

Our Lady of the Assumption Catholic Primary School

Hedgefield Road, Liverpool, Merseyside, L25 2RW

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

- The quality of teaching is not yet consistent across all year groups and leads to uneven progress as pupils move through the school.
- Most pupils make the progress expected of them in Years 1 to 6, but not enough make better progress than this. Not enough of the more able pupils are reaching the standards they should.
- Teachers in Key Stage 2 do not always have sufficient understanding of the teaching of early reading and writing to accurately meet the needs of pupils who have difficulty in this area. As a result, these pupils sometimes find the resources provided too difficult. This slows their progress in some lessons.
- Pupils are withdrawn too often from classes for extra help with literacy. Their access to the full curriculum is, therefore, limited.
- Middle leaders and managers are still at an early stage of developing their roles. They are not yet fully involved in driving improvement in teaching and learning in their subjects across the school. This is particularly in the teaching of reading and writing in Key Stage 2.
- The school's procedures for checking and planning for the progress of pupils with special educational needs are not effective enough.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher provides clear direction for the school. In the short time he has been in post there have been significant improvements in pupils' attainment and progress in both English and mathematics. Gaps between how well different groups are doing are narrowing. Most pupils now make expected progress from their starting points.
- Attendance has improved and is now in line with the national average.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress as a result of the effective use of assessment in planning for next steps in learning.
- The systematic teaching of reading and writing in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 is effective in raising attainment and accelerating progress in these areas.
- Pupils feel safe in school and behave well.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 21 lessons, of which six were joint observations with the headteacher and deputy. These included a number of short visits to lessons and other activities conducted by teachers and trained assistants.
- Meetings were held with two groups of pupils. Inspectors also held discussions with the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors, a representative of the local authority and school staff, including middle and senior managers.
- Inspectors took account of four responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View).
- The inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a number of documents. These included the school’s own data on pupils’ current progress, the school’s self-evaluation and planning documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Judith Tolley, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Juliet Demster

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Our Lady of the Assumption is a smaller than average sized primary school.
- Pupils are predominantly of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is lower than average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also above average, although this varies from year to year.
- The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is higher than average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has a number of awards including Healthy School status and the International Schools Foundation status.
- The headteacher has been in post for two years.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and accelerate pupils' progress further in reading and writing by:
 - extending the effective and systematic teaching of reading into Key Stage 2
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to practise their reading and writing skills in lessons
 - ensuring written guidance pupils are given about how to improve their work always enables them to make rapid progress in improving their spelling and handwriting.
- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching across the school to that of the best by:
 - ensuring teachers are fully aware of the needs of pupils who have difficulty with literacy so that they can support them more effectively in lessons
 - providing the more able with the right amount of challenge
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively to solve problems and to take the initiative in lessons.
- Develop the role of subject leaders in making improvements in teaching and learning by:
 - spreading best practice in their subjects
 - planning the curriculum so that pupils develop their basic skills systematically in all subjects as they move through the school.
- Ensure that the progress of pupils with special educational needs is checked regularly and planning for the next steps in learning are matched accurately to their needs.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, standards have risen year on year and continue to rise. From low starting points, standards rise steadily but overall are below average at Year 6 in mathematics and English.
- The majority of pupils make the progress expected of them but not enough make good progress. Too few of the more able pupils are reaching the standards they should, particularly in reading and writing.
- Although less-able pupils and pupils with special educational needs make the progress expected of them, the pace of their learning sometimes slows. This is because the resources provided for them do not always give them the support they need to complete tasks without extra help or the worksheets they are given are too difficult for them to read.
- Many pupils join the school in the Nursery and Reception classes with skills that are below those typical for their age. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, particularly in developing their communication, reading and personal and social skills.
- By the end of Year 6, their attainment has improved but is below the national average in writing, reading and mathematics. Most read fairly fluently and write accurately for a variety of purposes and audiences. However some have difficulty in reading and understanding what they have read and this hampers their progress. For some pupils inaccuracies in spelling and handwriting mar their writing.
- The school's actions to raise standards and accelerate pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics are proving successful. As a result of the systematic and well-planned teaching of reading and writing in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2, attainment by the end of Year 2 has risen and is now just below the national average. Attainment in mathematics has risen rapidly and now matches that in English.
- The pupil premium funding is used effectively and gaps between the performances of different groups are closing. Pupils who have fallen behind or who have special educational needs are helped through a range of extra support in class. As a result, these pupils are making up for gaps in their learning and most make the progress expected from their starting points.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The overall quality of teaching over time requires improvement. There are examples of outstanding practice within the school but this has yet to be shared with other staff. This means that the quality of teaching is not yet consistent across the school. As a consequence, pupils' progress is uneven.
- Teachers present new ideas clearly and activities are usually well designed to capture the pupils' interest and help them to get on with their work well.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work effectively together to plan lessons so that no time is lost in organising groups. They use questioning skilfully to support and extend pupils' thinking. However, less-able pupils sometimes lack the resources they need to complete tasks themselves in the time available or rely too heavily on adults to help them, so that the pace of their learning slows. Similarly, the more able are not always given the challenge they need to do their best.
- Pupils often make the best progress when they have the opportunity to work with a partner or in small groups to explore ideas and solve problems. For instance, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson pupils worked together enthusiastically to work out the best way to furnish a new hotel and still keep within a set budget. Similarly, Year 4 pupils confidently explained their 'top tips' for multiplying two digit numbers as a result of working together to investigate this. However, opportunities are sometimes missed in other classes to promote pupils' enjoyment and independence.
- In a mathematics lesson in Year 1, pupils made very rapid progress and their confidence

increased when learning how to subtract because the activities were very well sequenced and matched accurately to their needs.

- The teaching of reading in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1 is very well planned and consistent. As a result, pupils are confident in their reading. In Key Stage 2, however, many pupils have difficulty with reading because they did not get such a good start when they were in Key Stage 1. There remain gaps in their learning and opportunities are missed to practise reading skills in lessons. In addition, teachers do not always take pupils' capabilities in reading sufficiently into account when planning their lessons. At times, for example, pupils find worksheets too difficult and have to ask for help and this slows their progress.
- Marking is regular but varies in quality throughout the school. Sometimes spelling errors are left unchecked and pupils are not always given detailed enough guidance about how to improve their writing.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour is typically good.
- Pupils are kind and considerate to each other and work and play very well together. They take responsibility very seriously and are proud of their contribution to the school through, for example, the school council and as playground buddies.
- Disruption to lessons is rare and pupils are keen to learn. When given the opportunity to work in pairs or small groups they do so sensibly and with enthusiasm. They listen attentively to others and respect each other's views.
- They have very good relationships with adults, feel very safe and both pupils and parents are confident that any poor behaviour is dealt with promptly and effectively. They are aware of the different forms of bullying that can take place and know how to deal with it, playground buddies actively helping their peers at break and lunchtimes.
- They know how to stay safe and have a good understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Extra-curricular activities, including gardening and sport are popular.
- The school has worked well with outside agencies and with parents to improve punctuality and attendance. Attendance has risen to average and persistent absence has decreased.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides very clear direction based on an accurate view of the school's performance. He is strongly supported by the deputy headteacher and, in the time he has been at the school, has succeeded in winning the confidence of staff, parents and pupils alike.
- He has acted swiftly to put systems in place to improve teaching and learning, raise standards and to accelerate progress across the school. These, particularly the systematic teaching of reading, are proving to be effective, leading to pupils' better achievement. Staff have received appropriate training in order to improve and develop their skills and the school is well-placed to improve further.
- Subject leaders have an accurate view of the school's performance and how to improve further. They are not yet fully involved in procedures for checking on the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects and in developing their subjects in conjunction with other areas of the curriculum.
- Issues identified in the previous report have been tackled successfully. The detailed analysis of pupils' progress by the senior leadership team has led to appropriate interventions for pupils and suitable training for staff.
- Systems for checking on the progress of pupils with special educational needs are not strong enough. Plans for their progress are not reviewed frequently enough and, as a consequence,

teachers are not given accurate information about how they can support these pupils in lessons.

- There are good links with the local high school as well as with the children’s centre and the local network of schools which help staff develop their skills and help pupils to make smooth transition from one stage of their education to the next.
- The curriculum is at the early stages of being reviewed and improved but pupils already talk enthusiastically about the topics they are studying. However, opportunities are missed for pupils to practise their basic skills in subjects other than English and mathematics and this slows improvement in these subjects.
- Lessons are enriched by a variety of activities, such as Spanish and themed days, as well as a range of clubs and sporting activities, visits and visitors.
- The local authority has provided effective support for the teaching of mathematics and English which has improved the quality of teaching in these subjects.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has a good understanding of the school’s strengths and areas which need to be improved. Some governors are involved in setting out long-term plans to improve the school and checking on whether or not the actions are successfully implemented. The efficiency of spending is scrutinised, for instance, the effectiveness of the use of pupil premium funding. Governors ensure that safeguarding requirements are met. They are actively involved in the life of the school and effectively hold leaders to account.

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	133337
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	402567

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	200
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	B Ness
Headteacher	Martin Burke
Date of previous school inspection	25 May 2010
Telephone number	0151 4879301
Fax number	0151 4870024
Email address	ourladyp-ao@ourlady-pri.liverpool.sch.uk

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