



St Elizabeth's Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 104932
Local Authority Sefton
Inspection number 287070
Inspection dates 16–17 October 2006
Reporting inspector Frank Carruthers

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Webster Street
School category	Voluntary aided		Litherland, Liverpool
Age range of pupils	3–11		Merseyside L21 8JH
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0151 9225752
Number on roll (school)	355	Fax number	0151 9222236
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Michael Birkby
		Headteacher	Mrs Kathy Sullivan
Date of previous school inspection	10 June 2002		

Age group 3–11	Inspection dates 16–17 October 2006	Inspection number 287070
--------------------------	---	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: 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 three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Almost all pupils come from a White British background and no pupil is learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average.

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 where children achieve well. From a starting point of attainment that is below average in the Nursery, all groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make good progress to reach above average standards in English and average standards in mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. Since the amalgamation of the infant and junior sections of the school in 2001, there has been an upward trend in performance in Year 6 and this has continued in the most recent test results in 2006. This good performance is because senior staff, governors and all staff of the school, supported by some excellent links with other schools and agencies, have focused clearly on taking steps to raise pupils' achievement.

Good teaching promotes good learning throughout the school. Strengths include the quality of planning, relationships between staff and pupils and the use made of assessment information to track pupils' progress. The procedures for setting targets for individual pupils and teachers' marking of work are not yet refined enough in helping pupils to fully understand what they have to do to improve.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good and there is a strong emphasis on teamwork and collaborative learning. Pupils are gaining a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and personal safety. The school's good quality care, guidance and support promote these positive outcomes. Though attendance levels are just below average, the school works hard to improve the attendance of a small core of poor attenders and is generally successful in this. Pupils thrive in school because the curriculum is stimulating and there is a good range of activities outside lessons for them to take part in. The quality of provision in the Foundation Stage is good and leads to the children making good progress.

Leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher, senior staff and governors have made very good improvements to standards as well as to the school in general, since the time of the last inspection. School self-evaluation matches closely the views of inspectors and has been used effectively to identify key aspects for raising standards. The school gives good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make targets for pupils' learning more specific so they know the next steps in their learning.
- Improve marking of pupils' work so that it links to their targets and helps them to understand what they have to do to achieve them.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes and reach broadly average levels of attainment by the end of the Reception year except in some aspects of language and literacy, where they are below average. This good progress continues

in Key Stage 1. By Year 2 standards are broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. The 2006 assessments show an improvement on those of the preceding year with more pupils gaining average standards and the higher Level 3. Achievement is good.

Progress continues to be good in Key Stage 2, especially in English where there has been significant improvement since the time of the last inspection. Standards were broadly average in mathematics and science and significantly above average in English in 2005. Similar standards were maintained in 2006. There has been particularly good achievement in English, given the low starting point on entry to the Nursery. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities do well because of good support from teachers and teaching assistants and well planned programmes of work. Good teaching, underscored by the school's positive initiatives, such as excellent links with local networks of schools, leads to this good achievement. The school sets challenging targets and is very successful at achieving them.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The Christian ethos of the school is reflected well in the good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils. Behaviour is good in classrooms and around the school. Pupils say they feel safe, they value the care offered by all staff and are confident to ask for help if they need it. The school shows its keenness to develop the physical and emotional health of pupils through its commitment to the healthy school programme and its work with pupils to promote their emotional development. Pupils report that they are choosing healthy options at lunchtime and that they get lots of exercise. Parents speak warmly of the confidence the school gives their children. As one commented, 'The whole ethos of the school is centred around the children being happy whilst learning.'

Pupils' attendance is just below the national average and this is due mainly to a small core of very poor attenders. However, the great majority of pupils enjoy school and are keen to take on responsibilities, as illustrated by a group of older pupils who are being trained as activity leaders. Suggestion boxes in every classroom and a school council are signs of the school's commitment to giving pupils a voice. For example, pupils have had their say in devising the school mission statement, revisions to the behaviour policy and lunchtime arrangements and improvements in playground facilities. They contribute exceptionally well to the local community through such activities as hospital visits and supporting the elderly, and are generous in their fund-raising for such organisations as UNICEF, Cafod and Comic Relief.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The good quality of teaching leads to pupils learning well. Strengths include teachers' planning, which is consistent across the school and between parallel classes in the various year groups. As a result of good professional development, teachers have become more imaginative in their teaching, for example, in the way they use role-play and drama to promote speaking and listening skills and pupils' self-esteem. There is a positive atmosphere for learning, based on good relationships that lead to pupils behaving well and having good attitudes to their work. All adults have high expectations for their pupils and there is a good level of challenge in the work set. Teaching assistants, especially those working with pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are important members of the successful teamwork. Good assessment procedures, which are regular and continuous, lead to appropriate grouping of pupils so that they make good progress. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly but many comments do not closely reflect the pupils' targets for learning, so pupils do not clearly understand how to achieve them.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum meets the needs of all groups of learners in the school well and is particularly successful in meeting the local needs identified by the staff, such as promoting skills of speaking, listening and writing. During the Foundation Stage, children are given good opportunities to explore, make choices and develop independence in safe and secure surroundings. The provision for literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology, as well as support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are good. The curriculum is enriched by high quality provision in music and physical education activities, which contribute well to the pupils developing a healthy lifestyle. There are good links between science and health education, though there are missed opportunities in science for pupils to develop their own investigations. Examples of pupils' high quality artwork feature prominently in corridors and indicate pupils' enjoyment of learning. There is a good range of out-of-school activities, visits, visitors and involvement in the wider community.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

All procedures for child protection, safe recruitment of staff and other adults, as well as health, safety and risk assessments, are in place. Links with outside agencies to support work with vulnerable children and their families are excellent. Support for families, including promoting good attendance of the minority of pupils whose attendance is poor, is also good. The school has successfully improved the attendance of a few pupils who transferred into school with a history of poor attendance. Good

links with parents promote children's well-being and their education well and include several courses for parents. Starting at school is made easier through a successful pre-school parent and child group. There is a popular breakfast club that helps pupils to be punctual to school. Procedures to track pupils' progress are effective in promoting their good achievement. However, some targets for learning are not specific enough and they are not clearly known by all pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership by the headteacher is good. She has created a strong team to lead and manage the school and is well supported by the deputy headteacher and senior team. Provision has been improved very well since the last inspection and adaptations to the buildings since the time of the last inspection mean the school operates smoothly as a single unit. Staff are kept informed about the performance of the school and there is a clear focus on raising standards. School self-evaluation is accurate and based on a detailed analysis of data. It has led to improvements and identified priorities for the school development plan.

Middle managers have had high quality training to help them in their roles. There is strong leadership in some subjects, such as English and mathematics, but monitoring of provision in other subjects is developing rather than fully in place. Outside consultants from the local authority and networks of schools have made a very positive contribution to improvement since the last inspection. Governors fulfil their roles well, are properly informed and able to support the school and hold it to account. Both staff and governors are well involved in the construction of the school development plan. The school has good capacity to make further improvements.

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.

Inspection judgements

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

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?	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	1
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 very much for your help when we inspected your school. Please pass on our thanks to the other children we met and spoke to while we were with you. We enjoyed our visit very much. Now we want to share with you what we thought about your school.

Your school is giving you a good standard of education. This means that you are doing well in school subjects and there are many things that the staff do well for you.

These are some of the things that are good:

- staff take good care of you all, helping you all to be fit, safe and healthy
- you are achieving well in subjects such as English, mathematics and science
- your behaviour and attitudes to learning are good and you are growing into sensible students who want to learn
- the staff provide you with excellent opportunities to take part in activities in the community, such as the musical performances you do, and you have a good range of clubs after school to enjoy.

Congratulations. You have much to be proud of!

To help you to do better in school subjects, we have asked the staff to make sure:

- they give you detailed targets to work towards in your learning
- they mark your work so that it helps you all to know what your targets are, what you must do to achieve them and what the next steps are for you to learn.

You can see that your part in this is to make sure you know your targets and work as hard as you can to achieve them and then move on to the next.