

Our Lady of Good Help Catholic Primary School

South Drive, Wavertree, Liverpool, Merseyside L15 8JL

Inspection dates

6–7 July 2016

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- There is a lack of consistency in the quality of teaching that leads to varied rates of progress across classes and subjects, especially for the most able pupils.
- In mathematics, pupils have too few chances to solve problems, or to think and reason mathematically.
- In some classes, pupils have too few opportunities to practise and extend their writing skills in subjects such as science, history and geography.
- Children in the early years have too few opportunities to learn outdoors. Indoors, they have relatively few opportunities to find things out for themselves.
- Not all subject leaders are clear about what is expected in their subjects in all age groups.
- Action plans do not have clear, measurable milestones related to pupils' progress. This limits their usefulness when leaders and governors are checking the quality of teaching and learning.

The school has the following strengths

- Although not yet good, the school is better than it was at the previous inspection.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have, in a very short space of time, given the school a strong sense of direction and purpose.
- Staff, pupils, parents and governors share the headteacher's vision. Staff have risen well to the challenges the new leadership team has set for them. Expectations are high.
- Teaching and learning are both improving rapidly because staff follow the good advice and guidance they receive from senior leaders.
- Pupils behave well and they are eager to learn. They feel safe and the school keeps them safe. They understand and subscribe to British values.
- The governing body has worked closely with the diocese and the local authority to improve its effectiveness. It holds leaders to account well.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that pupils in all classes, and especially the most able, make good progress by ensuring that:
 - learning objectives are more specific about what pupils are expected to learn in lessons, and success criteria are about learning and not just the activities pupils have to do
 - teachers' questioning probes and challenges pupils' thinking better and encourages them to begin to think for themselves
 - in mathematics, there is more investigative, problem-solving work for pupils, deepening their understanding and helping them to think and reason mathematically
 - in writing, pupils are provided with more opportunities to practise and extend their writing skills in subjects such as science, history and geography.
- In the early years: develop the outdoor area so that it supports children's learning better; and teach children how to think for themselves so that they begin to see how to improve their own learning or extend it in different ways.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that subject leaders know what is required for pupils of all ages to make good progress in their subjects and giving all leaders and managers the skills they need to fulfil their roles well
 - including, in all action plans, measurable milestones related to outcomes for pupils, against which senior leaders and governors can check pupils' progress more rigorously.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management are not yet good. Although the new headteacher and deputy headteacher have taken decisive and effective action that has improved teaching and learning, not all leaders are fully up to speed with what is required of them. This is because leadership roles have been underdeveloped in the past. Well-targeted training is assisting staff in stepping up to their roles.
- Some subject leaders do not have a clear enough understanding of attainment and progress in all age groups so that they can guide staff throughout the school. As a result, pupils' progress, although better than it was, continues to require improvement.
- Leaders for English and mathematics are working with local authority consultants and staff from the partner school to help them lead their subjects better. They have made a good start on checking the quality of teaching and learning, for example through analysing the work in pupils' books. The checks senior leaders make on teaching and learning are very rigorous and staff respond well to the advice and support they receive.
- Robust systems for managing staff performance have only recently been established. Staff have welcomed them and the training they now receive to help them reach their targets, which are linked to the priorities in the school improvement plan. These priorities, those in other action plans, and the success criteria that accompany them, are not sharply enough focused on improving pupils' progress.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and suitably adapted to the needs of the school. It gives due attention to English and mathematics, and there is reasonable coverage of science and modern foreign languages, and all other subjects. Staff are using the new assessment systems well to measure and record pupils' progress accurately in reading, writing and mathematics.
- There are no systems to measure progress other than in English and mathematics. Understandably, leaders have focused on getting these subjects right first. They are now looking to introduce ways to assess skills in other subjects to a planned timetable.
- There are few clubs and extra-curricular activities at present but the school is looking to increase this in the next academic year. A good range of visits and visitors enrich learning across the curriculum and enhance pupils' personal development.
- Curricular planning includes opportunities for pupils to use their literacy and numeracy skills in different subjects. In practice, literacy skills are promoted better than numeracy skills.
- Recently implemented record systems mean the progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is now being recorded and tracked appropriately. Most-able pupils are also being identified earlier. Improved planning is beginning to help them too.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is central to all of the school's work. It includes the teaching of British values and is threaded throughout the curriculum. As a result, pupils have a strong awareness of fairness, justice and equality, and why it is important to be tolerant of others and follow the rule of law. The school successfully teaches pupils that rights bring with them responsibilities, and how to avoid being pressurised into doing something they know to be wrong.
- The pupil premium grant for disadvantaged pupils is used appropriately. Each pupil is identified, their needs assessed and funds used to give additional support for learning or assistance for educational visits and events, as required. This is helping to close the attainment gaps between them and other pupils.
- The primary school sports funding is used well to ensure that pupils become more physically active. It pays for specialist coaches, staff training and a wide range of sporting activities, and is enabling the school to begin to become involved in more competitive sport with other schools.
- The school has received intensive support from the local authority and the diocese. Current leaders have used it well to improve provision and pupils' progress.
- The vision, passion and determination of the headteacher and the deputy headteacher to improve teaching and learning shines through the improvement that has taken place in the past two terms. They very quickly got to grips with the strengths and weaknesses of the school and the staff. They have given the school strong capacity for further improvement and the means to achieve it.
- Staff very much appreciate the strong leadership they now have and the high expectations set for them. They feel valued and morale is high because they can see the positive effect the changes are having on the whole school community.

The governance of the school

- Governors understand the difference between their strategic role and the day-to-day management of the school. For example, working closely with the local authority and the diocese, they have secured good leadership and management for five terms, while they determine how to proceed in the future.
- After the previous inspection, the governing body undertook a rigorous review of how it operated. The

result is a restructured governing body with a wide range of professional, educational and community expertise, whose members challenge senior leaders robustly. Governors regularly attend training to keep their skills sharp and up to date.

- Governors monitor carefully the school's budget and its spending, including the extra pupil premium and primary school sports funding. They can comment knowledgeably on the effect such spending has on outcomes for the pupils. They supervise the headteacher's performance and make sure that teachers' annual targets are linked to improvement in pupils' progress.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Senior leaders and governors have placed the highest priority on ensuring that safeguarding arrangements are strong and secure, and known and implemented by everyone. This is evident in school displays and when visitors arrive so that pupils and staff are well looked after in a safe, secure environment. All training is up to date and the school helps parents to understand the importance of adopting safe practices such as using the internet safely.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- Although not consistently good throughout the school, teaching has improved considerably since the new leadership arrangements were implemented in January. Staff have risen well to the challenge of being held to account for the progress each of their pupils is making.
- Learning objectives are still sometimes too general or too lengthy, making it difficult for pupils to understand precisely what they are expected to learn. In addition, the success criteria that teachers share with pupils are too often a list of activities. They do not define precisely what pupils should be able to do at the end of a session that they could not do at the beginning.
- Some staff too readily accept pupils' first answers without questioning them further to correct or extend their thinking. For example, in a geography session, a volcano was said to 'explode' instead of 'erupt', while in a mathematics session, the term 'sum' was used to cover any type of written calculation.
- Teachers' expectations are not always high enough in mathematics. Pupils' books show that, in most classes, they do not have enough opportunities to solve problems that require reasoning and depth of thought. A notable exception is in Year 4, where pupils have had to use all of their reasoning powers to solve complex problems that deepened their mathematical understanding.
- The quality of written feedback that teachers give pupils is too often not precise enough to show pupils how to improve. Comments such as 'you struggled with this' are unhelpful in showing pupils where they have gone wrong and what to do about it.
- The now consistent approach to teaching phonics is improving pupils' ability to read and spell accurately. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 use their phonics skills well to help them read unfamiliar words. In well-organised guided reading sessions in Years 3 to 5, most staff probe pupils' thinking well, thus helping to improve their comprehension skills.
- Teachers have got to grips with the new assessment systems for reading, writing and mathematics. They do not pay enough attention to progression in skills in other subjects, often relying too heavily on worksheets that stop pupils showing what they know, understand and can do. Because the worksheets require only one-word or simple-sentence answers, they also stop pupils practising and extending their writing skills.
- Teachers use computers and tablets effectively to engage pupils in learning. They mostly follow demonstration or research activities with well-focused partner discussions that enable pupils to complete notes, share ideas and learn from each other.
- Well-chosen topics grab and hold pupils' interest within an atmosphere of shared learning that promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. With rare exceptions, staff manage pupils' behaviour well.
- Increasingly, most-able pupils are getting harder work to do in lessons so that they can take their learning further and faster. Teachers use support staff and other adults well to help less-able pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to make progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and parents agree that the school keeps their children safe. The school site is kept secure and visitors are carefully checked. Pupils know the risks associated with using the internet and mobile devices, and how to avoid them. They understand the different forms bullying can take, including those relating to race and gender.
- Pupils say they like their teachers because the teachers help them and make learning fun. They say their work is 'about right' now, not too easy but not too hard. They feel they are now making good progress because they are being given harder work to do than in the past. They and their parents acknowledge the improvement in the school since the start of the year.
- Pupils are proud of their school and readily take on responsibility, for example as school councillors and young leaders who help others at play and lunchtimes. Pupils work well together to keep the calm and orderly environment that is felt throughout the school.
- Elections to the school council give pupils a developing understanding of how democracy works. School councillors relish their roles, canvassing their class mates on issues such as a design for a Mediterranean garden or a new school uniform, or discussing changes to the behaviour policy. Councillors work steadily to ensure they achieve their aims: for pupils to be safe and happy, have a voice and enjoy school.
- Pupils learn how to make a positive contribution to society by accepting others, celebrating similarities and differences and reflecting on the effect their actions might have on others. They develop good empathy with others through, for example, fundraising for charity, and studying Paralympics and the effect of disability.
- The breakfast and after-school clubs meet daily in the school hall. Staff have due regard for pupils' health, safety and well-being. The clubs are happy, social times for the pupils at the start and end of each day.
- The depth of pupils' responses shows how deeply they think about the effect that different events have on different people. For example, pupils in Year 4 talked about how disappointed they would be if the dragon slayer in the story killed the baby dragon, or how the baby dragon's childhood would be ruined if the dragon slayer killed the mother.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Every parent who spoke to an inspector or completed the Ofsted questionnaire said behaviour is good. The pupils' good behaviour in and outside of lessons and their positive attitudes to learning, each other and adults all contribute greatly to the progress they make. These are important factors in helping the school to improve because pupils are ready and willing to listen, follow instructions and work hard.
- Pupils say bullying is not a problem and behaviour is much better since the new headteacher arrived. They see rules as fair and necessary to keep them, the school and, ultimately, society safe. They have every confidence in the staff, saying that there is always an adult on hand to help them.
- The school has good evidence to show how staff have helped pupils with behavioural difficulties to improve. On rare occasions, usually when work is not matched accurately enough to pupils' different ability levels, there is a low-level undercurrent of noise and rattling of equipment that is not conducive to good learning.
- The school works closely with parents and external agencies to try to ensure that pupils attend regularly and on time. Consequently, attendance is improving and is now average. Persistent absences are reducing but they are still above average. Leaders are doing everything they can to reduce them.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Pupils do not make equally good progress in all classes. Consequently, their overall achievement by the end of Year 6 still requires improvement. The work in pupils' books in the autumn term shows a lack of challenge, especially for the most able pupils.
- As they learn new concepts in mathematics, pupils are not sufficiently encouraged to use what they have learned to solve problems that deepen their understanding. They are, therefore, only at the early stages of learning to think and reason mathematically. This slows progress, particularly for most-able pupils.
- The work in pupils' English books shows that they know how to write in different styles for different purposes, mindful of their reader. In the past two terms, the quantity and quality of pupils' writing has

increased. Their writing has also become better structured.

- Pupils are now learning to read well and they enjoy reading. Improvements in the teaching of phonics mean that young pupils develop the skills necessary to read new words and spell accurately. Older pupils make good use of guided reading sessions. They use dictionaries competently to find the meanings of words or correct their spelling, and they are beginning to develop good comprehension skills.
- Pupils cover a great deal of appropriate work in other subjects but the progress they make in them is not clear. This is because the systems to assess how well they are acquiring skills in these subjects are not in place.
- Pupils use their writing skills well in religious education, where they turn parables into playscripts, or write balanced arguments about different aspects of Jesus's life. They do not use their writing skills as well in, for example, science, history and geography in some classes.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are benefiting from the early identification of those needs and the extra help that they now get quickly. Their progress also requires improvement but it is getting better in line with that of other pupils.
- The gap in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils is similar to that found nationally. The progress of these pupils is also getting better. Gaps in attainment and progress are closing in year groups currently in the school.
- A common thread through English and mathematics is the greater progress pupils have made since January as a result of improvements in the quality of teaching. Despite all of the issues that the school faced, standards and pupils' progress have improved in recent years and are now rising more rapidly.
- Early indications from the outcomes of the national tests for pupils in Year 6 are that the proportions of pupils reaching the expectations for their age are slightly higher than those found nationally

Early years provision

requires improvement

- When children start school, the majority have skills and knowledge that are broadly typical for their age. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development has increased in recent years and is now similar to that found nationally. This means the children are adequately prepared for their work in Year 1.
- Children's books show that they have many opportunities to practise early reading, writing and mathematical skills. Nevertheless, they have relatively few opportunities to find things out for themselves. Teaching requires improvement because it does not yet ensure that children make good progress in all of their learning.
- Children quickly learn to use phonics to help them read. Staff make phonics sessions fun and they organise them well. Within the sessions, learning is not always adapted well enough to suit the children's different levels of ability. For example, it does not allow for work in different phases of phonics, to stretch the most able children.
- Outdoor learning is underdeveloped. The outdoor area is not used effectively to help children learn in different ways, or to increase and extend learning that takes place in the classroom. Staff do not encourage children enough to make choices about where and what they might learn, and therefore become more independent.
- Children experience a wide range of mostly well-planned activities, often linked by a theme. For example, within the topic of animals, children visited a farm to learn about them. The visit led to writing, imaginative and creative play, counting and language development. Children sorted and counted different farm animals, rolled them in the mud and washed them. They were fascinated because, although the water they were using to wash the animals became muddier by the minute, it still washed the animals clean.
- Staff pay due attention to teaching early grammar, punctuation and spelling skills. They assess children's progress carefully and accurately and they are becoming increasingly good at using assessment information as they plan further work.
- Provision in the early years ensures that the children have a safe, secure and happy start in school. Staff attend the transition meetings set up by the local authority where they meet with staff from the various nurseries and learn about the children before they start. They then introduce children and their parents to the school and work with parents to help them become involved in their children's learning.
- The setting is safe and children's welfare, health and well-being are given high priority. Children behave well. They follow the few simple rules and learn to care for and respect each other and to respond quickly to instructions. They relate very happily to staff and visitors. The environment is calm and orderly; displays are bright and stimulating; and activities foster in the children a desire to learn and do well.

- The interim leadership has managed the provision appropriately and increased the proportion of children reaching a good level of development. It has not led the provision forward, developed the outdoors or provided a full range of writing opportunities for the children.

School details

Unique reference number	104670
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	10012145

This inspection 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	159
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Johanne Hennigan
Headteacher	Clair Knowles
Telephone number	0151 733 6937
Website	www.olgh.co.uk
Email address	schooloffice@olgh.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	1–2 July 2014

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who come from minority ethnic groups, including those who speak English as an additional language, is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium (additional funding for disadvantaged pupils) is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor targets, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Before- and after-school clubs, run by the school, operate daily on the school premises.
- The school meets requirements for the publication of specified information on its website.
- Pupils in Year 6 were out of school on both days during the inspection. On the first day, they were visiting their high schools; on the second, they were on a retreat with two other schools that ended with their leavers' Mass.
- The school has been through a period of considerable turmoil since the previous inspection. It has had to deal with several important issues and many staff changes, including at senior level. All of this led to a restructuring of the governing body and the appointment of an executive headteacher and deputy headteacher in January of this year, who will serve for five terms.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher remain leaders of their own nearby school, St Paschal Baylon. They share their time between the two schools. This arrangement has enabled the staff from the two schools to work together to help Our Lady of Good Help on its journey of improvement.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 17 sessions. Six visits were made jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors also analysed the work in the books of all groups of pupils currently in the school, as well as the school's most recent information about pupils' progress.
- Inspectors listened to pupils in Year 1 and Year 2, and sampled sessions where staff were teaching phonics, and guided reading sessions in Years 3 to 5.
- Discussions were held with key leaders, five members of the governing body and representatives from the local authority and the diocese to gain their views of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils, formally and informally. There were no responses to the online questionnaire for pupils.
- A range of documents relating to school improvement were examined, along with policies and procedures relating to teaching, safeguarding pupils, and provision for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Inspectors gained the views of a number of parents at first hand as they brought their children to school. They also took account of the views of the 10 parents who completed the online Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View.
- Inspectors spoke to the majority of staff to gain their views. There were no responses to the Ofsted questionnaire for staff.

Inspection team

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