



Our Lady Mother of the Saviour Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Better
education
and care

Unique Reference Number 111378
LEA Halton
Inspection number 278673
Inspection dates 15 March 2006 to 16 March 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs Dee Brigstock CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Lapwing Grove
School category	Voluntary aided		Palacefields
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Runcorn, Cheshire WA7 2TP
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01928 711921
Number on roll	132	Fax number	01928 717945
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr P Moriarty
Date of previous inspection	7 December 1998	Headteacher	Mrs A Synnott

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector.

Description of the school

Our Lady Mother of the Saviour Catholic School is a small school. All pupils are white British. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. When pupils start school their skills and knowledge are low, as are the socio-economic factors in the local areas.

The school has the local Healthy Schools Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school's previous designation as having serious weaknesses no longer applies.

Our Lady Mother of the Saviour is a good school. Most pupils, including the youngest in Reception and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make good progress. Standards are above average by Year 6. This represents really good progress between the time children enter school to when they leave, although the highest attaining pupils could do better in science. Relationships between all adults and pupils are good. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, and is particularly strong in Years 5 and 6. However, the school knows that pupils do not achieve as well as they might in Years 1 and 2 because teaching is less effective here than in the rest of the school.

The quality of care, guidance and support and pupils' personal development are good. Pupils are keen to learn, enjoy school and are well behaved. The school works well in partnership with others to keep pupils safe and healthy. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. The curriculum is satisfactory. It meets requirements and there is a good range of extracurricular activities. However, not enough links are planned in learning between subjects.

The school is led and managed well and it provides good value for money. The headteacher and governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and, in close partnership with the local authority, have tackled the issues from the last inspection with success, drive and determination, demonstrating the school's good capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Further improve the quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2.
- Raise standards in science for the highest attaining pupils through giving them more opportunities to construct their own investigations.
- Make more effective links between curriculum subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good overall. Children start school with low standards, particularly in language and communication skills. They make really good progress in the Reception class, although occasionally their learning is too formal. By the end of Reception, the majority of children reach the standards expected for their age.

By Year 2, pupils are attaining average standards and this represents satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2, where the teacher's expertise in planning for a mixed age class is still developing. In Years 3 to 6 the pace picks up again and pupils progress well. In 2005, Year 6 pupils attained standards which were well above average in English, above average in mathematics and average in science. The same pattern of attainment

is emerging this year, although more pupils are expected to reach higher levels in mathematics. Pupils are meeting very challenging targets in English and mathematics and enjoy rising to these challenges. Some of the highest attaining pupils could do even better in science, and to a lesser extent in mathematics, if they had more practise in constructing and conducting their own investigations.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good, and in English outstanding, progress throughout the school because their belief in their capabilities is raised very effectively by their teachers and their talented and knowledgeable teaching assistants.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy coming to school, their attendance is satisfactory, and they are keen to learn. Children in Reception quickly learn to follow instructions and share resources, and develop very good attitudes to learning for their age. Pupils' behaviour is good overall and they are keen to show their school in a good light. During lessons in Years 3 to 6, pupils' behaviour is outstanding but in Years 1 and 2, a very few pupils need constant reminders and encouragement to behave well. Bullying incidents are rare and pupils understand what to do if they are in trouble. They feel safe at school, recommend their 'safe' website and have a good understanding of how to stay fit and healthy. Older pupils readily explain what makes a healthy diet and are proud of their Healthy Tuck Award.

So far, the school council's influence extends only to improving their play areas and raising money for charities, but older pupils show maturity and are keen to take on additional responsibilities, such as helping to supervise younger pupils at lunchtime. Pupils play energetically and take part in a wide range of extracurricular sporting activities for a small school.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory, with significant strengths in their moral and social development. Pupils' involvement in the community is satisfactory. They raise funds for several charities and support local events within the parish community. Pupils' basic skills, including information and communication technology (ICT), teamwork, social skills and well-developed sense of responsibility, equip them well for their future life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. In Reception, children quickly learn writing and reading skills, although occasionally, planned learning activities are too teacher led and the pupils' independent learning skills are not promoted well enough. Teaching and learning in the Year 1 and 2 class are less strong than elsewhere. However, the school is implementing a range of support and improvement strategies which are

starting to improve their quality. Teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 is consistently good or better and teachers use interactive whiteboards effectively to engage pupils' attention in their learning. Relationships between all staff and pupils are good.

In Years 5 and 6, particularly in English, the teacher's marking is outstanding and pupils are expected to, and do, answer her comments in writing. They respond very positively to the challenging targets set for them resulting in rapid progress. Learning in science for the highest attaining pupils is less successful, because they do not have enough opportunities to construct, evaluate and improve their own investigations.

The school has good systems for assessing pupils' attainment, tracking their progress and diagnosing shortfalls in learning. This system is used well to track and improve teachers' effectiveness. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities learn well because their needs are catered for carefully, their work is valued, and they have very well qualified and talented additional support.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory and all statutory requirements are met. The Foundation Stage curriculum has a very strong emphasis on acquiring skills in language and mathematics, but not enough emphasis on making connections between areas of learning. The same is true of the curriculum for older pupils. All subjects are taught but links between them are not fully exploited and there are fewer visits and/or visitors than usual to give pupils first hand learning experiences. However, pupils find lessons interesting, especially in ICT, which has had a considerable boost since the last inspection. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are sometimes withdrawn from lessons in small groups, but still receive their full entitlement to the curriculum. Pupils' personal, social and health education is good and they benefit from a good range of well attended extracurricular activities and clubs for a small school, plus additional tuition in music and French from specialist teachers.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils' care, guidance and support are good. Pupils and parents appreciate that the school needs rules to keep pupils safe, and good relationships help create the caring ethos evident throughout the school. The number of school clubs shows the high level of commitment of the staff to the pupils. Adults boost pupils' belief in themselves and this ensures good progress for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Induction into Reception is well managed, helped by good links with the pre-school. Before transfer to their next school, Year 6 pupils get to know some of their new teachers well through having regular lessons from them.

Up-to-date child protection and health and safety systems promote pupils' well being effectively. Academic and personal development of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, is tracked accurately and this information is used to support most pupils' learning. It is not used consistently enough in Years 1 and 2,

where the teacher's marking lacks precision and therefore pupils do not have enough guidance on how to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The school knows itself well, although it is too modest in its evaluation of pupils' personal development. After the last inspection the school took a hard look at itself and set to work with great determination to put right identified weaknesses. This successful drive for improvement has been achieved with practical and sustained support from the local authority and parents. Information from a tightly structured monitoring programme has given the headteacher and senior teacher a clear view on the effectiveness of teaching, although feedback to teachers on the quality of their work is not always rigorous enough. The school's targets for improvement are accurate and form a good basis for the school improvement plan. How the school intends to measure its success against some targets, however, is not always specified in the plan, although the information exists.

Identified weaknesses, such as teaching in Years 1 and 2 are being tackled with determination and school leaders have developed a successful professional partnership with staff to improve practice. The same determination is evident in the improvements being made to the school building, including improved access for disabled pupils, the outdoor classroom for Reception and pupils' learning environment.

Governors meet their responsibilities well and have a detailed understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. The school's capacity to improve is amply demonstrated by its progress since the last inspection. Within a year, the school has demonstrated good improvement in pupils' progress, teaching, behaviour and attendance.

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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	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

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	3	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	3	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?	3	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	3	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

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 me feel so welcome in your school and for being helpful when I asked you questions. I really enjoyed talking with you.

There are lots of good things going on in your school. The best ones are:

- by Year 6, your English is a lot better than in a lot of other schools
- your school is a very friendly and pleasant place to be and so you enjoy your learning
- a lot of you present your work very well indeed
- your teachers use the interactive whiteboards very well in lessons
- everyone seems to get on well with one another
- you have really healthy meals.

To improve your school more:

- the children in Years 1 and 2 could do more challenging work
- your teachers could let you plan, carry out and then improve your own investigations in science
- better links between subjects could be made; for example, between art and history, or geography and science.

I hope you will carry on enjoying learning and helping your teachers to make your school a good and exciting place to be.