

St Clare's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104648
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	373152
Inspection dates	3–4 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Peter Cox

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	215
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Fr Aidan Prescott
Headteacher	Kerry O'Sullivan
Date of previous school inspection	27 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Teaching and learning were observed in 14 lessons delivered by eight teachers. Meetings were held with pupils, staff, senior and middle leaders, representatives of the governing body including the chair and vice-chair and the School Improvement Partner. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of policies and other documents including: self-evaluation documents, governing body meeting minutes, current data on pupils' performance and safeguarding compliance. They undertook an analysis of 59 parents' and carers' responses to questionnaires and those of pupils and staff.

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

- The extent to which pupils make progress towards their targets and how successful they are in this, given their abilities when starting school.
- Whether there is sufficient challenge contained within the curriculum and lessons to meet the needs of pupils throughout the school, including the Early Years Foundation Stage, adequately.
- The effectiveness of leaders, managers and governors, including how well they know the school and what to do to secure further improvements.

Information about the school

St Clare's is an average-sized primary school with an equal number of boys and girls. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average representing almost half of those on roll. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well above the national average, although the proportion of those who speak English as an additional language is half that seen nationally. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with that found nationally, yet the number of pupils with a statement for their special educational needs is lower than average. The school has a range of national awards including Healthy School status. Since the previous inspection a new headteacher has been appointed and started at the beginning of the current academic year.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

St Clare's is a caring school where pupils' behaviour is good. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and contributes well to the personal development of pupils who show care for each other and the school as a community, one pupil describing it as 'a family of friends that learn together'. The Early Years Foundation Stage prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education. During their time at school pupils make satisfactory progress overall. By the time they leave, they secure standards of attainment that are broadly in line with those seen nationally, although this year, above-average results in national tests were seen in English at the end of Key Stage 2. Teaching is satisfactory overall with a small minority that is good. There are some gaps in the performance of boys and girls in writing in Key Stage 1. The curriculum is satisfactory but is not monitored regularly enough to identify shortcomings. The new headteacher knows precisely what to do to make further improvements, building on those that have been secured since the last inspection, for example, the increase in pupils' attendance and the reduction of those who are persistently absent. Development plans are well-focused and securely in place. Other leaders and managers share the same ambition and are effective in the day-to-day running of the school but only demonstrate satisfactory effectiveness in helping bring about sustained improvements in pupils' achievement. The governing body holds the school to account satisfactorily and ensures good safeguarding procedures. Nevertheless, it does not currently analyse pupil performance data well enough. The school has a broadly accurate view of its effectiveness through its self-evaluation processes which are satisfactory, as is the capacity to sustain improvements.

Up to 40% of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit from an Ofsted inspector before the next Section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase achievement of all pupils by the end of Key Stage 2, especially in mathematics and boy's achievement in writing by the end of Key Stage 1 by:
 - providing consistently good or better teaching that challenges pupils of all abilities so that they make better progress in learning
 - using assessment data to better inform lesson-planning so that it targets specific ability groups more effectively

- undertaking more regular reviews of the curriculum and its effectiveness in matching the needs of all pupils.
- Increase the effectiveness of middle and senior leaders in driving improvement by:
 - making sure they are clear about what constitutes good or better teaching and promote this effectively across the school
 - ensuring that assessment is used more effectively to raise achievement.
- Strengthen the effectiveness of the governing body by:
 - ensuring that even more rigour is applied when holding the leaders and managers to account for the work of the school and particularly the achievement of all pupils.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils behave well in lessons and willingly engage in their learning. Relationships between each other and their teachers are good and help promote a harmonious, safe and caring environment. Pupils make overall satisfactory progress in lessons and over time, although some make good progress when the teaching is lively, engaging and challenging. Children enter the nursery with skills that are lower than those expected for their age. Most make good progress in their learning and development and begin Key Stage 1 having secured skills that are more typical for children of their age. However, boys' skills in writing are significantly lower than that of girls. Provisional Key Stage 2 results for 2011 show that attainment was broadly average in mathematics, representing satisfactory progress. In English, however, a significant proportion of pupils made good progress to attain the higher levels. The high proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals made satisfactory progress. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make satisfactory progress overall. Pupils feel very safe and have a good understanding of the benefits of leading a healthy lifestyle. They demonstrate this by eating fruit at playtime, choosing healthy food at lunchtime and exercising during and after school. Pupils contribute well to their school through a range of responsibilities such as by being monitors and serving on the school council. Pupils were involved in the recent appointment of the headteacher.

Attendance is average and most pupils who were once persistently absent now attend more regularly because of the help and advice given by the school. However, too many pupils are brought to school late. This slows the start to their learning and does not set a good example for their adoption of good work habits. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is underpinned by the school's Christian faith and is evident in pupils' good behaviour and considerate approach and understanding of one another.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
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	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is satisfactory overall. Some teaching lacks sufficient challenge for the pupils and this reduces the pace of learning. There is too much reliance on completing worksheets and cutting and pasting work into pupils' books. Some older pupils report that the tasks set are sometimes too easy. Where teaching is more successful there is a good level of challenge because of interesting activities and well-targeted questioning by the teacher. In the more effective lessons, more creative and lively teaching methods are used allowing pupils to work confidently in pairs and in groups, helping them develop as independent learners and progressing their learning at an appropriate rate. Assessment data on pupils' performance against anticipated targets is not used consistently well to plan activities that will successfully meet pupils' differing needs and abilities. Books are marked regularly by teachers who make some comments on progress and sometimes indicate to the pupils their next steps to improve, but this is not consistent across the school. The curriculum is satisfactory and generally meets the pupils' needs and interests and allows them to progress satisfactorily. However, it is not reviewed or modified in a systematic way to enable the school to tackle more quickly any shortcomings in outcomes, such as in mathematics and boys' writing. Care guidance and support are good and support pupils' good personal development particularly of those whose circumstances potentially may make them vulnerable. The school provides well for those pupils who join at points throughout the year other than at the beginning of term and good advice and guidance is given to parents and pupils about their next stage of learning.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account:	
The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The recent arrival of the new headteacher has seen a renewed ambition and determination amongst others to improve the achievement of all pupils. Improvements have already been made in daily routines such as the controlled release of pupils at the end of the day from their classrooms. There is recognition by leaders and managers at all levels that procedures need to be further enhanced to help effect accelerated pupil achievement. These systems include more frequent lesson observations and sharing of best practice to ensure that there is a higher proportion of good and better teaching and more effective use of assessment to make teaching more consistently challenging. The rigour with which the governing body holds the school to account for its work in areas such as the achievement of pupils is satisfactory. Most governors understand the school's strengths and weaknesses but their effectiveness in helping shape the direction of the school is limited. External partnerships are good and promote learning effectively for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and for those whose circumstances potentially may make them vulnerable. Safeguarding is good and exceeds minimum requirements. The school has adopted strong procedures to ensure the health and safety of its pupils, for example, by conducting termly external and internal site inspections. The opportunities available for all to succeed are satisfactory. The differences in the standard of boys' and girls' writing and the variance in subjects are being addressed through a more informed use of assessment and well-targeted support to help close these gaps. Community cohesion is satisfactory. Pupils have a clear understanding of their own religious, ethnic and social context but that of the wider world is less well-developed.

These are the grades for the leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children begin school with skill levels that are below that expected for their age. They make good progress in their learning and are happy and settled. Children behave well and engage in a range of activities with confidence and are responsive, despite some only just having arrived in school. Children welcome those new to the school and form good relationships with each other and adults. Teaching is good overall and often exciting, for example when children were using a digital camera to

record their work, developing their information and communication technology (ICT) skills and engaging in much discussion. The unit provides a well-balanced range of both teacher-led and child-initiated activities. Welfare and safeguarding procedures exceed requirements. There is enhanced provision for physical development both inside and out which is rich and varied for Nursery and Reception children and provides good support for their personal and social development. Children are challenged appropriately, and good behaviour management ensures a co-operative and safe learning environment. Leadership and management are good. Self-evaluation is rigorous and the use of reliable assessment data contributes well to the good outcomes for the children.

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 in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Of those parents and carers who returned questionnaires, the overwhelming majority is happy with the education the school provides. A few parents and carers responded that the school does not take sufficient account of their suggestions or concerns. Inspectors looked closely at this and are satisfied that the school has satisfactory procedures in place to take account of parents' and carers' views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Clare'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 59 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 215 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	38	64	20	34	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	44	75	14	24	1	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	39	66	20	34	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	36	61	22	37	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	39	66	20	34	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	34	58	24	41	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	37	63	21	36	1	2	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)	32	54	23	39	4	7	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	37	63	22	37	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	32	54	25	42	1	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	31	53	23	39	4	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	37	63	22	37	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	42	71	16	27	1	2	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 is for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 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.



5 October 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Clare's Catholic Primary School, Liverpool, L15 0DW

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we inspected your school recently. We also thank those of you who spoke with us in meetings, during lessons and at lunchtime. Your school provides you with a satisfactory standard of education. We were pleased to see how well you behave. You told us you feel safe, secure and well cared for by the teachers and other adults who look after you. We think those of you that attend Nursery and Reception make a good start to your education.

We want your school to be even better and we have asked your new headteacher, the governors and other teachers to do more to help you get the best out of your time at St Clare's. We have asked them to help you learn even more in all your lessons and help younger boys with writing. By the time you leave school you do quite well in English, but we think the teachers should help you do equally well, if not better, in mathematics too. We have also asked that the teachers who have management jobs are even more successful in what they do. Finally, we want your governors to ask the school harder questions about the speed at which you learn and to make sure that the teachers are doing all they can to help you succeed.

You can help the school improve by continuing to come to school regularly and arriving on time for school so that you are ready to learn from the start.

Thank you again for making us so welcome and I wish the best for the future

Yours sincerely,

Peter Cox
Lead Inspector

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