

Our Lady and St Philomena's Catholic Primary School

Sparrow Hall Road, Liverpool, Merseyside, L9 6BU

Inspection dates 13–14 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Teaching in some lessons is not good enough therefore pupils' progress is not consistently good across all year groups.
- Some school systems such as rigorous checking of pupils' progress and procedures to check the quality of teaching are not fully in place.
- Progress, particularly in mathematics, is hampered by a lack of challenge. In some lessons, pupils spend too long practising skills they already have and no new learning takes place.
- Marking and feedback to pupils on their work are not consistently good across all classes and subjects. As a result, not all pupils know how to improve their learning.
- The slower progress made over time by pupils in Key Stage 1 means that attainment by the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics remains below average.

The school has the following strengths

- The acting headteacher and the two acting assistant headteachers have, in a short time, identified priorities and introduced changes that are bringing about improvements. They know the school's strengths well.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to a super start. There is much excitement in learning generated by the creative curriculum.
- The governing body has become more active in checking the school's life and work.
- There are delightful and trusting relationships between pupils and staff. Pupils feel very safe.
- Pupils are well behaved, polite and courteous. They work together very well.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 15 lessons or part lessons taught by nine teachers and the swimming instructor.
- The inspectors observed the school's work, including the school's analysis of how well it is doing and its improvement plan, documents relating to safeguarding, minutes of governors' meetings, internal and external pupil progress data and pupils' work.
- The inspectors held meetings with pupils, staff, five members of the governing body and with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of the six responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), together with the replies to a staff survey and informal conversations with several parents.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations of pupils' attainment and progress.

Inspection team

Barbara Flitcroft, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Kathleen Harris

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Our Lady and St Philomena's is a slightly smaller than average sized primary school.
- The proportion of girls at the school is slightly above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below the national average and the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is well above the national average and the proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also well above the national average.
- Since the last inspection the long-serving previous headteacher has left and an acting headteacher and two acting assistant headteachers are leading the school. New governors have been appointed to the governing body.
- The school holds Healthy Schools status, has achieved the Basic Skills Quality Mark for the third time and holds the local authority swimming award.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the proportion of good or better teaching so as to raise pupils' achievement further by:
 - planning to include new learning in all lessons
 - ensuring all pupils are suitably challenged to achieve their best
 - making sure that teachers give pupils accurate and appropriate advice on how to progress to the next steps in their learning and that pupils are given opportunities to respond to this.
- Improve the impact of school leaders by:
 - making it clearer to teachers what they need to do to make their teaching better
 - establishing fully the system that checks pupils' progress and spotting quickly those pupils who are not doing as well as expected
 - checking that these actions always lead to an improvement in pupils' progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement requires improvement overall. In the best lessons, pupils have good attitudes to their work, are enthusiastic to learn and work well on their own and with others.
- Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and abilities that are below those that are typically expected for their age. They make good progress and by the end of Reception the vast majority of children have developed skills that are nearer but still below those typically expected across all areas of learning.
- Pupils' progress through Key Stage 1 requires improvement. Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics improved slightly at the end of Year 2 in 2012 but remained significantly below national averages overall.
- The school correctly focuses on developing speaking and listening skills with younger pupils as a high priority but improvement in skill development in reading, writing and mathematics is not driven quickly enough.
- The rate at which pupils make progress improves through Key Stage 2 but is still not consistently good enough. By the end of Year 6, pupils' standards of attainment in national tests in 2012 were broadly in line with the national average in English and mathematics.
- Pupils' enthusiasm for reading and their reading skills have been improved by the school purchasing attractive new reading books and the high profile of reading across the school.
- Pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs, and those eligible for pupil premium funding achieve as well as their peers nationally because work in lessons is well planned and the dedicated work of support staff helps to meet the pupils' specific needs.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- At present, there is not enough good teaching to lead to good achievement throughout the school.
- Over time, the increasing proportion of good or better teaching helps some pupils to achieve well, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage. In the best lessons learning takes place at a good rate. The exciting learning activities keep pupils focused on their work. This provides pupils with many opportunities to become actively involved in lessons. Support staff are used well to encourage concentration, learning and progress.
- In the weaker lessons, pupils are not sufficiently challenged to make the best progress. In a mathematics lesson, for example, there were no opportunities for new learning and pupils spent too long practising the skills they have already gained. In other lessons teachers spend too long overstressing teaching points to the whole class that are only relevant to a few. In these situations some pupils lose interest and a few react with less engagement in their learning.
- In Nursery and Reception classes, phonics (letters and the sounds they make) sessions are organised effectively to interest the children and further develop their skills. In Key Stage 1, staff create exciting learning activities as part of the creative curriculum, but the lessons do not include sufficient high quality opportunities for the development of pupils' reading, writing and mathematics skills.
- Pupils say they enjoy their lessons and some of them know how close they are to meeting their targets which are pasted on the front of their exercise books in class. However, the quality of feedback that teachers provide through their marking varies. Inspectors found little evidence of pupils following up the teachers' advice, answering the teachers' questions or doing corrections in order to improve their work.
- Teaching assistants are used well and make a significant contribution to the learning of pupils including those who are disabled or with special educational needs and those identified by the

school for additional support. This enables them to make progress that is consistent with that expected nationally.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils display very positive attitudes towards school. Their attitudes to learning are mainly good and most pupils are keen to be actively engaged in their lessons. Instances of them becoming distracted or distracting others, occasionally occur in the weakest lessons.
- Pupils are polite and well mannered and relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults are exemplary. Pupils are fully aware of the different forms of bullying. They report that bullying does not happen in school. Pupils feel confident to talk to an adult if they have any concerns.
- Pupils say they feel very safe in school because the adults look after them well.
- Safeguarding requirements are met and the school site is secure. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe. For example, pupils know about internet safety.
- Pupils are very well cared for. One parent told inspectors, 'I am really happy with the school because my child is happy. He used to be behind with his learning but he is proud of himself because he is catching up now.'
- The school's support to pupils whose circumstance make them most vulnerable is very effective.
- Attendance is improving as a result of the dedicated work done by school. Attendance figures are now broadly in line with national expectations. Punctuality is also improving.
- All of the parents who gave their views praised the school for keeping children safe. They also said their children were happy to come to school. Parents would recommend this school to others.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- There is a sense of passion and common purpose among the staff and governors to improve the school's performance. Morale is high because of the new acting leadership and staff feel they have clear direction and support from the acting headteacher and the acting assistant headteachers.
- However, this team is in its infancy and its work is not yet fully impacting on raising pupils' achievement, accelerating their progress or improving the overall quality of teaching. Procedures to check pupils' progress are not sufficiently embedded to ensure staff are clear about the progress pupils are making or to spot any pupils who are falling behind.
- Teaching still has weaker aspects because after observing teaching and learning in lessons, leaders do not spell it out clearly what teachers need to do to improve. The management of teachers' performance and how this is linked to reward, through increases in teachers pay, has not in the past been linked closely enough to pupils' progress and the school's priorities.
- The local authority identified a concern in the school's performance. They, together with the Archdiocese, have provided effective support for raising standards and possible improvement of the school building.
- The school provides a secure site with checks on all staff and visitors robustly carried out on entry to the school. Safeguarding arrangements overall meet national requirements.
- Leaders have encouraged an increased focus on higher expectations and this has put the school on a firmer footing and has secured the schools ability to carry on making improvements.
- Strengths in the curriculum include enrichment activities and the good promotion of pupils' speaking and listening skills. The recently introduced creative curriculum includes a range of exciting activities. For example, pupils speak fondly of the exciting Jubilee week which was held towards the end of last term.

- The school is fortunate to have a swimming pool on site. Weekly lessons are provided for pupils from Years 2 to 6. This results in the vast majority of pupils being able to swim by the end of Year 6.
- The pupil premium has been used effectively to support and provide specific help for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, enabling them to attain similar levels to the national average.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. School collective worship fosters a strong sense of community, celebration of achievement and time for prayer and reflection. Pupils participate well in the after-school clubs on offer. The school promotes equality of opportunity in all its work while ensuring that any discrimination is quickly tackled.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - New governors have recently joined the governing body, bringing new skills to help and support the school. Governors undertake their statutory duties effectively. Governors keep themselves very well informed and ensure funds such as the pupil premium, are properly allocated. As such, they are able to challenge and support school leaders. They are actively involved in shaping the strategic direction of the school and have identified areas for improvement.

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

Unique reference number	131837
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	406455

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	227
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Eileen Kelly
Headteacher	Angela Nolan
Date of previous school inspection	10 November 2010
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