

# Holy Spirit Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	104910
<b>Local Authority</b>	Sefton
<b>Inspection number</b>	287061
<b>Inspection dates</b>	8–9 May 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Frank Carruthers

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

---

<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	216
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Rev Father Harris
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Paul Davenport
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 April 2002
<b>School address</b>	Poulsom Drive Bootle Merseyside L30 2NR
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 5257497
<b>Fax number</b>	0151 5252206

---

<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	8–9 May 2007
<b>Inspection number</b>	287061

---

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This average sized Catholic primary school is situated in the Netherton district of Bootle. Almost all pupils are White British and none is learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. The number of pupils joining the school after the Reception year is relatively high in some year groups. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average and the Foundation Stage, that is the Nursery and Reception class, is resourced to cater for children with complex learning needs. There has been a change of headteacher since the last inspection. The school is part of an Education Action Zone, which provides additional funding and opportunities for partnerships between schools and other agencies, a Behaviour Improvement Programme and a Learning Network Community called JANUS. The school holds the Investors in People award and the Basic Skills Quality Mark.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

The school is providing a good education for pupils. The quality of its provision, leadership and management are good and this leads to the positive outcomes evident in the pupils' good achievement and personal development. Pupils do well in the core subjects of English and science so that, from levels of attainment that are well below those expected of children on entry to Nursery, they make good progress. Standards in both subjects by the time the pupils leave school in Year 6 are broadly average. Standards of pupils' writing are particularly good, thanks to the school-wide focus given to promoting this skill. Standards are not as high in mathematics in Key Stage 2, however, and this has been a trend in recent years which must be reversed. The achievement of boys has lagged some way behind that of girls in the core subjects, including mathematics, and this is a further trend which requires monitoring and reversing.

Pupils' personal development is good. They enjoy school, behave well and develop a good awareness of personal safety and how to lead a healthy and fit lifestyle. They grow into sensible students who want to learn and develop skills of teamwork and cooperation that help them when they move on to secondary school. The school gives high priority to doing its best for all pupils, including those with complex learning difficulties and/or disabilities. These pupils, and others with learning difficulties or who are at risk, do well and are helped to take a full part in school life. Parents of these pupils are full of praise for what the school is achieving, for example, making comments such as: 'We believe the progress our children have made is due to the willingness of the staff to try new approaches and ideas.' Provision for the care, guidance and support of all pupils is good thanks to the work of all staff: teachers, support staff and, in particular, the behaviour key worker.

The quality of teaching, learning and the curriculum is good, as are standards and provision in the Foundation Stage. A strength of the school is the contribution to lessons made by teaching assistants, who are highly effective in their roles. The quality of teaching and learning in Nursery is outstanding and gives the children an excellent start to school. The main school curriculum has a good emphasis on basic skills, and a particularly effective feature is the focus given to encouraging pupils to write well, for example when classes study a novel together and when teachers devise interesting links between subjects such as English and history.

Leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher is leading school improvement effectively by monitoring its performance well, identifying shortcomings and taking action to overcome them. Governors are very supportive of the school and some are frequent, even daily, visitors, but they are less secure in monitoring how well the school is doing and rely too much on the headteacher to keep them informed. There are outstanding partnerships with other schools and institutions which promote the pupils' enjoyment of learning, and the school uses additional funding well to raise standards. Progress since the last inspection has been good, indicating a clear capacity to improve, and the school gives good value for money.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and pupils' achievement in mathematics in Key Stage 2.
- Monitor the performance of boys throughout the school and take action to bolster their achievement.
- Develop the role of the governing body as a critical friend in the way it monitors the performance of the school and has an impact on its development.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Children in Nursery make significant strides in their learning and they progress well in the Reception class. By the end of the Reception year, most children achieve the goals for learning in all areas of development, though in some aspects of early reading and writing they are still working towards them. Children with complex learning needs achieve well in the resourced provision. Progress continues to be good in Years 1 and 2 and standards in Year 2 are usually in line with the national average. Standards in writing are often particularly good because of the many different ways that the school excites and enthuses pupils. This good progress in English continues in Years 3 to 6. Here again, projects such as reading a novel in class successfully encourage the pupils to write at length.

Achievement in mathematics has not been as strong in recent years in Key Stage 2. Standards in Year 6 assessments have been below those reached in English and science and have on occasions been well below average with few pupils reaching Level 5. Boys in particular have underperformed. The school has identified these weaknesses and sought the support of local authority subject specialists. A focus on improving skills of calculation has been one of the areas emphasised this year. The action has been too recent to show its full impact. However, although mathematics standards achieved by the current Year 6 are once again below those in English and science, there is evidence that their rate of progress is improving.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. This is because of the good one-to-one and small-group support they receive from effective teaching assistants.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Pupils are enthusiastic and have good relationships with one another and with staff. Behaviour is good and pupils say any incidents of bullying are handled properly by staff. There have been very few exclusions. The few pupils who are disruptive or present challenging behaviour are supported well by staff and the great majority listen very well in lessons.

Levels of attendance are consistently in line with the average for schools nationally. This good outcome is the result of the excellent work of staff, especially the behaviour key worker, to get the support of parents in this important aspect and motivate the pupils to attend regularly and punctually.

The school has given priority to developing the pupils' emotional, social and moral development and as a result, pupils have a good awareness of how to look out for one another and how to be safe themselves. There are good opportunities to take on responsibilities, for example as 'playbuddies', peer mediators and school councillors; all pupils with these roles say they are proud of what they have done to make playtimes more enjoyable. Pupils are aware of the need to help others less fortunate than themselves and when they raise money for school, a proportion always goes to selected charities. Particularly effective ventures have been the playground markets in which pupils become greengrocers for the day. These encourage an awareness of healthy eating as well as business skills. Pupils learn how to work independently and as a team, which are important skills to take forward to secondary school.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Strengths of the teaching are the ways that teachers plan engaging activities which ensure that there are good opportunities for pupils to work and talk together. Pupils are given positive encouragement to learn well through praise. Teachers use new technology such as interactive whiteboards well in lessons, for example in a Year 3 lesson featuring a 'talking book', which led to some good opportunities for role play. There is very effective support from teaching assistants, who contribute very well to the work of small groups of pupils, often using additional programmes of work. Teaching assistants plan with the class teachers especially well.

Teachers' planning is very effective in English. It caters well for the different levels of ability in classes and covers writing well, alongside the other skills of literacy, in the fortnightly cycle of topics. Staff are now recognising that they should plan with the needs of both boys and girls in mind, for example in their choice of books. In mathematics, however, there are examples where most pupils cover the same ground and this does not challenge all pupils well enough. Marking of pupils' work is consistently supportive and informative, referring back to pupils' targets and lesson objectives, thus helping the pupils to know what they must do to improve.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The curriculum places a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy, as reflected in the school's achievement of the Basic Skills Quality Mark. There are various exciting projects that promote links between subjects and writing opportunities well. Partnerships with other schools and additional funding from local authority projects contribute exceptionally well in these innovations. For instance, at the time of the inspection, pupils in Year 2 were enjoying a series of visits by a storyteller, which was leading to role play and creative writing. There were further examples of excellent practice in Year 4, where pupils have studied Charlotte's Web, and in Year 6, where the novel was Carrie's War. These are the kind of projects that encourage boys to take more interest in reading and writing. There are several initiatives to improve performance in mathematics, but these are only just beginning to have an impact on standards and there are missed opportunities to use mathematical skills in subjects such as science.

The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is good. It is very well planned and there is some exceptional practice in Nursery where the children's own interests are used to help direct what they learn.

The curriculum contributes well to pupils' awareness of personal safety and a healthy lifestyle, for example through lessons of personal and social education, and there is a good range of activities outside lessons for pupils to enjoy. Links between subjects are developing, and provision has begun for a modern foreign language, Spanish, initially in Year 3.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

The school works exceptionally well with partner institutions and agencies to promote the well-being of all pupils, especially those at risk and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school's positive atmosphere encourages pupils to feel safe and happy. The

work of the behaviour key worker promotes pupils' self-esteem very successfully and generates positive links with families, especially those experiencing stress. The school copes well with the relatively high proportion of pupils who join the school during Years 3, 4 and 5 and helps them to settle in quickly. All aspects of health, safety, child protection and safe recruitment of staff are in place. There are good arrangements for the transition of children into the Nursery and into the Reception class, as well as for pupils going on to secondary schools. The school has established a number of good links with parents, including workshops and courses which are having a positive impact on how pupils perform. Procedures to track the progress of pupils have been developed in the current school year and are beginning to be used effectively to identify good achievement, underachievement and gaps in learning.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher has introduced teams of subject leaders in order to create a more collegiate approach to management, and this is developing well. There is a shared vision for how the school is to improve and an outstanding commitment to including children who have complex learning needs. The school's process of self-evaluation is robust and is based on good quality monitoring of teaching and learning by the headteacher and senior leadership team. As a result, the school's view of itself matches exactly the judgements of this inspection. Where monitoring by senior staff is most effective, it focuses on specific issues and makes appropriate recommendations. This approach is necessary in order to promote the achievement of boys.

There are strong links with the parish church and both the headteacher and chair of governors are integral to this relationship, which benefits the school's ethos and the pupils' personal development very well. Governors support the school well and a number have a long commitment to it, though there is more they need to do in order to be fully effective in their role. Parents have very positive views of the school and appreciate how well their children do. A typical comment is: 'I feel the school and its staff are a real asset to the area.'

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**



## 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>
--	-----------------------

### 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	2
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	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>	2

<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	1
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	3
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 Holy Spirit Catholic Primary School, Bootle, L30 2NR

On behalf of the inspection team I would like to thank you very much for your help when we inspected your school. We enjoyed our visit very much. Now I would like to share with you what we thought about your school.

Yours is a good school, for instance:

- the staff take good care of you all and teach you well
- your attitude to lessons is good and it is clear that you enjoy school
- we were impressed with how well you are doing in English, particularly writing, and in science
- the school works exceptionally well in partnership with other schools to make your learning exciting and interesting, for instance in planning trips and special events
- children in Nursery get off to a fine start because of the excellent teaching
- the staff provide you with good opportunities to enjoy activities after school.

To make the school even better, the staff need to make sure the boys are doing as well as they can because at the moment they are not doing as well as girls. Also, your teachers need to help those of you in Years 3 to 6 to do better in mathematics, so please, work hard and enjoy school! Finally, the governors of your school need to be more involved in checking how well the school is doing too.