



St John Bosco Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 104941
Local Authority Sefton
Inspection number 287074
Inspection dates 31 January –1 February 2007
Reporting inspector Clare Henderson

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Green Lane
School category	Voluntary aided		Maghull, Liverpool
Age range of pupils	4–11		Merseyside L31 8BW
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0151 5202628
Number on roll (school)	197	Fax number	0151 5202628
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr C Rigby
		Headteacher	Mr Danny MacAreavy
Date of previous school inspection	26 February 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average primary school. Most pupils come from relatively advantaged homes. The proportion entitled to free school meals and the proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are below the national average. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The school has gained Healthy School status and the Activemark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school in which pupils flourish in their personal and academic development. 'Our children have thrived at this school': many such comments made by parents testify that St John Bosco is a special place to be. The headteacher's leadership is excellent. Parents say he is 'enthusiastic and passionate about the school'. His drive and determination to provide each pupil with opportunities to 'shine' and to reach their potential has been adopted by all staff, who equally share this belief.

Enjoying and achieving is at the heart of the school. Teachers and support staff have earned the trust and confidence of pupils and parents alike, with pupils saying 'Teachers make learning fun by getting everyone involved in sharing ideas.' Most pupils, including those children in the Foundation Stage, make very good and in many cases outstanding progress and achieve very high standards. This is because of the very challenging targets set for pupils to strive for and which they achieve. However, pupils do not always have a clear enough understanding of how to improve their work because the quality of teachers' marking is inconsistent. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make outstanding progress both socially and academically, as a result of the excellent care and support they receive from staff.

The outstanding curriculum excels in creating opportunities for all pupils to learn and achieve well. The close attention given to enhancing pupils' basic skills, including the excellent use of information and communication technology (ICT) prepares them well for the future. Partnerships with parents, the church, support services and other schools contribute effectively to the strengthening of pupils' personal and social attributes.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary in lessons and around the school. They know and uphold the school's rules and respect and share the school's values. Pupils care for each other, they feel safe and they know how to get help if they have a problem. Older pupils are proud to be 'Chummies' and they take their responsibilities to support and help younger pupils very seriously. As a result this is a happy and friendly school and the school council cite this as its greatest strength.

Healthy lifestyles and pupils' understanding of the importance of good diet are very well promoted throughout the school. This is reflected in the achievement of the Healthy Schools award and the Activemark.

The headteacher, staff and governors are not complacent and are continually looking ahead to improve the school further. Although they are aware of their strengths and weaknesses, the school's evaluation of itself is rather modest. It provides excellent value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop a more consistent approach to marking which will tell pupils clearly what they need to do next to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Children start school with skills which are slightly below average for their age. As a result of excellent teaching and an extremely good range of learning activities, children make excellent progress within the Foundation Stage, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development. By the time they leave the Foundation Stage, they meet and in some cases surpass the goals expected of them at this stage in their learning. This high level of progress continues and, by the end of Year 2, standards are consistently well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. This excellent rate of progress continues through Years 3 to 6, and culminates in consistently high standards being achieved at the end of Year 6. This has been the picture within the school for a number of years.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils say how much they enjoy school and in particular taking part in the wide range of extra-curricular opportunities provided for them. They also comment: 'We get to play loads of different games in our school.' The excellent provision of facilities on the playground ensures that pupils have every opportunity to play and exercise in a safe environment. Pupils have a tremendously positive attitude towards their work and school life; this is reflected in their very good level of attendance. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They are given lots of opportunities to be responsible for one another through the school council, helping distribute fruit and being part of the Chummy system. This aspect of the school is perhaps best described by parents who say: 'It's a lovely little school. Very friendly - like a family. When you're out shopping the older children know the younger ones.' Pupils' and parents' opinions are regularly sought and acted upon by the school. For example, pupils have influenced the acquisition of a bike shelter via the school travel plan and have contributed towards improvements in toilet facilities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teachers know their pupils extremely well and plan work that meets their learning needs. Their very good subject knowledge enables them to explain activities clearly and use questions skilfully to check that pupils understand what they have to do. Close attention is given to developing pupils' self-esteem and confidence so that they participate in activities enthusiastically. Pupils' say: 'Teachers make our learning fun'. Relationships throughout the school are excellent and pupils consequently really enjoy learning. Teaching assistants work in close partnership with teachers. They provide excellent support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities so that these

pupils make excellent progress. The techniques, including the excellent use of ICT, used by teachers to assess pupils' work and monitor their performance are very effective. These ensure that teachers set challenging targets for all groups of pupils to meet.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

In the Foundation Stage children enjoy the exciting activities, and acquire self-confidence and a strong desire to learn. Throughout the school achievement in English, mathematics and ICT is strengthened by their excellent use in other subjects. The extensive range of visits, visitors and opportunities to develop their sporting and musical skills promotes pupils' all-round development and enjoyment of school very well. Year 6 pupils benefit from a residential experience that enhances their ICT skills effectively, provides them with experience of teamwork and gives them opportunities to try physically demanding tasks. This helps to prepare them well for their future learning. The pupils report that they enjoy their lessons and the enrichment activities planned by the school very much.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding and contribute strongly to pupils' progress, enjoyment and well-being. Pupils report that they feel safe at school and are confident that all adults are approachable and caring. Necessary safeguarding procedures are in place, teaching staff are trained in these procedures and the health and safety of pupils is secure. Teaching assistants are deployed very effectively to support pupils' learning needs. One example of such deployment is the 'Herbie Group', where pupils are ably supported to improve their phonic and reading skills. Marking of pupils' work does not, in all classes, clearly guide pupils in the steps needed to improve their work. Very good links with local high schools ensure that transition is a smooth and a positive experience for pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The determined leadership of the headteacher is central in the excellent achievements of the school. He has been successful in establishing a collegial approach shared by all staff, successfully placing the needs of each pupil at the heart of the day-to-day life of the school. As a result, equality of opportunity for each pupil is outstanding.

Responsibility for leadership of subjects and coordination of specific initiatives and areas of the school's work are widely distributed. Subject leaders are fully involved in accurately evaluating performance and devising ways forward. They are firmly on course to develop opportunities to raise standards even higher by working together as a highly successful and committed team. As a consequence the school has an

excellent capacity to improve even further. The school has provided schools in the locality with excellent ideas on which to build their own success, particularly in using ICT to assess pupils' work.

Governors are committed to improving the school and they fulfil their responsibilities very effectively. They are strong supporters of the school but do not hesitate in questioning procedures or initiatives.

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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?	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	1
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	1
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

Thank you for welcoming us to St John Bosco. We would like to say a special thank you to the children who made the delicious crispy cakes, which we really enjoyed, and also all of you who spoke to us at lunchtime and playtimes. We enjoyed listening to your views about the school. These are some of the things we liked.

- You care for one another and you help to make your school a happy and special place to be. You are lucky to go to such an outstanding school and your school is very lucky to have you!
- We enjoyed talking to the school council and hearing how Chummies make sure that the younger children never feel lonely or sad and always have someone to play with while in the playground.
- We think your behaviour is excellent. You keep the school rules very well. You show how you respect the staff and each other by listening carefully to each other in lessons and in the playground.
- You have excellent opportunities to use computers in your lessons and lots of clubs to take part in at lunchtime and after school.
- We also saw you working very hard for your teachers and, because of this, all of you are doing very well indeed. You can be proud of this.

Mr MacAreavy, the governors and staff do a very good job and have plans to improve the school even more. They are making lessons exciting for you but they want to help you to do the very best you can. They need your help and support to become even better.

We have asked your teachers to make sure that, when they mark your work, they tell you clearly what you can do next to improve it even more.