

# St Oswald's Church of England Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	104900
<b>Local Authority</b>	Sefton
<b>Inspection number</b>	308702
<b>Inspection date</b>	4 October 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Clare Henderson

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3-11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	247
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Val Jardine
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs M Ellams
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	22 September 2003
<b>School address</b>	Ronald Ross Avenue Netherton Bootle Merseyside L30 5RH
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 5254580
<b>Fax number</b>	0151 5251715

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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 the quality of teaching is good enough to enable all pupils to make the progress they should; the school's efforts to raise attendance and improve behaviour; and the effectiveness of the guidance given to pupils through the setting of challenging learning targets. Evidence was gathered from observations of lessons, discussions with pupils and scrutiny of their work, discussions with the staff and the chair of governors, and analysis of the school's documents and parents' questionnaires. Other aspects 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, average in size, serves an area of high social and economic disadvantage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The number of pupils entitled to a free school meal is higher than national. There have been major staff changes this school year as a number of staff have retired. The school has won many awards including Artsmark Gold, International School Award, Investors in People, Sure Start Excellence and Healthy Schools.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school. Instrumental in the school's success is the outstanding leadership of the headteacher together with a shared commitment of staff and governors to the belief that every child, and the needs of their family, really matter. It is these aspects that parents really appreciate. A typical comment is, 'You are always made to feel very welcome by all the staff who are very approachable at all times.' Inspection findings agree with parental views.

Achievement is good. Pupils begin Year 1 with standards that are below the national average. Standards reached by pupils in Year 6 in 2007 in English and mathematics were above average, with significant improvements noted for all pupils in mathematics and writing. The determination of teachers and support staff to remove any barriers to learning is evident in the kind, patient and understanding way in which pupils and their families are treated. In particular, the extent to which the most vulnerable pupils are supported, emotionally and academically, is outstanding and accounts for their good progress. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make outstanding progress in their work because of the very effective support they receive.

Pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is outstanding. Their great enjoyment of school is reflected in good behaviour and enthusiasm for learning. They say they, 'love school' and thoroughly enjoy, 'learning about different cultures'. They feel safe and know there is someone to talk to if they have a problem. Pupils are very proud of their school and say they feel special. They greatly value opportunities to express their views and the many chances given to them to represent their school, for example, as school councillors or playground leaders. They take these responsibilities very seriously: for example, raising money to provide more computer and playtime equipment. Pupils have an excellent understanding of the need to lead a healthy lifestyle and understand the reasons why it is important to have a healthy diet and do plenty of exercise. As a result of the excellent strategies implemented by the school, attendance levels have improved in the last year and are currently broadly average. The school takes every opportunity to involve pupils in the community, through activities such as fund-raising for those less fortunate than themselves and participation in the 'children's university'. The wide range of courses provided by the school for parents enrich their own and their children's life experiences well.

The needs of almost all groups of pupils are well served by the curriculum. It is well planned and includes excellent enrichment opportunities to support work in the arts, sport and humanities as well as the teaching of Spanish. However, in Year 1, the curriculum is not adapted well enough to meet the specific needs of those pupils who have recently moved from the Foundation Stage and still need access to the Early Years Curriculum. The school does not miss an opportunity, through the excellent partnerships and community links which it has established, to foster pupils well-being. Extra-curricular sporting and creative activities, and a breakfast club, promote pupils' fitness, health and enjoyment and are very popular. There is a very good focus through the curriculum on developing positive attitudes to health, fitness and emotional well-being and this is evident in the awards the school has achieved. Pupils' improved literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills, together with their well-developed sense of community, prepare them well for their future lives.

The good progress pupils make throughout the school is the result of good teaching. All members of staff gather up to date assessment information to enable them to plan work that challenges pupils to achieve their best. Major strengths in teaching include very good use of personal

target-setting to involve pupils in their own learning, high quality relationships and high expectations. In spite of these strengths, in a small minority of classes, work set is not always suitably matched to meet pupils' individual needs. The use made of learning support assistants in supporting pupils' learning is of a high quality and enhances the quality of the work children produce. Good use is made of outside agencies in helping to ensure that the most vulnerable pupils are enabled to take a full part in all the school has to offer. Outstanding care, including robust safeguarding procedures, guidance and support, contribute greatly to pupils' academic and personal success.

Good leadership and management have ensured that all previous inspection issues have been tackled and that the school has moved on effectively. The school's accurate self-evaluation ensures that the school knows itself well and contributes to sustained improvement. Monitoring of staff performance is rigorous. Support for staff new to the school, and to leadership roles, is robustly planned by the assistant headteacher. This is focused effectively on maintaining good progress in pupils' academic and personal development. Governance is of a good quality with all legal requirements met. As such, the school is in a good position to improve even further. It provides good value for money.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

High quality teaching and strong effective leadership ensure that children receive a good start to their education in an environment that encourages them to be independent and very caring for one another. The school places a high priority on having good links with parents, who are happy with all aspects of provision. Children start school with skills that are below those typical for the age group and very low in terms of language and social skills. Assessment information is used well in providing a range of learning opportunities, both child and teacher initiated, within the classroom and in the outdoor environment which allow children of all skill levels to make good progress in all areas of learning. By the time children leave the Foundation Stage and move into Year 1, many are still below the levels expected. However, taking into account their low starting point this demonstrates good progress.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Provide Year 1 pupils access to the Foundation Stage curriculum as appropriate to their needs.
- Ensure that all teachers match activities to suit pupils' needs.

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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?	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 <sup>1</sup> 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	3
The behaviour of learners	2
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?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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



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

Thank you for the friendly welcome you all gave me when I visited your school recently. I really enjoyed my time with you and seeing you in lessons, even if it was only for a short time. I promised the group of pupils I did meet that I would let you know what I thought. I am pleased to tell you that your school is a good school. You do well in lessons and in tests because you work hard and understand the importance of this for the future. I agree with you that your teachers and other adults make lessons interesting and that, if you need help, you get it.

Your behaviour is good and I was impressed with how polite you were. You all benefit from the excellent care your teachers and support staff give to you and your families. You told me that you feel safe in school and that if problems occur an adult will sort it out quickly when you tell them about it. You are given a super curriculum and you have lots of opportunities to visit interesting places and work with artists and sports persons, but I feel that some of the children in Year 1 need to spend more time learning through play. I have also asked your teachers to make sure that work set in lessons for you is not too easy or too hard but just at the level to help you succeed.

I wish you the very best for the future and that you continue to work hard and enjoy your time at school.