

Our Lady of the Assumption Catholic Primary School

Hedgefield Road, Liverpool, Merseyside, L25 2RW

Inspection dates 18–19 June 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	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.

- From very low starting points, pupils learn quickly in reading, writing and mathematics and, by the end of Year 6, attainment overall is in line with that seen nationally.
- Teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now consistently good and some is outstanding. The school is constantly seeking to bring about further improvement.
- Pupils behave well in class and around school. They want to learn and do well. Lessons run smoothly with little disruption.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage provides a happy and secure environment, which enables children to settle in quickly and make a good start to their education.
- The school's leadership, supported by a united staff team, has high ambitions for the school and a quiet determination to provide a high quality education for its pupils.
- Systems for checking on the progress of individual pupils and pupil groups are rigorous and robust. Pupils' achievement, as a result, continues to improve.
- The school caters very well for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils. The curriculum is rich in opportunities for pupils to widen their experience, practise key skills and develop their talents.
- Governance is good. It is well informed and holds the school to account for its actions.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of teaching does not yet result in pupils making outstanding progress.
- Pupils' work does not always match the abilities of different pupils groups and provide the appropriate level of challenge to enable them to learn as quickly as they could.
- Pupils are not routinely given the opportunity to respond to the high-quality marking and benefit fully from the guidance it provides to enable them to improve their work.
- Teaching assistants are not always deployed as effectively as they could be to enable them to support pupils in their learning.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching in 17 lessons, including two joint observations with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. In addition, inspectors made some short visits to classes and other parts of the school to observe behaviour and safety and to hear some pupils read.
- A range of meetings was held with the headteacher. Inspectors also held meetings with senior leaders and middle managers, subject leaders, staff, representatives of the governing body, a representative of the local authority, a group of parents and a group of pupils. Inspectors also talked informally to pupils on the playground, as they came into the school, around the school and during lessons.
- The inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at a range of documents, including the school's own information about pupil progress; school improvement planning; the monitoring of teaching and learning and teacher performance; organisation of the curriculum; safeguarding information; headteacher reports; local authority reports; and the minutes of governing body meetings.
- There were insufficient responses posted on the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) for them to be analysed, but inspectors looked at 44 responses to the school's own survey of parents' views carried out in autumn 2013. They also considered 24 responses to the inspection questionnaire for staff.

Inspection team

Peter Martin, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David Smith

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average sized primary school.
- The very large majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority groups is below the national average and those for whom English is an additional language is well below that seen nationally.
- The proportions of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action, as well as those supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are above average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium is twice the national average. The pupil premium is the additional funding provided by the government for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school has achieved Healthy Schools status and the Bronze National School Games Kitemark.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- To improve teaching from good to outstanding and further raise attainment by:
 - ensuring that pupils, particularly the most able, are consistently provided with the appropriate level of challenge to enable them to make more rapid progress
 - building on the high quality marking of pupils' work by routinely giving pupils the opportunity to act upon the guidance given and to make improvements or corrections to their work
 - ensuring that the teaching assistants are always effectively deployed to support pupils' learning and that they provide the appropriate balance between support and challenge for pupils, especially those with special educational needs.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- From very low starting points, all groups of pupils make good progress in all key stages and leave at the end of Year 6 with attainment overall in reading, writing and mathematics that is broadly in line with that seen nationally.
- Children start school in the nursery with skills and knowledge which are well below those typical for their age. A very well organised, vibrant setting, which caters very well for the children's needs, enables them to settle in quickly and make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes. When pupils start Year 1, their skills have improved and are closer to, but still below, average.
- In recent years, progress in Key Stage 1 has been slower than in other parts of the school. In Year 2 in 2013, standards in reading, writing and mathematics were below average, especially in mathematics. However, the school has taken effective action to address this; reviewed its practices and strengthened the quality of teaching and support. Pupils are now making good progress in Key Stage 1, with current attainment improved and close to the national average.
- Attainment in Key Stage 2 has been steadily improving over the past three years. In 2012 and 2013, the proportion of pupils making the expected rate of progress or doing better than this has been at least in line, and sometimes better than the proportions that do so nationally, especially in writing. The school's own information about pupil progress and inspection evidence shows that improvement in Key Stage 2 is being sustained, with pupils in all year groups now making at least good progress.
- Standards in English are rising. The school's focus on improving writing across the school through a range of actions, including improvements to teaching and the quality of marking, resulted in a significant improvement in standards of attainment seen both at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 in 2013. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 at the end of Year 6 for example, was much higher than average.
- Pupils achieve well in reading. By the end of Year 1, an above average proportion of pupils achieves the nationally expected standard in linking letters with the sounds they make (phonics). School data and inspection evidence show that the school's greater focus on reading this year is paying dividends; attainment in reading is rising further in all year groups.
- Across the school, achievement in mathematics has also improved. In Key Stage 1, as a result of better teaching, standards of attainment currently in Year 2 are now much closer to average.
- The most-able pupils are generally challenged well in lessons and make good progress or better. An increasing proportion of pupils is, as a result, reaching the higher levels of attainment than previously. There are, however, some occasions when teaching is too cautious and does not allow them to progress quickly enough on to more challenging work.
- Good use of additional government funding enables the high proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium to achieve well. In Year 6 in 2013 for example, the attainment of eligible pupils, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, was about one term behind that of other pupils in the year group. This gap is narrower than the gap seen between these two groups nationally and reflects the school's success in promoting equality of opportunity.
- The small proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is also doing as well as other pupils in the school and similar pupils nationally.
- The school caters very well for pupils who have educational special needs, some of whom have very complex needs. Their progress is watched carefully and additional well-targeted support is ensuring that they are making good progress from their different starting points.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is good and improving because senior leaders and staff are united in the desire to continually improve its quality and have effective systems in place to bring this about.

- Teachers plan well to make their lessons interesting and exciting. They have good subject knowledge and ask pupils challenging questions to extend their thinking and deepen their understanding. However, on occasions, the work set is too hard or too easy for different pupil groups. In some instances, the most-able pupils are kept back unnecessarily when they could move on to the next stage in their learning more quickly. When this happens, the pace of their learning slows.
- Good relationships between staff and pupils are a real strength of the school. Teachers speak politely and respectfully to their pupils, using praise very well to encourage them to do their best. Pupils like their teachers; they listen to them carefully and try hard in their lessons.
- Pupils say they enjoy their lessons and that they are fun. They usually find the work challenging and are very happy with the range of after-school activities on offer.
- The learning of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is promoted well through a wide range of activities that both enable them to learn directly alongside adults, as well as taking part in activities they can choose for themselves, such as, a mini-beast hunt in the outdoor area. These activities are planned and thought through well to provide good links in learning. Two children were very proud to show to an inspector the paper butterflies they had made and decorated.
- The linking of subjects together is a strength of the school. For example, the descriptive writing of an Egyptian tomb completed by Year 6 in the morning during the inspection was followed later in the day with an activity to mummify tomatoes as part of a science investigation.
- The teaching of writing is also now a real school strength. Pupils are given lots of opportunities to write in different styles and different subjects about things they find interesting and, as a result, standards in writing are continually rising.
- Pupils' work is marked to a high standard. The marking tells pupils what they have achieved and what they need to do to improve further. However, pupils are not routinely given the opportunity to respond to this advice, to make improvement or to correct their work and consequently, not all pupils get the full benefit from it.
- In some classes, teaching assistants are very effectively deployed to support pupils in their learning. For example in the Nursery, teachers and teaching assistants work very skilfully and flexibly together, enabling them to respond effectively and quickly to children's needs. However, this is not the case in all classes. In some instances, teaching assistants tend to do the task for the pupils, rather than helping them to do it for themselves.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The school provides a happy and caring environment for its pupils, where staff and pupils show mutual respect. Consequently, pupils enjoy school and are happy to attend. They enjoy their lessons and make good progress.
- The school sets clear expectations of behaviour, which are fully understood by its pupils.
- Many pupils show an excellent attitude to their learning. They want to do well and listen carefully to their teachers and to each other. Consequently, most lessons run smoothly and pupils learn quickly with very little disruption. Only when the pace of the learning slows down do some pupils become restless and less attentive.
- Pupils behave well in and around the school and the older pupils set an excellent example of behaviour for the younger pupils. The school council is very motivated and plays an active role in the school. They contribute a lot to this cohesive and harmonious community.
- The school keeps rigorous records of behaviour incidents and these confirm that, although incidents do occur, they are not frequent and that the school deals with them effectively. Pupils, parents and staff all confirm that this is the case.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils feel safe at school and feel well cared for by all the adults. Pupils have a good understanding of the different forms of bullying (including cyber-bullying) and what to do to keep themselves safe. This is because the school provides appropriate activities such as 'Stranger Danger' and 'Bikeability and regular lessons

about the dangers posed by Internet use.

- Parents are very happy with the level of education and care their children receive. They appreciate the availability of the headteacher and the staff and their willingness to respond quickly to any concerns they may have. One parent said that, originally, when seeking a school place for his child this school had not been his first choice, but now he would not want his children to go anywhere else.
- The school works very hard to promote good attendance. A range of incentives, such as weekly cup competitions and rewards for good attendance, are in place. Consequently, it is improving and is approaching the national average.
- School procedures for keeping pupils safe are robust and all statutory requirements are met.

The leadership and management are good

- School leaders have high ambitions for their school. They know what they want their school to be and have a quiet determination to achieve their goals. They and the staff are united in their desire to make the school the best it can be.
- Arrangements for checking on the quality of teacher performance and pupil progress are thorough and robust. A strong focus on improving the quality of teaching, supported by well-targeted, quality additional training for teachers, has resulted in teaching, although not yet outstanding, being consistently good and improving.
- Rigorous systems for checking on pupils' progress are used very effectively to judge the school's performance and to identify new priorities for improvement. They are also used to determine how well different pupil groups are doing and identify any pupils who may need additional support. This is ensuring that all pupils groups make good progress.
- The school plans for improvement are extensive and thorough and reflect the school leaders' drive to bring about swift change. These plans have well thought-out priorities and actions to bring about improvement and the success of these actions is checked regularly.
- The role of middle leaders, including subject leaders, has been much enhanced since the last inspection. They have rigorous procedures to check on standards in their subjects and plan effectively to improve things further. For example actions taken to improve writing have resulted in significant improvement in the quality of pupils' writing in all year groups and it is now a strength of the school.
- The school's curriculum provides a rich and varied curriculum for its pupils that widens their experiences, nurtures their thirst for knowledge develops their talents and interests. The school has a strong commitment to equal opportunities for all its pupils and ensures that no pupil is denied the opportunities.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is excellent. It encourages them to have respect for themselves and each other; for the views and beliefs of others; to develop an appreciation of music and art; and provides opportunities for them to develop their own talents and skills.
- The primary school sport funding has been used effectively to employ high-quality specialist coaches to enhance the provision for its pupils; more opportunities for after-school sport and training for staff to ensure that quality physical education can be sustained in the future.
- Previously the school has been provided with substantial support by the local authority, including its inclusion on the Improving Schools Programme. However, such has been the success of school leaders in moving the school forward that this level of support is being reduced to light-touch support only.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance of the school is good and holds the school to account effectively for its actions.
 - Governors are highly committed and provide a good balance between support and challenge for leaders. New governors have been carefully recruited to provide additional expertise to help the governing body to become more effective. They are very well informed through

detailed and frequent headteacher reports and their own procedures for checking on school performance. They have a detailed knowledge of pupil progress and the quality of teaching. They ensure that any pay progression is closely linked to teacher performance. They also keep a watchful eye on the pastoral needs of the pupils and ensure that all arrangements for keeping them safe are robust. School finances are managed effectively. Governors ensure that pupil premium and additional sport funding are used effectively and check on the impact they have had on pupil standards.

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	442402

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	224
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bernadette Ness
Headteacher	Martin Burke
Date of previous school inspection	13 November 2012
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