



# Our Lady's Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 104459  
**LEA** Knowsley  
**Inspection number** 277162  
**Inspection dates** 15 November 2005 to 16 November 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Mr Mark Madeley CfBT Lead Inspector

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Ward Street
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Prescot
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11		Merseyside L34 6JJ
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 477 8220
<b>Number on roll</b>	240	<b>Fax number</b>	0151 477 8221
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr P Johnson
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	22 May 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs B Martin

<b>Age group</b> 3 to 11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 15 November 2005 - 16 November 2005	<b>Inspection number</b> 277162
-----------------------------	---	------------------------------------

---

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by a team of two additional inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

The school lies between Liverpool and St Helens in an area of mixed housing. It is average sized and serves two local parishes. Almost all children are white British and speak English as their first language. Few children are entitled to free school meals. There are no children with statements of additional need and few children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school has achieved Healthy School, Artsmark, Basic Skills, and Investors in People awards and is a member of a local Network Learning Community.

## **Key for inspection grades**

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 2**

The school and the inspection team agree that Our Lady's is a good school that has the full support of its parents and children. It gives good value for money because the children make good progress through the school and achieve above average standards at relatively low cost. Children's personal development has a high priority and they quickly learn to behave exceptionally well and how to stay safe and healthy. While standards are above average overall the school correctly identifies that children's writing could be better. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are average but have declined over the last three years. Assessment information is not always used well enough to help children make good progress in these year groups. Children enjoy coming to school partly because lessons are interesting and additional subjects, like French and Spanish, enrich the curriculum. Arrangements to help children express their feelings and respect the feelings of others are very good.

The Foundation Stage is a strength of the school. It has coped well with the gradually declining standards of the new children. It helps children make good progress in all aspects of their education because of the strong emphasis on learning through play.

The school is well managed and the headteacher provides strong leadership. Parents and staff respect her commitment to the children and their education. The school has the ability to improve further because governors and managers are frequently reviewing provision and children's progress. There has been good improvement since the last inspection; for instance, improvements to the information and communication technology (ICT) programme help children make good progress in this subject.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- improve children's writing
- improve progress in Key Stage 1 by making rigorous use of data to focus teaching and set more accurate targets for children.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Children achieve well and reach standards in tests that are above average by Year 6.

When they start school in nursery children's standards are similar to those commonly found. These standards have been declining in recent years with children's speech and their ability to share and take care of themselves being markedly weaker. Children make good progress through the Foundation Stage and many of them reach the expected standard for their age.

In 2004 children in Year 2 achieved average standards. The school recognises that standards have been falling since 2002 and this pattern was continued in 2005 but the school has not identified the causes fully. Progress is satisfactory and no groups of children achieved markedly better than any other.

Children in Year 6 in 2004 achieved above average scores in the national tests and all groups of children made similar good progress. The 2005 results were similar in science but were lower in English and mathematics. Because of this the school did not meet some of its targets in 2005. The school has correctly identified weaknesses in children's writing and put in place measures to improve them.

Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress towards the targets set for them. They receive good support in classes and additionally often take part in small group sessions in literacy and numeracy.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Children's personal development is good. They love their school. They enjoy school because they learn exciting things. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The Catholic ethos permeates the work of the school and creates a calm and purposeful atmosphere in which all can succeed. Children behave outstandingly well. They understand the reason for the rules because they helped write them. Well taught 'circle time' lessons help children respect and value each other's feelings. They support each other, for instance older children are buddies to the youngest. The children also enjoy charity work for those less fortunate than themselves. The school has successfully improved children's understanding of other cultures.

Children know simple ways of staying safe, like handling tools carefully and avoiding electrical items. They have a good understanding of how to stay fit and healthy. Most choose healthy snacks, exercise reasonably regularly and know that they should get a good night's sleep. The School Council is well organised and helps children understand how democracy works. It gives children a 'voice' and many of their suggestions have been followed up. Children are well prepared for the next stage in their learning because they have a very positive attitude to learning and good basic skills. Their attendance remains above average but has slipped recently. The school's analysis shows that too many parents are taking children on holidays in school time.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Overall, teaching is good and helps children achieve well. Very positive relationships help create a wonderful atmosphere for learning. In the best lessons teachers involve children by getting them to answer questions and discuss strategies. They share with the class what will be learned and children assess how well they have learned at the end. Most teachers use their secure subject knowledge to plan tasks that build on what children already know. Learning proceeds at a good pace and children really enjoy their work. One explained, 'the teachers make lessons fun'.

In the Foundation Stage, teachers have a thorough understanding of how young children learn. They plan exciting and practical activities that promote children's learning and their enjoyment of school. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution here. While there is some good teaching in Years 1 and 2, the overall quality is satisfactory. Assessment information is not used as well as it could be to meet children's needs. In Years 3 to 6, work is planned well to meet the range of attainment in classes. In a mathematics lesson, for example, children relished tackling a puzzle on shape and higher attaining children were challenged particularly well. Teaching assistants support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities well. In class, these children are generally given good additional help to promote their learning.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum meets in full the children's learning needs and statutory requirements. Foundation Stage provision is high quality. Children happily learn mainly through practical activities that are based around a well-chosen theme. In Years 1 to 6 there is a strong emphasis on the teaching of English, mathematics and religious education. The school is beginning to explore links between subjects so offering children opportunities to use their basic skills purposefully. The provision of laptop computers has improved ICT. Initiatives to improve writing have started but it is too early to evaluate their effectiveness. The children enjoy additional activities like violin tuition for Year 5 and special 'focus' weeks.

There is a satisfactory range of well attended after-school clubs, which are open to mostly junior children. The children enjoy the frequent trips to places of interest and the visits of theatre groups and dancers. The Robin Hood play created with a visiting author has left an indelible mark on Year 4 children who now see themselves as 'real authors'.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school makes children's care its highest priority and its provision is good. Every one of God's children is valued highly in the 'family atmosphere' of the school. The school counsellor plays a very positive role in supporting children's personal development, especially for the most vulnerable children.

Procedures for health and safety are in place and risk assessments are conducted regularly. Child protection arrangements are satisfactory because whilst communication between adults is very good there has been little training for staff, other than the named officer. Children are taught how to deal with bullying or racism and are confident that the school would deal quickly and fairly with these issues should they occur. In science lessons they learn how to develop safe relationships and healthy habits. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported well. The school has effective partnerships with their parents and outside agencies. Most children know their literacy targets but are less sure of how they can improve in numeracy.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher leads and manages the school well. Self-evaluation is accurate and agrees with the view of the inspection team. There are good systems to monitor the school's work and they enabled it to identify weaknesses in children's writing and make improvements. Less rigour is applied to the analysis of data for younger children so the school is not as clear about relative weaknesses in children's progress and how to improve it.

The headteacher involves all stakeholders in evaluating the school's work. The school's development plan provides a sound basis for promoting change, but the criteria against which improvement will be measured are not always sharply defined.

The school is strongly committed to providing the highest quality of care for children and in promoting their personal development. This creates a very positive learning environment where every child is valued. The management of provision for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good and provision for children identified as gifted and/or talented is also good.

The senior management team provide good support for the headteacher and are high quality role models for staff. Governors are very supportive of the school and meet their responsibilities well, including regular attendance at varied training sessions to improve their effectiveness. Many of them visit regularly. Resources are deployed well and the response to the last inspection has been good.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**



## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
--	-----------------------	--------------

### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	NA

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

### **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you very much for making my colleague, Mrs D'Arcy, and I so welcome in your school recently. We were delighted that you are so happy in school and that you behave so well. We agree with you that you have a good school and that the staff really care about each and every one of you. We think the school helps you all make good progress and reach high standards by the end of Year 6. Those children we spoke to were very good ambassadors for your school. We feel that you do really well to maintain a focus on learning despite the noise and mess of the building work going on around you. We are sure that those of you in Years 3 and 4 are looking forward to moving into your new classrooms soon.

Other things we liked about your school were:

- Mrs Martin and her staff run the school well and know how to make it even better for you
- the extra lessons, like violin and French, and visitors make school life really exciting for you
- you know how to stay fit, healthy and safe
- you respect each others feelings because 'circle time' is taught well
- the School Council is organised well and gives you a chance to be involved in running your school.

Even good schools like yours need to improve and so we have asked Mrs Martin and her staff to do the following:

- help you improve your writing skills even further
- help you make more progress in Years 1 and 2.

Thank you again for being so sensible and helpful during the inspection.