



# St Silas Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 104615  
**LEA** Liverpool  
**Inspection number** 277190  
**Inspection dates** 19 June 2006 to 20 June 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Mr Ian Thompson 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>	High Park Street
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled		Liverpool
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11		Merseyside L8 3TR
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 7276067
<b>Number on roll</b>	180	<b>Fax number</b>	0151 7260625
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr J Doran
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	30 October 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs J Ngenda

<b>Age group</b> 4 to 11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 19 June 2006 - 20 June 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 277190
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a small primary school serving an area of high social and economic deprivation. Eligibility for free school meals is very much higher than usual. About 75% of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and a small minority are refugees or asylum seekers. More than half the pupils have English as an additional language and are at an early stage of learning English, including most of the children currently in Reception, with some 12 home languages among them. The proportion of pupils on the school's register of additional learning needs is well above average but a below average proportion has a statement of special educational need. A much greater than average proportion of pupils enters or leaves the school at other than the usual times; more than half of the pupils currently in Year 6 joined the school in the last three years. There have been considerable changes in staffing, including three headteachers, over the last four years. The headteacher has been in post since January 2006.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory standard of education and provides satisfactory value for money. Inspectors agree with the school's evaluation of all aspects of its work.

The quality of provision and standards in the Foundation Stage are satisfactory, but learning is hampered by the lack of facilities for outdoor learning and play. Pupils enter the school with low standards. The majority make satisfactory progress in relation to their starting points as they move through the school.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers and classroom assistants are good at providing sensitive support for pupils. A common weakness is that assessment is not used well enough to support planning or to set targets for pupils so that work is matched closely to individual needs.

The curriculum is satisfactory overall but does not fully meet the needs of higher attaining pupils. A strong feature is the wide range of additional activities that the school provides to contribute to pupils' development.

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Pastoral care is a strong feature of the school but guidance based on assessment is not yet well enough developed to tell pupils clearly how to take steps to make better progress.

A prominent feature of the school is the display of posters that reinforce the message 'Citizenship comes first' and this is the spirit that underpins its harmonious atmosphere. The school works hard and successfully to celebrate the diversity of pupils' cultural backgrounds. Consequently, personal development and well-being are good, with outstanding features in pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher provides strong leadership and with good support from governors is moving the school forward. Much remains to be done in developing a manageable system of long term planning and defining roles and responsibilities of middle managers. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Because of the impact of developments the headteacher has already put in place, the school has a good capacity for further improvement.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Develop middle management roles to enable effective monitoring and support of school development.
- Make better use of assessment to identify underachievement and to help pupils understand how well they are doing and how to improve.
- Provide challenging work to raise achievement of higher attainers.
- Improve facilities for outdoor learning and play in the Foundation Stage.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

When pupils join the school, many have difficulties in communication and social learning. A substantial proportion has little or no English and, overall, standards are well below average. Children make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage towards most of the early learning goals and many make good progress in developing communication skills. This reflects the school's strength in meeting the needs of pupils who are at an early stage of learning English. Standards at the end of Year 6 are well below average, with a particular weakness in writing that the school has identified and is tackling. In relation to their starting points, the majority of pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. This includes those with additional learning needs and/or disabilities, many of whom make good progress. Higher attaining pupils do not consistently make the progress of which they are capable. This is because they are not always challenged sufficiently and some find the work too easy. The best progress is made by pupils who start the school in Year 1 and remain in it. Nevertheless, the many pupils who join the school at other than the usual times make at least satisfactory progress. This is a result of the school's effective procedures for assessing and meeting their needs through high quality additional support.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Personal development and well-being is good with some outstanding features. Pupils speak proudly of their school as, 'welcoming, safe and caring, where new children are always welcomed and looked after'. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and agree with this view. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. These aspects are celebrated well, building successfully on the diverse multi-faith and multicultural community served by the school. Many pupils participate in the wide range of out-of-school activities provided for them. These enhance and develop their sporting, musical and artistic talents well. Pupils' behaviour is good. They relate well to staff and to each other. The school works hard and successfully to overcome barriers of language to enable parents with many home languages to participate in their children's education and contribute to their development. Many initiatives have been introduced in the school's continuing drive to improve attendance, which is now broadly average. The school council is very effective in enabling pupils to contribute to decision-making. They were fully involved, for example, in establishing the school as a 'Fair Trade' school and the reflective 'Quiet Place' that provides them with calm support and opportunities for expression of feelings. This has a significant impact on pupils' awareness of how to value and respect one another and prepares them well for their next stage in learning. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of what it means to live a healthy lifestyle through work undertaken in achieving the Healthy Schools Award.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The best lessons have a variety of activities that involve pupils in practical work so that they have fun learning, for example, in science. Too often, lessons lack a sense of urgency and too little is asked of pupils, particularly higher attainers. Teachers and support assistants are good at providing well timed support so that pupils who find learning difficult and those at an early stage of learning English are helped to keep up and to make similar progress to their classmates. However, some lessons are dominated by teachers' presentations that go on too long. Consequently, support assistants do not have the opportunity to contribute to pupils' progress across the class.

Pupils' books also reveal some lack of challenge and expectation. This particularly affects higher attaining pupils in writing. Although consistently supportive, marking does not always tell pupils what they need to do to improve. Similarly, because the use of assessment and target setting is at an early stage of development, pupils do not know enough about how well they are doing, or how well they ought to be doing. This also means that underachievement is not always identified at an early enough stage for prompt remedial action to be taken.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory with some good features. It meets the needs of most pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those within the Foundation Stage. However, there is not enough challenge built into the curriculum to consistently meet the needs of higher attaining pupils. Parents comment favourably on the school's commitment to improving every pupil's opportunity to develop as good citizens whilst positively celebrating and valuing each pupil's uniqueness. The school provides a wealth of opportunities for pupils to work with artists and poets, to learn to play a musical instrument, to visit places of interest and to take part in sporting events and residential trips. These good links with external agencies greatly enhance the curriculum. Pupils have opportunities to learn Spanish and their diverse cultural and religious backgrounds are celebrated throughout the curriculum. Learning is enriched through pupils taking part in cultural and community events. The wide range of out-of-school activities, which include sports and the arts, is very popular with the pupils and contributes much to their personal development.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall. Good levels of care and support have a marked impact on pupils' personal development and well-being. Robust procedures for child protection and assessing any risks ensure that pupils are

safeguarded. The school has made a start in helping pupils understand what they need to do to improve their work. However, this is at an early stage of development. The school is very responsive to the needs of the most vulnerable pupils, those with English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Staff frequently meet with parents and members of external agencies to plan the support required and to review progress. Learning mentors provide invaluable support for groups of pupils, ensuring they receive high levels of care and enabling them to reach their potential.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher provides strong leadership based on a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and what needs doing to manage improvement. Her great strength is in being able to communicate her vision for the school's future and to take people with her. Following a period of considerable changes in staffing and management that slowed progress in many aspects of the school's work, the headteacher has brought stability and established a platform on which to build improvement. She has gained the support of parents and played a significant part in establishing a learning atmosphere in the school in which all are valued and included. The reflective and research based approach to development means that all staff are involved and have a voice in planning for improvement. The school's evaluation of its work is realistic and accurate. There are now well developed plans to restructure the school's management better to meet its needs. Nevertheless, middle management roles are not yet clearly enough defined to meet the school's needs for effective monitoring of its performance, particularly in teaching and learning.

Governors provide good support for the school and contribute well to its links with the community. Recent restructuring of the governing body means that it is now better able to hold the school to account for its performance. However, governors do not yet play a full part in shaping the direction of the school through long term planning.

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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>	3	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	3	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>	3	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	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	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	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>	3	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3	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>	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	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	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	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	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**

As you know, Mrs Henderson and I visited your school to check on how well it is doing. Thank you very much for the way you welcomed us into your school. We enjoyed talking to you about your work and your life in the school. We were very impressed by the courtesy and help you gave us. We agree with you that the school is a safe and happy place where everyone can enjoy learning.

The best things about the school are:

- everyone in the school cares for you well so that you know that you can get help with any difficulties
- you get on well together and help each other
- there are lots of extra activities that you enjoy.

We have asked your teachers to improve some things to make your school a better place to learn. These are:

- to work out ways for senior members of staff to keep a check on how well things are going in the school and to help it improve even more
- to help you understand better how well you are doing and what you need to do to improve your work
- to make sure that those of you who learn faster are given work that helps you to learn even more
- to improve the outdoor learning and play facilities for younger pupils.

Thank you for helping us with our work. We hope that you carry on enjoying lessons and continue to help to make St Silas an even better place to learn.