

# Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	104929
<b>Local Authority</b>	Sefton
<b>Inspection number</b>	287067
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 June 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Marie Cordey

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>	175
School	
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Anthony Kellett
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Philip Gretton
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 December 2001
<b>School address</b>	Kepler Street Seaforth Seaforth Merseyside L21 3TR
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 9283158
<b>Fax number</b>	0151 9490221

---

<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 June 2007
<b>Inspection number</b>	287067

---

© 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 is a small school set in an area of mixed housing near to the city of Liverpool. The vast majority of the pupils are White British. An above average proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals and the percentage of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is high. The school has gained Healthy Schools status 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

Our Lady Star of the Sea is a good school with outstanding features. Pupils make good progress from low starting points because of good teaching and outstanding care for their personal development. The headteacher has a vision for the school which includes all pupils achieving their best in an atmosphere of nurture and respect. Parents make an excellent contribution to the education of their children because the school welcomes and involves them.

Although standards are below average, pupils' achievement is good in relation to their starting points. The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage are good. Children settle into the Nursery class quickly because they are well taught and cared for. Changes to the teaching of communication, language and literacy in the Reception class have had a strong impact and children's skills have improved dramatically. Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 1 particularly in their writing. By the end of Year 6, pupils' standards have improved to below average in English, mathematics and science. Standards fell in 2006 to significantly below average; the school was quick to identify and address the underlying staffing difficulties and standards are now improving. Nevertheless, a small number of higher attaining pupils are not challenged enough in some lessons. The school is aware of this and is concentrating on strategies both to improve their performance and to raise standards in all the core subjects. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported and they make the same good progress as their classmates. Teaching and learning are good and lessons are typically planned to match the needs of all pupils and include good pace and vitality. Although pupils are generally actively involved in their lessons, they are not all aware of how they are doing in their work or what to do to make it better.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding and they feel valued, responsible and safe. They thrive in an atmosphere of respect and care and their spiritual, moral social and cultural development is excellent. The curriculum is also outstanding. Not only is achievement good, but low communication and social skills when children join the school are systematically improved. This happens because of dedicated staff, outstanding parental links, committed governors and the key involvement of the local authority and support staff. Enrichment activities are spread beyond the local area and pupils experience a rich variety of cultural and educational experiences. These are subsidised at the governors' insistence to make sure that all pupils can participate and enjoy what the local and wider community has to offer.

Leadership and management are good. Staffing is now stable. The school has spread leadership responsibilities so that more staff are involved in planning strategically for school improvement. A strong and clear vision of care and commitment to raising standards is at the heart of the school's leadership. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and he has led a strategy to improve standards and reverse their decline very successfully. His passion for equality and inclusion acts as a role model for staff and pupils. This reflects the character of the school which is committed to the care and well-being of its pupils. Governors work well to support the school and are working to involve more governors in the school's work. The school is very clear about what it wants to do in order to get better and judges its leadership and management, the curriculum, pupils' personal development and well-being, and teaching and learning accurately. The care, guidance and support of the pupils and their achievement and standards, however, are good rather than outstanding. This is because pupils are not involved enough in setting targets for their improvement and they make good, but not excellent, progress in their learning.

There has been good improvement since the previous inspection and the school has a good capacity to improve. The school provides good value for money.

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

- Ensure that all pupils know how they are performing in their work and what they need to do to make it better.
- Raise standards in the core subjects and extend the challenge for higher attaining pupils.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils reach standards that are below average by the time they leave school in Year 6. This is an improvement on the children's low skills when they joined the school. Particularly low skills in literacy are improving more rapidly in the Foundation Stage because of successful strategies to improve pupils' speaking and listening. This is also improving pupils' writing. Performance in mathematics has improved consistently throughout the school because of clear planning and effective booster classes. Pupils also join school with better skills in number. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have reached standards that are well below average and very few pupils attain higher levels. Standards improve to below average by the end of Year 6, although few pupils attain the higher levels.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is excellent. Pupils have a very positive attitude to learning and form excellent relationships with their teachers. Attendance is broadly average and has improved steadily because of the school's efforts. A very small number of pupils are frequently absent and this reduces the attendance figures.

Pupils' well developed sense of moral and social responsibility enables them to relate well to each other and contribute to the happy and caring atmosphere in the school. Pupils contribute to the wider community through many fundraising initiatives for local and world charities. The Pilgrimage Trust in particular has attracted a lot of support. The school council is active and pupils contribute to decision-making in the school. Pupils enjoy school and like their teachers. They adopt healthy lifestyles through the physical education programme, extra-curricular activities and the healthy school lunch provision.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers are skilled at making clear what the pupils are expected to learn. High expectations of work and behaviour characterise lessons. Consequently, pupils listen attentively, and concentrate and work productively. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their learning and make good progress. Effective preparation to include the use of information and communication technology (ICT) has made teaching more interesting and pupils more skilled in the use of technology. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported by skilled classroom assistants to make good progress.

Overall, planning is well matched to the needs of the pupils. However, in some lessons, the more able pupils are not provided with further extension activities or opportunities to work independently in order to accelerate their learning. Planning to include the use of personal targets is inconsistent and pupils' understanding of how to improve their work is patchy.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils are able to take part in an outstanding programme of residential visits every year from Years 2 to 6. They have excellent opportunities to develop and learn in new environments. A wide range of extra-curricular activities develops and extends learning and enjoyment through, for example, sport, drama and the computer club. Many workshops and performances contribute to pupils' enthusiasm for learning, including drumming and salsa dancing. Pupils develop their musical ability very well through a timetabled programme taught by a music specialist. There have been significant improvements in ICT resources since the previous inspection and pupils are much more skilful in the use of computers. The school has an excellent programme of personal, social and health education that raises awareness of how to stay safe and adopt a healthy lifestyle. This is supported by the excellent school meals and physical education provision.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Provision for pupils' care, guidance and support is good. The school values the contribution of parents and provides regular family learning sessions that are very well attended and enjoyed. Parents recognise and value how well their children are cared for and are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. Pupils are kept safe through robust safeguards and careful risk assessments. The school's provision to support the learning of vulnerable pupils and those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is exceptionally well planned. However, academic guidance is inconsistent and some pupils are not involved enough in setting their targets for improvement.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. Staff and governors work well together to improve pupils' standards as well as caring for their well-being. Strong and visionary leadership is now improving the school's performance following a period of staffing instability. Middle leaders are more involved in improving standards across the school and are beginning to monitor and evaluate the impact of what they do to improve pupils' performance. The Foundation Stage is well led and managed through rigorous planning for the development of children's social and academic skills.

**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>	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	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
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	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>	1
<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	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**

I would like to thank you all very much for the kindness you showed to us when we visited your school. You were polite and welcoming and made sure we enjoyed our time with you. We found your school to be a good school with some excellent features. The way you take care of each other and think about the people around you is outstanding. The involvement of your parents in the life of the school is excellent and this helps you to do your best. You settle into school quickly and make good progress in your work. Your headteacher provides excellent leadership and he is supported well by all the staff in the school.

We want the school to help you to improve your work even more. We know that you can do this because the school has already helped you to improve your writing a lot. Some of you are not sure how you are doing in your work and what to do to make it better. Perhaps you could help your teachers by asking about your work and taking part in setting targets to improve it.

With very best wishes for your future.