



# St Clare's Catholic Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 104648  
**Local Authority** Liverpool  
**Inspection number** 286998  
**Inspection date** 27 November 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Mike McLachlan

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Garmoyle Close
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Liverpool
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3-11		Merseyside L15 0DW
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 7334318
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	250	<b>Fax number</b>	0151 7350172
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Fr Aidan Prescott
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr M Hennessey
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 March 2003		

<b>Age group</b> 3-11	<b>Inspection date</b> 27 November 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 286998
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

St Clare's is an average sized primary school in a very socially diverse area in south-east Liverpool. The school is regularly oversubscribed. Attainment on entry to the Nursery is below average with a significant number of children having less well developed language and social skills. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is considerably above average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above average with a small number whose first language is not English. There are significant numbers of pupils who join or leave the school at different times during the year. The school has achieved the Liverpool Advanced Level Inclusion Charter which recognises the high priority the school gives to supporting children with special educational needs. The school has also achieved the Liverpool 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: 1

St Clare's is an outstanding school that enjoys the full and well deserved support of the community it serves. It gives outstanding value for money. Standards reached by pupils when they leave school are above average and this represents outstanding achievement from children's below average standards when they start Nursery. The very good provision in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception) ensures children make very good progress in their learning and helps them to settle quickly into school routines.

Pupils of all ages thoroughly enjoy learning and are enthusiastic about the many varied experiences the school has to offer.

The school's Christian values are central to all its work and success. There is a calm, orderly, but highly stimulating environment where all feel safe and secure. The school welcomes many families from different cultures and religions and this contributes significantly to the pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Behaviour is exemplary. While overall attendance is satisfactory, the attendance and punctuality of the majority are good. However, there is a small minority of pupils who do

not attend as well as they should. Pupils are very committed to healthy eating and exercise and readily challenge adults to do the same. They are very eager to take on responsibilities through membership of their very active and influential school council or

as prefects, buddies or class monitors. The house system is a unique feature of this school, providing significant opportunities for developing pupils' self-esteem through the

many team activities and opportunities for rewards and recognition of achievement. Consequently, all are very well prepared to move on within the school or into secondary education.

The high standards reached are as a direct result of outstanding leadership and a loyal and highly dedicated staff. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good or

better across the school. Exciting and imaginative links are made between subjects that capture pupils' interests; consequently, pupils become very active and independent learners and develop self-confidence. Teachers assess pupils' work accurately and plan tasks to challenge their individual needs. The school has identified, in its excellent school development plan, the need to extend pupils' opportunities to assess their own work and take more responsibility for identifying what they need to do to improve. The school offers an outstanding curriculum, enriched by a very wide range of activities in and out of school. Staff make excellent use of the unusual building design. They create stimulating classrooms with quiet areas for more focused reflection, and lively public spaces that display pupils' imaginative and creative work and celebrate their many awards and achievements. Care, guidance and support for pupils of all abilities are outstanding. The health and safety of pupils and adults are at the heart of this school and national advice on these issues is robustly followed. Very good personal and social development programmes ensure pupils understand their responsibilities and help them become active citizens. The school has very thorough systems for setting challenging targets for individual pupils and tracking their progress towards them; consequently, achievement is high. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are guided very well in their learning by school staff and by a very wide range of support agencies. This ensures they not only achieve very well but also develop a great deal of self-confidence. Leadership is outstanding. The headteacher's systematic, calm and very collaborative approach ensures that all are focused on seeking to improve further. The school accurately identifies, albeit modestly, its strengths and robustly identifies where it might improve. The school has exemplary systems for seeking and acting on the views of staff, pupils, parents, and governors. Consequently, all feel valued and feel that they influence the direction of the school. Parents frequently commented that they and their children were genuinely members of 'the St Clare's family'. The highly committed governing body

provide outstanding support and challenge to the school, although as one governor so

aptly said, 'It is hard to challenge a headteacher who constantly challenges himself'. The

school clearly has an excellent capacity and drive to bring about further improvements.

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

- Improve the attendance of a very small minority of pupils.
- Help pupils assess their own work and identify for themselves what they need to do next to improve.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils achieve exceptionally well because of the consistently good and often outstanding teaching they receive, the caring but challenging atmosphere in lessons, and their very positive attitudes to learning. Overall, there is a rising trend of improving standards and challenging targets are met and often exceeded. For example, in 2005, the school was in the top 12% of schools nationally for the progress made by pupils. Children start in the Nursery class with standards that are below average, particularly in language and social skills. Very good provision in the Foundation Stage enables children to settle down quickly and make very good progress so that they reach average standards by the time they start Year 1. Overall, progress through Key Stages 1 and 2 is exceptionally good and by the time pupils leave school, the standards reached are above average. The schools award for inclusion is very well deserved. Outstanding support, from teachers and other agencies, for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for pupils from minority ethnic groups whose first language is not English, ensures they progress very well from their individual starting points.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils of all ages display outstanding standards in their personal development and well-being. Attendance has improved significantly since the last inspection. The school systematically challenges those families whose children do not attend regularly. However, despite the school's best efforts, a minority of pupils still do not attend as well as they might. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary; they show care and consideration for each other and get a real enjoyment out of learning in the classroom and in taking responsibility from an early age. As one Reception pupil proudly told the inspector, she was the 'class monitor' and responsible for 'everything'. Pupils' self-esteem is high because their achievements are recognised and valued. The healthy schools award is richly deserved and pupils enjoy the healthy food options and eagerly participate in the many sporting activities in and out of lessons. Pupils' views are regularly sought and acted on and the school council has made a significant contribution to school life

and the local community. Pupils are very well prepared for their future schools and working life.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 1**

Throughout the school, teaching and learning are consistently good with many outstanding features. Teachers plan interesting activities and the work is well matched to pupils' individual needs. They know their subjects well and, through an exciting new initiative, enable pupils to see how the learning in one subject links with that in others. Excellent relationships and pupils' attitudes to work are a feature of all lessons and there is a good balance between collaborative and independent learning. All these factors contribute to pupils' enjoyment of learning and their outstanding progress. Work is marked well, pupils know the targets set for them and teachers give them very good advice on how to improve. The school has rightly identified that more needs to be done to develop pupils' understanding of how they can be involved in assessing their own work and identifying for themselves what they need to do next. Teaching assistants and other classroom helpers provide very good support for learning and social development in and out of lessons. Excellent relationships with parents give them confidence to support their child's learning.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 1**

The curriculum has many outstanding features and is enhanced by French and many different sporting, arts and other creative activities. Statutory requirements are fully met. Extra-curricular programmes abound and are very well attended. Music plays a significant and uplifting part in the life of the school and all clearly enjoyed singing in the assembly observed. The school has recently introduced a very effective programme for ensuring pupils can see the links between learning in different subjects and excellent examples of this work are on display throughout the school. The very effective personal, social, health and education programme has a very good focus on citizenship and the world of work.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 1**

The school provides excellent care, guidance and support. Staff commitment to pupils' well-being is exceptional. Pupils and parents were glowing in their praise for the support and information on progress they receive. Pupils feel safe and confident they have someone to turn to for help if it is needed. The school understandably takes great pride in the way it provides a harmonious multicultural and multi-faith environment in which all feel valued. Health and safety are paramount and the school ensures current requirements are met. The excellent target-setting and tracking system

ensures pupils are set challenging targets but at the same time do not feel pressurised by the challenge. Excellent links with many agencies ensure pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are very well supported. As a result, all pupils are very well prepared to move on to their next stage in learning.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils above average standards and high achievement stem from the outstanding leadership and management of the school. The headteacher has an excellent vision and a purposeful, supportive approach to the improvement of the school; consequently, staff show great loyalty to the school and the families it serves. Staff, parents and governors all expressed the opinion that they were, as one parent so aptly said, 'part of a happy caring family that had high expectation of its children'. Robust self-evaluation, involving pupils and parents as well as staff and governors, is a significant strength of the school resulting in an improvement plan of high quality. This exemplary system of consultation ensures all members of the St Clare's family feel they play a part in moving the school forward. The governing body provides excellent support as well as rigorous challenge to the headteacher and staff. As one governor expressed, 'we are privileged to provide a service for our pupils and parents by acting as the critical friend of the school'. The school rightly has a very high reputation in the area as evidenced by its oversubscription.



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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>	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

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

### 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	1
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	1

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	1
<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.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
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	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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**

I would like to thank you all for the way in which you welcomed me into the family of St Clare's. I thought you were all delightful. You did yourselves, your teachers and your parents or guardians proud.

I think you go to an outstanding school and you and your parents clearly think the same. I also think that you become very mature young people as you move through the school. Almost all of you try very hard to come to school every day. It would help if everyone tried as hard as the rest. I thought you behaved exceptionally well. Most impressive was the way in which you really enjoy what you do in and out of lessons. For example, you really enjoyed your singing during the assembly - I am sure your Christmas show will be great.

I was delighted that all age groups are very keen to take on responsibilities. For example, as members of your very influential school council or as prefects, house captains, buddies or class monitors. I think the staff care for you very well and that you feel safe. You are also keen to look after yourselves, for example, through your healthy school activities.

I think you and your teachers work really hard together so you learn lots of different things, achieve really well and reach very good standards by the time you leave school. I think it would be even better if you were taught more how to work out for yourself what you need to do to improve and I know the school has very good plans in hand for this to happen.

I think your headteacher and staff lead your school very well. I was really impressed by the way he encouraged all staff, governors, parents and particularly yourselves to be part of creating the school's plans to improve it even further.

Thank you again for making my visit so enjoyable.