



St George's Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 104925
Local Authority Sefton
Inspection number 287065
Inspection date 11 September 2006
Reporting inspector Jim Kidd

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Dennett Close
School category	Voluntary aided		Maghull, Liverpool
Age range of pupils	3–11		Merseyside L31 5PD
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0151 5261624
Number on roll (school)	220	Fax number	0151 2886560
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	
		Headteacher	Mr L McKay
Date of previous school inspection	14 October 2002		

Age group	Inspection date	Inspection number
3–11	11 September 2006	287065

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average primary school. It serves a mainly residential area and the number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. Most pupils come from White British backgrounds and none speaks English as an additional language. A below average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties. St George's Catholic Primary is working towards the Healthy Schools Award and pupils and staff are looking forward to the new school building, which is due to be started next year.

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, in which pupils feel happy and safe. They get a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes where staff introduce them to new and interesting experiences and where they learn many new skills as a result. Throughout the school, pupils work hard and respond eagerly to good teaching and the challenging group targets set for them to make good progress in each key stage. They achieve well to reach consistently above average standards by the time they leave Year 6. Their standards in reading are particularly impressive. Standards in writing are beginning to rise even further because of a strong focus on improvement and the effective strategies put in place as a result to accelerate pupils' learning. Whilst standards in mathematics are above average, a minority of pupils in Key Stage 2 find problem solving difficult and do not always reach the levels of which they are capable.

Pupils enjoy their school and are very proud of it. They are keen to talk to visitors and want to tell them about the many successes on the sports field: in the 'Junior Ashes' Cricket Cup', for example. Pupils know that the adults who work with them care for them and want them to do their best. 'Our teachers are kind and friendly,' they say, 'and we always behave well and try to help each other at break times and lunch.' They take full advantage of the school fruit scheme and talk confidently about the importance of eating healthy food and keeping fit. Pupils, teachers and adults get on well and warm relationships are a key feature of the school. However, the school council is relatively new and the school does not fully exploit the benefits of pupils taking a lead in expressing their views about how improvements could be made. Attendance is satisfactory but could be better. There is not enough emphasis on rewards and incentives to raise it further.

The school has a long-held reputation for success in history and this continues to be the case. In addition, providing Spanish for all year groups, extensive sports activities and a strong focus on business enterprise are just three other elements of the well balanced curriculum. It is no surprise that pupils accurately believe that they have many interesting things to do in lessons. Indeed, senior staff monitor teaching and learning closely to spread good practice across the school. As they say, 'it is only by continuing to do this that we will ensure that the good progress of all our pupils will be maintained and improved further.'

Leadership and management are good and have produced a real sense of community and a school where all feel both valuable and valued. Under the dedicated guidance of the headteacher, pupils have achieved consistently well and teachers and support staff have benefited from the ongoing emphasis on development and improvement. The headteacher is ably supported by his teaching and non-teaching colleagues, who spend considerable time evaluating performance in all areas of school life.

In St George's Catholic Primary, pupils operate within a safe, caring and stimulating environment and the vast majority of parents are very positive about what the school has to offer. The inspector agrees with the school's view of itself and of its effectiveness. It has made good improvement since its last inspection and this, together

with pupils' continued good achievement and the strengths in leadership and management, shows that it has good capacity to do even better.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve problem-solving skills where they are not strong enough for pupils in Key Stage 2 so that these pupils reach higher standards in mathematics.
- Develop and implement strategies to improve attendance.
- Improve systems to encourage pupils to express their views and hence accept more responsibility in all areas of school life.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

From attainment which is below national expectations when they enter the Nursery, pupils make good progress across the school and, as a result, standards are above average when they leave at the end of Year 6. All groups of pupils achieve well. Reading is the strongest area because, over a number of years, the school has placed considerable and successful emphasis on encouraging pupils to take an interest in it. Similarly, standards in writing are improving steadily because the school is providing many opportunities for pupils to write for a range of audiences. In Years 3 to 6, attainment in mathematics is above average but, because some pupils find problem solving difficult, it lags behind performance in English and science. In 2006, girls did better than boys in the Key Stage 2 national tests but this has rarely been the case since the last inspection and both genders usually perform equally well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good. Pupils enjoy school, behave well and cooperate together maturely in class and in the playground. Pupils have some say in decisions which affect them in their work and play, through the school council's work on a travel plan for example, but the school has not extended these opportunities far enough to help pupils make strong contributions to the school community. Pupils are well aware of the importance of a healthy lifestyle and take full advantage of the fruit scheme and breakfast club to develop this. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils support a wide range of local, national and global charities and have a strong sense of social and moral responsibility. Spiritual and cultural development is fostered well by a variety of religious activities, musical and drama events and an emphasis on pupils learning about faiths and cultures different to their own.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good throughout the school and their quality is maintained by regular lesson observations and the sharing of effective practice. A strong feature of the teaching is detailed and very effective lesson planning, which reflects the high expectations teachers have of their pupils and which ensures that work is matched closely to the different ability levels of the pupils. In the best lessons, a Year 2 science session on the five senses, for example, pupils thrived on challenging questions which made them think and they were completely engaged by a wide range of practical activities. Similarly, Year 1 pupils were beside themselves with joy when the teacher encouraged them to guess which numbers were emerging, very slowly, from behind the board. The school is aware, however, that in a small minority of lessons the pace drops and teachers spend a little too much time in explaining the activities. As a result, the pace of pupils' learning slows.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school makes good use of both local and national guidance to provide a good curriculum. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) has been extended well and there is a major emphasis on promoting literacy and numeracy skills to equip children for the future. The good quality curriculum is enhanced further by strong links with local schools and organisations, including cluster arrangements, which provide Spanish, sports modules and business enterprise activities. These have a positive effect on pupils' abilities to work cooperatively in teams. Pupils are full of praise for the annual musical and drama events but express the view that they would like more after-school clubs.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The breakfast club is just one example of the school's positive ethos, strong commitment to pastoral care and encouragement for all pupils to do their best. It demonstrates the good quality of care, support and guidance provided. Pupils are confident to talk to adults and are also concerned to make sure that their classmates are happy in school. Child protection procedures and arrangements to safeguard pupils are in place and pupils feel safe. There are effective systems to assess and track pupils' progress and the talented and industrious team of teaching assistants provides extensive support for pupils experiencing difficulty. Pupils of all abilities are guided and encouraged equally well. Individual and group targets in literacy and numeracy are well established and pupils are fully aware of what they need to do to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school is well led and managed by a dedicated headteacher, who has the well-being of both children and adults always in mind. His thoughtful and consultative leadership has ensured a shared vision and a strong sense of purpose amongst staff and governors. There is a strong team spirit and all staff work together well. The headteacher and senior staff monitor planning, teaching quality and pupils' work, identifying areas for improvement on a regular basis. As a result of this good leadership and management, standards have been above average and achievement good over a number of years. The school knows itself well and evaluates its performance accurately. It is fully aware, for example, that more needs to be done to improve performance in mathematics and that attendance is not as good as it should be.

Governors support the school well and are not afraid to hold senior leaders to account. They meet regularly and are fully committed to ongoing improvement. The school has good capacity for further improvement because performance in all areas of its life is continually under review. It provides good value for money.

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?	2
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	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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	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	3
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	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 all for the warm welcome you gave me when I visited your school recently. I really enjoyed meeting you and was grateful to all of those who came to speak to me in the playground, during lessons and in the Junior Library. St George's is a good school and I know you are very proud of it.

Here are some of the really good things about your school

- You do well in all your subjects and make good progress in your lessons.
- Your behaviour is good and you get on very well with each other.
- Your teachers teach you well and you work hard.
- You feel safe in school and your teachers and teaching assistants look after you well.
- Your headteacher and all your other teachers know how to make St George's even better!

What I have asked your school to do now to make it even better

- Work with you to improve standards in mathematics in Key Stage 2.
- Encourage all pupils to attend regularly. Attendance is satisfactory at the moment but it could be better! Everyone can play their part in this by making sure they never miss school unless they really have to.
- Give you more opportunities to voice your opinions about many areas of school life so that you can help make your school even better.

Thank you once again for being so kind and friendly. I enjoyed watching you learn.