



St Michael's Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 104656
LEA Liverpool
Inspection number 277199
Inspection dates 10 July 2006 to 11 July 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Mark Madeley CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Guion Street off Boaler Street Liverpool, Merseyside L6 9DU
School category	Voluntary aided	Telephone number	0151 2638460
Age range of pupils	3 to 11	Fax number	0151 2605308
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Chair of governors	Mr F Dwyer
Number on roll	349	Headteacher	Mr A Hegarty
Appropriate authority	The governing body		
Date of previous inspection	18 September 2000		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a large, inner city school, which serves predominantly White British pupils from the local parish. An increasing number of pupils from overseas, most of whose parents work in health care, join the school in classes other than Nursery and Reception, but few of them are at the early stages of learning English. Many of the children starting school in the Foundation Stage have very weak language and social skills. The school has an above average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school, giving good value for money, because it helps pupils achieve well. The inspection agrees with the school's overall evaluation. Good leadership and management have brought about improvement since the last inspection; all the previous issues have been dealt with and test scores at the end of Key Stage 2 have improved. Recent staffing difficulties have been sensitively handled. Management has the ability and the desire to improve the school further.

The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation is good. Management know the strengths and weaknesses of the school well through activities to check on all aspects of its work. It has identified that pupils are making only satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1, and that standards there are low, particularly in reading and writing. Elsewhere in the school, pupils are making at least good progress. The provision in the Foundation Stage is good. Well planned and exciting activities help children make good progress from their often low starting points. Test scores at the end of Year 6 in 2005 were average in English and above average in mathematics and science. This represented outstanding progress for those pupils. Good teaching has helped raise test scores for the last five years, but teachers' marking does not always show pupils how they can improve further.

The curriculum is of good quality. Pupils' learning is enriched through the interesting and varied experiences on offer, and they thoroughly enjoy the many educational visits and out-of-school clubs provided for them. The school has strong partnerships with other local schools and agencies that benefit the pupils considerably.

Pupils flourish and their personal development is good because of the high standard of care staff provide for them. Pupils and their parents like the school, though attendance is below average. They are well prepared for the next stage in their learning through the strong emphasis placed on developing their skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT).

What the school should do to improve further

- improve the standards pupils reach and the progress they make in reading and writing in Key Stage 1
- ensure that teachers' marking helps pupils to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well because teaching is good, particularly in the juniors. On entry to the Foundation Stage, standards for the majority of children are very low. For example, many three year olds find it hard to communicate in words and a few have not held a pencil or crayon before. Children make good progress as a result of well organised and challenging provision. However, despite this good progress, many do not reach the standards expected for this age group. By the end of Reception, some have considerable

ground to make up. Pupils make only satisfactory progress through Key Stage 1 because they sometimes lack the social skills to make the most of lessons. For example, they do not focus on their books during guided reading sessions. Test scores were low in 2005, particularly in reading and writing, but have risen steadily since 2003 when they were exceptionally low.

Test results at the end of Year 6 in 2005 were above average in mathematics and science, showing that pupils had made outstanding progress. Test scores for this age group have risen for five consecutive years. Pupils meet the very challenging targets set for them.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those at an early stage of learning English make good progress against the targets set for them. They are particularly well supported when undertaking additional learning programmes in small groups.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. There are high quality relationships in the school and pupils respect themselves, each other and the world around them. Their behaviour is good. They feel safe in school and know to speak to a member of staff if they ever feel upset. Good induction procedures help new pupils feel at home quickly. They have positive attitudes to learning and enjoy coming to school. However, despite the school's efforts, attendance rates are below average. The school has put in place a system of rewards and sanctions and attendance has improved this year. It is working with a few families who find regular attendance a challenge. Pupils have a clear understanding of how to stay safe. They also make good choices about regular exercise and selecting healthy food, which help them to stay fit and well. Pupils from different cultures work and play happily together. They all make a positive contribution to their school and the wider community by involvement in the school council or undertaking responsibilities within school, like assisting with the breakfast and lunchtime clubs. Teamwork in lessons, on the sports field and on residential visits, coupled with the good grounding they receive in basic skills, prepares pupils well for the world of work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Although the school evaluates it as satisfactory, inspectors judge that the quality of teaching and learning is good. Most staff have very positive relationships with the pupils, using humour and praise effectively to maintain their interest and raise their self-esteem. At the beginning of the lesson, they share with the pupils what the lesson will be about, and older pupils are starting to assess how well they have learned. Some staff use new technology well to stimulate pupils' ideas. In the best lessons, teachers

extend pupils' understanding by asking them to justify their answers or to comment on other pupils' work, as in a good Year 6 writing session. When teaching is less effective, the pace of learning slows because teachers do not hold pupils' attention. Occasionally, pupils cannot be relied on to work in groups at their task whilst the teacher supports another group. In the Foundation Stage, the quality of teaching and learning is good. Children quickly learn the well established routines of the classroom. They enjoy the freedom of choosing activities as well as learning from the well structured adult-led sessions. Teachers use their assessment well to plan pupils' future learning. All pupils enjoy the praise and rewards that most of their work brings. Very few know how to improve their work further because teachers' marking rarely offers them points for improvement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It meets all requirements and the needs of the pupils well. A strong emphasis is given to teaching basic skills in English, mathematics and ICT, which gives pupils a firm foundation for later life. A specialist teacher teaches ICT skills across the school and as a result, pupils' standards in this subject have improved, but displays indicate that pupils make little use of these skills in other subjects. The personal, social and health education programme makes a very strong contribution to pupils' understanding of how to stay healthy and safe. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage provides children with exciting opportunities in all areas of learning.

There are many interesting activities and school clubs provided, often on a multicultural theme. These effectively enrich the curriculum and stimulate learning. Pupils' imaginations are caught when visitors share their expertise and beliefs. Visits, including the occasions when pupils 'sleep over', are eagerly anticipated and fondly recalled by the pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. The pupils are well cared for. Staff know them well and work hard to ensure that they feel safe and secure. They actively promote positive values, such as friendship and kindness, for example, through 'circle time' sessions. Pupils say that they enjoy these sessions and that they help them feel more positive about themselves. Appropriate procedures for safeguarding pupils are in place. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified at an early stage and good support is put in place to ensure their needs are effectively met. Parents are well informed about what is being done for their children and supported in helping them at home. The school works effectively with and makes good use of the expertise of outside agencies that provide additional support for these and other pupils. Clear targets are set to guide pupils' learning. These are shared with them and also with their parents. Pupils know their targets and work hard towards achieving them. Better use could be made of marking by teachers to provide guidance to pupils on how to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Good leadership and management have improved the school since the last inspection. The senior managers know the strengths and weaknesses of the school from their robust checking systems. The whole school is focused on raising standards and improving teaching and learning. Rising standards and better achievement show that this is working. The school has good capacity to improve further. In recent years the school has had many staff changes and absences, and these have been well managed. The Foundation Stage, provision for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and assessment are well managed.

This is an inclusive school in which all pupils are welcomed and helped to achieve their potential. Pupils from a variety of cultural heritages and a wide range of abilities form the exciting mix that is the school's population. All pupils usually get a fair deal but staffing difficulties this year in Key Stage 1 have meant that those pupils made satisfactory progress whilst elsewhere pupils made good progress. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are highly supportive of the school. They meet their legal duties and are well organised. Some are inexperienced and as a body they do not yet hold the school fully to account.

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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?	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

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	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?	2	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?	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	2	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

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

We enjoyed our time at your school and both you and the staff made us very welcome. We think that your school is a good school because it helps you do really well in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. It also develops in you many important personal qualities, like being kind to each other and understanding someone else's point of view. You behaved well, though one or two were a little chatty in lessons. Those who spoke with us were confident and well mannered. You told us you enjoy school a great deal and we felt that you were keen to learn in lessons.

The management of your school is good. It has improved the school since the last inspection. Test scores are improving in the infants. In 2005, pupils in Year 6 made outstanding progress. We are pleased that you like the wide range of clubs, including the very well attended breakfast club, and the educational visits the school takes you on. We agree with your views and feel that these things make a powerful contribution to your learning.

Even in a good school there are things to improve. We have asked the school to do two things to make your school a better place for you:

- help the infants make better progress and reach higher standards
- make sure that teachers' marking helps you improve your work.

We are sure you will want to help, too, because you like your school so much. We suggest that you make every effort to come to school every day, and on time! Try always to do your best and use the comments teachers will write in your books to make your work even better.

We would like to thank you all for making us very welcome in your school and for helping us with our inspection. Your views were important to us. We wish you and the school all the best for the future.