



Our Lady of Perpetual Succour Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 133320
Local Authority Halton
Inspection number 294070
Inspection dates 15–16 November 2006
Reporting inspector Ian Thompson

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Clinton View
School category	Voluntary aided		Widnes
Age range of pupils	4–11		Cheshire WA8 8JW
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0151 4246130
Number on roll (school)	193	Fax number	0151 4206214
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr A Long
		Headteacher	Mr PA Towey
Date of previous school inspection	13 January 2003		

Age group 4–11	Inspection dates 15–16 November 2006	Inspection number 294070
--------------------------	--	------------------------------------

© 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 two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average size school serves an urban area of mixed social and economic circumstances. All pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is about average as is the proportion with a statement of special educational need. The school has an Artsmark and Activemark and recently gained a Health Schools Award. Since the last inspection the number of pupils on roll has declined sharply with a consequent reduction in staffing.

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. The school judges its overall effectiveness accurately and provides good value for money. Pupils do well and are well prepared for their future lives.

Pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD), achieve well as they move up through the school. Standards on entry to the school are broadly average. By the end of Year 6 standards in English, mathematics and science are well above average overall. The school does particularly well to promote boys' progress so that they do at least as well as girls. In 2005, pupils' progress in mathematics put the school in the top 10% of schools nationally.

From the moment they enter the school children make good progress because of the early identification of their learning needs and the very good management of their learning in the Foundation Stage. They become confident in the classroom and enjoy sharing their experiences with adults. Clearly established routines mean that children quickly start to develop the ability to work independently, and in groups, so that teaching can be directed to meeting their individual needs. As a result, most reach the targets the school sets for them in all of the areas of learning and are well prepared for their life in the school. Teachers build well on this flying start.

Teachers' consistent expectations of work and behaviour help establish a calm and purposeful atmosphere in the school. Pupils respond with good behaviour and an eagerness to learn that contributes much to the quality of their learning. As a result personal development is good. Throughout the school pupils show an awareness of being part of a community in which they have responsibilities to others. Most pupils attend well, behave well and are keen to contribute. They enjoy their lessons and the wide variety of other activities provided by the school. They have a clear sense of right and wrong and develop into caring individuals who get on well with each other - all of which helps them to make good progress. Teachers use assessment information well in planning lessons to meet pupils' needs. What is not so consistently well done is their use of assessment through marking to let pupils know how well they are doing or to set clear targets for improvement.

The school's curriculum provision is good and provides exciting learning opportunities for pupils of all abilities. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good with some outstanding features.

The school takes good care of its pupils. Pupils say that they feel safe and secure and that there is always someone to talk to if they need help, or advice.

Good monitoring of pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science is being extended to other subjects. Reports to parents contain detailed information. However, the method of constructing them using a computer programme is prone to error and the information is frequently expressed in a form that is not meaningful enough to parents and pupils. This means that, despite all the effort that teachers put into producing them, reports are not as useful as they should be in supporting progress.

Good leadership and management by the headteacher, senior staff and governors set clear direction. The result is a school with a strong sense of community and care in which pupils thrive. Parents appreciate the school's efforts to involve them in their children's education. Improvement since the last inspection has been good and the school has a good capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make better use of assessment and marking to give pupils a clear idea of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.
- Improve the quality of reports to parents so that they provide clear and accurate information about standards and progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

All pupils achieve well in relation to their starting points. By the end of Year 2 pupils reach broadly average standards in writing, reading and mathematics. Results in national tests at the end of Year 6, although fluctuating from year to year, have been maintained at above average levels in English, mathematics and science. In 2006, results in English were well above average overall and more than double the national average for the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels. These results reflect the school's successful efforts to raise standards in English and in writing in particular. Standards in work seen during the inspection match these results. Pupils also reach above average standards in other subjects such as design and technology and art and design.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good and the school makes good provision for their well-being. Pupils are developing healthy life styles as a result of eating healthy meals at lunchtime, having regular exercise through physical education lessons and taking part in the many sporting activities. They help and support each other, for example through the role of play leaders, and are keen to contribute time and money to support those in need, particularly through the school's links with Catholic charities. They also enjoy contributing to school improvement through their work on the school council and their duties as school 'eco-officers'. Attendance is average. Although the majority of pupils' attendance is good, overall figures are affected by holidays taken in term time.

A well structured programme of assemblies and personal development lessons means that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They are very aware of the needs of others, as illustrated by Year 1 enjoying preparing to welcome new children into the school. They are also starting to develop the general skills and attributes they will need in adult life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Pupils achieve well because teachers plan interesting lessons that capture and maintain interest. Good links are made between subjects to help pupils make sense of their learning.

Little time is wasted in lessons because pupils respond well to teachers' consistent expectations of work and behaviour. The best teaching drives lessons at a rapid pace and makes pupils think. Pupils are caught up in the challenges they are given and, importantly, also have fun. As a result they are eager learners and make very good progress. Marking is always supportive and usually provides an indication of how pupils could improve: at its best, clear targets are set for improvement and progress towards them is subsequently checked. However, too often pupils are not given clear guidance on how to do better and opportunities are missed to promote progress. Teachers involve classroom assistants well in planning lessons so that they know what is expected to happen and are able to provide sensitive and focused support that enables pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to keep up with their classmates. Nevertheless there are occasions, for example when teachers are introducing topics to the whole class, when classroom assistants are not given an active role so that best use is not made of their time.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The recent development of a teamwork approach to managing subjects has led to improved planning and better use of resources. Teachers are confident because of improved schemes of work and greater support for each other. The increased emphasis on teaching through cross-curricular topics has also contributed to improved standards because pupils are more motivated when they see how different aspects of their work are inter-related. The achievement of the Artsmark award is recognition of the good quality of work in art and design. Good links with a partner secondary school enrich the curriculum and have, for example, enabled the introduction of a modern foreign language. A good range of extra-curricular activities enhances the curriculum. In addition to the wide range of sports clubs, the activities involving art, drama, dance and music and the many educational visits enhance pupils' cultural and social development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. The school's Christian mission underpins its approach to providing care for its pupils. It is inclusive. Parents say, 'There is a wonderful sense of community at Our Lady's.' Procedures for safeguarding pupils are in place. Close links with partner nursery schools ensure that the needs of pupils

entering the Reception class are well met. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified early and make good progress. They benefit particularly from the good support given by teaching assistants. Good links with partner secondary schools contribute to pupils' learning and mean that they are well prepared to move to their next phase of education.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

A well developed programme for checking the work of the school by managers at all levels using a variety of methods means that the school's evaluation of its work is accurate. Strengths are known and areas for improvement clearly identified. Planning for improvement is systematic and done well: progress towards targets is checked regularly. A good example of effective management is in the way that the staff has been reorganised and responsibilities restructured in the wake of recent staffing reductions. The new responsibility structure provides for better communication, enables staff to work more closely together and promotes the sharing of good practice. Initiatives designed to raise standards are carefully monitored for effectiveness and value for money. Governors support the school well. They are well informed about its work and have the experience and training to hold the school to account for its performance and to set appropriate targets.

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?	2
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	2
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	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?	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

As you know, Mr Crouch and I visited your school to check on how well it is doing.

Thank you very much for the way you made us welcome. We enjoyed talking to you about your work and your life in the school. We were impressed by the courtesy and help you gave us. We agree with you that the school is a safe and happy place where everyone can enjoy learning. Yours is a good school and you are right to be proud of it.

The good things about your school are:

- it is well run by Mr Towey and his staff
- you make good progress because you are taught well and have lots of interesting things to do
- the way everyone - staff and pupils - work together to create a really good atmosphere in the school
- your teachers and the teaching assistants give children who find learning a little difficult a lot of help
- you behave well, concentrate in lessons and help each other
- you form good relationships with all others in the school, including visitors like ourselves
- you know that it is important for you to have a healthy way of living. We could see at lunchtime that you take this seriously.

We have asked Mr Towey and your teachers to improve some things to make your school an even better place to learn. These are to:

- make sure that marking lets you know what you need to do to improve
- improve the quality of reports so that your parents and you can see clearly how well you are doing.

Thank you for helping us with the inspection of your school. We hope you will carry on helping to make your school a good place to be and wish you well for the future.