

Holy Family Catholic Primary School

Arncliffe Road, Halewood, Liverpool, Merseyside, L25 9PA

Inspection dates 19–20 September 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		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Behaviour and safety are outstanding. Pupils are exceptionally well mannered, and their behaviour is exemplary during lessons, at play and while moving around school. Pupils enjoy learning and relish all opportunities of taking on responsibilities and helping each other.
- Pupils and their families are exceptionally proud of their school which they say is very safe and caring.
- Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher, governors and senior leadership team know the school's strengths, and exactly what it needs to do to secure even further improvements.
- The school is highly inclusive and well respected within the community and its family of schools. Senior leaders and all school staff work tirelessly to ensure that no pupil is disadvantaged by their circumstances, and that all pupils have equal access to high quality learning opportunities.
- Achievement is good. The vast majority of pupils make at least good progress throughout the school. A significant proportion make outstanding progress to achieve standards which are higher than the national average by the end of Year 6.
- Reading and mathematics are exceptionally strong subjects for a number of groups of pupils, including boys and those entitled to support through the pupil premium. Standards attained by pupils in these groups are outstanding.
- Teaching is at least good in most year groups, and in all subjects, and is increasingly outstanding. In the majority of lessons, teachers involve pupils well, and plan tasks which are set at just the right level to sufficiently challenge them and build on their skills and abilities.
- Governors are closely involved with the school and have ensured that the quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In a few lessons, activities do not match the needs of all groups of pupils, especially in Year 1 and this slows progress.
- Pupils' knowledge and understanding of the wide variety of cultures and traditions that characterise multi-cultural Britain is not as well developed as it could be.

Information about this inspection

- Seventeen lessons, as well as small group activities, parts of lessons, and phonics, (the links between letters and the sounds they make), were observed.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read from Year 2 and 4, and held discussions with three groups of pupils from across the school.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' books with the school's senior leadership team.
- Inspectors took account of 27 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and the school's own surveys of parents' views. Questionnaires completed by 19 members of staff were taken into account.
- A meeting took place with a representative from the local authority school improvement service.
- Two meetings were held with a total of four governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body.
- Various school documents were examined. These included, the school development plan, school data on pupils' progress, minutes of the governing body meetings, records of pupils' attendance, behaviour records and safeguarding documentation, monitoring records of the quality of teaching and external school evaluation reports.

Inspection team

Lenford White, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Bimla Kumari

Additional Inspector

Frances Farnorth

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives additional funding through the pupil premium is above the national 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 who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well below the national average, and few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Since the last inspection, the school has undergone significant staffing changes, including the appointment of a new deputy headteacher, full-time mentor, three additional class teachers (owing to increased numbers) and an Early Years Foundation Stage manager. The school has undergone significant refurbishments, and remodelling. This has included a new library, classrooms and administration offices.
- A breakfast club and an after-school service operate from premises adjacent to the school, these are subject to a separate inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching so that even more is outstanding by ensuring that all activities match the needs of all groups of pupils, especially those in Year 1 who are not yet fully ready for the Key Stage 1 curriculum.
- Further enhance pupils' knowledge and understanding of life in multicultural Britain through providing as many opportunities as possible for them to learn about a wider variety of cultures and traditions.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the nursery with skills and abilities which are consistently lower than those expected for their age, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics. Excellent provision, good quality teaching and exceptionally strong relationships with parents and the school's adjacent nursery and children's centre ensure that children get off to a good start, and make at least good progress.
- Owing to teachers' first-class subject knowledge, and their high expectations as to what pupils can achieve, pupils' performance in reading and mathematics at the end of Year 6 in 2013 was exceptional. Standards attained by boys, for example, were outstanding.
- The majority of pupils make at least good progress through Key Stage 1, however, slower progress is made by those pupils who are not yet quite ready for the Year 1 curriculum.
- The school ensures that the progress of all pupils is closely monitored, and that support is provided, including small group and one-to-one teaching, precisely when it is needed. School leaders are careful to ensure that such support is available to pupils of all abilities, including the most able.
- The school ensures equality of opportunity between different groups of pupils, and though the overall performance of boys is slightly above that of girls, there are no significant differences and both groups' achieve standards which are better than those found nationally in all subjects.
- The whole-school focus on writing, including providing adult learning opportunities for parents and additional homework and after-school clubs has helped to ensure improvement in pupils' attainment, especially at Key Stage 1, which is now above the national average.
- Pupils entitled to support through pupil premium funding make good progress overall and outstanding progress in reading and mathematics. Although they are currently, on average, two terms behind their classmates, their attainment at the end of Year 6 is significantly higher than similar groups of pupils nationally.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs benefit from the tailored support they receive from well-trained teachers. Owing to this and effective monitoring and tracking, their progress is outstanding in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school has too few pupils from minority ethnic groups, or who speak English as an additional language to make national comparisons meaningful. However, inspection evidence reveals that there are no significant variations between their achievement and that of their peers in school.
- The schools enhanced focus on teaching phonics, (the sounds that letters make) including specialist teacher training, has improved pupils' performance. The proportion of Year 1 pupils who met national screening check requirements in 2013 was greater than the national average. Pupils read exceptionally well for inspectors and enjoyed helping each other to develop new reading skills.

The quality of teaching is good

- The majority of teaching observed during the inspection was good, with much outstanding.
- The majority of teachers have exceptionally high expectations of pupils, especially in mathematics which is exceptionally well taught. Teachers provide regular challenges at the start of lessons in order to 'get pupils grey cells working' and set a fast pace. This was the case in a brisk Year 5 lesson where pupils spent five minutes eagerly competing with each other to answer 50 questions correctly in order to meet the 50 Club challenge, and ultimately enter into the 50 Club Hall of Fame.
- All lessons are purposeful and start with clear learning objectives which are shared with pupils at the beginning of the lessons. Typically, pupils assess whether or not they think lesson objectives

have been met at the end of lessons, and share their thoughts with their class-mates.

- The vast majority of pupils know their learning targets and what they need to do in order to reach them. All work is marked and up-to-date, and teachers give regular feedback to pupils to ensure that they continually improve. A scrutiny of books revealed that pupils regularly assess their own work and comment on what their teachers have to say about it.
- In the best lessons, all pupils are given opportunities to work independently and find things out for themselves. This is particularly the case in outstanding practice observed in Nursery and Reception classes where children are regularly challenged to find things out for themselves, be involved in activities which are of interest to them and organise their own learning.
- Planning between teachers and sharing of good practice is a strength. Examples of this were observed during the inspection in two good Year 5/6 mathematics lessons where teachers ensured that all pupils made good progress and developed their understanding of methods for identifying number factors. Similarly, two Year 3/4 teachers planned effectively to ensure that all pupils could accurately identify the characteristics of formal play scripts.
- Teaching assistants are very well trained and work extremely well in partnership with teachers to deliver small 'focus group' activities in English and mathematics, usually for lower ability children.
- However, in some lessons, activities do not match the learning needs and interests of all groups of pupils. This is particularly the case for pupils in Year 1 some of whom would benefit in continuing to learn through play and investigative activities similar to those in the Reception Year.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is exemplary. All pupils, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, show a high level of concern for each other, and a desire to be helpful. Pupils are courteous and respectful and have a well developed understanding of how to stay safe, particularly when using the internet or electronic forms of communication such as hand-held games and mobile phones.
- Pupils are curious and very respectful, they are well mannered and come to school impeccably dressed. They take great delight in their own achievement, and in the achievement of their class-mates. This was exemplified in a whole-school celebration assembly where every pupil listened in silence until it was time to applaud good attendance and their class-mates achievements during the week.
- The overwhelming majority of parents who completed Parent View, and a much larger sample who completed the school's own questionnaire, indicated that they thought behaviour was outstanding most of the time and that their children were always safe in school. The inspection survey of teachers views revealed that all teachers thought that behaviour was mostly outstanding, and never less than good.
- Pupils are aware of different forms of bullying, which they say is rare at school. During discussions, older pupils showed a very mature concern for anyone who might be treated differently because of their beliefs or how they looked, and indicated that they would always tell an adult if they saw anyone treated unfairly. Younger pupils said that they felt 'super-safe' in all areas of the school and that there were always adults around to help them if needed.
- All pupils relish the opportunity of taking on board responsibilities either as prefects, playground buddies or house captains. School councillors are especially active and have recently enjoyed writing to the local police station to thank officers for helping them to keep safe, and to the local council explaining why traffic restriction measures, such as yellow zigzag lines, need to be placed outside of the school to improve safety.
- The school has well-planned programmes to educate pupils about safety. These include inviting visitors from, for example, the fire brigade to lead assemblies focusing on promoting fire awareness, and exploring health and relationships with the school's learning mentor through circle time.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Exemplary leadership ensures that the school is well known and well respected both within the community and within its family of schools. The school is highly regarded for its work in a number of areas, including the Early Years Foundation Stage, mathematics, special educational needs and religious education.
- The headteacher, supported by a very able senior leadership team, a highly dedicated team of teachers and teaching assistants, and a well-informed governing body, is fully committed to ensuring that no pupil is disadvantaged because of their family background or circumstances.
- Senior leaders demonstrate a keenness to identify and support leadership potential within the teaching staff, as evidenced by its support for two members of staff currently on the National College for School Leadership Middle Leaders Development Programme. Evidence gathered during the inspection indicated that this support is helping the school to continually improve the quality of teaching and learning.
- All staff who completed the inspection questionnaire spoke in the highest possible terms of the school's leadership, and emphasised how proud they felt to be a part of the 'school family' and how appreciative they were of professional development and training opportunities.
- All staff development opportunities are closely linked to individualised teacher targets. Middle managers who spoke to inspectors talked of their 'leadership challenges' to, for example, improve pupils' performance in phonics, improve writing opportunities across the school and maintain outstanding performance in mathematics.
- Excellent opportunities are provided for pupils to practise their skills in reading, writing and mathematics across all subjects and in a range of situations outside of school. Teachers have been especially innovative in linking writing tasks to visits to local places of interest, including churches, and to writing 'letters of purpose' to, for example, 10 Downing Street.
- Most aspects of the school's personal, social, health and education curriculum are outstanding. However, pupils' knowledge and understanding of the variety of cultures and traditions that characterise multi-cultural Britain is not as well developed as it could be.
- The local authority recognises the good standard of education attained by pupils at the school, the many outstanding aspects of its work and its good standing within the community and its family of schools. As a result of this, it provides 'light-touch' support.
- Leaders have carefully planned how to spend the new government funding for physical education and sport so that it further enhances the quality of its physical education teaching and ensures more pupils participate in sporting activities.
- Safeguarding procedures are followed closely and meet requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors ensure that their training is up to date and that they have a good understanding of how well the school is performing, and what it needs to do to become even better. They are committed to ensuring that no pupil who requires additional help with their learning misses out on any aspect of school life. They know that the pupil premium funding is making a difference to eligible pupils because they spend time in school and receive regular reports on their progress. Governors know that overall teaching is good and improving because they receive regular reports on the quality of teaching and come into school to talk to teachers and look at pupils' work.
 - Governors challenge any staff underperformance through rigorous performance review procedures, and make sure that any pay awards are linked to stretching targets. They also ensure that the headteacher is held to account, and know that the school has been successful in providing adult learning opportunities for parents in order for them to support their children with literacy and numeracy and that writing and overall achievement has improved.

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	104468
Local authority	Knowsley
Inspection number	426213

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	314
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Clare Cooke
Headteacher	Carroll Hamilton
Date of previous school inspection	24 September 2008
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