

St Aloysius Catholic Primary School

Twig Lane, Huyton-with-Roby, Liverpool, L36 2LF

Inspection dates 16–17 June 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The school is well led by the headteacher who, since her appointment, has quickly established a culture of high expectation and ambition. Her decisive actions have brought about significant and rapid improvement in pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Children get off to a good start when they join the school, ensuring that by the time they leave Reception they are well prepared for their transition into Key Stage 1.
- Pupils are well behaved and get along with one another very well. They are enthusiastic learners who enjoy coming to school and relish the challenges that their teachers set them in lessons.
- Pupils achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics as well as in other subjects such as history and art.
- The rich and vibrant curriculum gives pupils the opportunity to develop their skills, knowledge and social, moral, spiritual and cultural understanding across a broad range of subjects.
- The teaching of mathematics is a significant strength of the school. Pupils are increasingly developing their number skills to solve problems and investigations.
- Senior leaders and governors ensure that teachers, including those who are newly qualified, receive effective training and support. As a result, the quality of teaching is good.
- Pupils and parents agree that the school keeps children safe. The relentless work of the learning mentor has ensured that the proportion of pupils absent from school has reduced significantly.
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It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Governors do not effectively check the impact that the pupil premium funding has on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.
- Not all teachers have the highest expectations of what pupils can achieve in their lessons.
- In a small number of classes, pupils' achievement in reading is not as high as in writing and mathematics.
- Not all statutory policies are systematically reviewed and regularly updated.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed lessons in each class of the school, including one joint observation with the headteacher and one with the deputy headteacher. They also observed several small group support sessions that help pupils to catch up in reading, writing and mathematics. On the second day of the inspection, several classes were off-site visiting the theatre.
- Discussions were held with senior leaders, members of staff, three representatives of the governing body, one representative of the local authority and a representative of the Archdiocese of Liverpool.
- Inspectors examined a wide range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils informally during the school day and observed them during playtime, lunch and before and after school. They also met formally with a small group of pupils.
- Inspectors heard a number of pupils read.
- Inspectors took note of displays around the school and the work in the outdoor areas.
- The school's tracking of pupils' progress was examined and a work scrutiny with senior leaders was carried out.
- Inspectors spoke to a small number of parents at the start of the day. There were insufficient responses logged on Parent View, the online questionnaire, for inspectors to analyse. Inspectors, however, took note of the responses to the school's recent parental questionnaire as well as the 22 responses they received to the inspection questionnaire for school staff.

Inspection team

Martin Bell, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Nigel Cromey-Hawke

Additional Inspector

Sheila O'Keeffe

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Aloysius Catholic Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher and deputy headteacher have been appointed. There have also been significant changes to teaching staff.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium funding is above the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage; the proportion of pupils for whom English is not, or believed not to be, their first language is well below the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- There were no pupils at the time of the inspection educated off-site in alternative provision.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is well above the national average.
- The school has a full-time Reception provision and a part-time 52-place Nursery class which operates every day for a morning and an afternoon session.
- The school has a number of awards including Artsmark Gold and the International School Award.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the governing body robustly checks the impact that the pupil premium funding has on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.
- Make sure that all statutory policies are systematically reviewed and updated regularly so that they inform school procedures.
- Increase the proportion of pupils working at age-related expectations in reading in the small number of classes where achievement is not as high as in writing and mathematics.
- Ensure that every teacher has the highest expectations of what pupils can achieve in all subjects.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Since her relatively recent appointment in April 2014, the headteacher has steered the school on a course of rapid improvement. She has been well supported by the deputy headteacher, who was appointed in September 2014. Together, they form a strong collaborative team that communicates high expectations to the school community. Significant recent staffing changes have been managed well so that any disruption to the quality of teaching across the school has been minimised.
- Senior leaders' decisive action, following a dip in pupils' achievement in 2014, has resulted in improvements in the quality of teaching and, consequently, the decline in pupils' achievement has been halted. The headteacher and other senior leaders keep a close check on the quality of teaching through lesson observations, and by looking at pupils' books and analysing assessment data. They use this information effectively to identify areas that need improvement and then put in place support that ensures teaching improves. During regular meetings, the headteacher holds teachers to account for the progress that pupils make. Positive action is taken, for instance, by starting reading interventions to support pupils who are identified as falling behind.
- Middle leaders are a powerful catalyst in helping to deliver improvements in the quality of teaching and the curriculum across the school. Strong subject knowledge enables the mathematics and English subject leaders to pinpoint where the strengths and areas for development are in their subjects. Actions such as modelling lessons for colleagues and writing a new mathematics calculations policy, help to ensure that the quality of teaching improves.
- Leaders have prepared well for the introduction of the New National Curriculum and continue to refine and develop the already rich and vibrant experiences it provides to the pupils at the school. Pupils are given good opportunities to develop their writing and mathematics skills across the curriculum. In a design and technology lesson, for instance, pupils enjoyed writing instructions for children in another class to follow, on how to make a puppet. Pupils acquire knowledge and a deep understanding of the topics they study by being given opportunities to use their research skills to find out further information. In Year 6, for example, pupils discovered interesting facts about the slave trade. Pupils in Year 5 were able to distinguish between primary and secondary sources of evidence to develop their understanding of why the Anglo-Saxons invaded Great Britain. A large number of educational visits and visitors to school further enhance pupils' learning and enjoyment of the subjects they study.
- Social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good. Pupils study a range of other world faiths to develop their understanding and respect of other religions. Pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 study the ancient Latin language while pupils in lower Key Stage 2 learn how to speak Spanish. Pupils enjoy the high number of opportunities to visit theatres to enhance their learning. Pupils returned excitedly after their trip to watch 'The Groovy Greeks' at the Floral Pavilion theatre, during the inspection.
- Pupils' understanding of British values is effectively promoted. Pupils in Year 6, for example, visit their constituency MP at the Houses of Parliament to observe debate and deepen their understanding of democracy. Furthermore, pupils in Year 5 are working on a bronze level award from the Mayor of Knowsley that encourages pupils to complete a number of challenges to help them become responsible citizens.
- Senior leaders ensure that all pupils, irrespective of their gender, faith, ethnicity or culture have equal access to the curriculum. Furthermore, work with pupils by the learning mentor helps to ensure that there is no discrimination in the school. School records confirm that incidents of bullying or discriminatory name-calling are extremely rare. Pupils say that they do their best to make everyone welcome in their school.
- Policies and procedures for ensuring that pupils are kept safe are thorough and communicated effectively so that all in the school community know their role. Safeguarding training is up to date and systems for recording any concerns are well established. Some other school policies, however, are not systematically reviewed by governors and the headteacher to inform current procedures.
- The pupil premium funding has been utilised mainly to employ extra teaching and support staff. As a result, the achievement of eligible pupils is now improving across the school in all subjects.
- The sport premium is a grant of money from the government to ensure a significant and lasting legacy following the 2012 Olympic Games. Leaders have used this funding for a range of initiatives including employing a sports assistant to coach pupils at playtime and lunchtime, improve the skills of playtime staff and teachers and increase the numbers of pupils participating in competitive sports. Pupils are proud of their achievements in reaching the Knowsley sports hall athletics final and becoming Huyton football champions.
- The support of the local authority in setting up a collaborative of three local schools has been warmly welcomed. This has allowed leaders to visit each other's schools to support improvement in the quality of

teaching. Funding provided by the local authority has also financed the purchase of digital reading tablets which are planned to be used to help raise reading achievement further across the school.

■ The governance of the school:

- The comment 'This is our community and we want the best for our children', made by the Chair of the Governing Body, exemplifies the commitment and passion that many members of the governing body have to support and help improve the school.
- Governors generally have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school due to the regular reports that they receive from the headteacher and other senior staff. They have a good overview of the quality of teaching and understand the link between teachers' performance and pay progression.
- Some of the information that governors receive about the achievement of pupils does not help them to challenge the school leadership about the progress of all groups of pupils, including those known to be disadvantaged. This means that, while governors have a very good knowledge of how the pupil premium funding is spent, they do not effectively check the impact it is having on narrowing the achievement gap between eligible pupils and others in school and nationally.
- Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities to keep pupils safe effectively. They ensure that all checks have been carried prior to adults starting work in the school and many governors have attended safeguarding training.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The school is a well-ordered and harmonious community where pupils cooperate well with one another irrespective of their background.
- Behaviour in lessons is generally strong. Pupils are enthusiastic learners who follow adults' instructions promptly and without fuss. They settle to their tasks quickly and enjoy opportunities to work collaboratively. In Year 1, for example, pupils worked well in pairs to make predictions about the story *Handa's Surprise*. In a small number of lessons, where teaching does not inspire pupils or meet their learning needs, some pupils' immature behaviour results in low-level disruption and chatting.
- Pupils have a great deal of pride in their school and they delight in holding posts of responsibility such as being members of the school council. Around the school and on the playground, pupils are respectful and polite. Lunchtime staff play their role in helping pupils to enter the school calmly and ready to learn. Learning support assistants, for instance, made their own line to come into school at the end of lunchtime break in a humorous challenge to pupils to line up in a more orderly fashion.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. This view is shared by almost all parents who responded to the school's own recent questionnaire. Children also say that they feel safe in school. They report that incidents of bullying or name calling are extremely rare.
- Through the delivery of a wide range of themed assemblies, senior leaders ensure that pupils have a very good understanding of how to keep safe. Areas covered include aspects of road safety, 'stranger danger', substance misuse and internet safety.
- The work of the learning mentor to improve attendance has been highly effective. The percentage of pupils who are absent from school, particularly those who are off most often, has reduced significantly.

The quality of teaching is good

- Most teachers have high expectations and plan challenging activities that pupils relish. In a Year 2 lesson, for example, where pupils had to write a letter to a premiership footballer, all groups of pupils achieved well. Their teacher clearly communicated what needed to be included for their writing to be successful and the level of challenge was high. In a small proportion of lessons, however, expectations of what some pupils can achieve are too low. As a result, these pupils do not concentrate fully on their work and progress is not as rapid as it could be.
- Teachers use questioning effectively throughout lessons to check pupils' understanding of new learning. Any misconceptions are quickly addressed and further challenges are added to move learning on at pace where appropriate. This was evident, for example, in a Year 1 phonics (the sounds that letters make)

lesson. Pupils thoroughly enjoyed the challenge of reading their 'alien names', no opportunity to accelerate learning was wasted and pupils who grasped the concept quickly were challenged by their teacher to explain to the rest of the class how many syllables the alien word had.

- The teaching of mathematics is a strength throughout the school. Lessons are planned that build upon the foundation of pupils' prior learning. A clear whole-school calculations policy, updated to take account of the new curriculum, ensures that there is a consistent approach to the development of calculation skills by all teachers. Pupils enjoy their mathematics lessons. In one Year 2 lesson, pupils could barely control their enthusiasm during an exciting mental maths game. As the lesson progressed, pupils developed their reasoning skills by justifying their answers of addition problems to their classmates.
- Teachers provide frequent opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills across all areas of the curriculum. A high priority is given to developing pupils' language skills and using adventurous vocabulary to make their writing more interesting. Pupils read often and widely. Their understanding of a large range of genres is developed through writing detailed book reviews that include character and setting descriptions and a synopsis of the plot.
- Teaching assistants provide effective support to all groups of pupils in lessons. Furthermore, they use their good subject knowledge to deliver high-quality interventions that help pupils who are falling behind in their learning to catch up quickly.
- The school's marking and feedback policy has recently been reviewed. Feedback to pupils is developing and they say that teachers' comments, as well as their targets, are helping them to understand what they need to do to improve their work.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Since her permanent appointment, the headteacher has led a relentless focus on improving the quality of teaching. As a result, pupils' achievement has improved rapidly. Pupils' attainment at Key Stage 1 improved in 2014 so that pupils enter Year 3 with standards that are broadly in line with those seen nationally. The achievement of older pupils leaving the school in 2014 fell. Nonetheless, the proportion of pupils attaining Level 4 in reading, writing and mathematics was above the national average.
- Pupils' achievement in mathematics is particularly strong. In almost all classes, pupils are currently making accelerated progress. Mathematics books show that pupils have a firm grasp of basic number skills and that they are beginning to be given greater opportunities to apply these to a range of problem-solving activities and investigations.
- The proportion of pupils currently on track to reach age-related expectations and above in writing by the end of Key Stage 2 is above that seen nationally. A scrutiny of pupils' books, undertaken jointly with senior leaders, shows that pupils are able to use complex sentence structures, adventurous vocabulary and to apply spelling, punctuation and grammar skills effectively. Pupils are given opportunities to develop their writing skills across the curriculum. For example, children in the Reception class were observed writing postcards to the Queen. Pupils also write for a real purpose and children in the Year 1 and 2 class were delighted to receive a reply from Kensington Palace to the letters that they had sent to the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge.
- While most pupils make at least the expected progress in reading, in a small number of year groups the proportion of pupils working at age-related expectations and above is lower than in writing and mathematics. Senior leaders have taken appropriate action to tackle this issue and have ensured that there are large numbers of reading interventions in place so that any pupils who have fallen behind catch up quickly.
- Pupils who are known to be disadvantaged currently achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics, following a fall in their achievement in 2014. These pupils make accelerated progress that is in line with that of other pupils in school and, in some classes, above that of other pupils. Consequently, the gap between this group of pupils and other pupils nationally is on track to narrow rapidly in 2015. By the end of 2014, disadvantaged pupils left school three terms behind other pupils nationally and other pupils in school in mathematics. They were one term behind other pupils nationally and other pupils in school in reading; in writing, they were two-and-a-half terms behind other pupils nationally and two terms behind other pupils in school.
- The most able pupils currently in school make at least expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils on track to attain the higher Level 5 in all subjects is above that seen nationally. This represents a rapid improvement from 2014, when the achievement of this group of pupils was significantly below the national average in writing and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve very well. The progress that they

make in all subjects is accelerated because of the high expectations of their teachers and good-quality support from skilled teaching assistants.

The early years provision

is good

- From starting points that are often below those typical for their age, children get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes. Children make good progress across all areas of their learning. By the time they leave Reception, they are well prepared for the next stage of their education with a higher proportion of children reaching a good level of development than the national average.
- Teachers have high expectations of what children can achieve. They ensure that activities match their abilities and develop an enthusiasm for learning. Children made good progress in a phonics lesson, for example, when the teacher used a game of pass-the-parcel to encourage pupils to read words and place them in simple sentences.
- Clear routines and structures, as well as effective modelling by adults, ensure that children are well behaved, treat each other kindly, and play and learn collaboratively. For example, a small group of children worked harmoniously together in the campsite role-play area to prepare food on the imaginary fire for their guests. Teachers and other adults supervise the children effectively to ensure that pupils are kept safe and secure without inhibiting their imagination.
- The learning environment is spacious and well thought out to provide a wide range of purposeful and inspiring activities for the children. The outdoor area is utilised particularly well and areas such as a music stage encourage children to investigate and play percussion instruments. However, because of a lack of a wide range of high-quality reading books, some children do not get the opportunity to read on their own or in small groups as often as they could.
- Leadership of the early years is good. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have oversight of the provision and have introduced recent changes that have further enhanced the quality of teaching. The deputy headteacher has a good understanding of assessment and uses this information with the class teachers to ensure that activities build on children's learning. Strong relationships with parents have been established that help support children's learning throughout the early years.

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	131332
Local authority	Knowsley
Inspection number	461722

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	337
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs K Brownrigg
Headteacher	Miss S Wrigley
Date of previous school inspection	27 June 2011
Telephone number	0151 477 8110
Fax number	0151 477 8111
Email address	staloyusius@knowsley.gov.uk

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