

Our Lady of Walsingham Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	132198
Local Authority	Sefton
Inspection number	300437
Inspection dates	21–22 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Janette Corlett

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	355
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Fr A Eagleton
Headteacher	Mrs B Shiels
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Stand Park Avenue Netherton Bootle Merseyside L30 3SA
Telephone number	0151 525 0395
Fax number	0151 636 3362

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a large primary school newly formed through the amalgamation of two schools in September 2006. The school takes most of its pupils from a large housing estate of rented properties surrounding the school. A high proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and there are no pupils who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above that found in most schools nationally.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school. Pupils enjoy coming to school and feel safe and secure. As one older pupil commented, 'When you get here, you don't want to go home'. Pupils know teachers care for them and provide plenty of opportunities for them to have fun while they learn. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and is enriched by a good range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils participate with enthusiasm in creative arts and sporting activities, which are regularly enhanced by visits to places of interest and from interesting professionals. There are rich opportunities for pupils to investigate and celebrate cultural diversity, spiritual awareness and a sense of their responsibilities as future citizens. Provision for pupils identified as being especially gifted or talented is limited.

Pupils enter the school with skills and knowledge well below those expected for their age and make good progress in the Foundation Stage. In Years 1 to 6, pupils make satisfactory progress overall so that standards by the end of Year 6 are broadly average. The rate of pupils' progress varies considerably, however, due to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. Where teaching is good or better, pupils make rapid progress, but in some lessons the pace is too slow and there is not enough challenge, particularly for more able pupils. This means that pupils do not progress as quickly as they should and the standards reached by more able pupils are not high enough. Teachers do not consistently set pupils targets for improvement based on rigorous assessment of their prior achievements. The result is that many pupils have insufficient guidance on what they do well and what they must do to improve. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities progress at the same rate as others and are well supported by the school's team of teaching and support assistants.

The headteacher has only recently taken up her appointment. She has a passionate commitment to school improvement and demonstrates the ability to develop strong leadership and management. This has already resulted in detailed plans for further improvement and a more rigorous approach to assessing the school's strengths and weaknesses. However, the school's current evaluation of its performance is over-generous in relation to the overall quality of provision, which is satisfactory rather than good. Subject leaders have a satisfactory grasp of strengths and weaknesses in their subject areas, but are not involved enough in checking pupils' progress and the quality of teaching and learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the standards and improve the achievement of more able pupils in Years 1 to 6.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that all pupils make consistently good progress.
- Improve academic guidance so that pupils are clear about the next steps to take in their learning.
- Ensure that all school leaders rigorously monitor the work of the school in order to improve its performance.

A small proportion of 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

Achievement is satisfactory. Children enter the school with standards well below age-related expectations, particularly in speech and language. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage and by the time they reach Year 1 are much closer to reaching the expected learning goals, although standards are still below average. By the end of Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics remain below the national average. By the end of Year 6, standards are broadly average, but the proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels in English, mathematics and science is below average. Standards and achievement are inconsistent across the school. In some classes at both key stages, pupils make good progress, but in others they do not progress as well as they could. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good. They really enjoy school, commenting that 'the teachers are special, and make lessons fun'. Pupils feel safe and secure, confident that teachers will always help and support them. They show a good attitude to learning and their behaviour is generally good. Pupils make a positive contribution to the community through raising funds for a range of charities. They show good awareness of how to develop healthy lifestyles, and particularly value the wide range of extra-curricular sports activities. The school encourages pupils to develop their independence and self-confidence. This means that older pupils feel well prepared to move on to secondary education.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They know right from wrong and have many opportunities to explore and celebrate the cultural diversity of modern British society. Collective worship provides good opportunities for calm, spiritual reflection. Attendance is satisfactory. The school is doing all that it can to emphasise the importance of regular attendance and to support families in bringing their children to school on time each day.

Year 5 pupils enjoy supporting one another through their work as peer mediators and play leaders, but pupils in Year 6 have few opportunities to take on responsibility. Pupils feel their opinions are listened to and valued, but the school does not formally seek their views, for example, through a school council or pupil surveys.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Teachers know their pupils well and have good relationships with them. In good or better lessons, teachers make good use of information and communication technology (ICT). There is a brisk pace and children are motivated to achieve well. However, the quality of teaching is not consistently good across the school and this means that in some classes, pupils do not achieve as much as they could. In these classes, teachers' planning does not take sufficient account of pupils' individual starting points. It relies heavily on published schemes of work, which do not always provide sufficient levels of challenge for higher ability pupils. Similarly, teachers do not always use assessment information to set appropriately challenging targets for groups and individuals. Their

expectations of pupils' progress are not high enough, and this means pupils do not always aspire to fulfil their potential.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory with some good features. Visitors to the school include artists, poets, writers, theatre groups and sports coaches. These visitors enrich the curriculum and promote pupils' personal development through encouraging self-esteem and valuing creativity. There is a good range of after-school provision, which links to the high priority the school attaches to physical education (PE) and sports. Displays show the high profile of art and ICT in the curriculum. Pupils have many opportunities to explore the media and techniques used by internationally renowned artists and to develop their own artistic skills. The quality of provision in the Foundation Stage is good. Indoors, children have access to an exciting range of activities to support their learning. Outdoor learning is still in the process of being developed in this new school. The school works hard to ensure pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities enjoy full access to the curriculum, but provision for pupils identified as being gifted and talented is not as strong.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The quality of care, guidance and support for pupils is satisfactory overall. The school cares well for pupils. Adults form good relationships with pupils and help them to feel happy and safe in school. The home/school liaison officer supports families and is helping to improve levels of attendance. The school has robust procedures for child protection and safe recruitment of staff. Thorough risk assessments have been carried out and all the staff are trained in child protection procedures. The school maintains good links with outside agencies to ensure a smooth transition to the next phase of education and to support learning. Academic guidance is not yet effective in ensuring all pupils know the next steps to improve their learning. Individual targets are not set and shared with pupils in all classes. Whilst those pupils making insufficient progress are highlighted for concern and action taken, there is little evidence that pupils identified as making good or better progress have been identified for further challenge.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory and the school has satisfactory capacity to improve. The school leadership has been through a period of transition over the past 12 months. The new headteacher brings a strong sense of direction and is motivating staff to work together to promote improvement. She has accurately identified a number of strengths and areas for improvement, but the overall quality of self-evaluation is rather too positive at this early stage in the school's development. The focus on standards and achievement for all groups of learners is not as sharp as it should be and evaluations of teaching and learning are over-optimistic, given current standards and variable rates of progress across the school. Whilst some monitoring of teaching and learning takes place, it is not consistent or rigorous enough to improve standards. Subject leaders do not have sufficient opportunity to develop their leadership roles to maximise their impact on school improvement. The headteacher knows what the school needs to do to improve and has already set up robust action plans to move the

school forward quickly. Governance is satisfactory. The governors know the school well and are very much committed to its development.

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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>	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	2
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	NA

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	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

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.

Annex A

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

We really enjoyed coming to your school. It was lovely to talk to you and learn how much you enjoy school, feel safe there and how well cared for you are. You showed a great deal of respect for each other and for all the adults who work in your school. You also know all about eating healthily, and the importance of exercise in keeping you fit.

Your school is satisfactory. These are some of the things we think your school does well:

- the way your teachers make learning fun
- making sure that you have lots of exciting things to do - the after-school clubs, trips and visitors who help you with your learning
- helping you learn about other cultures: how people are the same and how they are different
- the way very young children in the Nursery and Reception settle into school very happily and quickly learn new skills.

We think your school could be even better if:

- your teachers gave you a bit more guidance on how to improve your work
- your teachers gave you work which may be a little bit difficult at first, but helps you learn more quickly and reach higher standards
- more of the teachers were involved in checking on how well your school is doing.

You can help with this through listening carefully to your teachers' instructions and trying really hard to follow their advice.

Thank you again for making us feel so very welcome in your school, and for being so polite, kind and helpful during our time there.