

## Kirkdale St Lawrence CofE Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	132176
<b>Local Authority</b>	Liverpool
<b>Inspection number</b>	293971
<b>Inspection date</b>	9 July 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Paul Bamber

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

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<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>	
School	226
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Rev M Griffin
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Jennifer Forshaw
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 February 2003
<b>School address</b>	Fonthill Road Liverpool Merseyside L4 1QD
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 9222775
<b>Fax number</b>	0151 9223961

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

Many pupils who attend this average sized school come from considerably disadvantaged backgrounds. The inner-city area in which it is situated suffers from high incidences of violent and drug related crime and unemployment. The proportion of pupils entitled to a free school meal or who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is much greater than the average. Pupils are from mainly White British backgrounds but a small proportion are from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds and who speak English as an additional language. The school has a Healthy School Award and the Artsmark Silver Award.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This school currently provides its pupils with a satisfactory quality of education. It has good features, notably the sensitive care and support provided for pupils to enable them to develop well personally and to become increasingly effective young citizens.

From very low attainment on entry, children in the Nursery and Reception (Foundation Stage) make satisfactory progress in most areas of their learning. Children continue to make satisfactory progress throughout their time in the school. Standards in mathematics and science are broadly average but standards in English are well below average. The school acknowledges that pupils' writing, in particular, should be much better. It has urgently put in place strategies to improve older pupils' ability to write in a more focused way and with clearer sentence construction.

Pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to learning. Recent improvements in their overall attendance, which is now broadly average, have been achieved as a result of positive strategies to reward good attendance, an effective partnership with the local authority and through the sterling work of the learning mentor.

Relationships throughout the school are positive. These contribute well to the calm atmosphere in lessons and the harmonious way in which pupils play together at break and lunchtime. Older pupils play a significant part in the smooth running of the school, willingly taking responsibilities to monitor other pupils' behaviour, carrying out helpful routines and in promoting healthy and environmentally friendly activities. Pupils are set a good example by the headteacher and the staff who are very positive in their dealings with them.

The quality of teaching and learning and the curriculum is satisfactory. Pupils learn best when they are actively involved in lessons and given some responsibility for their own learning. Sometimes there is insufficient challenge, especially for the more able pupils and their pace of learning is rather slow. In these cases, they do not always achieve as well as they might. The curriculum offers pupils some enriching experiences and the school's award of the Artsmark celebrates its determination to provide a wide creative diet. There is a relative weakness, acknowledged by the school, in the provision for some pupils in Years 3 to 6 with the most significant learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This is because they are predominantly taught together in a separate class. This distracts from their entitlement to the National Curriculum and from opportunities to mix fully and learn with pupils of their own age.

All pupils are very well cared for, but especially those who are the most vulnerable. As a result, they achieve as well as their peers, being especially well supported by teaching assistants and the learning mentor. This is the strongest aspect of the school's leadership. The recently appointed headteacher and deputy headteacher are clear about what needs to be done to improve the school and have set a pragmatic agenda for that improvement. However, because many of the strategies have either very recently been introduced or are about to be, their impact, especially on raising standards in English and in changing aspects of the provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, have yet to be seen. The school is accurate in its self-evaluation, albeit a bit modest about pupils' personal development. Together with its clear plans for improvement, this useful insight into its own effectiveness gives the school a satisfactory capacity to improve further. Overall, the improvement since the last inspection and the value for money the school offers are satisfactory.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English, especially in writing.
- Review the provision for pupils in Years 3 to 6 who have the most significant learning difficulties to ensure their full entitlement to the National Curriculum.
- Ensure that in all lessons the pace and challenge teachers set fully engages pupils and promotes their good achievement.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Children make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage but enter Year 1 with many failing to reach the national targets set for them in most areas of their learning. They continue to make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2 but their standards remain well below average in literacy, particularly in writing. Their performance in mathematics and science is better. In Years 3 to 6, most pupils continue to make satisfactory progress and attain below average standards overall. In the 2006, Year 6 national tests, standards improved all round on previous years and challenging targets set in mathematics and science were substantially met. Although better than in previous years, performance in English lagged behind the other two subjects. This can be partly explained by the high proportion of pupils with language difficulties in that year group. Because teaching is not consistently challenging enough for the more able pupils, too few gain the higher Level 5 in English.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Their spiritual development is effective. This is because of the opportunities provided for them to reflect in assembly and in Circle time (lessons specifically designed to help them focus on sensitive issues and personal dilemmas) and to the increasingly close partnership with the church. Pupils know right from wrong and have a keen sense of fair play. They have a moral conscience, being vigilant about environmental issues and sympathetic to those less fortunate than themselves. They get on well together, are tolerant of each others' difficulties and go out of their way to foster friendships and to celebrate the success of others. Pupils have a sensitive awareness of different faiths and customs and celebrate these through first-hand experiences of the music and ceremonies of a variety of cultures. Until recently, attendance has been below average but those who absent themselves most frequently have responded well to positive rewards for better attendance and thus it is now broadly average. Because of the lack of opportunity, some pupils are not as confident as others in taking responsibility for their own learning.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Where teaching is at its best, teachers inject good pace and set most pupils challenging work which promotes good learning.

Many teachers make good use of information and communication technology (ICT) to engage pupils actively in lessons and to make learning clearer and more vibrant. The quality of relationships between adults and pupils is consistently positive and this means that lessons are conducted in a calm and purposeful manner. Teaching assistants support pupils with learning difficulties effectively and sensitively during group work but are not always as actively involved in other stages of lessons.

Where teaching is less effective, there is a lack of urgency and pace is slower. Pupils are insufficiently informed about how long they have to complete tasks or the quantity of work expected of them. This especially applies to more able pupils who are not always sufficiently challenged or who are required to listen to explanations about work they can already do.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum meets requirements in most aspects and provides pupils with adequate basic skills in reading, mathematics and ICT. It is not currently as successful in fully meeting the needs of some pupils with learning difficulties or for many pupils in writing. The curriculum does offer pupils a rich diet in the arts and the recent introduction of French teaching is much appreciated by older pupils. A satisfactory range of out-of-class activities engages many pupils in pursuits to promote their better health and awareness of the environment. They have a helpful programme to promote their good personal, social and health education with visiting experts contributing well to this and to pupils' appreciation of the arts and of other cultures.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

This aspect is a strength of the school. This good quality goes a long way to breaking down the significant barriers to learning experienced by many pupils. Because of the sensitive care and support they receive, the most vulnerable pupils cope well with learning and school life. Effective arrangements to settle children into the Nursery mean that much of the anxiety parents and their children have about starting school are successfully alleviated. The school's 'safety net' for pupils in distress works well with all staff, but particularly the learning mentor, providing friendly and sympathetic support.

Strategies to ensure pupils' safety and protection are in place and meet national guidelines. Parents are effusive in their praise for this aspect of the school's work.

'The children feel safe, it is a place they love being in,' is a typical comment. Although there are robust systems to evaluate pupils' academic progress, they are not always fully used by staff to rigorously track pupils' progress against the targets set for them. This means that in some classes, pupils' achievement is not as good as in others.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The newly formed senior leadership team has identified relative weaknesses in the school's provision and has either put into place or is about to implement strategies to address these. It is, therefore, too early to measure the impact of most of these initiatives, although the reintroduction of extra classes to target Year 6 pupils has had a positive effect in raising their

attainment in 2007 national tests. The headteacher and deputy headteacher rightly view raising standards and improving pupils' achievement as the most important priorities. They also realise that enhancing aspects of the quality of teaching and aspects of the curriculum are needed to achieve this and do not shy away from taking tough action in order to improve provision. Governors have fully supported these actions and they also ensure prudent financial control. They equally acknowledge that they should visit the school more regularly in order to monitor those aspects of the school's work for which they are individually responsible.

The pupils have benefited from the good partnerships the school has established with the church, the local authority and parents. Their personal and spiritual development together with the support they receive at home have all been enhanced by these links.

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## 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>
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### 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>	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3
<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>	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**

Inspection of Kirkdale St Lawrence CE Primary School, Liverpool, L4 1QD.

Thank you very much for welcoming me so warmly and politely when I visited your school recently. You obviously enjoy school and it is giving you a satisfactory education at the moment. I was very impressed with how well you behaved and how hard you worked in lessons. Many of you told me how much you liked art and design, and the visits and visitors who come to your school. I was also taken with how well the older children take care of the younger ones and enjoy their responsibilities as prefects and school councillors. All the adults and children seem to get on very well together and this obviously helps you feel safe and secure in school. You are looked after very well and many of your parents wanted to make sure that I knew that they were very pleased with the way the school cares for you. Your new headteacher and deputy headteacher know what needs to be done to improve your school.

There are a few things that I have asked the school to do to make it even better. Your standards in English, especially in your writing need to be higher. You can help by trying really hard to improve your English. I have asked your headteacher to make sure that those of you who are taught in Class 7 spend more time in lessons with the other pupils in their year group. Finally, some of your lessons need to be quicker in pace and those of you who find learning easier than most could be set harder work.

Thank you again for making me feel so welcome.