



St Oswald's Catholic Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 104659
Local Authority Liverpool
Inspection number 287002
Inspection dates 1–2 November 2006
Reporting inspector Arthur Markham

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	St Oswald Street
School category	Voluntary aided		Liverpool
Age range of pupils	3–7		Merseyside L13 5SB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0151 2288436
Number on roll (school)	321	Fax number	0151 2803760
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs V Amos
		Headteacher	Miss J Mosinski
Date of previous school inspection	18 March 2002		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3–7	1–2 November 2006	287002

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average sized infant school with a Nursery. Most pupils are of White British background with a small number from minority ethnic groups, almost all of whom speak English fluently. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above that found in most schools, as is the number of pupils entitled to free school meals. The school has been awarded the Artsmark, the Basic Skills Quality Mark, the BT Schools award for Communication, and the Groundwork Schools Physical Environmental Improvement award. It also has Healthy School and Investor in People status.

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. It is highly regarded by parents, who are very pleased at the good level of care taken of their children. As one parent put it, 'St Oswald's is a very caring school. The teachers and head are very approachable and have the children's best interests at heart.' The strong emphasis placed on pupils' personal development ensures they develop good learning habits from an early age and show increasing maturity as they go through the school. They consequently develop into self-assured young people who are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Staff work hard to provide an attractive and stimulating learning environment so that pupils develop an enthusiasm for learning and clearly enjoy school. Pupils' behaviour is excellent; they play happily together and are courteous and polite. They understand the importance of a healthy diet and are given plenty of opportunities to participate in physical activities. They carry out a range of responsibilities well and make a good contribution to the school community through the work of the school council.

Pupils' enjoyment in learning is reflected by the good progress they make and the way that standards have steadily improved in recent years. Children get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage because of effective teaching, which presents them with an exciting variety of practical activities to enjoy. They make good progress from below average starting points and most reach the standards expected nationally. In Years 1 and 2, good quality teaching results in this rate of progress continuing, so that, by the end of Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are in line with those expected nationally. However, pupils' speaking and listening skills are below average. Many have difficulty in expressing their ideas because of their limited vocabulary. Teachers know their pupils well and use assessment information reasonably to plan work to meet their needs. This enables the needs of those pupils with learning difficulties, and the growing numbers of pupils who speak English as an additional language, to be met well. However, present monitoring procedures do not track all pupils' progress effectively. A new system has been developed to do this, but it is not embedded across the school.

A major factor in the success of the school is the strong leadership provided by the headteacher. She provides a good role model for staff and has successfully developed a strong team approach throughout the school. They all work hard to provide a good quality of education for the pupils. This is reflected in the rich diet of learning experiences enjoyed by pupils. The extensive use of visits and visitors, special focus weeks and excellent links with the local community enrich the curriculum well and make learning exciting. However, the low number of computers and electronic whiteboards limits provision in information and communication technology (ICT). Governors are committed and support the school well. The school has a clear and accurate view of its effectiveness and areas for development because self-review procedures are good. There has been good improvement since the last inspection and, taking into account the strong leadership of the headteacher, the teamwork evident in the school and the effective support provided by governors, the capacity for further improvement is good. St Oswald's provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Extend the range of opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills across the curriculum.
- Ensure that pupils' progress is closely monitored to identify underachievement quickly.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in ICT.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. On entry to the Nursery, many children have skills which are below those expected for their age, particularly in language and literacy. They make a good start to their learning in the Foundation Stage because close attention is given to providing a balance of teacher directed and independent activities. By the end of Reception, most children reach the standards expected for their age. In Years 1 and 2, pupils continue to make good progress and reach average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. However, pupils' speaking and listening skills are below those expected. The school has identified this as a priority, but the action being taken has had limited impact. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress and achieve well from their starting points. The few pupils learning English as an additional language also make good progress as a result of the effective support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The personal development of pupils is outstanding and better than the school judges it to be. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils enjoy school and respond positively to the very good relationships they have with their teachers. Their behaviour is excellent. Pupils' confidence and self-esteem are developed very effectively through an impressive programme of personal, social and health education, which supports learning and also enables pupils to cope with difficult situations. The Christian faith is at the heart of the school's ethos, but pupils also learn about other religions and cultures to ensure that they are well prepared for life in a multi-cultural society. Pupils have an excellent awareness of the need for a healthy lifestyle and practise this enthusiastically through sport and physical activities. They willingly undertake responsibilities and the school council helps them to make a positive contribution to school life. Their good social skills and positive attitude to learning mean they are well prepared for the next stage in their schooling. The school works hard to improve attendance, which is currently close to the national average.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Pupils like their teachers and are happy and productive in lessons. They develop good work habits from an early age in the Foundation Stage because routines are well organised and strong emphasis is given to practical activities. In Years 1 and 2, teachers' caring and consistent approach develops pupils' confidence and enthusiasm for learning. Clear explanations and effective use of questions ensure that pupils understand what they have to do and they make good progress as a result. An appropriate focus is given to the development of key skills and language development to address the needs of those pupils whose speaking skills are lower than expected. The effective use of teaching assistants ensures that good support is given to those pupils with specific learning needs and those learning English as an additional language.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The rich and varied curriculum meets the needs of pupils well. The strong focus on personal, social, health and citizenship education is reflected in the pupils' outstanding personal development. The Foundation Stage curriculum has a good emphasis on learning through play and discovery. Thoughtful planning, based on the Early Learning Goals, eases pupils into the National Curriculum during their first term in Year 1. Good attention is given to the development of basic skills in literacy and numeracy and useful links are made between subjects. 'Themed weeks' stimulate pupils' learning when, for example, they explore other cultures or science more extensively. However, resources in ICT are limited and this restricts learning opportunities. Learning is enriched by an impressive range of visits and visitors and pupils benefit from a good range of extra-curricular activities, including a ju-jitsu and Spanish club.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of care, guidance and support provided for pupils is good. The warm and caring atmosphere within the school ensures that pupils feel safe and confident that there is someone they can talk to if they are troubled or upset. Appropriate procedures for the safeguarding of pupils are in place, including arrangements for child protection. Parents and carers find the staff very approachable and value the way they are involved in their children's education through the sharing of pupils' targets and the information given in workshop sessions. The school monitors pupils' academic progress but the process is not rigorous or accurate enough to enable teachers to know precisely how well pupils are doing or ought to be doing. Staff work hard to ensure that transfer from Foundation Stage to Year 1 and also to the school's partner junior school takes place smoothly.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher leads the school very well and, ably supported by her deputy, gives a very clear direction to the school. Both have successfully developed an effective team approach within the staff, who implement initiatives enthusiastically to improve the quality of education provided for the pupils. Parents are very pleased with the quality of education provided, one saying, 'The staff put a lot of effort into making St Oswald's an enjoyable experience for our children and giving them an impressive standard of education'. The development of excellent links with the local community and other schools successfully enhances the learning opportunities presented to pupils. Self-evaluation procedures are well organised and the school has an accurate knowledge of its strengths and of those areas requiring further development. Pupils' performance is not well enough monitored, but steps are being taken to address this. The governors fulfil their responsibilities well. They are very supportive of the school and have a good awareness of its strengths and areas for development.

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
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

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ 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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
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	1
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

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

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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	3
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

As you know, three inspectors recently visited your school to find out how well you are learning. Thank you for being so friendly and talking to us. We very much enjoyed being in your school and listening to what you had to say. We decided that St Oswald's Infants is a good school. Your school is a very welcoming place and is always trying to improve so that you enjoy your learning and do well. The things we particularly liked were:

- the way your headteacher and staff work hard to make learning interesting for you
- your excellent behaviour in lessons and around the school
- your excellent awareness of the need to have a healthy lifestyle
- the way you work hard for your teachers
- the way your teachers and other adults take good care of you and make sure that you

feel safe and happy.

To make it even better the school now needs to:

- give you even more opportunities to develop your speaking and listening skills so that you do well in all subjects
- carefully check how well you are doing so that extra help can be given to you if it is needed
- give you more opportunities to use computers so that you develop your skills and use them in other subjects.

Thank you for helping us so much with the inspection of your school. We hope that you will continue to work hard in school and help the teachers so that St Oswald's Infants becomes an even better school.