



# St Brigid's Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 104474  
**LEA** Knowsley  
**Inspection number** 277167  
**Inspection dates** 23 November 2005 to 24 November 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Mr Joe Peacock 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>	Waterpark Drive
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Stockbridge Village
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5 to 11		Liverpool, Merseyside L28 7RE
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 4778150
<b>Number on roll</b>	192	<b>Fax number</b>	0151 4778151
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr Peter Fraser
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	2 October 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs G Price

<b>Age group</b> 5 to 11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 23 November 2005 - 24 November 2005	<b>Inspection number</b> 277167
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

The school is about the same size as most schools nationally. Almost all pupils are from a white British background and of the very small number from a minority ethnic background, only one needs help to speak and understand English. About a third travel to school from outside the normal catchment area. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average and rising. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) is broadly average. On entry to the Reception class, the attainment of most children is well below that expected for children of this age and about half experience difficulty with language and communication skills. The school has been successful in gaining a number of nationally recognised awards such as Investors in People Award and Healthy School Award.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

St Brigid's is an outstanding school. It is giving very good value for money. The leadership provided by the headteacher is outstanding and is steadily strengthening all aspects of the provision. Inspection judgements mostly agree with the school's self-evaluation. The curriculum is outstanding rather than good as it excites and motivates pupils, meeting their needs exceptionally well. The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding and as a result, all pupils, including those in Reception, make good progress and most achieve the standards expected of them. In reception, provision for children's personal, social and emotional development is a strength and this is helping to advance children's communication and language skills as they settle quickly and gain in confidence. However, the accommodation for Reception children is inadequate, putting constraints on the curriculum and presenting many challenges to the successful teaching. However, these are handled skilfully and effectively. Children with learning difficulties are well provided for and make very good progress. Parents are extremely supportive of the school and appreciate the high level of care and the quality of the education it provides. Governance is satisfactory. More development is needed to ensure that all governors know their roles and responsibilities. There has been good improvement since the last inspection and the school has a very good capacity to improve further.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Explore ways to improve the accommodation for children in Reception and continue to

develop the outdoor provision.

- Continue to work with the governors to establish effective roles and responsibilities for

everyone.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Achievement is good as a result of the wide range of strategies the school employs to support pupils in their learning. In Reception, children achieve well in all areas of learning due to the good teaching and strong emphasis on their personal, social and emotional development. By the end of the current reception year, a significant number of pupils are not expected to achieve all their Early Learning Goals. This is due to the difficulty many have with communication and language skills.

There is a strong emphasis on gaining literacy and numeracy skills throughout and by Year 2 detailed assessments clearly show that all pupils make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. However, relatively few achieve at the higher Level 3. Achievement by Year 6 in English, mathematics and science is good. As a result of

strategies to raise the attainment and rate of progress for boys and higher attainers, boys out-performed girls in the 2005 national tests for 11 year olds and all those expected to achieve the higher Level 5 did so. However, far fewer attained at this higher level in English and mathematics than did in science. Achievement in information and communication technology (ICT) is good as computers are used effectively by pupils for their work in all subjects.

The proportion of pupils identified with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is low for the context of the school. Effective teaching, the right attitude and behaviour developed from Reception and a stimulating curriculum have all combined to ensure that learning difficulties are effectively overcome. As a result, these pupils make good progress and many achieve the standards expected for all pupils.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils are extremely proud of their school. They are enthusiastic, work hard, and thoroughly enjoy their lessons. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is exemplary with pupils showing respect and consideration for others. They very willingly accept responsibility and are cheerful, polite and helpful. The school council has been influential in bringing improvements to school life. They have, for example, sought and been involved in many improvements in the school playground. These include the development of a sensory garden, and the provision of 'buddies' to help look after younger pupils at break times.

The school has worked very hard to improve attendance and, though it is currently below the national average, over the last four years there has been a steady improvement. The school supported by the Learning Mentor has developed a range of very successful rewards and strategies that have raised attendance levels and steadily reduced the level of unauthorised absences.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils develop self-esteem and confidence because their different achievements are valued and rewarded. They are involved in the wider community through both Knowsley Children's Parliament and Eco Council. These have been instrumental in improving the local area. Pupils gain a very good knowledge and understanding of world religions and cultures through lessons and a very wide range of visits and visitors. All understand, very well, how to keep safe and healthy. In the cookery club, for example, they learn how to prepare healthy food. Pupils are encouraged to become economically aware through their involvement in the Credit Union Young Savers Account.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 1**

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Teaching seen on many occasions was outstanding and was characterised by excellent relationships with pupils, a sense

of fun and challenging tasks which guaranteed pupils' full attention. The highly competitive game of Connective Cricket in Year 6, where pupils in teams added appropriate endings to sentences, was a good example.

In Reception, the teaching of personal, social and emotional development is a particular strength. Good use is made of adults to support small groups and this gives children confidence and ensures that they have plenty of opportunities to speak and listen. All staff are consistent in their expectations of behaviour, which is exemplary in lessons.

Developing literacy and numeracy skills is given a high profile in all lessons by teachers using modern technology very effectively to enhance pupils' learning. Using laptops to divide sets into sub sets on a spreadsheet challenged Year 4 and resulted in much discussion. Teaching assistants, who are in every class, are an integral part of the teaching staff and provide high quality support in lessons.

Detailed assessments are carried out which feed into the planning cycle so that previous learning is successfully built upon. The attainment and progress of individual pupils is carefully tracked as they move through the school and any underachievement is quickly spotted.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 1**

The Curriculum matches the needs of all pupils exceptionally well and statutory requirements are met, including in the Foundation Stage. Teachers in the Reception class successfully compensate for the lack of work space and storage for larger equipment for outdoor play. Throughout the school, literacy and numeracy skills are promoted very effectively in all lessons and computers are used all the time to add interest.

Work in the classrooms is greatly enriched by many opportunities to take part in educational visits to local museums and places of educational interest. Having their own minibus is a considerable asset and it is used extensively to provide valuable learning experiences. Workshops such as drama and dance are often led by visitors and residential visits are popular and well supported. There is an exceptionally wide range of extracurricular opportunities which include sporting activities, creative arts, homework and cookery. Very good links are established with many local organisations, and pupils often take part in community activities such as singing carols at the Liverpool Museum.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The school takes excellent care of all its pupils. As a result, Pupils trust staff and know who to turn to if they need help. There is very good support for pupils when they are upset or troubled. The Parent Mentor provides very valuable input by working closely with pupils and their families. Parents and carers feel welcome in the school and are strongly encouraged through parents meetings and workshops to be involved in their children's education. Pupils say that they feel safe in school because the rare instances

of bullying are dealt with swiftly and effectively by all the staff. They also think that the arrangements for preparing them for their transfer to secondary school are good. All appreciate the opportunities they have to discuss their worries. 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. There are very clear strategies in place for the early identification of children who may be in need of additional support.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good, overall. The leadership of the extremely capable headteacher is outstanding. Raising standards is a constant focus for her and has a high profile. Very effective strategies have been introduced to make learning exciting and relevant for all pupils, creating a vibrant climate for learning. The three members of the senior leadership team provide excellent support. Their collective expertise and energy help ensure that there is a good capacity to continue to improve.

The procedures to monitor and evaluate the school's performance are exceptionally good. Subject areas are grouped together in categories such as creative subjects and the collective expertise of co-ordinators used to bring about improvement. Paired lesson observations with teachers and senior staff also ensure that every member of staff is tuned into the process of identifying what needs to be improved. As a result, school self-evaluation is accurate. The current School Improvement Plan is well written, identifying the correct priorities but too many are identified and the key priorities are not given sufficient prominence.

The school is fully inclusive, effectively meeting the needs of the children and their parents. Governors', parents' and pupils' views are regularly sought and taken into account. Governance is satisfactory. The governors are very supportive and keen to help the school move forward but the responsibilities of some new governors are not sufficiently well developed. Financial management is very good and resources are effectively and efficiently deployed ensuring good value for money. However, the accommodation for children in the Reception class is inadequate by modern standards. Good efforts have been made to develop the outdoor area but a lack of storage space limits the provision of larger items of equipment.

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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>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### 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>	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	2	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

<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>	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	1	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	1	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	1	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1	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	1	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	3	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	NA
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**

How lucky you are to attend St Brigid's school! We think your school is giving you a really good education. Please pass on our thanks to all the pupils for helping us when we visited. It would have been nice if we could have stayed longer as we really enjoyed talking to everyone and especially you, the members of the School Council. We are pleased that everyone enjoys school so much and think that you are all working hard in your lessons.

The things that we particularly liked were:

- your headteacher does a fantastic job and, with the support of the whole staff, she has succeeded in creating a school you can all be proud to attend
- your teachers are good. They work hard and you are learning lots of new things in lessons and on your many trips and visits
- the excellent number and range of after school clubs provided for you to enjoy
- the way the school gives you responsibilities, looks after you and cares for you all equally well
- the way you are all fully involved in the life of your school. We were very impressed with the contributions made by the school council
- the really nice way you all behave towards each other and your teachers.

We have only asked your teachers and the governors to improve two things to make your school even better.

- We would like to see children in the Reception class have much more space for their work and some shelter so that they can play outside.
- We think the governors could help the school to be even better by trying to spot things that could be improved when they visit.

Thank you again for helping us with the inspection of your school. We hope that you will carry on enjoying your lessons and helping your teachers to make your school even better!