

# St Cecilia's Catholic Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	104645
<b>Local Authority</b>	Liverpool
<b>Inspection number</b>	286997
<b>Inspection dates</b>	25–26 April 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Colin Smith

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>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	206
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr B Pemberton
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr C Coyne
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 February 2002
<b>School address</b>	Green Lane Tuebrook Liverpool Merseyside L13 7EA
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 2281760
<b>Fax number</b>	0151 2300232

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<b>Age group</b>	7–11
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

This is an average sized school situated in an area of social disadvantage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is also above average. The vast majority of the pupils are of White British heritage. A small number are of Indian and Asian heritage or from mixed backgrounds and all of them speak English.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

St Cecilia's is a successful school that provides good value for money. The school's greatest strength is its extremely caring atmosphere, which is widely appreciated by all members of the school community. The way the school works alongside parents and health professionals to promote pupils' well-being is exemplary. As one parent so aptly put it, 'All staff are highly committed and dedicated to the education and well-being of every child'. The level of care, guidance and support provided is outstanding. In this school every child matters. Safeguarding pupils is an extremely high priority. Teachers and support staff are very effective in removing barriers to learning. Consequently, even the most vulnerable pupils feel valued and grow in confidence. These factors make a significant contribution to pupils' good personal development. Their behaviour is excellent, they are equipped to lead healthy lifestyles and they show an acute sense of social responsibility.

Pupils achieve well and standards are above average overall. Achievement in mathematics and science is in the top 10% nationally. Standards and achievement in writing have fallen short of national and school expectations in recent years. Consequently, standards in English are only average even though pupils' reading skills are good. Determined efforts are being made to raise standards in writing and with some success. This is evident in the written work in pupils' books. However, when planning lessons, teachers do not always provide sufficiently challenging activities to fully extend the learning of the more able pupils.

Teaching and learning are good overall and outstanding in Year 6. Pupils in all classes produce carefully organised work in response to the extremely constructive and helpful advice they are given. This explains why they usually learn successfully. Occasionally, a lack of pace or challenge in lessons hampers pupils' learning. This partly arises because checking of the quality of teaching and learning is not as sharply focused as it could be. A good curriculum, impressively enriched by a wide range of additional experiences, makes a major contribution to pupils' enjoyment of school and helps to prepare them well for the future.

The school benefits from good leadership and management. The headteacher is a driving force who sets the standard. By carefully tracking and checking pupils' progress, examining their work and seeking their views, the headteacher and staff are in a good position to identify areas requiring improvement. This is why the school's self-evaluation is accurate in almost all areas. Even where the inspection findings do not fully endorse the school's view of itself, the differences are marginal. There is a determination and commitment amongst staff and governors to maintain the school's successes and remedy any weaknesses. This is reflected in the improvements made since the previous inspection, illustrating the school's good capacity for improvement.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement and standards in writing, particularly of the more able pupils.
- Ensure that all lessons have sufficient pace and challenge to raise teaching to consistently good levels across the school.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' knowledge and skills on entering school had been typical for their age until 2005, when attainment started to rise. Standards in the school are also rising as pupils increasingly reach the challenging targets set for them. Given their starting points, pupils achieve well in reading and very well in mathematics and science. Consequently, standards are above average in all of these subjects by the end of Year 6. Standards in English are adversely affected because, in writing, too many of the more able pupils do not reach the higher levels of which they are capable. In the other core subjects, more able pupils achieve well. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well, personally and academically, because of the good support they receive. The progress made by the very small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds compares well to that of others in the school.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development is at the heart of the school's mission. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Behaviour is excellent. Friendliness, politeness and helpfulness are qualities in abundance. Through art and music, pupils develop a sense of wonder. In sport, they learn to become team players. Rich multicultural experiences enable them to develop respect for other faiths and customs. As one pupil remarked, 'We're all different - black, white, but we're all equal'. They show maturity in working together to prevent any form of bullying or racism. Pupils are eager and proud to carry out their responsibilities as buddies, prefects and school council members. Their contribution to the community is exemplary. Achieving the Healthy Schools Award has successfully raised their awareness of how to stay healthy and keep safe through diet, exercise and avoiding dangers such as drugs. Pupils are being well prepared for the future, despite the weaknesses in their writing. Although pupils enjoy school, attendance is only satisfactory. Successful initiatives are making a difference. Although attendance was below average last year, it has been broadly average this year so far. This is partly why pupils' personal development is good but not outstanding, as the school believes.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Lessons are invariably well managed and all teachers expect and insist on pupils giving of their best. Consequently, pupils practise and improve their skills conscientiously and produce a large quantity of accurate and well-presented work in their books. These good work habits pave the way towards successful learning. There are examples of outstanding teaching in Year 6 where pupils are highly stimulated, for example, to use their numeracy skills to calculate the areas of complex shapes. Thorough assessments are made of pupils' learning. The extent to which teachers use the information to set tasks that are well matched to pupils' different learning needs is good overall, but not consistent. As a result, pace and challenge in the lesson are not sufficient, on occasions, to ensure that every pupil is fully engaged and achieving well.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

Provision in the arts and physical education is outstanding, for which the school has gained awards. These subjects foster creativity and significantly enhance pupils' appreciation of competitive sport and healthy lifestyles. Pupils' experiences are extremely well fostered through a rich assortment of educational visits, residential and extra-curricular activities. These opportunities greatly enhance their understanding of the wider world and increase their enjoyment of school. On the whole, the curriculum is sensitively adapted to cater for pupils' diverse needs. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities benefit from carefully sequenced tasks designed to strengthen their literacy and numeracy skills. Good opportunities for gifted and talented pupils to participate in workshops in neighbouring high schools help to meet their needs to some extent. However, there is more to do to raise their achievement further, particularly in writing. This is why the curriculum is good but not outstanding, as the school judges it to be.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The exemplary level of care, guidance and support provided changes pupils' lives. Those experiencing difficult home circumstances, often with learning and emotional problems, are extremely well supported. Consequently, their self-esteem and self-respect visibly grow, enabling them to achieve as well as they possibly can. All legal requirements for safeguarding pupils are fully met and strengthened by robust procedures to minimise any risks to their well-being. Strong relationships have been forged between parents, teachers and pupils. Pupils often describe teachers as 'their friends' and trust them implicitly, knowing that they will go to any lengths to support them. Teachers are determined to improve pupils' writing skills. This is evident in the extremely constructive guidance now being provided. Pupils are given information to help them to climb up each rung of the improvement ladder. Consequently, they are acquiring a unique talent for assessing their own progress in all core subjects.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher's ambition for the school is evident in the clear direction and measurable targets provided. Governors do their utmost to support and check developments to ensure that the principle of equal opportunities is upheld. Staff work together purposefully. For example, improving pupils' problem solving and investigation skills has raised achievement in mathematics and science substantially since the previous inspection. Improving standards in writing has proved elusive. However, in a determined attempt to remedy this, the tracking of pupils' progress has been taken to new levels. Pupils' individual test results have always been tracked to identify and boost any faltering progress. This year, the results of each class have been calculated and shared with teachers, making them fully aware of their impact on pupils' learning. This is already proving a powerful tool for improvement. School and subject leaders make an important contribution in checking the work of the school. Pupils are interviewed and their work is very carefully scrutinised. This has led to very informative marking and good quality work in pupils' books. However, systems for monitoring teaching are not quite as rigorous, which is why there are some inconsistencies in pace and challenge across the school. The strong emphasis on

raising achievement is equally matched by the promotion of exceptionally high levels of care. The school's warm and supportive atmosphere provides an oasis of calm security, particularly for the most vulnerable pupils.

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## Annex A

## 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>
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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 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	2
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	1
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	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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.

## 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	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

Inspection of St Cecilia's Catholic Junior School, Tuebrook, L13 7EA

Thank you for making us welcome and answering all our questions so helpfully. We thoroughly enjoyed our visit and would like to share our findings with you.

Your headteacher, staff, parents and pupils believe that St Cecilia's is a good school. We agree entirely. Most of the pupils achieve well and reach standards that are above average in reading, mathematics and science by Year 6. We were very impressed by the amount of high quality work in your books. This tells us that teachers do a good job. They expect a lot of you and give you all the help and support you need. In return, you try your best to produce neat, careful and accurate work. Perhaps the most special thing about your school is the way teachers and support staff go out of their way to look after you. There are times when pupils do not find learning easy and sometimes arrive at school unhappy because of the things that have happened outside school. We noticed how successfully your teachers make the school a happy and very safe place for you. We believe this is why your behaviour is excellent and you try so hard to carry out your responsibilities.

Your ideas and feelings are very important to your headteacher. By seeking your views, the headteacher can alter the way the school works to make your education more meaningful and enjoyable. This is why so many extra activities are provided. You seem to enjoy them immensely. Your headteacher and governors lead the school well. Despite the lack of playing fields and very limited space inside the building, you still manage to win sporting competitions. Your headteacher always finds a way to help you and your school to overcome any difficulties.

Although your school is successful, our job is to help it to improve even more. This is how we judge it can be done.

- Although most pupils make good progress in reading, mathematics and science, some of the more able ones do not reach the higher levels that they should in writing. We have asked teachers to help the more able pupils, particularly when planning English lessons.
- Much of the teaching is good but in a few lessons it could be even better. We have asked teachers to move lessons along quickly and raise the challenge wherever they can. We believe this will keep you interested and help you to learn successfully in every lesson. You can help by working quickly so that you can tackle those extension activities.