

St Michael and All Angels Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104464
Local authority	Knowsley
Inspection number	377084
Inspection dates	5–6 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Joanne Olsson HMI

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	364
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Fr Andrew Rowlands
Headteacher	Louise Bowman
Date of previous school inspection	22 September 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. Twenty-one lessons led by 15 teachers were observed. Inspectors also made visits to the Early Years Foundation Stage and observed pupils at play and lunchtime. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, representatives of the governing body, senior leaders and managers and a local authority officer. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including arrangements for safeguarding, information about pupils' attainment and progress and pupils' books. They considered the responses to questionnaires from staff, pupils and 60 parents and carers.

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

- Whether the improvements in 2011 in attainment are being sustained and whether all pupils, particularly boys and those pupils in Key Stage 1, are making consistently good progress from their starting points in order to close gaps in attainment.
- How effectively the school is raising pupils' achievement in English, particularly in writing.
- How effectively the school has secured improvements in the quality of teaching and whether this is leading to pupils making accelerated progress.
- The impact of the newly formed leadership team, including members of the governing body, in driving improvements to teaching and pupils' achievement.

Information about the school

The vast majority of pupils who attend this larger-than-average-sized primary school are from White British heritage. There are fewer pupils from minority ethnic groups than found nationally. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is also below average. The number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is also above the national average. The school has received a number of awards, including Healthy School status, the International School award and Arts Mark. Since the previous inspection, the school has changed its name and moved into a new building. The current headteacher took up post in January 2011. The deputy headteacher joined the school in September 2011. At the time of the inspection, a number of leaders and managers were relatively new to their roles.

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

Pupils' personal development is a strength of this satisfactory school. Pupils are courteous, happy and offer a warm welcome to visitors. Their considerate and respectful behaviour makes a significant contribution to their learning. Pupils enjoy school and this is reflected in their increasing attendance levels which match the national average. Pupils speak positively about the adults who care for them and the teachers who make their learning fun. The views of many are summed up in the comment, 'It takes hearts to make this school'. Parents and carers unanimously agree that they are happy with their children's school experience.

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Children enter with lower than expected skills and knowledge for their age and make good progress. Inconsistent progress in Key Stage 1 means pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 remains below the national average. Recent improvements to teaching indicate pupils in Years 1 and 2 are making better progress from their starting points and attainment gaps are narrowing. Pupils make good progress in upper Key Stage 2 to reach attainment levels which are broadly in line with the national average. Pupils' achievement in mathematics is stronger than in English, particularly in writing, because calculation skills are systematically taught across the school. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make the same progress as their peers because they receive good-quality support during lessons and in smaller group sessions. In some year groups, girls' achievement is better than boys. This is because the curriculum does not always meet boys' interests as well as it might.

Although some teaching is inspirational, it is satisfactory overall. All teaching is characterised by warm and trusting relationships. Most teachers plan interesting and relevant lessons to link pupils' learning to everyday life. While day-to-day assessment is used to reshape tasks and explanations, assessment information is not always used with enough precision to meet the needs of all pupils fully. In addition, some teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can do and the progress they need to make. Teachers conscientiously mark pupils' work and affirm their efforts. Some teachers provide detailed guidance to pupils on how to improve their work. However, this practice is not consistent across the school.

Determined leadership by the headteacher has secured improvements in some areas of weakness while maintaining a strong focus on pupils' personal development. As a result, pupils' achievement in mathematics has improved and almost all pupils make

expected progress from their starting points. Other senior leaders and managers, although relatively new, have quickly formed a cohesive team with a common sense of purpose. The systems to monitor the work of the school are in place but the findings from these activities are not always used with enough precision to drive improvement and eradicate inconsistencies in teaching. Nonetheless, accurate self-evaluation, stronger pupil achievement and adequate progress since the previous inspection mean the school has satisfactory capacity for further sustained improvement.

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

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' achievement, particularly in writing, by:
 - providing regular and consistent opportunities for pupils to write for sustained periods of time across a range of subjects
 - ensuring basic skills such as handwriting, punctuation and grammar are consistently taught in all classes
 - reviewing the curriculum to ensure it closely matches the interests of boys.

- Improve the quality of teaching so it is consistently good by:
 - ensuring assessment information is used with precision to meet the needs of all pupils
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve and the progress they need to make
 - providing clear guidance to pupils on how to improve their work
 - sharing the outstanding practice within the school.

- Develop the systems for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school by:
 - providing greater opportunities for subject leaders to monitor their areas of responsibility
 - using assessment information more precisely to drive improvement and to eradicate achievement gaps between different groups of pupils
 - sharpening the focus of monitoring activities to eradicate remaining inconsistencies.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and are willing to work hard. In a Year 4 English lesson, for example, there was excellent collaboration between pupils as they performed scenes from a fiction book. Pupils listened carefully to each other, allocated responsibilities and discussed how to improve their work. In a Year 6 English lesson, pupils skilfully collected evidence from a text to show how characters change over time. They carefully considered each character and offered mature and often moving responses to reflect how each character was feeling. Activities such as these unleash pupils' imagination and creativity. They enable pupils to become

reflective thinkers and confident speakers who are willing to share their ideas and tackle new challenges.

Unvalidated test results show pupils' achievement at the end of Key Stage 2 improved in 2011. From their higher starting points, pupils made good progress in Years 5 and 6 to reach above-average attainment levels. School-based data and inspection evidence confirm the historic inconsistency in pupils' progress has been eradicated. Almost all pupils make at least expected progress in all classes. Consequently, attainment is rising, particularly in upper Key Stage 2 where the majority of pupils are working at age-related expectations. These pupils are on track to reach the school's appropriate targets. Nevertheless, not all pupils are working at the levels of which they are capable. This is because the satisfactory progress they make is not rapid enough to tackle previous underperformance. Pupils' achievement in mathematics is stronger than in English because some pupils have gaps in their grammar, spelling and handwriting skills which limit the amount and quality of the work they produce. In addition, some pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to practise their writing for sustained periods across a range of subjects.

'I feel safe because the teachers are always watching us to keep us safe' is a typical comment from the overwhelming majority of pupils who say they feel safe in school. Pupils say bullying sometimes happens, but they are confident that the adults who care for them will listen to their concerns and resolve any problems. Pupils are proud of their school and keen to take on responsibilities. Their involvement with a local allotment project enables them to take an interest in their community, as they plant, grow and provide vegetables for people in the area. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good; pupils show enthusiasm for learning, a keen sense of right and wrong and a commitment to fundraising activities. Their very well-developed personal qualities, in addition to adequate basic skills, mean they are satisfactorily equipped for the next stage of their school careers.

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

¹The 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?

Trusting relationships mean pupils are willing to offer their ideas without any fear of giving the wrong answer. Teaching is sometimes exceptional. This is because teachers use assessment information with precision to match tasks to pupils' needs. Effective use of questions means pupils are able to think deeply and give considered responses. In lessons where this is the case, pupils are actively involved in their learning and no time is wasted. Teachers use every opportunity to maximise pupils' learning. In less effective lessons, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough. Sometimes there is a lack of urgency which results in pupils completing low-level tasks. In addition, assessment information is not always used well enough to identify the next steps all groups of pupils need to take in order to make good progress.

The developing curriculum is leading to greater opportunities to link subjects to make pupils' learning more exciting and relevant. For example, the Second World War topic was brought alive as pupils spent a day as war-time evacuees. Basic skills are adequately developed across the school. Provision for younger pupils to learn about the links between sounds letters gives a solid foundation for their reading and writing skills. Although there are whole-school systems for developing pupils' basic skills in English these are not consistently delivered in all classes. Older pupils have good opportunities to write for sustained periods of time across a range of subjects. Occasionally, the curriculum is not well matched to meet the interests of boys. A good range of visits and visitors enhance pupils' learning.

The overwhelming majority of pupils agree that adults in the school care about them. Secure systems and effective partnerships mean individuals and groups of pupils receive the support they need to make progress in their learning and personal development. Good transition arrangements are in place so pupils quickly settle into the next phase of their education. The systems for monitoring and promoting good attendance have improved considerably since the previous inspection. These sound systems have led to a reduction in the number of pupils who attend school less often. Consequently, attendance levels are average and rising.

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher's clear vision for the school has been effectively communicated to the whole school community. Her ambition is effectively underpinned by good-quality planning. Consequently, there is a common sense of purpose and a determined drive to secure further improvement. The systems for monitoring the work of the school are appropriate and regular. However, these activities are not always used with enough precision to identify and eradicate remaining inconsistencies. Although

relatively new to their roles, senior leaders and managers have quickly grasped the key barriers to improving pupils’ achievement and have well-founded plans to address these issues. They are beginning to monitor their areas of responsibility more effectively. Due to the good-quality information they receive, members of the governing body have an accurate understanding of the school’s strengths and weaknesses. As a result, they are beginning to provide a greater level of challenge to senior leaders and managers.

Safeguarding arrangements are good due to well-founded policies and procedures. Relationships with parents and carers have been strengthened through regular communication and opportunities to share their views. The introduction of year-group curriculum booklets is one example of how the school has responded to suggestions. Partnerships are used effectively to enrich the curriculum and to support pupils’ learning and well-being. Pupils benefit from language specialists from a local high school to enhance their French-speaking skills.

The school has strong links with the local community and uses these to promote pupils’ understanding of diversity. For example, pupils meet and work with pupils from other schools as part of the local authority’s School Council Forum and a recent visitor has spoken about Judaism. Links on a national and global scale are emerging but are underdeveloped. Nonetheless, the school itself is a very cohesive community and, as a result, it is making a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion. Although pupils’ achievement in mathematics is better than in English, the school promotes satisfactory opportunities for all pupils to develop well and there is no evidence of discrimination. Recent improvement in monitoring the progress made by all pupils has led to swifter intervention for those in danger of falling behind. However, the school is not using this information with enough precision to evaluate how well different groups of pupils are performing.

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	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	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

When children join the Early Years Foundation Stage what they know and what they can do is below, and sometimes well below, the expectations for their age. Most children make good progress from this starting point and a growing number enter Year 1 with skills and knowledge as expected for their age. Children enjoy their learning and are keen to take part in all of the activities provided. They are friendly, polite and considerate to each other and to adults. They work well together because they are willing to take turns and listen to each other. This was evident as two girls prepared a birthday party for their friend. They talked about what food they would have and then set about preparing the table in a very cooperative manner. These strong social skills plus their thoughtful behaviour make a significant contribution to their learning.

Adults use information and communication technology along with other resources to capture children's interest. Good use is made of the outdoor environment to reflect the same areas of learning as indoors. However, some children are not able to access this area at the start of the day because the resources are not readily available. Planning reflects the needs and interests of the children because adults rigorously assess and record children's progress in all areas of learning. Adults generally use questions well to extend children's skills and understanding, but learning opportunities are sometimes missed because adult intervention is not timely enough.

Although relatively new to the role, the Early Years Foundation Stage leader has organised staff training to improve the use of assessment and has implemented a plan of action to address inconsistencies between the Nursery and Reception classes. She is enhancing her role in monitoring the Early Years Foundation Stage.

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

The return rate for parent and carer questionnaires was lower than is usual in primary schools. Most of the parents and carers who returned the questionnaires were positive about all aspects of the school. Almost all consider their children are kept safe and make enough progress. The overwhelming majority agree the school deals well with unacceptable behaviour and that it is well led and managed. A few are not so content with the information they receive about their children's progress or the support they receive to support their children's learning. A few do not agree that the school prepares children well for the future. Inspectors looked at these concerns carefully and their findings are included within this report.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Michael and All Angels 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 60 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 364 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	33	55	24	40	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	38	63	20	33	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	31	52	26	43	3	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	30	50	29	48	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	30	50	28	47	2	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	34	57	22	37	3	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	30	50	29	48	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)	26	43	28	47	2	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	31	52	28	47	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	30	50	29	48	0	0	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	25	42	31	52	0	0	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	32	53	27	45	0	0	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	33	55	27	45	0	0	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.



7 October 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Michael and All Angels Catholic Primary School, Liverpool, L32 0TP

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave the inspection team when we recently came to inspect your school. It was a real treat to meet you, listen to your views about your school and to look at your work. We consider St Michael and All Angels to be a satisfactory school. The main things we found out about your school are:

- You make satisfactory progress and your attainment is broadly average.
- You are happy to come to school; you feel safe at all times and you feel well cared for by all adults in the school.
- You have good attitudes to learning; you are willing to work hard and you are very good at working cooperatively with your classmates.
- Your behaviour is consistently good in classrooms and around the school.
- Your attendance is improving and is now average.
- Teachers make your learning interesting.

In order to make your school even better, we have asked the governing body to work with the headteacher and staff to focus on a few key areas. We have asked them to help you all make better progress in English. We have also asked them to make sure all teaching is good across the school. Finally, we have asked them to use all of the information they have about your learning to help you all make better progress.

We are sure that with such strong personal qualities you will all help your teachers and headteacher to improve the school further. Please accept our best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Joanne Olsson
Her Majesty's Inspector

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