



St William of York Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Better
education
and care

Unique Reference Number 104934
Local Authority Sefton
Inspection number 287071
Inspection dates 4–5 December 2006
Reporting inspector Kevin Johnson

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	St William Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Crosby, Liverpool
Age range of pupils	3–11		Merseyside L23 9XH
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0151 9247280
Number on roll (school)	205	Fax number	0151 9314558
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs J Kavanagh
		Headteacher	Mr D Ryan
Date of previous school inspection	1 October 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average sized primary school situated on the Northern outskirts of Liverpool. It serves an area of mixed owner occupied and local authority housing and is recognised as an area of social need. A bigger than average proportion of pupils is known to be eligible for free school meals. The number of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. It is a designated Catholic school for physically disabled pupils.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. The quality of pastoral care provided is good and parents are overwhelmingly appreciative of the way their children are looked after. Pupils feel safe in school because they have trusting relationships with adults who work there. Health and personal well-being are promoted well so pupils are able to make sensible, informed choices about their diet and exercise. Pupils enjoy school and consequently, attendance and punctuality are good. Pupils show respect and care for one another. They are cooperative and extremely well behaved, showing courtesy and good manners.

The curriculum is satisfactory. There are strengths in the way it promotes pupils' personal development and in the programme of visits and visitors to enrich pupils' learning and help them enjoy their work. However, it is not always planned well enough to help all groups of learners achieve their full potential, particularly in mathematics.

Children start in the Nursery with skills that are below the levels expected for their age. Satisfactory provision ensures they make steady progress in most areas of learning. Achievement by the end of Year 6 is satisfactory overall and broadly average standards are attained in English, mathematics and science. Despite this, however, there is some underachievement in mathematics. Standards by the end of Key Stage 1 are below average and, though improving, are not yet high enough. Teaching overall is satisfactory and improving. However, it has not been effective enough in the past to raise mathematics standards to the levels attained in English and science. There are now pockets of stronger teaching in the Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 2. Where this occurs, pupils are beginning to make better progress. However, there are still instances where learning lacks pace because work is not matched well enough to pupils' abilities so there is insufficient challenge particularly for more able pupils.

Monitoring and evaluation of academic progress and teaching has not been robust enough in the past to pick up underachievement and weaknesses in provision. This has resulted in pupils' limited progress, particularly in mathematics, and the school holding too positive a view of some of its work. The school has accurately identified mathematics as the main priority to improve and decisive action has already begun. Working closely with the local authority adviser, the new subject leader has identified the weaker areas of learning in mathematics, introduced more rigorous assessment procedures and is beginning to evaluate the outcomes of teaching. The impact of these measures can already be seen in the improved achievement of pupils in Years 5 and 6 over the current term. The introduction of a new scheme to teach phonics is also having a good impact in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Again, there are promising signs of improvement in literacy skills. Self-evaluation has enabled the school to judge accurately most aspects of its work and its overall effectiveness. There is a strongly shared commitment among all staff and governors to improving standards and quality. Action to boost the crucial areas of standards and monitoring of performance are underway and recent appointments of an assistant headteacher and a coordinator for mathematics have brought new strengths and expertise to the leadership team.

Overall the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement in mathematics throughout the school and in reading and writing at Key Stage 1.
- Improve the rigour of monitoring, evaluation and use of assessment to bring about action to raise standards.
- Raise the quality of all teaching and learning to that of the best.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils achieve satisfactorily overall. Children in the Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress in most areas of learning and good progress in their personal and social skills. However, standards in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development are still below expectations when children enter Year 1. Children currently in the Reception class are progressing well in response to good teaching. Progress throughout the school is uneven due to variation in teaching quality and the level of challenge for pupils. Overall, there are no significant differences between groups of pupils in their rates of achievement. Standards at the end of Year 6 showed some decline for a couple of years, but recovered well in English and science in 2005. In the 2006 tests, standards in these two subjects remained broadly the same, but mathematics standards slipped further and continue to reflect underachievement. Key Stage 1 standards also dipped in 2005 and although there was a marginal improvement in 2006, they are still not high enough reading, writing and mathematics.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils have mature, caring attitudes towards each other. They know what is right and wrong and are conscious of their responsibilities within school and towards the wider community. A good example is the 'Angels' group who help to care for the elderly members of the parish. Behaviour is usually exemplary in lessons and around the school. The school council has done commendable work in raising awareness about bullying. It has an active voice in the school enabling pupils to share their views democratically. Pupils understand about healthy lifestyles and how to keep themselves safe. They have negotiated healthier choices of food at lunchtimes and enjoy the many opportunities for sports.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

In the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 2, some good and outstanding teaching is helping pupils to make good progress, but this quality is not consistent throughout the whole school. Strengths lie in the positive relationships between pupils and staff and in the way teachers promote pupils' personal development. This results in a positive classroom atmosphere and exemplary behaviour. Teachers' planning is satisfactory, but objectives for different groups are not always a feature so at times the same tasks are given to all pupils whatever their ability. Sometimes teachers' explanations are too long leaving insufficient time for pupils to complete their work. There have been recent improvements in procedures for assessing pupils' progress. However, the use of assessment information is not yet sufficiently embedded in teachers planning. Marking is regular but does not always give pupils enough information about how well they are doing or what they need to do to improve. Teaching assistants provide effective support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities enabling them to make satisfactory progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory with good features. Satisfactory provision is made for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However, the needs of the more able pupils in particular are not fully met in all lessons and especially in mathematics. This is why the curriculum is not as good as the school has judged it to be. The curriculum is particularly well enriched through a wide range of educational visits and visitors, and out of school clubs and activities. These experiences stimulate enjoyment in learning and nurture pupils' talents, interests and personal development effectively. Healthy lifestyles and personal safety are woven meaningfully into the curriculum so pupils are well informed when they need to make choices about their future well-being.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pupils are very well cared for by the adults who work in the school consequently, they feel secure and confident that there is always someone to help them. Vulnerable pupils are given the sensitive support they need to help them achieve alongside others. For example, the Rainbow group provides good opportunities for pupils to come to terms with their particular difficulties. A good emphasis is placed on personal safety and pupils learn how to avoid hazardous situations both in and out of school. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are in place and safety checks on the building and equipment are rigorous.

Academic guidance is not as strong as the pastoral care The process of checking pupils' progress regularly against their learning targets is relatively new. This has meant that

some underachievement has not been identified quickly enough or effective remedial action taken. There are new procedures to remedy this but, though promising, it is too early to gauge their full impact on achievement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school is led and managed satisfactorily. The headteacher and senior managers provide good quality care and are vigorously leading the drive to improve standards. They are supported by a committed staff team and governors who fully share the vision for the school's future. Monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance is improving. New strategies to tackle the low attainment in mathematics are already showing positive signs of success. Assessment data is being scrutinised more regularly to check on individual pupils' progress and to set challenging targets. Although it is too soon to see the full impact of these measures for all pupils, there has been notable progress this term in Years 5 and 6. The most essential priorities for the school are clearly identified in the improvement plan. Governors know the school's strengths and areas of weakness and recognise the need to apply more rigour in their evaluation of its performance. They are beginning to monitor the progress made and to challenge and support the headteacher in the drive to raise standards.

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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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

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	1
The attendance of learners	2
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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
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	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

As you know Mr. Maloney and I visited your school recently. I have to say we were extremely impressed with the warmth of the welcome you gave us. Your behaviour is excellent and your politeness and good manners made it a pleasure to talk to you. We were pleased to find out how much you enjoy school and that your attendance is good. It is good that all the adults in school look after you so well. We know how safe you must feel and that this helps you to get on so well with each other.

We found out also that you are making satisfactory progress in your work. However, everyone would like your progress to be good so we have left your teachers and the governors some ideas about how to make your school better.

First of all you must all work as hard as you can to achieve better standards in mathematics. To do this we have asked your teachers to check your progress more often to make sure you are reaching your targets. You can help by making sure you know what your targets are and by asking your teachers what you must do to achieve them. We have also asked your teachers to give everyone in the class work that really challenges them so that you all make the best possible progress. Finally, we have asked your headteacher, teachers and governors to keep a closer eye on the school's work to make sure all your hard work really pays off.