

# St Gabriel's CofE Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	104452
<b>Local Authority</b>	Knowsley
<b>Inspection number</b>	286946
<b>Inspection date</b>	13 July 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Henry Moreton

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3-11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	222
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Rev M Rogers
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr K Brayshaw
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	11 June 2002
<b>School address</b>	Ellis Ashton Street Huyton Liverpool Merseyside L36 6BH
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 4778250
<b>Fax number</b>	0151 4778251

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

St Gabriel's is an average sized school. Pupils are drawn from areas of high social deprivation and the proportion eligible for free school meals is above average. Most pupils are of White British heritage and, although the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above average, all use English as their first language. An average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, but the number with a statement of special educational need is below average.

The school is located on two sites separated by a busy road. It is a member of the Greater Merseyside Teacher Training Consortium and has links with the Merseyside Creative Partnership Agency.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

St Gabriel's is a good school. It has a number of outstanding features. The comment that, 'The school is a well run, close knit, community church school which is doing well academically, but also teaches the children respect for others and good moral values' is typical of the views of parents.

The school is successful in helping pupils make outstanding gains in their personal development and well-being. The care, guidance and support available for pupils are excellent. Pupils of all abilities respond exceptionally well to the innovative curriculum that is taught well and helps them to make good progress. The school's success stems from the very clear direction the headteacher sets. He and his staff are very well supported by the governors, ably led by their chairperson.

The good leadership has improved the quality and standards in the school reported at the last inspection. In particular the range of opportunities to help pupils to become independent learners is significantly improved. This has been achieved through the introduction of a creative curriculum. Self-evaluation is a rigorous process through which the school accurately identifies its strengths. However, senior managers do not always give written and recorded suggestions to staff on how they could improve their work, when observing lessons. Key decisions are only taken after staff have been well consulted and as a result morale is high. Senior and middle managers are fully involved in implementing new school initiatives. They map provision for individual pupils, use staff resources flexibly and monitor outcomes closely.

Children enter the Nursery with standards well below those typically expected for their age. They get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage because teaching is imaginative and captures their interest effectively. Teachers develop children's early reading and mathematical skills very well. In Years 1 to 6 pupils build on this firm foundation and make good progress. They reach standards that are broadly average in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. Within this generally positive picture, standards in writing are proving difficult to improve. Nonetheless, pupils of all abilities make very good progress in reading. Pupils' achievement is good overall.

Teaching and learning is of a good quality across the school. Some teaching is outstanding. Excellent use is made of a range of teaching strategies to engage pupils' attention. As a result their behaviour is exemplary and the climate for learning is purposeful in all classes. Teachers' weekly planning is meticulous. Teachers set challenging targets for individual pupils.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent and is well promoted by the personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme. The curriculum provides access to an enriching range of activities. Involvement with the Creative Partnership Agency helps the staff to very effectively use educational visits and visitors to bring subjects to life. In this way the links made between subjects such as poetry, music and mathematics are highly imaginative and make learning relevant for pupils of all ages and abilities. In turn this supports the 'Every Child Matters' agenda exceptionally well.

With many of their parents and carers, pupils make a very strong commitment to the school community and are unfailingly helpful towards one another. A typical comment is that, 'school is fun and happy and you learn a lot'. There is an active school council and pupils feel that they are listened to by staff. Pupils have a keen awareness of the need to keep themselves safe and healthy. The school has robust policies and procedures for safeguarding them. Support for

parents and carers is good. There is an exceptionally helpful school website, which is highly valued. A small proportion of parents feel that the school could do more to communicate with them. A typical comment from parents that summarises the majority of views is, 'Not only has our son excelled academically, he has also developed socially through the nurturing and caring ethos within the school. This has given him the best possible start in life.'

School governors are very closely involved in supporting staff and pupils. They challenge the senior management team and are aspirational for the school and its pupils. Improvements in the curriculum and in enabling the pupils to become more independent give a clear demonstration of the school's good capacity to improve further. The school provides good value for money.

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

- Raise standards in writing in Years 1 to 6.
- Ensure that managers always identify key development points in writing when they observe lessons.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

By the time pupils leave school they have made good progress to achieve average standards. By the end of Reception standards are below average in all areas of learning, but this represents good progress from well below average starting points on entry to the Nursery. Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 1 and 2 and standards are rising. Standards are broadly average but those reached in writing are lower than in reading and mathematics. In Years 3 to 6 pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, continue to make good progress and reach standards that are average by the end of Year 6. All pupils make very good progress in reading because teachers make excellent use of resources to meet individual needs.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development and well-being and their spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development are outstanding. Parents' and pupils' views, and evidence in lessons, show that pupils are very enthusiastic and get a huge amount of enjoyment from school. They work hard and their behaviour is exemplary in lessons and around the school. Attendance is satisfactory. It is not good because of the incidence of unauthorised absence. Pupils' speaking and listening skills, self-confidence and independence develop very well alongside their mathematics and reading. Their writing skills develop more slowly. They feel safe and take full advantage of the many activities provided to encourage them to be healthy, such as taking part in sport, including planned opportunities after school. There are many examples of pupils working together and helping one another. The active school council plays a key role in school improvement.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of teaching and learning is good and pupils of all abilities learn well. Pupils say that, 'lessons are fun' in this school. Activities are well planned to match their needs and cater for the range of abilities in each class. Staff have a very secure understanding of the learning

needs of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and respond to these well in their teaching. This is especially evident in the teaching of reading and mathematics but less so in writing. Teachers and support staff work together well and are good role models. Lessons are lively and interesting and hold learners' attention throughout. As a result pupils of all abilities are attentive and respond to the many opportunities to work with others, including role-play. Teachers link subjects by the very effective use of resources, including computers.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 1**

The curriculum is outstanding. There is an extensive range of activities which very effectively meet the needs of the pupils. A flexible approach to the use of staff and resources meets the pupils' learning needs exceptionally well, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. A range of school trips together with visitors to school provide variety and interest as well as the necessary practical tasks and experiences. Links with other schools and providers add further enrichment. Classroom displays of pupils' work reflect the high expectations throughout the school. Pupils' imagination and confidence is developed very well through having access to a wide range of visiting authors and poets.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

Staff provide excellent welfare and pastoral care. There are exemplary procedures and systems for staffing checks with a meticulously maintained single central record in place. There are robust risk assessments for class-based activities and visits. Diligent assessments and records are made of pupils' academic performance and personal development. There are extensive links and liaison with other professionals, including a Teacher Training provider and 'experts' in the curriculum, and these impact positively on pupils' learning. Pupils thrive in this school. A typical comment from parents is that, 'My children have never wanted not to go to school. As a parent what more could I ask for? When your children enjoy school, it is doing a great job.'

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. Well led by the headteacher, and based upon effective school self-evaluation, managers respond creatively to the needs of pupils. Effective systems are in place for training and supporting staff. The observations of lessons by managers are accurate, although they do not routinely set out in writing areas for development and as such do not enable staff to improve their practice. Parents and carers are well supported and they have good access to staff, including through the school website. Nonetheless, a small number consider that the school could communicate more effectively with them. Governors make a significant contribution to the strategic direction of the school and hold managers to account extremely well. In close partnership with them they have created a climate of mutual trust and support.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	1
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.



## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Inspection of St Gabriel's Church of England Primary School, Huyton, L36 6BH.

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited to inspect your school. I am writing to let you know what we found out. You can access a copy of our report on [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you get time, try to look it up because we think you will find it interesting. It is based on what you and your parents told us, as well as what we saw for ourselves in the school.

Yours is a good school. The staff care for you extremely well. You make good progress with your school work because of your hard work and the skills of your teachers. You should be proud of the way you behave. The school provides many opportunities for you to take part in exciting activities and we like the way that you have so many chances to develop your interests in drama, art and sport. We saw for ourselves how proud you are of your school and what confident young people you are becoming.

We have asked the headteacher, his staff and the governors to make the school better by improving your writing. You can help by trying even harder when you write in literacy and in all your other subjects. Always check your spellings and ask your teacher or your friends if you are not sure about when and where to put your full stops, commas, capital letters, and etcetera. We are also asking the teachers to make sure that when they observe each other's lessons they always find things that would make them even better.

We wish you all the best for the future.