



# St Albert's Catholic Primary School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 104467  
**Local Authority** Knowsley  
**Inspection number** 286950  
**Inspection dates** 2–3 October 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Frank Carruthers

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 address</b>	Steers Croft
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Stockbridge Village, Liverpool
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11		Merseyside L28 8AJ
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 4778560
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	218	<b>Fax number</b>	0151 2201824
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr K Mahoney
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	11 March 2002		

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

The school is situated in Knowsley on the edge of Liverpool. Most children are from the local area of Stockbridge Village which has high levels of unemployment. Almost all are White British and none is learning English as an additional language. The proportion of children eligible for free school meals is high and the proportion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average.

## **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 providing pupils with a good education and helping them to achieve well both in their basic skills of literacy and numeracy and in their personal development. Key strengths of the school are the care, guidance and support the staff provide for the pupils, who feel safe and who thrive. As a result, behaviour in school is outstanding with pupils being very attentive in class and considerate of each other. The school is successful in helping the few pupils who display challenging behaviour to manage it well and prevent it from disrupting the education of others. As a result, pupils are attentive and learn well in lessons. From a low starting point, the children make good progress in the Foundation Stage and through Key Stages 1 and 2 because of good teaching. In most years, standards in Year 6 match the national average for the proportion of pupils reaching the expected Level 4 in English, mathematics and science. Few pupils reach the higher Level 5 and this is an area for improvement.

Leadership and management of the school are good. As a result of strong leadership by the headteacher the school has developed good procedures to evaluate its performance and has made good improvement since the time of the last inspection. The headteacher recognised there was a need to improve the quality of teaching and learning and approached the local authority to take part in a programme of whole-school intensive support. The impact of this is evident in improvements to the quality of pupils' learning, better use of assessment and a thorough approach to the school's self-evaluation, which is now more accurate and effective. There are still some elements of good practice that are not fully in place, for example, the pace of learning in some lessons and the effectiveness of marking. These are key areas for improvement. The recently expanded leadership team, supported by a committed and effective governing body, has good capacity to improve provision further and, as the school itself asserts, is 'confident, ambitious and well informed'. The school provides good value for money.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve planning for the curriculum of the highest attainers so that they achieve their best.
- Make sure teachers' introductions to lessons are of appropriate length so that there is good pace and variety to children's learning in all lessons.
- Make sure children understand their targets for learning in English and mathematics and, when marking their work, make more consistent reference to how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Most children start in the Nursery with attainment that is well below average, especially in communication, language and literacy. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage and, by the end of the Reception year, most have achieved the goals for learning

in personal, social and emotional development and physical development. The majority are still working towards goals in communication, language and literacy and some are still doing so in mathematical development.

Through Key Stage 1, pupils continue to do well and the great majority reach expected levels of attainment in Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. Tracking the pupils' progress through Key Stage 2 shows that progress for all, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, is good. Steps taken to iron out inconsistencies in performance in recent years have had a positive impact on standards and the quality of pupils' learning, especially in mathematics. Nevertheless, in this subject as in English and science, there is still potential for more pupils to reach the higher Level 5.

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

### **Grade: 2**

The personal development and well-being of pupils are good and have some outstanding features. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils enjoy school. One child explained that, 'the teachers make lessons fun', showing the very positive attitudes shared by others. Attendance is broadly in line with the national average. The school works hard to help raise awareness of the importance of good attendance and children are provided with a variety of awards for attending well.

Behaviour in school is outstanding. A few pupils display challenging behaviour. They are extremely well supported by staff, who also establish excellent links with parents and outside agencies to help them. Pupils confirm they feel safe and are clearly aware of measures designed for their safety. Their awareness of leading a healthy lifestyle is excellent. There is an active school council which, along with other pupils with responsibilities, works hard to improve the school for the rest of the community. Pupils also help others in the wider world by raising money for international charities.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Key strengths of the teaching, which is good in all age groups, include the excellent relationships between staff and pupils. This means that pupils respect staff and are keen to learn. Effective use is made of teaching assistants and volunteers to help groups of pupils, especially those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, to be included in all activities and to achieve well. Lesson objectives are shared at the start of lessons so that pupils are aware of the purpose of learning. Good use of new technology in classrooms helps to keep them interested and attentive. There are clear and effective procedures to assess achievement and progress and to group pupils by attainment.

On occasions, oral introductions to lessons are too long, reducing the opportunities for other types of work. Planning for the most able pupils does not always challenge

them well enough and marking is not consistently geared to helping pupils to achieve their targets and to take the next steps in their learning.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

There is a rich curriculum which is reflected in the bright displays around the building. This is enhanced by focus weeks, and visiting artists and performers which help to develop the children's understanding of other cultures through the arts. The majority of groups in the school are well catered for but the curriculum for more able pupils lacks challenge. A range of before- and after-school clubs provides pupils with opportunities to develop their interest in sport and creative activities. These clubs are very popular and well attended. The school has begun to enhance the curriculum by linking different subjects, allowing pupils to improve skills by working on topics that cover several subjects.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

Care, guidance and support for pupils are outstanding overall. There are many ways in which staff support pupils and their families extremely well. These are evident, for example, in the work done by the learning mentor and the parent mentor, who help to encourage good attendance and punctuality and also work with families in difficulties and promote parenting skills. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is very well planned and the links with other agencies, for example, behaviour and learning support specialists, are very good. Parents express their appreciation for these aspects of the school's work. For instance, one commented, 'This school has been absolutely fantastic regarding my child's problems.' Any vulnerable children are very well looked after and a befriending system between staff and pupils helps pupils' sense of security and self-esteem extremely well. A breakfast club twice weekly gives pupils a good start to the school day. Procedures and practices for all aspects of child protection, health, safety and safe recruitment of adults are robust. Staff have developed good procedures that monitor and track pupils' achievements. These help the staff to identify learning needs and set targets for future development.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher has provided strong leadership which has led to the school being involved in an effective partnership with the local authority to improve teaching and learning. He is well supported by the deputy headteacher and the other members of the leadership team who lead initiatives and areas of the curriculum and monitor the performance of staff and pupils well. This is improving both teaching and learning across the school. Leadership throughout the school is focused on raising standards and the headteacher has a clear vision of how this will continue by further improving teaching and developing pupils' skills across the curriculum. The strong ethos of care

and support is seen in the quality of relationships in school. The governing body is very supportive and challenges the school when necessary in order to raise standards. The school is well resourced and the use of new technology has developed well as a result of recent investment. There are strong links with parents who are encouraged to be involved in learning programmes. This not only assists them in helping their children's learning but also helps to develop their own learning. There are many productive links with other schools through local networks which share good practice.

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## 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>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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>	2
<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.

## 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	2
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	2
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**

Thank you very much for your help when we inspected your school. Please pass on our thanks to the other children we met and spoke to while we were with you. We enjoyed our visit very much. Now we want to share with you what we thought about your school.

Your school is giving you a good standard of education. This means that you are doing well in school subjects and there are many things that the staff do well for you.

These are some of the things that are good:

- the headteacher and staff take excellent care of you, helping you all to be fit, safe and healthy and supporting anyone who is having a difficult time
- you are achieving well in subjects such as English, mathematics and science
- your behaviour and attitudes to learning are outstanding and you are growing into sensible students who want to learn
- the staff provide you with good opportunities to take part in activities and clubs after school.

Congratulations. You have much to be proud of!

To help you to do better in school subjects, we have asked the staff to make sure:

- they do all they can to help the most able among you to do well
- they make sure they do not keep you on the carpet altogether for too long at the start of lessons
- they mark your work so that it helps you all to know what your targets are, what you must do to achieve them and what the next steps are for you to learn.

Your part in this is to make sure you know your targets and work as hard as you can to achieve them and move on to the next.