

Our Lady of Good Help Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104670
Local Authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	308647
Inspection date	22 November 2007
Reporting inspector	John Heap

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	141
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr N Henword
Headteacher	Mrs S Horncastle
Date of previous school inspection	17 March 2003
School address	South Drive Liverpool Merseyside L15 8JL
Telephone number	0151 7336937
Fax number	0151 2800430

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: whether standards and progress are good enough in writing; how well the various groups of pupils in the school are progressing, including gifted and talented pupils and looked after children; the effectiveness of coordinators and governors in evaluating the work of the school. The inspector gathered evidence from school documentation; interviews with pupils, parents, staff and governors; observing lessons and other activities and analysing parents' questionnaires and comments. 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

This below average sized primary school serves a mainly White British population in an area which has some signs of social and economic disadvantage. Around 14% of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and a small number are learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is above average, as is the proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. A very small number of pupils are cared for by a local authority. The school has successfully achieved the following awards: Healthy School, Basic Skills and Activemark. Out-of-school care and other extended services are provided.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This good school gives good value for money. Pupils and parents alike appreciate the quality of education the school provides. A typical view from parents is, 'I am very pleased with all aspects of the school. I have been very impressed with the dedication and hard work displayed by all the staff who have taught my children.'

Clearly, the vast majority of pupils thoroughly enjoy school because there are high expectations of their learning and behaviour. Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Their moral and social development is particularly strong. As a result, pupils learn and behave well. Attendance is satisfactory. On the few occasions when these expectations are not met, there is swift and effective action to improve matters. For example, the school provides pupils with good extra support in lessons and links effectively with outside agencies to resolve the few shortcomings in behaviour and attendance. Pupils develop a good understanding of social and cultural diversity through the work they do on a range of faiths. An excellent assembly highlighted a range of festivals from faiths such as Judaism and Islam and pupils clearly understood that there are similarities in the rituals of these celebrations. Pupils throughout the school have a good knowledge and understanding of the importance of leading healthy and safe lifestyles. The school's provision in these matters has improved significantly since the previous inspection and has led to it gaining national awards. Pupils contribute well to school and the community, particularly through the work of the school council and in the enthusiastic way the older pupils care for the younger ones.

Achievement is good. Children arrive in the Foundation Stage (Reception) with skills that are below expectations, particularly in communication and literacy skills. Pupils make good progress throughout the school so that by the end of Year 6, results in national tests are often above average overall. Results are typically higher in mathematics and science than English mainly because standards in writing are lower and could be better. There has been a major focus on improving standards in writing and there are signs of improvement, particularly by the end of Year 2. Nevertheless, across Key Stage 2, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to write at length. Pupils have individual learning targets for reading, writing and mathematics. These targets are used effectively in helping to raise standards in reading and mathematics. However, when marking pupils' writing, teachers do not provide clear enough guidance on how well they are meeting their individual targets and what they need to do to improve further. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, those from minority ethnic backgrounds and learning English as an additional language and those cared for by the local authority also make good progress from their various starting points. Pupils are well prepared for future learning and life beyond school by the time they leave Year 6.

These good outcomes are the result of effective teaching and learning, a strong curriculum and a robust approach to care, guidance and support. Throughout Years 1 to 6, lessons are managed well and there are few disruptions to pupils' learning. This also allows pupils to benefit well from a curriculum that effectively promotes both good academic and personal development. Teachers plan work to match pupils' individual needs. This is particularly effective when the curriculum is adapted well for pupils who have additional learning needs to give them more support. Links with secondary schools and other external agencies are also effective in supporting pupils' learning, including providing challenging work for gifted and talented pupils.

Pupils and parents are highly appreciative of the wide range of activities that are packed into the curriculum, such as visits, visitors to the school and other clubs within and after the school day. These have a significant impact on pupils' all round achievement. Parents find the school caring and pupils say they feel safe and secure. This is because procedures to safeguard and protect pupils are robust.

Leadership and management are good and have led to good improvement since the last inspection. The headteacher leads the school very well and has a clear vision for improvement. The school's work is kept under review and challenging targets are set for both staff and pupils to improve their performance. Senior staff and governors provide good support and play an effective role in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. The school improvement plan accurately identifies areas for development. The school demonstrates a good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children join Reception with skills and abilities that are below expected levels for their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy, and personal, social and emotional development. They make good progress and join Year 1 with attainments that are broadly typical for their age. The effective teaching gives a strong focus to improving children's speaking, listening and knowledge of letter sounds and there is good support for children from all staff. The school is working towards providing a greater balance between adult-led and child-initiated tasks, so that independent learning skills can fully flourish. Children are interested in what they are doing and work well together when the task is appropriate. The curriculum covers all the learning areas effectively and makes strong use of the outdoors, particularly in the further development of children's knowledge of the world. The Foundation Stage is led and managed well. The coordinator uses assessment information well to track children's progress to promote good achievement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing by the end of Year 6.
- Make sure that the marking of writing informs pupils of how well they are doing towards meeting their targets and what they need to do to improve further.

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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?	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?	2
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	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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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.

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	2
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

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

I thoroughly enjoyed my time in your school. Both you and the staff were all very kind, welcoming, helpful and hospitable. I found that Our Lady of Good Help is a good school. Here are some of the main things that make it so:

- the good progress you make as you go through the school, both in your academic learning and your personal development; these strengths are preparing you well for the future
- the good contribution that you make to the happy, friendly and caring atmosphere in the school
- your interest and knowledge of other religious faiths
- your enthusiasm and enjoyment of the wide range of activities the school provides, particularly the various visits and the clubs you attend
- the way that you say you feel safe and secure because of the school's thorough methods of checking and ensuring your safety and welfare
- the good work by your headteacher, senior teachers and governors that makes the school a successful place to learn.

To make your school even better I have asked your teachers to make sure that by the end of Year 6 your skills and abilities in writing are even better than they are now. I have also suggested that this will be helped by making sure that the marking of your writing consistently tells you whether you are meeting your learning targets and what you need to do next to improve. I know that you will want to join with your teachers in developing your writing to the best it can be.

Good luck for the future and best wishes.