

# St Charles' Catholic Primary School

Tramway Road, Liverpool, L17 7JA

## Inspection dates

31 October– 1 November 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Pupils make good and sometimes better progress in their studies and reach above average standards by the time they leave. The 2012 Year 6 results, for example, were the best in the school's history and demonstrate how much pupils' achievement has improved since the previous inspection. Achievement in mathematics was outstanding.
- The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection and is now good. Relationships in the classroom, between pupils and between pupils and adults, are good. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs receive impressive support from well-qualified learning support assistants.
- Pupils are very proud of their school. Their behaviour in lessons and around school is outstanding. They are also very eager to learn. They feel safe in school because, in their words, 'We are surrounded by people we trust.' Parents, too, have a high regard for the school and for the way staff look after their children and help them to make progress.
- The headteacher has a very clear view of how the school can move forward and has put in place a number of well-thought-out plans which have led to increased levels of progress throughout the school. Leaders and managers at all levels lead by example.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- On occasions, more-able pupils are not challenged well enough to enable them to reach the levels of which they are capable. In a minority of classes, pupils are not always encouraged to find things out for themselves and therefore to take more responsibility for their own learning.
- Leaders and managers at all levels recognise that the sharing of good and excellent classroom practice is vital if pupils' achievement is to continue to accelerate. The governing body could use its knowledge of school performance better to provide increasing challenge to the school leadership.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons or part lessons, taught by eight teachers. They also heard pupils read in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
- They held meetings with two groups of pupils, including members of the school council, five members of the governing body and two representatives of the local authority. They also had discussions with senior leaders, staff, including members of the school improvement team, learning support assistants and the co-ordinator for special educational needs. In addition, they spoke informally to parents at the beginning of the school day.
- Inspectors took account of 14 responses to the on-line questionnaire (parent View) and also of nine questionnaires returned by school staff.
- They observed the school at work and looked at a variety of school documents, including pupil progress and attainment data, pupils' workbooks, school development planning and the school's procedures for gaining an accurate view of its performance. They also considered minutes of governing body meetings, reports produced by the local authority and safeguarding and child protection documentation.

## Inspection team

James Kidd, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Kathleen Harris

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school with many more boys than girls on roll. Pupil numbers are increasing rapidly.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority, is high and nearly twice the national average.
- The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic heritages is below average and there are few pupils who speak English as an additional language. However, an increasing number of pupils from Eastern Europe are joining the school and all of these pupils are at an early stage of learning English.
- The percentage of pupils supported at school action is below that usually seen and the percentage of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- More pupils than is usually found join or leave the school at other than the usual times.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which is the minimum expectation for pupils' learning and progress.
- St Charles' Catholic Primary is a nationally-accredited Healthy School and holds full extended school status. It is an active member of the Dingle-Granby-Toxteth Collaborative of 14 schools and the local authority Special Educational Needs Consortium.

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

- Continue to accelerate pupils' achievement by:
  - ensuring that the challenge for more-able pupils is consistent across the school and enables all of them to reach the standards of which they are capable
  - ensuring that activities in class require all pupils to become more independent in their learning and thus take more responsibility for their own progress.
- Further enhance the impact of leadership and management at all levels by:
  - promoting the sharing of good and exemplary classroom practice across the school
  - ensuring that members of the governing body use their knowledge of school performance more effectively to enable them to hold the leadership to account with increasing rigour.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Although there are variations over time, most children start school with skills which are typical for their age. As a result of good teaching and support and a vibrant area which comprises a wide range of different activities, they make good progress and enjoy their time in Reception, getting on very well with their classmates and with the adults who work with them. The classroom and outdoor display promotes learning well. For example, around every corner, there is information on numbers, letters of the alphabet and days of the week. Children also learn to look after animals and feed the chickens every day, collecting eggs from them as often as they can.
- Good progress and achievement continue across the rest of the school and pupils reach above average standards in reading and writing by the end of Year 6. In 2012, attainment in mathematics was well above average and this represents outstanding achievement in this subject from pupils' starting points. In both English and mathematics, the percentage of pupils reaching the National Curriculum Level 5 was higher than ever before. Although challenge for more-able pupils is sometimes inconsistent across the school, inspection evidence demonstrates that pupils in the current Year 6 class are on track to reach even higher standards.
- Pupils enjoy English. As early as Year 2, they define and use simple connectives accurately and give good examples of language and 'super sentences' used in stories. In Year 4, they use the internet to research information on different kinds of animals and present their findings with confidence to their peers. By Year 6, they read fluently and with understanding, pronouncing increasingly complex words with accuracy. Pupils have a similar interest in mathematics. In Year 3, for example, they measure accurately as a starting point to estimate length. In Year 6, they handle different kinds of data well, converting units correctly to draw diagrams to scale.
- As a result of wise use of the pupil premium funding, looked after children and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals make the same good progress as their peers. Gaps between how well these groups of pupils are doing and similar pupils across the country are most certainly narrowing. Similarly, good and often outstanding support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs ensures that these pupils, too, achieve well.
- The small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, including those who have recently joined the school from Eastern Europe and who speak English as an additional language, are making similar progress to their classmates.
- Parents believe that their children make good progress and say that the skills and commitment of teachers and learning support assistants are the key elements in bringing this about.

### The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is good in all key stages and there are examples of outstanding practice. Teachers and learning support assistants work well together in all lessons and they treat the pupils in their care with dignity and respect. Moreover, pupils speak highly of the adults who work with them and their positive views are echoed by parents who are entirely satisfied with the teaching their children receive.
- Detailed planning, strong relationships in the classroom and good on-going assessment of how well pupils are doing are the hallmarks of most lessons. In lessons where teaching is outstanding, in a Year 1 English lesson for example, pupils are fully aware of what they are going to learn; challenge for pupils of all levels of ability is exactly what they need and promotes their excellent progress. In such lessons, pupils are motivated to want to learn, really enjoy the activities and are delighted at the progress they make. Similarly, outstanding teaching in a Year 5 mathematics lesson enabled pupils to use mathematical language accurately and to explain their reasoning when converting mixed numbers to improper fractions. In both these lessons, teachers' questioning was excellent and the pace of learning was rapid.

- In a minority of lessons where aspects of teaching require improvement, there is often too much teacher talk and pupils are not required to find things out for themselves. They are, therefore, too reliant on the teacher and do not take enough responsibility for their own learning and progress. On occasions, too, more-able pupils are not challenged effectively enough to enable them to reach the levels of which they are capable.
- Teachers' use of information about how well pupils are learning is good and ensures they can plan lessons to meet pupils' individual learning needs and provide sessions, for individuals and groups, which help them catch up and make the progress they should. Indeed, the school's procedures for checking the progress of all groups of pupils are good. For example, the school has an accurate view of how well pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium are doing and also the progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.
- The marking of pupils' work is detailed and gives them accurate advice on how they can improve their work.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding**

- Pupils are very proud indeed of St Charles' Catholic Primary and represent the school outstandingly well. They welcome visitors warmly and are delighted to show them their work. Their behaviour in all areas of the school is excellent and they show their enjoyment of school life by their above average attendance and by their support for their peers and also for younger pupils and children in the Reception class. The school is a racially-harmonious community; pupils get on very well with each other and are exceptionally well mannered.
- Pupils have the highest regard for their teachers and learning support assistants who, they say, 'Listen to us and are always there if we need them.' They feel secure and have a strong awareness of how to keep themselves safe. There are regular fire practices, pupils are aware of the meaning of 'stranger danger' and they understand that use of the internet can sometimes lead to problems.
- In the opinion of pupils, bullying is rare in school and, if it occurs, is dealt with most effectively. They add, that the school takes bullying seriously and that they are taught about the dangers of bullying in all its forms. Indeed they have a perceptive understanding of nature of different kinds of bullying, including bullying related to prejudice.
- Pupils are offered a variety of responsibilities in school, for example as class monitors, prefects and members of the school council. They are also keen to offer suggestions about which charities, including Cafod, they can support. School councillors have been involved in planting trees, taking part in interviews for the new deputy headteacher post and in expressing their views at a governing body meeting.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a major strength of the school. For example, events such as 'Black History Week', the study of African art, the making of African clothes, the celebration of Chinese New year and writing letters to a school in America enhance their multi-cultural awareness. In addition, the playing of musical instruments, regular choir rehearsals and involvement in school productions promote their cultural development outstandingly well.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- Exceptional leadership from the committed and forward-looking headteacher, who is supported well by the temporary deputy headteacher and the school improvement team, has led to significant improvements in achievement, teaching and pupils' behaviour since the previous inspection. The school's leadership shows that it has an accurate understanding of how well the school is doing and is, therefore, capable of continuing to make improvements.
- Performance management arrangements are secure and salary progression is rigorous and based on classroom performance and the national Teachers Standards.
- There is an overriding emphasis on improving the quality of teaching and learning and staff at all

levels of experience and responsibility comment, 'We are now much more positive about our school and there is a much greater focus on teaching and how it fosters pupils' achievement.' Indeed, the school's involvement with the Dingle-Granby-Toxteth Collaborative has provided a range of effective training for teachers to help them improve and develop their skills. The school recognises that the sharing, across the school, of good and outstanding classroom practice is very important if pupils' achievement is to continue to accelerate.

- Systems to check the quality of teaching are secure and senior and middle leaders are actively involved in lesson observations. Staff pay tribute to the good quality of feedback they receive, including 'Next Steps', after lesson observations. Indeed, following joint lesson observations during the inspection, there were examples of outstanding and entirely accurate feedback given to staff by senior leaders.
- The local authority gives strong support to the school, through the challenging targets set by the Acute Challenge Board after the previous inspection and the appointment of a temporary deputy headteacher, who is a member of the local authority school improvement team.
- St Charles' Catholic Primary is a school in which pupils come first. Child protection and safeguarding policies and practice fully meet current requirements and the school does not tolerate any form of discrimination.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body provides good support and challenge to the school, although some members are relatively new to the role. They have a secure understanding of how pupil premium funding is spent and of the impact of this spending. Governors are aware of the quality of teaching in school and of how the leadership attempts to improve it. They observe lessons and invite staff to governing body meetings to talk about their work. They are actively involved in overseeing performance management arrangements and teachers' salary progression. They are fully aware that they could use their knowledge of school performance more effectively to hold the leadership to account with increasing rigour.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	104646
<b>Local authority</b>	Liverpool
<b>Inspection number</b>	404952

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	168
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Sarah Jennings
<b>Headteacher</b>	Chris Davey
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	19 January 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 7275830
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