

Holy Trinity Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104635
Local Authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	308637
Inspection date	7 April 2008
Reporting inspector	Colin Smith

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	
School	170
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Mark Fagan
Headteacher	Mr L Mulcahy
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2005
School address	Banks Road Liverpool Merseyside L19 8JY
Telephone number	0151 4277466
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and the following issues were investigated: pupils' achievement, particularly in English; teachers' use of assessment in setting challenging tasks, and the extent to which leaders check the work of the school to make further improvements. Evidence was gathered from observation of lessons; pupils' work; discussions with staff, governors and pupils; and a scrutiny of the school's documents and questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than average in size. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well above average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. The vast majority of pupils are White British. A very small number are of African, Chinese, Asian or Caribbean backgrounds.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Holy Trinity is a good school with a number of outstanding features, not least the exemplary level of care, guidance and support provided for all pupils. The school's values of Christian kindness are acutely evident in the way the most vulnerable pupils are safeguarded and their families supported. Barriers to learning are removed sensitively, enabling the most disadvantaged pupils to settle and learn extremely well. Pupils respect and trust their teachers because, as they put it, 'Learning is fun and teachers are always there to help us.' These factors are the bedrock of pupils' outstanding personal development. Pupils have excellent awareness of how to lead healthy and safe lifestyles. They strongly resist any form of bullying or racism and behave impeccably in lessons and around school. Attendance is good and pupils show extremely high levels of social responsibility and maturity as play leaders, buddies and school councillors. The school maintains an excellent partnership with parents, who are unanimous in their appreciation of the school's work. Comments such as, 'Sending my children to this school is the best decision I ever made,' typify the views of many parents.

Achievement is good and standards are above average. Following the good start made in the Foundation Stage, pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2, although girls make quicker progress than boys. By the end of Year 2, standards are above average overall and verging on well above average in mathematics. Standards have been rising well in response to the challenging targets set and are higher overall now than when the school was previously inspected. Given their starting points, pupils achieve well from Years 3 to 6. In these year groups, achievement in mathematics and science is exceptionally good and standards are well above average by the end of Year 6. Achievement from Years 3 to 6 in English is satisfactory and standards are broadly average in both reading and writing by the end of Year 6. This is why overall achievement is good but not outstanding as the school believes. The more able pupils usually achieve well and those who receive additional learning or language support make remarkably good progress in reaching their targets. Although boys generally achieve as well as girls from Years 3 to 6, the attainment gap in English remains. In order to raise achievement in English, the school has improved the way writing is taught. As a result, increasing numbers of pupils are learning how to express their ideas clearly, using interesting vocabulary and accurate punctuation. However, boys in particular are not avid readers and do not find it easy to read with fluency and good understanding.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The excellent climate for learning and good pace in lessons ensures that pupils work hard and give of their very best. Teachers' high expectations are reflected in the very good quality of work in pupils' books. There are examples of outstanding teaching, for example in Year 6, where the contribution of every pupil is built upon systematically and pupils are regularly challenged to apply their skills to solve problems. The use of assessment to measure pupils' learning is good, particularly when teachers ask pupils to show their answers on mini-whiteboards. This helps teachers to know when it is appropriate to move on and when further reinforcement is needed. Marking of pupils' work is constructive and pupils know exactly what they need to do improve. On the whole, teachers use assessment well to set challenging tasks that are well matched to pupils' different learning needs. Just occasionally, the needs of the more able pupils are not considered sufficiently, which hampers their learning. Pupils' success in learning, and the enjoyment they derive from it, springs from good teaching and the outstanding curriculum provided. The curriculum is sensitively adapted to meet the needs of

all pupils, particularly those who find learning difficult. Numerous, well attended additional activities are provided which help to nurture pupils' talents and interests.

Good leadership and management, including supportive governance, are driving the school forward. The headteacher promotes a clear vision and is highly successful in securing very high staff commitment towards raising achievement and standards. This is evident in the good improvements made since the previous inspection, particularly the way subjects are led and managed, and in the way teachers give up their personal time to boost pupils' achievement. Pupils' written work is checked regularly, their progress tracked and assessments of their learning carefully analysed. Lessons are observed, teachers' planning is reviewed and pupils' opinions and responses are gathered. Senior staff act upon their findings purposefully in making important changes. This has led to significant improvements in pupils' speaking and listening skills, data handling skills in mathematics and competency in information and communication technology (ICT). That said, there is scope to improve reading. These strategies underpin the school's self-evaluation, which is accurate in almost every respect and at the heart of the school's good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Most children enter the Nursery with skills below those expected for their age and well below in aspects of language. Children make good progress in Nursery and Reception. By the end of the Foundation Stage most children achieve the learning goals expected for their age, apart from those related to communication and language, which are still below expectations. The Foundation Stage is well led and managed in ensuring good provision and successful achievement overall. A wide range of well organised and carefully structured activities are provided, indoors and outside. Children become absorbed in learning through play, for example in the pretend caf., where they discover the importance of healthy foods. A good number of adults are on hand to talk with and question children about their experiences. This helps to improve their spoken language. Children's progress is carefully noted and recorded. The information is used purposefully in planning the next learning steps. In response to the weaknesses in language, teachers have introduced specific activities to improve children's reading and writing skills. Children are gaining from these experiences, for example Nursery children recognise letters and sounds and Reception children are able to write short sentences correctly. However, during these activities, children are sometimes kept for too long on the carpet area and their interest can wane.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement in English, particularly in relation to boys' comprehension skills and enjoyment in reading.

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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?	2
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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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	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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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	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?	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.

Annex A

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	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

Thank you for welcoming me to your school and answering my questions so politely and honestly. I thoroughly enjoyed my visit.

You have every right to be proud of your school. It is a good school, just as you said it was, and in some ways it is excellent. I can understand why many of you said that the teachers are the best thing about your school. They work very hard to make your lessons interesting and will not let any of you slip behind. This is why they give up their own time, after school and in holidays, to provide extra lessons to help you to do your very best. Your school is well run and there are lots of extra activities provided, in and out of school. This helps you to make the most of your education. You explained perfectly how the excellent curriculum provided makes your learning and your time in school so enjoyable.

Your school is like a big family. Your teachers and support staff take excellent care of you. In return, you take very good care of each other. Your attitudes to learning and your behaviour are excellent and the good work in your books shows just how hard you try in school. Good teaching and your determination to do well are the main reasons why you make such good progress. Your progress in mathematics and science is excellent. This is why standards are well above average in these subjects. There are also signs of good progress in ICT.

Although most of you make satisfactory progress in English, your progress in other subjects is better. I have asked your teachers to keep up the good work they are doing on improving your writing and concentrate now on improving your reading, particularly the boys' reading. You can help by trying to reach the targets set for you and by reading for pleasure, which is much more fun than you think, once you get used to it.