

# Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	104916
<b>Local authority</b>	Sefton
<b>Inspection number</b>	395643
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 July 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Denise Shields

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	585
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ian Beck
<b>Headteacher</b>	Maureen Hillsdon
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 March 2009
<b>School address</b>	Grantham Road Southport PR8 4LT
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## Introduction

### Inspection team

Denise Shields  
Sheila O'Keeffe  
Carol Machell

Additional Inspector  
Additional Inspector  
Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 24 teachers teaching 25 lessons or part lessons, including short visits to a few support lessons where specialist help is provided by teaching assistants. The inspectors listened to pupils from a range of different ages and abilities read. Meetings were held with three groups of pupils, five members of the governing body and school staff, including senior and middle managers. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's strategic development plan, safeguarding documentation and minutes of the governing body meetings. They analysed 190 parental and carers' questionnaires and questionnaires completed by pupils and staff.

## Information about the school

This is a much larger than average-sized primary school. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average. The school meets the current floor standards, which are the minimum standards for attainment and progress expected by the government.

The school houses a designated provision for pupils aged 5 to 11 with autistic spectrum disorder (totalling 20 places), serving all areas across Sefton. Nearly all children in the Nursery transfer into the Reception classes; they are joined by children from a range of other nursery providers from the local area. Inward mobility is much higher than average as a number of pupils join the school at varying times after the Reception Year, including those who transfer from a local infant school at the beginning of Year 3.

The school has achieved Healthy School status, and a number of awards including the Inclusion Quality Mark and Artsmark gold awards.

**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

<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key Findings

- This is a good school. It is not outstanding because attainment and progress in writing is not as strong as in reading. Furthermore, in the Early Years Foundation Stage, planned activities do not always cover all areas of the curriculum both indoors and outdoors.
- Our Lady of Lourdes is an exceptionally inclusive school; relationships are extremely strong, levels of care and guidance are high and the curriculum is rich and varied. Consequently, pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness, and their enjoyment of learning, are outstanding.
- Since the last inspection, attainment has risen steadily and is well above average in reading and mathematics. More pupils than average attain the higher levels in these subjects. Pupils make at least good progress in reading and mathematics, but this is not matched in writing where their attainment and progress is not as strong. As a result, taking account of pupils’ differing needs, abilities and starting points, achievement is good.
- Pupils who attend the designated provision receive high quality teaching. Tightly focussed tasks are carefully matched to their complex needs and abilities and so they achieve exceptionally well, both academically and in their personal development.
- Almost all teaching is good, with examples of outstanding practice. Teachers often use well-chosen resources and fun activities and so pupils are inspired to learn because lessons engage their interest.
- Without exception, pupils say they feel safe and secure in the school, a view endorsed by almost all parents and carers. Behaviour over time is excellent; consequently, in lessons, learning is not disrupted.
- Leaders and managers at all levels, including the governing body, continually build on the school’s well-established strengths by using performance management to good effect. Leaders have successfully led improvements in the quality of teaching, pupils’ achievement and the curriculum.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and increase the rate of progress made by pupils in writing by ensuring:
  - greater depth of challenge in writing tasks for the more-able pupils
  - that the programme to teach the sounds letters make (phonics) is taught more effectively
  - that opportunities for pupils to write in a range of contexts are extended
  - that more chances are provided for pupils to improve their spelling skills.
  
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, ensure that planned activities consistently cover all areas of the curriculum, both indoors and outdoors, and provide a wider range of opportunities for children to practise and improve their early writing skills.

## Main Report

### Achievement of pupils

Almost all parents and carers state that their children make good progress. This is supported by inspection findings. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children happily engage in learning activities. Children enter Nursery with skills that are broadly typical for their age. They make good progress overall and there is a rising trend in their attainment by the end of the Reception Year. Progress in developing early writing skills is not as strong, because there is not a wide enough range of activities for children to select in order to practise and improve these skills.

By the end of Year 6, attainment is well above average in reading and mathematics and above average in writing. Through Key Stages 1 and 2, progress is good overall. Progress for all groups of pupils, including those who join the school at varying points during the year, is better than their peers nationally in reading and mathematics. This level of progress is not always matched in writing, although it is satisfactory overall. For the most part, the more-able pupils are given writing tasks that are more difficult than those given to their peers. However, these tasks do not always have sufficient depth and challenge to enable pupils to make greater progress. The performance of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is nearly always better than that of their peers nationally. All pupils read regularly to an adult in school; individual pupils' records show that most also read to their parents or carers at home. Pupils' attainment in reading by the end of Year 2 is above average and by Year 6 it is well above average, and more pupils than average attain the higher levels.

Pupils show a huge enjoyment of learning; this has a positive impact on their achievement. Their imagination is fired by the 'Wow Events' that take place before the start of each theme. For example, pupils spoke very enthusiastically about the 'Tardis' that was teleported into the playground and then took pupils back in time to Ancient Greece. 'Lessons are great fun!' is a view that typifies that of most pupils. By the end of Year 6, pupils are mature, articulate and independent learners. In lessons, pupils work well in small groups or with a partner. Almost all pupils try their best at all times and concentrate and listen carefully. Pupils readily help, praise and encourage each other and are very keen to succeed.

Pupils who attend the designated provision enjoy learning and try hard with their work. This is because they have very secure relationships with adults and praise is used very well to build their confidence. Teaching is highly effective. Tasks are divided into small manageable steps and so pupils' concentration levels are maintained. Consequently, their progress is often rapid and their attainment better than their peers nationally. Taking account of their differing abilities and complex needs their achievement is outstanding.

## **Quality of teaching**

The quality of teaching is good with some that is outstanding. This judgement reflects the views of almost all parents and carers. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children are taught well and enjoy learning. However, planning does not always cover all areas of the curriculum, both indoors and outdoors. This limits the activities children can select from to develop their skills and knowledge and so prevents them from making greater progress.

In nearly every lesson, the interactive whiteboard is used effectively to engage pupils and extend their knowledge. In the best lessons, teachers are very skilled at quickly building on pupils' prior knowledge and consolidating pupils' new learning, through the use of well-chosen activities. Highly skilful questioning deepens pupils' understanding and learning is often rapid. In most good lessons, the pace is lively and imaginative use is made of resources that capture pupils' attention. In a few lessons, the pace is mundane and teachers talk for too long; in these instances learning is slower. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to supporting individuals and small groups. They guide learning and boost pupils' self confidence, sensitively and effectively. In all classes, relationships are strong so pupils are not afraid to ask for help if they should need it. Marking and pupils' learning targets guide individual pupils' needs and so they are clear about how to improve their work.

Throughout the school basic mathematical, reading and writing skills are taught well overall, effectively providing pupils with the tools they need to learn. The teaching of phonic skills (the sounds letters make) varies between classes. In the best lessons, teachers ensure that the balance between whole class, group and individual phonic work is just right. Here too, teachers have clear enunciation and this aids pupils' understanding of the sounds that letters make. Curriculum planning often contributes extremely well to pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In Year 5, for example, after pupils had watched a short video clip of a scene from the film 'The Piano Player' by Aidan Gibbons, a quiet reflection time was provided. Skilful, well-targeted questioning by the teacher then explored pupils' ideas and deepened their understanding of how the piano player might have felt about the death of his friend in the war. Pupils showed extremely mature awareness and empathy for the feelings he may have experienced, demonstrated through their responses, such as, 'tenderness', 'He cradled him in his arms.' or 'His face showed extreme sadness.'

## **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

The inspection findings show that behaviour over time is frequently exemplary in lessons and during lunch and playtimes, and that disruptive behaviour is rare. Pupils are very proud of their school. 'Inclusive, exciting, very safe, friendly, supportive, never ever boring!' are just a few of the many positive views expressed by pupils. Almost all pupils develop high levels of self-confidence and discipline and frequently help and encourage each other. Pupils

who attend the designated provision happily join their classmates outdoors in the playground and, when taught in mainstream classes, are fully accepted and supported sensitively by their peers. Pupils are extremely courteous and respectful. Their attitudes and engagement are excellent because the curriculum is exciting and captures their interest. All these positive qualities reflect clearly the school's mission statement of 'Live, Love and Learn' and have a very marked impact on pupils' achievement.

Without exception, pupils report that they feel totally safe in school and there is an adult they can turn to for help if they are troubled or sad. Overwhelmingly, pupils say that everyone gets on with each other. They understand different types of bullying and say that bullying is extremely rare. The very few recorded incidents have been dealt with to the satisfaction of everyone involved. The vast majority of pupils and their parents and carers reflect the inspection findings with their view that they are very satisfied with behaviour and safety.

### **Leadership and management**

The headteacher, supported well by capable senior and middle leaders and an effective governing body, has moved the school forward. Morale is high. A regular cycle to monitor and evaluate the work of the school is robust. It is used effectively to set key priorities for raising attainment and promoting pupils' learning and progress. Professional development is closely aligned to school priorities; it is appreciated highly by all staff and is a key factor in securing improvements in teaching and learning. The actively involved and well informed governing body monitor the school's work carefully. Members of the governing body are fully involved in determining its strategic direction. The areas for improvement identified at the time of the previous inspection have been successfully tackled. All of these factors mean that the school has good capacity to continue to improve.

The curriculum is good. It is broad and balanced and caters for pupils' needs and interests. Subjects are brought together in exciting themes that are creative and interesting. Overall, ample opportunities are planned to enhance pupils' basic skills. However, pupils do not have enough chances to practise and improve their spelling skills. While pupils write in a range of contexts, these are not extensive and varied enough to enable pupils to make greater progress. The curriculum is enriched by an extensive range of clubs after school and educational and residential visits. All of these experiences contribute greatly to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and have a significant impact on their attitudes, behaviour and achievement.

Pupils benefit from an extremely caring and supportive environment in which everyone is encouraged to succeed. The school promotes equality of opportunity very effectively. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated and so the school is a harmonious and friendly community. Careful attention is given, not just to individual pupils who might be in danger of falling behind their targets, but also to provide the support required to improve the achievement of particular groups. The school's procedures for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements.

## 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](http://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.**



13 July 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School, Southport, PR8 4LT**

Thank you for the friendly welcome you gave the inspection team when we inspected your school. We saw how proud you are of your school and you are right to be so, as yours is a good school.

Your lessons are fun and interesting and you told us how much you enjoy learning. There is an extensive range of other activities too, such as visits and visitors as well as overnight stays; these help to build your self-confidence. Good and sometimes outstanding teaching helps you all to achieve well, to make at least good progress and to attain standards in reading and mathematics that are well above average. Standards in writing are not quite as strong. We have asked your teachers to give you plenty of enjoyable chances to improve your writing and spelling skills further and to ensure that more difficult work in writing is given to those of you who learn more quickly. All of you benefit from high levels of care, which is one reason why your behaviour is excellent. We are pleased that you enjoy school, feel extremely safe and say that bullying of any kind is extremely rare. Your parents and carers like the school as well and are very happy with it.

In the Nursery and Reception classes children enjoy learning and achieve well. Sometimes, there are not enough activities for them to choose from. We have asked your school to ensure that there are always lots of exciting things for them to do both inside and outdoors so that they can learn as much as possible. Pupils who attend the designated provision achieve exceptionally well because their teachers ensure that work meets their needs closely.

Your headteacher, other staff and governors know the school well and they are good at finding ways to make your school even better. You can all play your part in helping the school to get even better by continuing to work hard. Thank you for talking to us and helping with the inspection.

Yours sincerely

Denise Shields  
Lead Inspector

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