



St Jerome's Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 104938
Local Authority Sefton
Inspection number 287072
Inspection dates 7–8 March 2007
Reporting inspector Eileen Mulgrew HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Greenloons Drive
School category	Voluntary aided		Formby, Liverpool
Age range of pupils	5–11		Merseyside L37 2LX
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0151 2886003
Number on roll (school)	205	Fax number	01704 831724
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Patricia Starkey
		Headteacher	Mrs E Peat
Date of previous school inspection	22 October 2001		

Age group 5–11	Inspection dates 7–8 March 2007	Inspection number 287072
--------------------------	---	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2007

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 one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

St Jerome's is a smaller than average school serving an affluent area of Formby. Almost one fifth of pupils travel to school from outside the area. The number of pupils from ethnic minority groups is low. The vast majority of pupils speak English as their first language. Very few pupils are eligible for free school meals. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average and no pupils have a statement of special educational need. Currently, the school's pupil population is very stable with few joining or leaving at other than normal times. However, 10% of the pupils in Year 6 have been in the school less than four years. The school has been awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark in 2000, 2003 and 2006. Activemark was awarded in 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

St Jerome's provides an outstanding education for its pupils. Since the last inspection, the previous school building which was destroyed by fire has been replaced with a new one. All members of the school family contributed to the planning of the new build, bringing governors, staff and pupils together as one team. This team spirit continues and is underpinned by the distinctive Christian ethos which permeates all areas of school life.

The school is popular with parents and has been oversubscribed for the last two years. 'St Jerome's is a fantastic school and we are so lucky that our children attend this wonderful place.' sums up the views of parents.

Pupils join the Reception class with skills, knowledge and understanding comparable to most children of their age. The quality of provision in the Reception class is outstanding. Due to excellent teaching, an outstanding curriculum and particularly high provision for care, guidance and support, pupils make excellent progress and standards in mathematics and science are consistently high by the time they leave the school. When results in English in 2005 dipped for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2, swift and effective action was taken to improve pupils' writing. Inspection evidence shows pupils are now working at very high levels in writing.

Teaching is excellent. Staff are aware of how pupils are learning and lesson planning is based on agreed procedures which ensure that new skills are developed consistently well. Subject knowledge is excellent across all curriculum areas. The curriculum is exciting and meets the needs of all learners and teachers know how pupils like to learn best. Strong, positive relationships and high expectations result in pupils' excellent behaviour and enjoyment. Skilled teaching assistants work effectively to support individuals and groups so that all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make very good progress. Pupils have an excellent understanding of the importance of maintaining a healthy body and a healthy mind. They are confident, happy and responsible members of the school community and express their views keenly through the school council. Links with pupils in African and Japanese schools help pupils to understand different cultures and there are early plans to extend their understanding of the multicultural society in which they live.

Leadership and management, including governance, are outstanding. The headteacher has used a recent government initiative to establish teams which successfully use the expertise of individual teachers. Governors understand their role and fulfil all statutory requirements. They know the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Individual members contribute their expertise, for example, in helping to design and build the new school. Despite disruption caused by the fire, the school has maintained high standards and achievement. It provides excellent value for money and has outstanding capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the school's plans to increase the pupils' understanding of the multicultural society existing locally are fulfilled.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

This area of the school's work is outstanding. When pupils join the school in Reception, what they know and can do is broadly as expected for their age, although it is less so in their personal development. Emphasis is placed on developing skills which enable pupils to work independently. Progress in this class is rapid and by the time pupils begin Year 1 most pupils have achieved standards expected for their age in all areas of the early learning goals, with secure skills for independent work.

As they move through the school, pupils of all abilities, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make very good progress. In the 2006 national tests, pupils aged seven attained results which were above the national average in mathematics and writing. Almost half of all pupils reached a level above that expected for their age in reading.

In the 2006 tests, pupils aged 11 attained results which were well above average in English, mathematics and science. Around half the pupils gained a level above that expected for their age in English and mathematics, whilst two thirds did so in science.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The personal development and well-being of the pupils are excellent. Pupils show their enjoyment for learning in their very good attendance and eagerness to be involved in all aspects of school life. Very positive relationships exist between all members of the school community and pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Pupils are happy and have fun when learning. Many pupils said, 'It's really fun'. As a result pupils achieve exceptionally well, making outstanding progress in acquiring the numeracy, literacy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills which will help in later life. Pupils appreciate the importance of healthy lifestyles. They make healthy choices at lunchtime, both from the healthy menu and in the contents of their lunch boxes. Pupils value the benefits of exercise and have been rewarded with the Activemark for sports. They have a sophisticated understanding of issues to do with personal safety. In a recent questionnaire, the school council found that three quarters of the school felt unsafe on the car park, this resulted in the committee members sending a letter to parents with clear instructions on how to improve safety. The 'playground buddies' take their responsibilities seriously when caring for and supervising the younger pupils. Through their role as Guardians of the National Trust and fundraising for charitable causes, all pupils contribute to the community.

Pupils' personal qualities reflect very good support given for their moral and social development. Spiritual development is outstanding. The school is cultivating links with schools in Africa and Japan and it has plans to increase the pupils' understanding of the multicultural society existing locally.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning are outstanding. Excellent relationships, high expectations and the attentive attitudes of pupils lead to a very positive, supportive learning atmosphere in every classroom. Pupils are happy to take risks with their learning and as a result nearly always complete challenging tasks. Teachers' subject knowledge is excellent which results in a confident, enthusiastic style. Learning activities are varied, exciting and fun. Pupils in the Reception class had planned a role play area after a visit to a garden centre. They all cheered and clapped when told that the Winter Garden Centre was open. A noteworthy feature is the excellent use made of the ICT equipment by teachers and pupils. Pupils use interactive voting systems to assess each other's learning and teachers use them to check on the pupils' responses to work and adapt lessons accordingly and immediately.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The outstanding curriculum fully meets national requirements. There is a strong emphasis on developing pupils' skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT and these are developed and applied across subjects. Good links are made between subjects: each one is studied in depth. Learning is brought to life by visits to a place of interest or through visitors to the school. Pupils' progress is tracked in all areas of the curriculum. The curriculum is further enriched through themed weeks, such as Book Week. Most pupils attend one or more of the excellent wide variety of extra-curricular activities, which range from chess to circus skills. The school has introduced French for all pupils and instrumental tuition in Year 4. Pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 have the opportunity to experience a residential visit which contributes much to their cooperative and social skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Provision for care, guidance and support is outstanding. The commitment of a highly trained staff is a key feature in the excellent care provided to pupils in the school. Pupils feel very safe, both in and out of school, with risk assessments conducted whenever needed. They trust all members of staff and know who to turn to if they are troubled. Child protection procedures are in place and understood by all staff: arrangements for safeguarding pupils follow the latest government guidelines. Many

parents commented on the excellent care and academic guidance provided by the school. Procedures for settling new pupils into school are very good. Smooth transfer to secondary school is achieved, in part because of the collaborative working relationship between the staff from the schools involved.

The quality of the academic guidance given to pupils is excellent. Through the process of marking and setting of targets, particularly in writing, pupils know exactly what work they have done well and how to get even better. This, together with rigorous checking of progress, results in confident pupils willing to 'have a go' and achieve very high standards of work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management, including governance are outstanding. The school is led with purpose, direction and enthusiasm by an experienced headteacher and effective deputy headteacher. Working as a senior team with two other senior members of staff, they are moving the school forward towards well defined aims. A highly effective evaluation process identifies what needs to be done and action is taken swiftly. The expertise of every member of staff is used successfully to lead specific parts of the school's development plan. Consequently, there is a culture of teamwork focused on the pupils' well-being and raising academic attainment. Governance is excellent. There are good links between individual governors and subject specialists. Many governors visit the school regularly and they successfully monitor its progress. This, together with detailed reports from all the governing body's committees, results in governors having a firm grasp of the school's performance. The disruption faced by the school since the last inspection has been met head on and has not been allowed to be a barrier to improvement. The new school building offers a high quality learning environment which is appreciated by all members of the school family. There is no complacency in this school and the school is very well placed to make further improvement.

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?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
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	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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 we recently visited your school to see how well you are learning. We would like to thank you for making us feel so welcome and talking to us about St Jerome's.

You all looked so smart in your bright red uniform and ready to learn. We think your school is outstanding.

These are the things we found best about your school.

- Your parents are extremely proud of your school and happy for you to go there.
- You all work hard and are very well behaved.
- Teaching is excellent and all the staff take care of you extremely well.
- You achieve very high standards of work and have lots of fun.
- You have a superb headteacher who wants to give you lots of exciting things to do.
- Governors get involved with the school, know what is good about it and what can get better.

We have asked your teachers to let you find out more about the range of cultural traditions in the area near where you live.

We hope you continue to enjoy your learning at St Jerome's.