



St Laurence's Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 104461
LEA Knowsley
Inspection number 277164
Inspection dates 30 November 2005 to 1 December 2005
Reporting inspector Mr Ian Hocking CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Leeside Avenue
School category	Voluntary aided		Southdene
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Kirkby, Liverpool L32 9QX
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0151 5464733
Number on roll	404	Fax number	0151 5474218
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Fr Nick Wilde
Date of previous inspection	2 October 2000	Headteacher	Mr P Cronin

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

St Laurence's Catholic Primary is situated in Kirkby. It has many more pupils than other primary schools nationally and serves an area of very high deprivation. The school has a Nursery that is oversubscribed. When children start in the Nursery their skills are very much lower than expected for their age.

At the time of the inspection 404 pupils attend the school of which 52 attend the Nursery. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average as is the proportion that has statements for their learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Almost all pupils are from white British backgrounds.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding and very popular school that successfully lives out its mission statement. Parents are highly appreciative of the school and greatly commend its work.

Children begin in the Nursery with very low standards. However, as a result of excellent provision, they make great strides in learning in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception classes). Excellent teaching results in outstanding progress being made throughout the school so that the vast majority of pupils leave Year 6 with standards that are in line with those nationally. Nevertheless, fewer than is the case nationally reach the highest standards in English.

The school values each pupil and gives them excellent quality of support, care and guidance. Pupils' personal development is outstanding; they very much enjoy school and all that it offers. They say lessons are 'fun and exciting'. Pupils' behaviour and courtesy are exemplary. The school provides an enriched curriculum and a vast amount of extra-curricular activities.

Leadership, management and governance are outstanding. Through his example of dedication and hard work, the headteacher inspires staff to give total commitment to the pupils. The senior management team and governors have ensured that good progress has been made since the last inspection. The school gives excellent value for money.

The school knows itself well, though inspectors judge that in some aspects it does not give itself sufficient credit. It is well aware of the actions it should take to improve further and is determined that each pupil shall achieve as highly as possible. The school's leadership remains ambitious for success, and, as a result, the school has a good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

The school should continue to seek to improve the number of pupils reaching the highest levels in English.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Children start school with exceptionally low standards. By the time they leave at the end of Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science are broadly in line with those expected nationally. This represents outstanding progress and outstanding achievement.

Most children have poor communication and social skills when they begin in the Nursery. As a result of outstanding provision, they make excellent progress in the Foundation Stage, particularly in speaking and listening and in their personal, social and emotional development. Because of the ground they need to make up, very few pupils enter Year 1 with standards that are in line with those expected nationally for

their age. Nevertheless, because of excellent teaching across the school, pupils make rapid progress to reach average standards overall at the end of Year 6. However, the school is striving to increase the number of pupils who attain the highest standards in English.

Achievement is similar for all groups of pupils in school and reflects an excellent level of inclusive practice. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also make outstanding progress over time. This is because of the very effective and well planned support provided by the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. The children are, understandably, extremely proud of their school. Their enjoyment of school is exceptional and they are very keen to learn, consequently their behaviour is exemplary. Attendance is average and punctuality is good.

Pupils work and play well together, for example when playing football in the playground and/or when sharing their thoughts in a mathematics lesson. Older pupils clearly understand and readily accept their responsibility as role models for others and show a mature attitude when they take on responsibilities, such as, helping younger children in the Nursery. The School Council successfully develops pupils' understanding of democracy and gives them a voice in the school.

Assemblies successfully promote Catholic values, as for example when pupils compose and share their thoughtful prayers with their classmates. Pupils' self-esteem is developed effectively and they show respect, care and consideration for others, for example, by contributing to local and international charities.

The school promotes the safety, health and well-being of its pupils most successfully, especially through extensive opportunities for physical exercise. Pupils are aware of the dangers of drugs and why it is important to keep fit and healthy. They are well informed about relationships education, healthy eating and drinking.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The school judges the teaching and learning to be good, but inspectors judge it to be outstanding, on the basis of the outstanding progress pupils make during their time at the school. The headteacher has created an atmosphere of excellent relationships throughout the school. Teachers expect pupils to work hard and behave sensibly.

Teachers plan lessons thoroughly. Excellent teamwork between teachers and support staff ensures that the individual needs of all groups are successfully met. Lessons are delivered by highly skilled teachers, whose positive and often good humoured approach

captures pupils' total interest enabling excellent learning to take place. For example, in a Year 5 literacy lesson pupils were inspired to write a piece of narrative prose in the role of a 'reporting police officer'. Teachers use a wide range of methods to encourage pupils. Reception pupils were enthralled when they had to find out what was in the 'magic parcel', for example.

Teaching is guided by comprehensive assessment of pupils' work. Specialist support teachers, in partnership with class teachers, quickly identify and effectively support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The provision of information and communication technology has been greatly improved since the last inspection, enhancing learning across the curriculum. The developments of the Early Years play area and playground enables young children to also learn outdoors. The school works very successfully with parents, for example, by offering learning opportunities in literacy, numeracy and computer workshops.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum matches the needs of the pupils very well. It is broad and balanced, and all statutory requirements are met. Work in the classrooms is greatly enriched by many opportunities to take part in educational visits. These have included visits to local museums and places of educational interest. Workshops that involve visitors to the school include Multicultural weeks involving drama and dance, creative curriculum projects and many health and exercise days are held. There is an exceptionally wide range of extra-curricular activities available to all pupils, including creative arts, music, and sporting activities many of which develop pupils' fitness and help combat obesity. Pupils are encouraged to adopt healthy life styles and are made aware of any safety risks, for example, in physical education lessons. There are very good links with many local organisations and pupils take part in community activities, such as singing Christmas carols to the senior citizens. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is very good.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school takes excellent care of all its pupils. Pupils trust staff and know who to turn to if they need help. There is very good support for them when they are upset or troubled. The learning mentor provides an extremely valuable service by working closely with pupils and their families. The pupils say they feel safe in school. Parents and pupils say that the very rare instances of bullying are dealt with swiftly and effectively.

Pupils are aware of the targets set for them within lessons and know what they need to do to improve their work. They say the school prepares them well for their transfer to secondary school. Child protection and health and safety procedures are very well established and there are very good links with outside agencies, which give a range

of help to the pupils. The school has very clear strategies in place for the early identification of children who may be in need of additional support.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The leadership and management of the school are outstanding, ensuring a good capacity for the school to improve further.

The school's Mission Statement is at the centre of all its work and the headteacher successfully ensures that the school is at the heart of the community.

The headteacher's very thorough oversight of the school has given him an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Checking of teaching is thorough and purposeful, contributing very well to performance management and school improvement. The school's detailed analysis of pupils' standards and progress contributes well to target setting and the sharpening of teaching.

The headteacher has successfully established a very effective system for identifying what the school needs to do next. This fully involves staff and governors drawing on their knowledge and experiences. As a result, there is an exceptionally strong feeling of teamwork amongst all involved in recognising ways to continue to improve the school. The highly detailed School Development Plan focuses sharply on what needs to be done, to improve standards. Subject leaders are extremely enthusiastic and contribute to improvement through their development plans; their aim within the school is 'to make teachers passionate about their job'.

Governors provide outstanding challenge and support. Through regular visits to the school and involvement in its work, they have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They share the staff's commitment to the school's continued improvement.

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Inspection judgements

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

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	1	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	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

How well do learners achieve?	1	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	NA

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
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
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
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
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
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
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
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 for making us very welcome at your school. It was a pleasure to talk to you because you are very friendly and well mannered. Following our visit we would like to tell you what we have found out about your school.

The best things are that:

- your headteacher knows you all very well and takes very good care of you
- you listen to your teachers and behave sensibly, which means that everyone can get on with their work and learn new things
- you enjoy your learning in school and appreciate the many club activities on offer
- there are lots of grown ups that you know in school and trust, which means you can talk to them if you have a problem
- you are pleased with your school and the teachers are rightly proud of you
- the teachers help you to learn and make the school a pleasant and happy place to be in.

For those of you who are very good at English we have asked the headteacher and teachers to carefully check that:

- you are helped to learn even more in your English lessons.

We know that your headteacher and teachers and all the adults in school do their best for you; you can help them by always trying your best.