

St Hugh's Catholic Primary School

Earle Road, Liverpool, Merseyside, L7 6HE

Inspection dates 22–23 May 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress and achieve well from their varying starting points.
- Pupils are taught well. Some teaching is outstanding. Teachers make lessons interesting and fun for pupils. They provide well for those pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- Pupils behave well. They are eager to learn and enjoy school. They feel safe and enjoy each other's company. Pupils contribute very well to the welcoming atmosphere that exists in the school.
- The school is led and managed well. The headteacher and deputy headteacher drive good improvement. They are supported by a strong governing body. Leaders check teaching quality and achievement rigorously. Teaching performance has improved overall since the previous inspection.
- The school's federated partnership with a children's centre and a nearby nursery school are beneficial to children's learning and development and helps children in the Reception class to get off to a good start.
- The school's very strong links with parents continue to improve.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 has not improved quickly enough. Expectations of what some pupils can achieve at the end of Year 2 could be higher.
- The school's approach to the teaching of phonics (letters and sounds) does not fully cater for the needs of all pupils.
- A few families have yet to be dissuaded from taking holidays in term time, which contributes significantly to below average attendance overall.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 11 lessons, two of which were joint observations with the headteacher and one of which with the deputy headteacher and parts of other lessons.
- Meetings were held with members of staff, pupils, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- There were no responses from parents via the online questionnaire (Parent View) but inspectors spoke with a small group of parents who shared their own views about the school with the team.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and took account of a wide range of documentation including: national assessment data and the school's assessments; the school's own view of its work; local authority reports; minutes from governing body meetings; samples of pupils' work and safeguarding documents.

Inspection team

Kevin Johnson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lynne Read

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is much higher than average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children that are looked after by the local authority.
- Almost all of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above average.
- Many pupils start the school, or leave, outside the usual times and many do not speak English when they first join the school.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action is above average. A similar proportion is supported by school action plus or has a statement of special educational needs.
- The school has formed a federation with a nearby children's centre and a nursery school. The headteacher has led all three provisions since her appointment in April 2011 and they share the same governing body.
- A breakfast club is provided by the school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 by:
 - making sure that children's learning is based firmly on good assessment when they move from the Reception class to Year 1 so that their needs are fully met and learning moves on more quickly
 - expecting more from pupils, especially the more able, at the end of Year 2.
- Make sure that the school's approach to teaching phonics meets the specific needs of all pupils.
- Build on the increasingly positive links with parents to ensure that holidays are not taken during term time so that attendance will improve more rapidly.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children get off to a good start in the Reception class. Although their skills are generally below, and for some, well below those typically expected when they arrive, they are ready to learn and make good progress. The school's very strong links with the pre-school providers, through the federation, provide clear understanding of children's actual starting points and enable Reception staff to build well on the early stages of children's development. When they enter Year 1, an increasing number of children achieve broadly expected levels in all that they do, although a significant number still work below expected levels. However, some of the children have not had pre-school experience and are unable to speak English when they start school.
- Provision for pupils in Year 1 does not fully reflect the skills they bring with them from Reception. Assessment in Year 1 is not used well enough to identify the very varying needs of the pupils in this group. Some are still in need of the kinds of activities that are available in Reception and others are not given enough challenge to move their learning on quickly. Leaders are revising targets in order that learning and development in Year 1 follows on from that in the Reception and contributes to higher expectations and standards at the end of Year 2.
- Standards at the end of Year 2 have been slow to improve over time, but the picture is changing as the benefits work through the school from pre-school experience and the Reception. Reading, writing and mathematics are showing improvement. Standards rose in 2012 and currently, the school's assessments and pupils' work show that more pupils are on track to reach broadly expected levels in the current year. Given their very varied starting points, this represents good achievement. The school recognises, nevertheless, that more could be expected of some pupils over the key stage, especially the more able pupils.
- Progress is good in Years 3 to 6. All groups of pupils achieve well, including those who join the school part way through the key stage and who speak English as an additional language. Additional help for them is quickly in place and it is very effective. Pupils quickly learn English. Analysis of school assessment indicates that the majority of pupils in Years 5 and 6, for example, who joined the school during the last two years have made rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Overall, pupils progress well and attainment is on track to be broadly in line with the national expectations in English and mathematics for those pupils long enough in the school to be assessed. In 2012, all Year 6 pupils made expected progress, or better, in English, and the proportion that made expected progress in mathematics was higher than the proportion that did so nationally.
- In Year 2, reading abilities vary according to the pupils' understanding of English. Nevertheless, all enjoyed their books, which were matched well to reading ages. A pupil new to the school who speaks English as an additional language could recognise initial sounds of words, and used pictures to talk through a story showing a good level of confidence and good progress for someone struggling with the language.
- By the end of Year 6, pupils choose their reading independently from a suitably wide range. They read accurately and with good fluency and generally gain meaning from what they read. They are clear about the books they like and which authors they prefer.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress. Their learning is very clearly mapped out for them, whatever their particular needs, and the quality of teaching they receive is good.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals also make good progress. Pupils benefit from the additional teaching that the funding provides and assessments show that the group performs well in relation to others in the school.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is good with some that is outstanding. It has strengthened since the previous inspection, but is not outstanding overall because the teaching of phonics does not cater well enough for all groups, and the expected outcomes at the end of Year 2 are not ambitious enough for all pupils.
- Teachers focus well on writing and mathematics. Lessons are generally planned well and challenge pupils' abilities to get the best out of them. The opening sentence of a pupil's descriptive 'horror' writing, 'It was the cry of the ferocious demon...the haunting howl of death', was not untypical of writing produced by Year 6.
- The teaching of phonics, however, lower down the school, has limited impact because pupils are not grouped well enough according to their needs, so there are too few groups with too few adults involved in daily phonics teaching.
- All teachers and teaching assistants provide good teaching and support for pupils who speak English as an additional language, especially those new to the school. Their good learning is underpinned by good relationships, which ensure that pupils feel secure and valued by teachers. As a result, pupils settle well in their classes, gain in confidence and are very willing to take part.
- A good range of teaching methods is used to help pupils learn. These often include role play, visual support, such as pictures and video clips, and discussion between pupils. These methods are most helpful to pupils who are less confident with English because they enable them to play a full part in their lessons.
- Methods such as these were successfully used in a science lesson in which Year 5 pupils were fully active. They learned all the ways in which seeds are dispersed, and discussed and rehearsed the methods so that every pupil could describe seed dispersal using correct scientific terms by the end of the lesson.
- Teachers use technology well in lessons to help pupils learn. Electronic whiteboards and laptops help pupils to focus their attention and are a strong feature in many lessons.
- Teaching assistants contribute well to pupils' learning. They support individuals and groups of pupils effectively in lessons and help to monitor progress. Some excellent work from a teaching assistant was seen when pupils at an early stage of learning English as an additional language using modelling clay to build model people and learn the names of the main body parts. The activity was great fun and the teaching assistant continually questioned pupils about their new words to make sure they remembered them.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- Pupils behave well in all areas of the school. Their behaviour and attitudes in lessons are, at times, exemplary and this contributes to their good learning.
- Pupils are always polite and well mannered. They are mindful of one another and enjoy each other's company whatever their cultural background.
- Pupils describe their school as 'fabulous and fantastic', because they enjoy lessons so much, as well as the exciting events planned for them, such as residential trips. Nevertheless, attendance is below average, largely because of the number of holidays taken during term time. The school works very hard to encourage attendance and is making some headway, but it is slow.
- Pupils contribute well to the life of the school. The school council and eco council are active in gaining pupils' views, recycling and saving energy. The area for growing vegetables is a source of pride and the harvest goes to the school kitchen. Pupils are very willing to act as play leaders and buddies to others newly arrived at the school. Part of that duty is to offer a welcome gift to their new arrival. This reinforces the school's Christian values and strengthens the cultural harmony that is an excellent feature of the school.
- Pupils feel safe. They say that they are very well cared for and parents agree. Parents and pupils speak highly of the breakfast club and the extra care it provides. Parents also speak highly of the

school's lead in setting up initiatives such as a Credit Union, which benefit the wider community. They fully recognise the ways in which the school works to change pupils' lives for the better.

- Pupils say that there is no bullying in the school but that name-calling occurs occasionally and is dealt with quickly. School records confirm that instances are rare. Pupils are aware of how to keep safe out of school, including from potential hazards of the internet and misuse of mobile phones
- By the end of Year 6, pupils are confident about themselves and their work and well prepared to face the challenges of the next stages in their education.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher are a driving force in the school's improvement. They are supported well by a knowledgeable governing body and committed staff that work determinedly to provide the best for the pupils.
- Leaders check the impact of the school's work rigorously and have a clear view of what is done well and what is to be improved. They have identified the need to strengthen phonics teaching and to be more ambitious for attainment at Key Stage 2. Plans for the latter are already in place but it is too soon to see impact at this stage.
- Since the headteacher's appointment, there have been improvements in teaching quality, assessing pupils' progress, the quality of senior leadership, the learning environment and learning resources. All of these are now showing a positive impact on progress and achievement and demonstrate leaders' capacity as a self-improving school. This is endorsed by the local authority who provide 'light-touch' support.
- The management of teaching and learning is good. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have a very accurate overview of teaching quality. The staff is more settled following some earlier changes. Monitoring of teaching followed up by support, mentoring and well-targeted training has improved the quality overall. Teachers' performance management is guided by the Teachers' Standards and all know how increases in salary is linked to their success in improving pupils' progress.
- The headteacher's appointment as head of the children's centre and nursery, as well as the school, is an important step taken by the governing body. The school is better able to reach the community it serves and there are valuable opportunities to prepare children for entry to Reception.
- The curriculum engages pupils well. There is a good choice of after-school activities and other visits to add richness to their learning and help them to achieve well. Improvements in the provision for music and information and communication technology have improved learning opportunities and pupils also achieve well in art and Spanish.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are strongly committed to improving the life-chances of pupils in the school. They understand its importance to the wider community. They are well trained and knowledgeable about aspects of governance. For example, they scrutinise national assessment data to compare the school's performance with national trends, and regularly check school assessments to pick up on the performance of different groups in the school. Their training and the range of experience among governors equips them well to hold the school to account. The headteacher's performance management is overseen efficiently. Governors have accurate knowledge of the whole-school's teaching performance and how it affects salary structures. They check the effectiveness of pupil premium funding by monitoring the progress of potentially vulnerable pupils to ensure that they have equality of opportunity to achieve their best. Safeguarding procedures meet all government requirements.

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	104652
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	411701

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	180
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	A Glanville
Headteacher	Andrea Connearn
Date of previous school inspection	13 May 2010
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