, groups of pupils and officers from the local authority. They observed the school's work, and looked at school policies, minutes of meetings of the governing body, assessment information and curriculum planning. In addition, 38 responses to parents' and carers' questionnaires were received and analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The impact of strategies put into place to improve pupils' mathematical calculation skills.
- The extent to which the curriculum has been adapted to meet the needs of individual pupils.
- How successfully leaders are working to raise attendance.
- How effectively children's personal, social and emotional development is promoted in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Information about the school

St Aloysius is larger than the average sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average, as is that of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The executive headteacher oversees two schools and divides her time between them. The school has gained a variety of awards including the International School's Award, Artsmark Gold and the Activemark. It is also an accredited Healthy School.

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

St Aloysius is a good school. It has many strengths and several outstanding features. These include engagement with parents and carers, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, the extent to which pupils feel safe and the way in which they are adopting a healthy lifestyle.

The inspirational leadership of the executive headteacher, in partnership with the perceptive associate headteacher, has been the key to the school's success. They provide educational direction that is clearly focused on driving the school forward. As a result, the curriculum has been successfully adapted so it more closely meets individual pupil's needs, attainment is rising and attendance is improving. Senior leaders and the governing body work well as a team to ensure the smooth running of the school when the executive headteacher is attending to her duties in the other school. Self-evaluation is accurate and provides a clear picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Leaders use this information to put plans into place to bring about improvement. These are not always linked closely enough to their impact on pupil outcomes and, at times, there is a lack of rigour in measuring the progress towards their achievement. Leaders are highly committed to working in partnership and this makes an excellent contribution to pupils' learning and well-being. The track record of leaders in making and sustaining improvements shows that the capacity for taking the school forward is good.

The effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding and enables children to make an exceptional start to their education. In Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils make good progress, which enables them to reach broadly average standards in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. Writing is a weaker aspect of pupils' performance in English. This stems from a lack of an extensive vocabulary, which limits their use of imaginative and interesting language to engage the reader. Action taken to improve pupils' mathematical calculation skills has developed their ability to use different methods to solve problems. Nevertheless, pupils lack confidence in choosing for themselves the most appropriate method to use and lack accuracy in applying them.

The school is a stimulating and friendly setting in which to learn. Pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to learning. They make an excellent contribution to the school and wider community, with pupils having a strong voice in their learning and well-being. Although teaching has many strengths, there are times when teachers do not make it clear to pupils their next specific steps in learning. Parents and carers are appreciative of the care taken of their children.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in English and mathematics to above the national average by:

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- extending pupils' vocabulary so they can use imaginative and interesting language in their writing that engages the reader
 - improving pupils' skills in independently using different calculation methods accurately to solve number problems
 - ensuring teachers always make clear to pupils their next specific steps in learning.
- Strengthen leadership and management by ensuring plans for improvement are always closely linked to pupils' outcomes and that progress towards their achievement is checked rigorously.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils achieve well from their skill levels on entering school in the Early Years Foundation Stage, which are well below those typical for their age. Their enthusiasm for learning contributes positively to the good progress they make. Pupils take pleasure in their activities and are keen to do well. They particularly enjoy working collaboratively to solve practical problems. This was evident in a science lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4 when they were investigating if people with bigger feet jumped the furthest.

Pupils are secure readers and enjoy books. Their vocabulary is not extensive and this limits their ability to use imaginative language in their writing to capture and maintain the reader's interest. They lack proficiency in selecting for themselves and applying accurately the most suitable method of calculation to solve mathematical problems. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make the same progress as other pupils, because their individual needs are identified early and extra support provided to ensure they are fully met. There is no significant difference between the achievement or the learning of different groups.

Pupils are very proud and are committed to their school community. They enthusiastically take on responsibilities to improve the school, such as being a member of the school council. Their involvement in the wider community is substantial and they are very actively involved in fundraising for local and national charities. Pupils say they feel safe in school at all times and have an excellent understanding of what might present an unsafe situation.

They talk very knowledgeably about how to live a healthy lifestyle, such as by eating a healthy diet and taking regular exercise. Pupils are open to new ideas, appreciate cultural diversity and do not tolerate any form of racism. They resolve conflict situations exceptionally well and have a very good insight into the rights of others. Their improving attendance and broadly average attainment means pupils are soundly prepared for their future lives.

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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	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
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	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
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 have secure subject knowledge and are able to explain new ideas clearly and confidently. They manage lessons well so that pupils are engaged in their work and little time is lost. Strong emphasis is placed on pupils being actively involved in lessons. This was observed when pupils in Years 5 and 6 were interviewing sports professionals, including a Premier League football referee, to find out about their working life. Teachers use assessment information effectively to set work that matches the needs of different groups. Marking and discussion between staff and pupils ensure that pupils understand in broad terms how to improve their work. It is not as effective in indicating the precise next steps in learning. Teaching assistants are deployed well to support all pupils, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Pupils commented that changes to the curriculum have made it more interesting and enjoyable. Leaders have adopted the International Primary Curriculum which emphasises a skills based approach to developing pupils' academic and creative talents. Links between subjects have been strengthened and pupils are provided with memorable experiences, particularly in art, the performing arts and physical education. This has been recognised by the school gaining Artsmark Gold and the Activemark. The curriculum is extended by extra-curricular activities that are attended well and by opportunities to visit places of educational interest, such as the Tate Liverpool. The way the curriculum has been adapted to better meet the needs of pupils is contributing positively to the improved progress that

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pupils make, but has not had enough time to impact fully on attainment at the end of Year 6.

All staff are firmly committed to the care and welfare of pupils. The school's work in supporting the learning, development and well-being of individual pupils who may face challenging circumstances, is deeply embedded at all levels. Established links with outside agencies, including the school's educational psychologist and healthcare professionals, ensure extra support for individual pupils is available when required. Transition arrangements are good, particularly between Reception and Year 1, which contributes effectively to pupils' progress and achievement. Leaders have worked successfully to raise attendance and it continues to improve.

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?

Senior leaders successfully inspire those involved in school life to share a common sense of purpose in meeting ambitious targets set for all pupils. As a result, morale is high amongst all staff. The procedures for managing the performance of staff and for their professional development are used well to support pupils' learning. Governance is good. The governing body is supportive of the school and influential in shaping its direction. Planning for improvement is not always effectively linked to pupils' outcomes, which makes it difficult to measure its success in promoting their learning and development.

The promotion of equality of opportunity is good and the school has effective procedures for tackling any form of discrimination. As a result, pupils' outcomes are positive and any unevenness between different groups is minimal. There is a thorough awareness of safeguarding issues amongst all members of the governing body and staff. Training for safeguarding is regular and of high quality, particularly in child protection. The school is highly committed to working in partnership with others, including the North Huyton Learning Collaborative, and often takes a leading role in activities. As a result, pupils' learning and development are enhanced, for example, in the performing arts and sport, in ways that the school could not provide on its own.

Leaders promote community cohesion well. Pupils are encouraged to view their role as not only members of the school but to consider their role in the local, national and international communities. This has a beneficial impact on cohesion within the school, the local community and beyond. Excellent engagement with parents and carers ensure they are strongly involved in their children's learning and the work of the school. The parent and learning mentors makes a significant contribution in helping the school make effective relationships with hard to reach families.

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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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make exceptional progress because of the consistently high quality teaching they receive. Staff have a very good understanding of how children of this age learn and progress. As a result, they provide activities that are practical, stimulating and very effective in capturing and maintaining children's interest. Children's language development is effectively promoted by sessions that stress the importance of linking letters and sounds. A good example of this was observed in a lesson in Reception, in which children were challenged to work in pairs to create words that rhymed with 'shark'.

Strong emphasis is placed on children's personal, social and emotional development, as this is weak on entry to Nursery. Children are encouraged to make choices for themselves and this successfully develops their skills as independent learners. Social development is very effectively promoted through the organisation of the setting which enables Nursery and Reception class children to mix together throughout the day.

The curriculum provides rich and imaginative experiences that meet the needs of children very effectively. It is enriched by opportunities to explore the local environment and to go on visits, such as to Croxteth Hall to experience a woodland in winter. The organisation and use of the outdoor area to promote children's learning and development are outstanding. Of particular note are the areas for role play, such as the 'Tropical Beach' in which children were seen to be lost in a world of their own.

Outstanding leadership ensures that staff use ongoing assessments very effectively to plan activities to take forward the learning of individual children. Comprehensive policies and procedures ensure the welfare and safety of children. Parents and carers are kept very well informed about their children's progress, such as through their learning journals.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	1
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

Most of the parents and carers who returned questionnaires were positive about the school's work and the efforts of all staff. Two comments were typical, 'I am very happy with the school and the teachers will always go out of the way to help you', and, 'St Aloysius makes learning fun and exciting for my child, and a happy child means happy parents.' There was no significant trend of negative views. Inspection judgements support the positive views of parents and carers.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Aloysius 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 38 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 299 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	33	87	4	11	0	0	1	3
The school keeps my child safe	34	89	3	8	0	0	1	3
My school informs me about my child's progress	28	74	8	21	1	3	1	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	34	89	3	8	0	0	1	3
The teaching is good at this school	34	89	3	8	0	0	1	3
The school helps me to support my child's learning	29	76	7	18	1	3	1	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	30	79	7	18	0	0	1	3
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)	25	66	11	29	1	3	1	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	30	79	7	18	0	0	1	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	31	82	5	13	1	3	1	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	71	9	24	1	3	1	3
The school is led and managed effectively	32	84	4	11	1	3	1	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	34	89	3	8	0	0	1	3

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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see 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.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



29 June 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Aloysius Catholic Primary School, Huyton-With-Roby L36 2LF

Thank you for the friendly welcome you gave us when we inspected your school. We enjoyed meeting you and seeing the many interesting things you do.

The inspectors judge that your school is good and that:

- you make good progress and by the end of Year 6 attain average standards in English and mathematics
- you have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe and are adopting a healthy lifestyle in an outstanding manner
- the curriculum is helpfully extended by visits to places such as to the Tate Liverpool and Croxteth Hall
- staff make sure you are safe in school and on visits
- children in Nursery and Reception have a wonderful start to their education
- staff and the governing body are working hard to help you do even better.

This is what we have asked your school to do now:

- raise your attainment in English and mathematics, such as by extending your vocabulary, improving your mathematical calculation skills and ensuring teachers give you specific guidance about your next steps in learning
- make sure that plans for improvement are linked closely to your learning and development and are checked carefully to see if they are proving successful.

All of you are a credit to your school and can help it improve further by continuing to try your best in your activities.

Yours sincerely

Melvyn Hemmings

Lead inspector

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