



# Corpus Christi Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 104814  
**LEA** St. Helens  
**Inspection number** 277226  
**Inspection dates** 26 June 2006 to 27 June 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Mr Mike McLachlan CfBT Lead Inspector

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Old Lane
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Rainford
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11		St Helens, Merseyside WA11 8JF
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01744 678102
<b>Number on roll</b>	164	<b>Fax number</b>	01744 678103
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Canon Leo Stoker
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	22 January 2001	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Leslie Balmforth

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

Corpus Christi is a small primary school situated in the village of Rainford, an area of relative prosperity. Attainment on entry is broadly average. The proportion of pupils in receipt of free school meals is below the national average as is the number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The number of pupils with English as an additional language or who are at an early stage of learning English is very small. The school has gained awards in Investors in People, Basic Skills, Active Mark Gold and the Foundation Stage Kite mark.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 2**

Inspectors agree with the school's judgement that this is a good school which gives good value for money. Standards reached by the end of Year 6 are above average and this represents good progress given pupils' starting points at school. The quality and standards achieved in the Foundation Stage are good. There is a strong family atmosphere and children and parents enjoy all the school has to offer. Pupils become sensible caring and mature because of good care and guidance and the strong Christian ethos of the school. The quality of teaching is good, although a number of staff absences have led to some inconsistencies in some classes. In some lessons, insufficient use is made of the performance data the school collects to enable pupils to know what to do to improve their work. A good curriculum is very effectively enhanced by many outstanding extra-curricular activities and themed events. All pupils are made welcome, including a significant minority from other faiths. Strong links with external providers and other schools ensure pupils are well prepared for the next stage. Leadership and management are good. Self evaluation is accurate and the leadership team have correctly identified the need to improve the quality of writing throughout the school. The headteacher has rightly delegated responsibilities for improving key aspects of the school to his strong leadership team, but he is insufficiently involved in supporting and checking that new systems to improve standards are used consistently in all classes. The school has made good progress since the last inspection and has the capacity and drive to improve further.

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

- Improve standards of writing across the school.
- Ensure that the initiatives introduced to improve standards are consistently implemented across the school.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Inspectors agree with the school's judgement that pupils' make good progress given their starting point when they join school. Standards reached in the national tests in Year 6 in 2005 were above average and this represented good achievement for these pupils. The work seen during the inspection confirms this position as do the mathematics and science results for the 2006 tests. The English results were not published at the time of the inspection. In 2005, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels in English was less than in mathematics and science. Good analysis by the school's assistant headteacher indicated that pupils' writing, particularly their ability to write creatively, was not as strong as reading. Overall standards reached in writing in Year 6 are now above national expectations but work remains to be done to ensure the same level of improvement lower down the school. A good programme of 'free' writing is encouraging creativity, particularly for boys. Further developments are planned to support the technical skills needed for pupils to become effective

writers. Standards reached by the end of the Foundation stage are good. This represents good progress given pupil's broadly average ability on entry. Standards reached by the end of Key Stage 1 are above average. Staff absence has resulted in greater progress in Year 2 than in Year 1. Overall, pupils reach challenging targets and the trend is one of steady improvement.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Inspectors agree with the school's judgment that standards of personal development and well-being are good. Most pupils behave well and often very well around the school and in lessons. They enjoy all that the school has to offer and are excited by the diverse range of activities provided, particularly in the theme events such as the recent Spanish and Africa weeks. Attendance is good; there is very little unauthorised absence and no pupils have been excluded. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and the school has worked hard to provide enriching multicultural experiences for all pupils. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to act safely and develop healthy lifestyles. Physical activities, including sports and dance, are strong elements of the school's curriculum and although this is a small school it achieves very well in local and regional events and competitions. Pupils are given some responsibilities within the schools such as head boy and girl, activity leaders or setting up the computers for younger pupils. The school's council meets regularly but there is no formal system for reporting outcomes of meetings, for example to classmates or to the governing body. Most pupils learn to work independently or in a group as appropriate. Consequently they are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Inspectors agree with the school's judgement that the quality of teaching is good and that some is outstanding. Good teaching and learning is characterised by thorough planning, pace and effective questioning. Pupils are actively engaged, enjoy learning and are encouraged to work independently from an early age. In outstanding lessons the level of challenge and progress is excellent, learning is linked to other subjects and pupils know and regularly check their progress towards their targets. Pupils state that the best lessons are practical. For example one pupil enthusiastically explained in detail a lesson on sound where he used a tuning fork to move objects without touching them. Staff absence is a concern for some parents and this has led to some inconsistency in provision. Some temporary teachers have not always been fully involved in training to ensure their approaches are consistent with the most effective practice in the school. Good plans are in hand to resolve these issues. Assessment is good although in some lessons marking does not always provide sufficient advice on what pupils need to do to improve their learning or reach their targets. Teaching assistants

and other classroom helpers are well directed to support learning, and good relationships with parents help pupils to succeed.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The school considers the curriculum to be outstanding. Inspectors judge it to be good with some outstanding features. Overall it is well planned and the development of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) is good. However, the school has recognised the need to further develop pupils' writing skills and make stronger links between the other subjects currently covered through the themed weeks. Statutory requirements are met. Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well catered for. An emphasis on practical activities allows pupils to develop a good understanding of work in real situations. Some very good displays of work enrich pupils' experiences. The Foundation Stage curriculum is well planned. Enrichment of the curriculum is outstanding with excellent use of visitors and visits to support learning. Themed weeks on Spain and Africa have developed the pupils' understanding of and empathy for other cultures and people. One Year 2 pupil was moved to say that, 'We can just turn on a tap to get water but some people in Africa have to search for a water hole.'

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Care guidance and support is good. Generally speaking, pupils' academic and personal development are well tracked and pupils who require extra support are quickly identified and consequently make good progress. Occasionally this information is not used sufficiently in lessons to help pupils know what they need to do to improve. Child protection and health and safety systems are in place. Good links exist with parents and outside agencies and there are very strong links with local high schools. Transition arrangements are very effective. Teachers from these schools work well through events such as the excellent Year 6 salsa dancing lessons and the design and technology challenge so that pupils are confident to move on to their new schools. Lunchtime supervision is good and opportunities are used to develop leadership skills. For example Year 6 activity leaders plan and supervise games for infant pupils. Good relationships exist between pupils and staff which help create the caring and supportive ethos throughout the school. Parents are very supportive of the school. As one put it, 'The children are encouraged to be themselves and fulfil their potential.'

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Inspectors agree with the school's judgement that leadership and management are good. Because of its size, the strength of relationships between staff and the considerable support shown by the parents, the school has a strong family atmosphere. The headteacher, aided by a very strong leadership team, has successfully brought

about improvement since the last inspection. Key aspects of the school's work, for example curriculum and assessment, have been rightly delegated to senior leaders who have specific expertise. These aspects are successfully led. However, the headteacher is not sufficiently involved in supporting and monitoring the impact of the initiatives to improve standards. The result is some inconsistency in implementation particularly where temporary staff are involved. Performance management is used effectively to assure the overall quality of teaching and training has been targeted to support the development of specific skills. School self evaluation is accurate and the school has rightly identified the need to improve writing throughout the school and to use the information it holds on pupils' progress more effectively to plan work for pupils in lessons. There are good plans to tackle both these issues. The governing body provides support and challenge for the school and is well briefed by the senior leadership team. Given the steady improvement in standards and the plans in hand to raise these further, the senior leadership has the capacity and drive to bring about further 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>	<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>	2	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	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	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	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>	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	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	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**

The inspection team would like to thank you for the way in which you greeted us and made us feel 'at home'. You were all a credit to yourselves, your families and your teachers. We think you go to a good school and that some things about the school are very good. We were impressed by the way in which you were kind to each other and friendly towards your staff and other visitors. We like the way you help in school, for example, your Year 6 activity leaders and the school council.

You make good progress in your learning and you know about a wide range of things by the time you leave your school. We agree with your teachers that you need to improve your writing skills a little more and that with your good efforts and the teacher's good plans this can be done.

The staff of your school work hard to make lessons interesting and they know what each of you needs to do to improve. We think you are set challenging targets and in some classes you clearly know what they are and what you need to do to improve your work. It would be even better if all classes adopted this good system. We can see that you are excited by your lessons, particularly when they are practical, and you especially enjoy the excellent extra activities such as the Spanish and African weeks, and the Victorian School day.

We think that you are well looked after and you feel safe and secure in school. There are excellent links with the high schools and other visitors so you feel very confident to move on to your next school.

We think that the headteacher and his team leaders know what is good in your school and work hard to make your school better. It would be helpful if the headteacher checked more often to see if the plans for improving your school are working well.

Thank you again for making our visit to your school so enjoyable.