

St Oswald's Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 104900 |
| Local authority | Sefton |
| Inspection number | 377146 |
| Inspection dates | 25–26 April 2012 |
| Lead inspector | Nigel Cromey-Hawke |

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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| 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 | 223 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Val Jardine |
| Headteacher | Emma Murtagh |
| Date of previous school inspection | 4 October 2007 |
| School address | Ronald Ross Avenue Netherton Sefton Bootle L30 5RH |
| Telephone number | 0151 525 4580 |
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Introduction

Inspection team

Nigel Cromey-Hawke
Stephen Docking

Additional Inspector
Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 17 lessons taught by nine teachers, including joint observations with the headteacher. They also held meetings with members of the governing body, staff, parents and carers and groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation, including development planning, pupils' work, safeguarding arrangements, self-evaluation records, relevant policies and performance data. Inspectors took account of the responses to the online Parent View survey in planning the inspection. They also scrutinised questionnaires from 96 parents and carers, 15 staff and 38 pupils.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized primary school. Most pupils are of White British heritage and very few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is above that usually found. The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. The school operates its own breakfast club and manages the local children's centre, which is subject to a separate inspection report. The most recent report for this can be found on the Ofsted website. The school has many awards, including full International School status, Investors in People, Artsmark Gold and Healthy School status. The school has undergone significant staffing changes in the last two years, as well as an extensive building programme.

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 | 2 |
| Achievement of pupils | 2 |
| Quality of teaching | 2 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | 2 |
| Leadership and management | 2 |

Key Findings

- This is a good school. Its main strengths are good levels of care and support enabling pupils to grow in confidence, good teaching and an exciting curriculum that promotes pupils' enjoyment of learning. St Oswald's is not yet outstanding because there is some teaching and some aspects of leadership and management that are no better than satisfactory.
- Achievement is good. From low starting points on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage progress is good, with attainment by the end of Year 6 broadly average. The progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is good and often very good, due to the impressive support they receive from specialist teachers and teaching assistants.
- Teaching is good overall, with some that is outstanding. The best teaching features good pace and challenge, good use of assessment to help pupils improve their own work and the use of interesting activities within lessons that capture pupils' interest and help them learn. Some teaching is less effective. In these lessons there is insufficient pace to maintain pupils' full attention and activities are not as well matched to learners' needs as they should be, especially for the more able. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, speech and language teaching is not fully coordinated across the classes due to staffing changes.
- The behaviour and safety of pupils are good. The vast majority of pupils say they feel safe and enjoy their time in school. The number of bullying incidents is low and well dealt with. Attendance is average but improving rapidly.
- Leadership and management are good overall. The school knows its strengths and weaknesses well, and manages teaching and performance effectively. Achievement and attendance have been improved since the previous inspection. Aspects of development planning lack a sharpness of focus, however, and some governing body training is overdue.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the small amount of satisfactory teaching to at least good by:
 - bringing a brisker pace to these lessons to ensure that all pupils are fully engaged in their learning
 - providing greater challenge, especially for more-able pupils, by ensuring that there is a better match of activities to pupils' needs
 - bringing a clearer focus and direction to the teaching of speech and language within the Early Years Foundation Stage.

- Improve leadership and management by:
 - bringing a sharper focus to subject leader development plans to enable their more effective implementation and allow for more meaningful evaluation of their impact upon outcomes
 - extending the training of some members of the governing body so that they can support the school even more effectively.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

The vast majority of parents and carers state that their children make good progress and this view is supported by inspection findings. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes make good progress from low starting points and achieve well. This is because teachers provide children with a wide range of stimulating activities within the bright and attractive setting. Adults have high expectations, teaching is good and the children are happy to learn. The school recognises, however, that due to recent changes in staffing there is not a coordinated approach between Nursery and Reception in the teaching of speech and language. In Key Stages 1 and 2, most groups of pupils make good progress because of the good and sometimes outstanding teaching they receive. They enjoy their learning and develop a range of skills well that will ensure they are well prepared for the next stage in their education. By the time pupils leave, attainment for the vast majority of pupils is average and in the current Year 6 it is above average. Pupils develop good understanding in a range of subjects, including literacy, leading to their growing confidence in learning. Over time, attainment in reading at the end of Key Stage 1 is low but improving strongly and by the end of Key Stage 2 it matches the national average. Pupils whom the inspectors heard read spoke with pleasure about books they had read and used a good range of strategies to tackle unfamiliar words confidently and effectively.

Scrutiny of pupils' work confirms good achievement and pupils were proud to show examples of work indicating good progress, particularly in history and English. The school has focused strongly upon writing over the last year and the results of this can clearly be seen in improved standards in this area. Gaps in the performance of girls and those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals were also identified last year and have been successfully closed through concentrated support strategies

operated by the highly skilled teaching assistants. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs also make good progress and learn well. Many such pupils make accelerated progress, especially those in upper Key Stage 2, who are taught English and mathematics by the specialist teacher. A wide range of support from beyond the school is skilfully coordinated to support these pupils, including services such as speech and language therapy, when appropriate.

Quality of teaching

Almost all parents and carers are of the view that their children are taught well and the inspectors agree with this. Much of the teaching observed was good, with some that was outstanding, but also some that was satisfactory. The school has an accurate perspective on its teaching quality which was confirmed by the close agreement in joint observations made by the inspectors and the headteacher. Classrooms and corridors are vibrant, colourful areas for learning, reflecting the schools' Artsmark award. In the best lessons, teachers convey high expectations of progress and behaviour, often successfully promoting pupils' independence by the use of assessment guidelines that help pupils to improve their own work without adult assistance. In these lessons, data on pupils' progress are used well to match activities to pupils' needs and interests. As a result, pupil engagement is good and real progress is made. In an outstanding mathematics class, for example, the real-life experience of shopping during the sale period was used to great effect to help pupils calculate percentages and discount proportions. In this lively lesson high-quality learning took place that was greatly enjoyed by all pupils.

Teachers plan English and mathematics lessons particularly well, often including specific plans for teaching assistants to focus upon particular groups of pupils. Behaviour is good and sometimes outstanding because it is well managed. Teaching and the planned curriculum support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well because they draw on a wide range of curriculum activities, such as the training for responsibility in education and employment programme, designed for this. Marking of pupils' work is good. The recently upgraded facilities for new technology are well used by staff and pupils to enhance learning.

The best lessons are characterised by good levels of pace and challenge but satisfactory lessons lack this rigour. Such lessons are less vibrant, slower paced and there is not always a good match of activities to pupils' needs, particularly for the more able. As a result, pupils sometimes lose interest and progress in these lessons is no better than satisfactory. Some pupils expressed concern that they did not receive sufficient information about how well they were doing in their work. Investigation during inspection revealed this to be very largely a temporary situation, created when a class underwent staffing changes last year and that the school's practice in this respect is otherwise good.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The school is a calm, well ordered and harmonious community. Parents, carers and pupils are justifiably very confident that pupils are safe and well looked after. One pupil typically commented, 'School gives us chances we would never get in life.' Pupils act safely in lessons and around school and play well together during lunch

and break times. There have been no exclusions in the last five years. A range of planned curriculum activities raise pupils' awareness of how to keep safe, for example near roads and railways. Discussions with pupils revealed that they have a good understanding of different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying, incidents of racial abuse, bullying of pupils with special educational needs and bullying by or of minority groups. They consider it well dealt with by the school on the rare occasions it occurs. Staff operate a comprehensive system of rewards and consequences effectively. The school also operates a system of personal, social, health and citizenship targets for pupils that are regularly referred to by teachers in the best lessons and incorporated into pupils' learning. These often have a marked impact upon pupils' personal development, and the school can point to cases where they have resulted in significant improvements in some pupils' behaviour. Many pupils also take advantage of the breakfast club to get a healthy start to the school day, reflecting the schools' award in this area. Many are also involved in the good range of after-school activities provided by the school, especially in sport and music, which make a strong contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The attendance of pupils over time is average. The parent support advisor is effective in monitoring attendance and it is improving rapidly. Persistent absence has been significantly reduced from above to now below the level of schools in similar contexts.

Leadership and management

Good leadership by the headteacher, supported by the recently restructured senior leadership team and subject coordinators team continues to move the school forward. The headteacher is ably supported by the governing body, but some members are recently in post and training has yet to take place to prepare them fully to carry out their support and challenge functions. Across the school, staffing has been stabilised and staff morale is high. Whole-school improvement planning reflects accurate evaluation of the school's strengths and areas to improve and has underpinned good improvement since the previous inspection. Subject leaders' plans currently lack a sharpness of focus, however, about exactly what needs to be done to bring about improvement, making evaluation of impact upon outcomes less effective.

Professional development is closely aligned to school priorities and has been a key factor in securing improvements in teaching and learning, notably in relation to writing. Frequent pupil progress meetings are held and inform both the good pupil target-setting system and the leadership team's strategic understanding of the school. All of these mean that the school has good capacity to continue to improve.

The rich curriculum is well structured, has a strong focus upon literacy and numeracy and has strengths in its promotion of pupils' awareness of and contact with the wider world. This even includes a visit by pupils to China as well as other extensive international links, reflecting its award in this area. As such, its contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. The school engages well with parents and carers, making effective use of its children's centre and providing a good programme of family learning.

The promotion of equal opportunities is effective, with the needs of most groups of learners well met. Instances of discrimination are rare and, if encountered, tackled robustly. Safeguarding requirements are met and the school demonstrates good practice in site safety and in the revision of its policies to promote child protection.

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 | 54 | 42 | 2 | 2 |
| Primary schools | 14 | 49 | 32 | 6 |
| Secondary schools | 20 | 39 | 34 | 7 |
| Special schools | 33 | 45 | 20 | 3 |
| Pupil referral units | 9 | 55 | 28 | 8 |
| All schools | 16 | 47 | 31 | 6 |

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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

Common terminology used by inspectors

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Achievement: | the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment. |
| Attainment: | the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons. |
| Attendance | the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance. |
| Behaviour | how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school. |
| Capacity to improve: | the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement. |
| Floor standards | the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures |
| Leadership and management: | the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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: | inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. |
| 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. |
| Safety | how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning. |

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.



27 April 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Oswald's Church of England Primary School, Bootle, L30 5RH

Thank you for the warm reception you gave me and my colleague when we inspected your school recently and for sharing your views with us, both in school and through the questionnaires. You were very friendly and enthusiastic about what you do.

St Oswald's is a good school. You get a good start to your learning in the Nursery and Reception classes and make good progress there. This continues throughout the rest of the school. By the time you leave the school in Year 6 the attainment of most of you is broadly average. Those of you who are disabled or have special educational needs also make good progress, due to the additional support you receive. Teaching across the school is good, with some that is outstanding but also a small amount that is satisfactory. The school looks after you well, you say you feel safe and you obviously enjoy being there. Your behaviour is good and your attendance is improving. Well done! The range of subjects you take is good and even includes visits to China to see how people live there! Senior staff are leading the school well and bringing about further improvements.

To make your school better, we have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to:

- make sure that all your lessons are at least good or better
- provide more detail within some parts of school planning and ensure that governors receive more training to help the school improve further.

You can help by telling your teachers how best you learn and if you have any problems. I wish you the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Nigel Cromey-Hawke
Lead inspector

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