

Holy Angels' Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104464
Local Authority	Knowsley
Inspection number	308607
Inspection dates	22–23 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Frank Carruthers

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	370
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Fr Andrew Rowlands
Headteacher	Mrs A Coffey
Date of previous school inspection	15 December 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	15 December 2005
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Sidney Powell Avenue Westvale Kirkby Liverpool Merseyside

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	22–23 September 2008
Inspection number	308607

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is larger than average. Its Early Years Foundation Stage provision (EYFS) consists of two part-time Nursery classes and two Reception classes. Almost all pupils are of White British origin. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. The area the school serves is one of above average social deprivation. The school has been in temporary accommodation since September 2006 and is scheduled to move into a new building on an adjacent site in September 2009. The school has the Basic Skills Quality Mark, the Healthy Schools award 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: 3

The school provides a satisfactory education for pupils. It has good features, namely leadership and management, and the pupils' personal development; the care, guidance and support it provides for pupils are also good with some outstanding features. Senior leaders are guiding staff and pupils well through a difficult period of adjustment while the new school is being built. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

Pupils' achievement in English, mathematics, science, and information and communication technology (ICT) is satisfactory overall. Children enter the Nursery class with levels of skills that are generally well below levels typical for their age. By the end of Year 6, they have made good progress in English and the proportion reaching the expected level for pupils at this age is close to the average of schools nationally. Progress in mathematics is satisfactory overall. Provisional test results for 2008 in mathematics were lower than the previous year whilst those for science improved. Overall, standards in Year 6 have improved since the time of the previous inspection.

Pupils' personal development is a strength of the school. Pupils enjoy school, behave exceptionally well and develop a good awareness of the need to lead a healthy lifestyle and how to be safe. Relationships among staff and pupils and between pupils are very good. The school excels in how it cares, guides and supports its pupils and their families. Links with agencies, such as social and medical services and special needs providers, are very strong. The school's learning mentor is very effective in supporting pupils and their families, and systems to promote attendance are good. Although levels of attendance are below average, they are rising towards the national average. Last year, they were adversely affected by significant outbreaks of childhood and other illnesses.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. There is now a higher proportion of good teaching than at the time of the previous inspection but there is still some variation. Teaching assistants are well trained in their roles and make a very good contribution teaching programmes of work to pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and helping them to make good progress. The curriculum is satisfactory overall. It provides good foundations in English and recent improvements in science provide better opportunities for pupils to enjoy investigative work. The school is aware of the need to develop aspects of mathematics and does all it can to offer pupils experience of ICT. Its provision for more able and talented pupils is underdeveloped.

Strong leadership by the headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, is steering the school well towards a vision of a new school with excellent facilities. Senior staff are determined to make sure pupils have the best opportunities to do well, despite current limitations of buildings and grounds. They are well supported by governors and parents, who are looking forward with great anticipation to the new school next year. The school works well with the local community, parishes and other schools. Given the progress made since the last inspection, the school has good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Nursery and Reception classes is good. Children's achievement is good so that by the end of the Reception year the majority are working at levels expected of children at this

age. Teaching and learning are good, though staffing changes in the Nursery in the last school year led to some inconsistency in children's achievement. This has now been addressed. Despite the difficulties of the temporary accommodation, the children have good opportunities to enjoy a wide range of activities both indoors and outside. Senior staff have taken a keen interest in making sure the children have not been disadvantaged by any limitations. Children enjoy school and the expertise of staff is such that they have a very good understanding of the nature of the EYFS curriculum and know the importance of children learning through play. Staff regularly and effectively observe and assess how well children are developing. They identify early any difficulties children are having and then intervene by involving parents and outside agencies quickly. Leadership and management of the EYFS are good and arrangements for starting in the Nursery and transferring to Year 1 are smooth. The curriculum in Year 1 is appropriately matched to the needs of the Reception children as they start in Key Stage 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics in Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good.
- Develop provision for the more able and talented pupils.

A small proportion of the schools where 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

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. There is some variation between year groups in the performance of pupils, being good in the majority of years but not all. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 have been close to the national average in reading, writing and mathematics in the last two years, though the proportion of pupils exceeding the expected level in mathematics has been below average. Progress is good in English, and standards by the end of Year 6 have been rising consistently since the time of the previous inspection. This is because of an effective focus on improving the teaching of reading and writing. Progress in mathematics is more uneven and standards, though better than at the time of the previous inspection, are below average. Progress in science has improved. A good focus on improving pupils' investigative skills has begun to have an impact in this subject. Progress in ICT is satisfactory. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress thanks to well organised support by the teachers, the special educational needs coordinator and teaching assistants.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils enjoy school and say they like lessons. This view is endorsed by the great majority of parents who responded to the inspectors' questionnaire. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding: they show high levels of respect for one another and for adults and this is the result of clear policies on and expectations for behaviour. A number of parents commented very favourably on this aspect of the school's work and a typical view was, 'I feel the school is run and organised well for the pupils.' Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and their awareness of the needs of others is especially evident in the lengths the pupils go to raise money for charity. They develop a good awareness of cultures other than their own through the curricular links with schools in other parts of the

world. Pupils' involvement in the local community is good and the development of skills for their future economic well-being is satisfactory. They develop good skills of independence and cooperation and have opportunities to plan events themselves.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is uneven across age groups and it is better in English than in mathematics. In the best lessons, planning is meticulous and there is a careful match of strategies to learning objectives so that all pupils make good progress. Learning objectives are constantly revisited so that pupils are always able to understand the skills they are developing. The pace of lessons is brisk and the work is tailored so that individual needs are met. Pupils' work is marked regularly with very helpful comments so that pupils receive clear guidance. Where pupils' learning is satisfactory, planning is not sufficiently precise so that some pupils became confused at times and learning is impeded. Sometimes, the pupils spend too long listening to the teacher and become unsettled and at other times, pupils are not challenged enough when they are given tasks to do. The teaching of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good, however, because of the quality of the support and intervention programmes provided for them. As a result, they achieve well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum develops basic skills of literacy well and this is reflected in the Basic Skills Award the school has gained and leads to good achievement in English. The curriculum for mathematics is satisfactory overall, though there are some elements in which pupils underperform, namely mental activities and calculations. The curriculum for ICT is satisfactory. Despite drawbacks in facilities, the school overcomes them well by providing banks of laptops for pupils to use and also making very good use of specialist expertise at the neighbourhood City Excellence Centre. The curriculum for the personal development, health and fitness of pupils is well organised and this is evident in the awards the school has gained. Visits and visitors to school enhance the breadth of pupils' learning well. An example is the science based project on marine life by led by visiting specialists. There is a good range of activities after school. The curricular opportunities for the most able pupils and those who display particular talents, however, are underdeveloped.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The work of the learning mentor and well-trained teaching assistants ensures that the needs of vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are fully met. Pupils report that they always have an adult to turn to and that they appreciate the learning mentor's help in resolving their problems. The school has adopted a whole-school approach to managing behaviour and a system of house captains and team points ensures that behaviour is excellent. Extensive partnerships with external agencies provide pupils and their families with good support. Parents are particularly appreciative of the help they receive through the Family Learning and 'Stay and Play' sessions. Parents are welcome to come in to speak to teachers before and after school. A comment typical of many parents is, 'Staff are understanding, caring and sympathetic.' Procedures to promote child protection, the safe recruitment of staff, health

and safety and to reduce risk meet all current requirements. Arrangements for tracking pupils' progress are good and the information gained is used very well to set targets. Pupils are involved in assessing their own progress so most know what needs to be done to improve their work. Occasionally, however, pupils are not clear how to improve when they are not sufficiently challenged in their learning

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher displays determined and purposeful leadership, which has steered the school through challenging times. She has a very clear vision of how the school is developing which is shared with the whole staff. She has also had a pivotal input into the design of the new building so that it can provide a stimulating, environmentally friendly school. The deputy headteacher, who has been particularly effective in developing the school's system for tracking pupils' academic progress, ably supports her. Both senior leaders have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and have clear plans to secure improvement. School self-evaluation is good. Middle managers are developing their leadership skills well and are beginning to have a real impact on school performance. Leaders at all levels are now setting challenging targets, which are helping to raise achievement. Governors have developed well since the previous inspection through much improved training. They have a close awareness of the school's strengths and areas for development and provide good support for leaders. The school has effective strategies to promote pupils' understanding of the community based upon strong links with partners in the local, national and international communities. Financial management is good with unit costs just above average and a small surplus of funds in the school budget.

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Annex A

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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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?	2

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
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	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Inspection of Holy Angels' Catholic Primary School

I would like to thank you very much for your help when we inspected your school. We enjoyed our visit very much. Now we would like to share with you what we thought about your school.

Your school is giving you a satisfactory standard of education. These are some of the things that are good or better.

- Your headteacher and staff are doing their very best to make sure you don't miss out on your education while the new school is being built.
- All the staff take good care of you and help you all to be fit, safe and healthy.
- You are growing into sensible students who take on responsibilities, for instance, as school councillors, and want to learn.
- Your behaviour in class and around school is outstanding.
- You are doing well in English.
- Those of you who find school work difficult are helped to do as well as you can by teachers and classroom assistants.

Part of my job is to make suggestions about how the school can be even better. There are three things I have asked the school to do.

- Make sure you all do as well as possible in mathematics.
- Make sure that all lessons are good.
- Do more to challenge the more able and talented pupils among you.

You have a part to play in this: know your targets, work hard in lessons and do your very best! Most important of all, carry on enjoying school!