

St Paul's and St Timothy's Catholic Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104673
Local Authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	308649
Inspection date	27 September 2007
Reporting inspector	John Ashton

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	4-7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	360
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr J McCoy
Headteacher	Mrs M Eves
Date of previous school inspection	1 April 2003
School address	South Parkside Drive Liverpool Merseyside L12 8RP
Telephone number	0151 2282114
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

The inspector investigated the following issues.

- Achievement and standards and evidence of progress across the school, particularly in Reception.
- The planning, balance and organisation of the curriculum, especially in Reception.
- The relative consistency of quality of teaching and learning across the school.
- Why standards are so high and achievement so good by the end of Year 2.

Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation, national published assessment data and the school's own assessment records, policies and minutes, observation of the school at work, interviews with senior members of staff and pupils, and the parents' 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

This larger than average infant school has four forms of entry in each of its three year groups. It caters for children from a wide range of social and economic backgrounds. Below average proportions of pupils are eligible for free school meals or have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Most come from the immediate mixed catchment area of owner-occupied and rented housing in West Derby, an Eastern suburb of the city of Liverpool. Almost all its pupils are White British with very few pupils at an early stage of learning English. The vast majority are baptised Catholics.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. It provides a very high quality of education and is particularly well led and managed. Its pupils make much better than expected progress and achieve significantly above average results year-after-year in the national assessments at the end of Year 2. Not surprisingly, it is always heavily over-subscribed.

That parents are delighted with the school is demonstrated well by their positive written comments on the questionnaires and by their huge attendance at a Year 1 harvest assembly during the inspection. This assembly was simply stunning. So many of the children were actively involved in small scale playlets or as individuals, and showed such wonderful self-confidence and joy at taking part. Typical of parental written comments about the school are phrases like, 'a very approachable staff', 'working above and beyond what might be expected', 'always so friendly and welcoming', 'excellent relationships', 'children benefiting greatly from the quality of the teaching', and the 'excellent leadership'. Some parents wrote that their children skip to school because they feel so secure and comfortable and so excited to be going there.

The keys to the school's continued success are the incredibly effective leadership and excellent staff teamwork plus the extremely high expectations of both staff and pupils. The school exudes an all embracing warmth and welcoming atmosphere.

Standards are high and children's achievement is outstanding. From a broadly average starting point, the children make better than expected progress through both Reception and Key Stage 1. Most go on to achieve well above average standards by the end of Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics. The school's effective monitoring systems picked up that girls were achieving slightly better than boys, children with summer birthdays were slightly behind those born in earlier terms, and the relatively few children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities on School Action were achieving at an average rather than well above average level. It sprung into action and focused its efforts even more in these directions. The outcome was that the end of Year 2 results in 2007 were even better than those in 2006, which were themselves well above the national average.

Relationships in the school are excellent and the children's attitudes to learning are very positive. Attendance is above average and better than at the last inspection, partly as a result of increasing the length of the Whitsun holiday, leading to fewer families taking holidays in term time. The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. They clearly enjoy coming to the school. They feel safe, know about the importance of eating healthily, play a full part in the school and neighbouring community, and are very well prepared for the next stage of their education. They told the inspector that they love writing stories, and love also the way their teachers look after them. They say they would like a better play area outside and more apparatus on the playground. The quality of the care, support and guidance they receive is excellent. The children's progress is thoroughly and continuously monitored. Safeguarding procedures are up-to-date and conform to the latest guidelines.

Pupils achieve very well because the quality of teaching and learning is never less than good and often outstanding. Expectations of what the pupils can achieve are very high. Teachers have confidence in their subject knowledge and know what they need to do to maintain the school's high standards. They work very well together in year teams, always receptive to finding better ways of doing things. They are very well supported by effective classroom assistants. Lessons are always planned in detail and managed with good control. A strength throughout

the school is the challenge given to particular groups of children at their own levels. In every lesson seen, pupils were busy with their work and often so engrossed they failed to notice the arrival of a visitor. Teachers are making good use of information and communication technology as a learning resource and a tool for their teaching. Interactive whiteboards are used very effectively to introduce new learning, to capture the children's interest and to show them how to successfully complete their tasks. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and positively, writing lots of praise such as 'well done' and 'excellent work'. What is often missing is why the work is good or what could be done to improve it. This is not as consistent across the school as it could be.

The curriculum - criticised at the last inspection - now has lots of breadth and is innovative too. To aid continuity of experience, it is based throughout the three years on the six areas of study in the Foundation curriculum and this is working well. French is taught successfully in weekly sessions to all classes from as early as Reception, and Spanish is being introduced in a rolling programme, partly after school and partly in lesson time. Class teachers attend the lessons and follow up the specialist teaching later in the week. Swimming has been introduced this year in Year 2. Purposeful visits and interesting visitors, interspersed with theme days, enliven the normal routine and keep the learning fresh. Other enrichment activities such as multi skills are offered later in the year, after school.

Leadership and management at all levels are outstanding. There is an excellent mixture of leadership from the front, combined with leadership by enthusing and developing other teams and individuals to take ever more responsibility for the areas in their care. Governors are very well led and more proactive than most. They support well but also challenge the leadership very effectively. This is helped by the school keeping them up-to-date and helping them to gain first-hand knowledge on a regular basis of what takes place in the classrooms.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Very good professional links with the neighbouring nursery settings and the popular and well attended Saturday induction sessions ease the transition into the four Reception classes. Criticised at the last inspection as an area for improvement, the present Foundation Stage set-up is a significant strength, for there have been considerable developments since then. Relocation of the classrooms to the other side of the school, adjacent to the playground, has helped enormously with the arrangements for integrating outside activities into the day-to-day routines. The leadership of this stage is now a considerable strength. Everyone now pulls in the same direction. There is consistency and effective teamwork and a flexibility of working which matches that in the rest of the school. The curriculum described in the last inspection as not sufficiently well planned and not providing adequate opportunity to develop children's independent learning is now such a strength that the same pattern is continued through the other two year groups. Every child is actively involved as much as possible. There is an excellent mix of teacher-directed and the children's own choice of activities. Every child is stretched and carefully monitored. They settle remarkably quickly and most achieve their early learning goals by the time they move on to Year 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teachers' marking makes clear to children what is good about their written work and what needs to be improved.

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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?	1
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	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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 St Paul's and St Timothy's Catholic Infant School, Liverpool, L12 8RP

I really enjoyed visiting your school recently. A very special thank you must go to those children who joined me for part of their lunch break. You told me so many good things about the school. So also did your parents in the questionnaires they sent me.

I agree with you that you are all very well looked after at St Paul's and St Timothy's. I believe that you are very well taught too and experience an especially well planned and well balanced range of activities. When this is combined with how hard you all work and how much you love coming to school, I am not surprised that standards are so high in the school.

Some of you spoke of how good it would be if there could be some more permanent playground equipment to make break and lunchtimes more interesting. You will be pleased to know just how soon this is due to be done.

I was as thrilled as your relations were to see one of the harvest assemblies taking place during my visit. It was simply stunning how well you all performed, how confidently so many of you spoke into the microphone or acted out your roles.

I love the quality of your written work, particularly the work on golden sentences. I have asked that your teachers, when they mark it, tell you more often not just how good it is, but why it is good and how it could be made even better.

Best wishes to you all for the future.