

Our Lady of Good Help Catholic Primary School

South Drive, Wavertree, Liverpool, Merseyside, L15 8JL

Inspection dates 1–2 July 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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

- Pupils do not make consistently good progress in Key Stage 2. As a result, standards by the end of Year 6 are not as high as they should be, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- Not all teachers have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. Sometimes they plan work that is too easy or too hard, particularly for the most able pupils.
- Sometimes pupils wait too long in lessons to tackle more demanding work.
- Marking does not always help pupils improve their work and teachers do not always check pupils act on the guidance provided.
- Teaching assistants are not always used well enough in lessons to aid pupils' progress.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to apply and improve their writing and mathematics skills in other subjects.
- Plans to improve teaching and pupils' achievement are not clear enough in how their success will be judged.
- Senior and middle leaders do not make enough checks on whether their actions have worked successfully to improve teaching and achievement.
- Teachers are not yet held fully to account for ensuring pupils make good progress.
- Middle leaders and governors are not provided with enough information on the progress of all groups of pupils to enable them to check whether they are achieving well enough.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and senior leaders share a strong determination to improve the school. Some successful steps have been taken in improving the quality of teaching, the progress of pupils and attendance.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 are taught well and make good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils enjoy learning, behave well and feel safe. They have positive relationships with the staff which boosts their self-esteem well.
- Governors are well focused and provide effective support and challenge to the school.
- The school works closely with the local authority and other schools to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 16 parts of lessons and looked at pupils' work in books and examined records of their attainment and progress. They also listened to pupils read in Years 2 and 6 and discussed with them their views about reading.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and reviewed a wide range of documentation, including the school development plan and documents related to pupils' attendance, behaviour and safeguarding.
- The inspectors met with teachers, groups of pupils, a representative of the local authority, and members of the governing body. A telephone conversation was held with the Chair of the Governing Body.
- The inspectors took into account the views expressed by staff in the eight voluntary questionnaires they returned.
- Inspectors considered the 17 responses to Parent View, the Ofsted online questionnaire, the school's own surveys of parents' views and spoke with several parents at the start of the school day.

Inspection team

Chris Maloney, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Sandy Dixie

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than most other primary schools.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is smaller than average and includes a few who are learning to speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support through pupil premium funding is above average. This additional government funding is provided for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which is the minimum expectation for pupils' achievement in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- There have been significant changes in staffing since the school's last inspection, including new appointments to the teaching staff and teachers changing classes.
- The school is a member of the local 'South Central 1 Consortium' of schools and the '5 Ways Learning Network'.
- The headteacher is a Local Leader of Education.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to at least good and so ensure pupils make consistently good or better progress, particularly in writing and mathematics in Key Stage 2, by:
 - making sure all teachers consistently plan work that makes pupils of all abilities think hard, particularly the most able
 - ensuring that pupils are moved on to more demanding work in lessons as soon as they are ready
 - ensuring marking consistently makes it clear to pupils how to improve their work and pupils are given opportunities to show they can
 - ensuring teachers make the best use of teaching assistants throughout the whole lesson in helping pupils make the best possible progress
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to use and extend their writing and mathematical skills in a range of subjects.
- Improve leadership and management further by:
 - ensuring actions planned by leaders at all levels are crystal clear in how their impact will be measured, particularly in the learning and progress of pupils
 - ensuring senior and middle leaders have more opportunities to check the success of their actions in improving the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils so that they can take precise actions to bring about necessary improvements
 - ensuring that middle leaders and governors better check whether achievement is good enough by regular access to detailed information on the progress of all groups of pupils across school
 - ensuring that leaders and governors hold teachers more rigorously to account via their pay progression for pupils making better than expected progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- The achievement of pupils requires improvement because over time their progress is not consistently good and is far too variable between classes and subjects in Key Stage 2. Pupils have not been reaching the standards they are capable of by the time they leave Year 6, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- The skills of children starting the Early Years Foundation Stage varies year-on-year, sometimes below and sometimes similar to those typical for their age. However, they make good progress from their different starting points and are becoming increasingly well prepared for Year 1.
- Standards by the end of Year 2 have been below average overall and in reading, writing and mathematics. Indeed, standards fell in 2013 to be significantly below average overall and well below in reading and mathematics. Despite an increase in the proportion of pupils achieving Level 2 and above in reading, well-below average proportions of pupils reached the higher Level 3 in reading, writing and mathematics. However, the picture for current pupils in Year 2 is much brighter. Their attainment has risen sharply to be close to the national average. More pupils are working at the higher levels, especially in reading and mathematics.
- Test results at the end of Year 6 show that standards have been variable over time. Although improving to close to the national average in 2012 in reading, writing and mathematics, standards declined in 2013 to below average overall and well below in mathematics. Even though the proportions of pupils achieving Level 4 and above in reading and writing improved, not enough pupils reached the higher Level 5 in reading and mathematics.
- Not enough pupils made the progress expected of them in mathematics or made better than expected progress in reading and especially in mathematics.
- The work of current pupils in school and checks on the records of their progress show that, although pupils are now achieving well in Key Stage 1 due to higher expectations and improved teaching, the progress of pupils in Key Stage 2 is still not good enough. Senior leaders know that much more needs to be done to address the inconsistent quality of teaching which is leading to variability in progress evident across classes, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- The progress of the most able pupils requires improvement because work is not always demanding enough to challenge their thinking or stretch their abilities.
- Pupils enjoy reading at home and in school. Standards in reading are rising steeply in Key Stage 1 because of much improved teaching of reading and the good quality support targeted for those who need it. In 2013, the proportion of pupils in Year 1 that reached the expected standard in the screening check of their understanding of the sounds that letters make was below expected nationally, but current checks show standards are rising.
- Pupils' writing is not improving quickly enough, reflecting inconsistencies in teaching and the guidance offered to pupils on how to improve their work, particularly in Key Stage 2. Pupils have too few opportunities to practice and extend their writing skills across subjects. The written work of the most able pupils lacks the use of grammar and richness of ideas and vocabulary expected.
- Although calculation skills are improving, pupils do not have enough opportunities to apply their mathematical skills in problem solving or in other subjects and this is hindering their progress.
- In Year 6 in 2013, the gap in the attainment of pupils supported by the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, compared to their peers, closed significantly. Attainment was similar to that of the others in their year group overall; one and a half terms above in mathematics, one and a half terms behind in reading and a term behind in writing. Across the year groups currently in school, the gaps in attainment of those supported through the pupil premium group and the other pupils in school are closing. This reflects the school's commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity for every pupil.
- Disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and the few pupils who speak English as an additional language make similarly inconsistent progress as others in school. However, the progress of current pupils is improving due to early identification of their learning needs and well-focused extra support from skilled teaching assistants.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Despite recent improvements, teaching has not been good enough over time, especially in Key Stage 2. This is reflected in observations during the inspection, checks on the school's own records of pupil progress and their work in books.
- Improvements are evident in the attention that teachers give to planning for pupils of different abilities. However, the work set is not always challenging enough, particularly for the most able pupils. Pupils often wait too long for more demanding work or do unsuitably mundane tasks that merely fill time. This slows the progress they make.
- Skilled teaching assistants are used well to support individuals and groups of pupils, particularly the less able. However, some teachers do not always use them well enough throughout the whole lesson resulting in missed opportunities to help pupils make the most of their learning.
- The quality of marking is showing signs of improvement and there are some good examples in Key Stage 1 of precisely how pupils should improve their work. However, this good practice is not yet seen in all classes in school and teachers do not consistently check that the guidance they are giving is being acted upon by pupils.
- Staff take every opportunity to build strong relationships with pupils who they know well and care about. This helps boost pupils' self-esteem, good behaviour and mutual respect.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught well in a caring environment where their love of learning is nurtured and their learning needs supported. As a result, they make good progress from their individual starting points.
- Pupils in Key Stage 1 are now learning well because teaching is usually good. Activities planned for pupils are generally well matched to their different abilities. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to ask searching questions to deepen their understanding and check on pupils' learning so that they are given more demanding work as soon as they are ready. Pupils are well motivated to try their best because expectations are high.
- Year 2 was a hive of activity as pupils were challenged to apply their knowledge of different calculation strategies to solve mathematical word problems. The teacher and her assistant provided highly motivational support and challenge to pupils of different abilities that made them think hard and try out ideas. This led to pupils, including the most able, sustaining their concentration and enjoyment in learning and making good progress throughout the lesson.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They enjoy school, have positive attitudes to learning and behave well in lessons and during break times. This is reflected in their improving punctuality. Although current attendance is below average, it is recovering quickly from its dip in 2013 having improved to solidly average in 2012.
- Pupils are courteous and welcoming to visitors. They play harmoniously and are considerate to each other. They enjoy learning with and about pupils from different backgrounds and cultures. A typical pupil comment was, 'We are all people, its ok to hold different beliefs as long as you don't hurt others.'
- Pupils have positive relationships with staff. A typical pupil comment was, 'Staff are really kind and you learn things while having fun.' Pupils say they enjoy doing challenging work.
- Sometimes, when learning does not fully meet their needs, a few pupils lose interest in their learning and occasionally disturb others in class.
- Pupils really enjoy the range of opportunities they have to take responsibilities in school such as being a school councillor. Pupils particularly enjoy helping others through raising funds for Comic Relief or the local Nugent Care Society.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. They know a lot about staying safe, especially on the internet. As one pupil said, 'Don't tell people your personal information'. Pupils have a secure understanding of different types of bullying, including prejudice-based. They say that bullying is not an issue as it rarely happens, but are confident staff sort it out fairly.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because over time not enough has been done to secure consistently good progress for all groups of pupils across the school. The quality of teaching has not been consistently good enough.
- The headteacher's passion and drive for improvement is shared by other senior leaders. Some successful improvements have been made to the quality of teaching, especially in Key Stage 1. The headteacher and governors have tackled underperformance in teaching head on and managed the significant changes in teachers and teaching responsibilities well. The attendance of pupils is recovering to its improved level following the dip in 2013.
- The quality of teaching is checked, and guidance and support given to teachers on how to improve. Opportunities for staff to access specific training have been strengthened.
- The progress of all pupils is now being checked more regularly so that actions can be taken to support those in danger of underachieving. This reflects the school's commitment to giving all pupils equal opportunities to learn. However, not all pupils are yet making enough progress, particularly the most able, and senior leaders have not yet ensured that teachers are fully held to account via their pay progression for pupils making more than expected progress.
- Although actions planned by leaders at all levels to improve the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils are detailed, they are not clear enough in how the success of their impact will be judged, especially on the learning and progress of pupils.
- Senior and middle leaders do not check regularly enough to see if the actions they are taking are working well enough in improving the quality of teaching and learning and the achievement of pupils. This is hindering their ability to take decisive actions to bring about improvements.
- Sufficient time is allocated to English and mathematics and subjects are linked together creatively in themes, such as when Years 5 and 6 worked on a CSI (Crime Scene Investigation) week linked to science work. Pupils enjoy learning musical instruments such as guitars, flutes or clarinets. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to use and extend their writing and mathematical skills in a range of subjects.
- Strong partnership working such as with the local '5 Ways Learning Network' of schools, has enabled teachers to visit other schools to observe learning and teaching. The school has also received effective support from the local authority in managing changes to staff and improvements in teaching and learning. A strong partnership with Liverpool University led to them helping the children to design and build the school garden.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils have good opportunities to learn about the local community such as visiting the local Jewish high school to see an exhibition on Anne Frank. There are good opportunities for pupils to learn about other cultures and traditions through multicultural weeks or visits to the local Synagogue.
- There are positive links with parents and the local community. Good use is made of primary school sports funding to use skilled coaches to improve the skills of staff and to give pupils access to sports like Water Polo.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The Chair of the Governing Body has successfully led improvements in strengthening the support and challenge they offer to school leaders. Governors are passionate and determined to make the school the best it can be and have taken some decisive action to address underperforming teachers. They visit regularly and work hard to get to know the school well. They have good links with teachers and with classes. Governors monitor the school's budget well and ensure any extra funding for sport or the pupil premium is used effectively and its' impact tracked carefully. They make good use of the information they are given but as yet do not receive enough information on how all groups of pupils are progressing to judge if teaching and achievement are good enough. Governors make sure that safeguarding meets 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	104670
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	443925

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	158
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nick Henwood
Headteacher	Sue Horncastle
Date of previous school inspection	24 November 2010
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