

St Luke's Halsall Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104921
Local Authority	Sefton
Inspection number	308707
Inspection date	20 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Delia Hiscock

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	240
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Pete Spiers
Headteacher	Mrs Susan Kerwin
Date of previous school inspection	7 June 2004
School address	Cooks Road Crosby Liverpool Merseyside L23 2TB
Telephone number	0151 9245142
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The following issues were investigated: standards and achievement, the curriculum and other activities, and leadership and management. Evidence was gathered from observation of learning; the pupils' work; discussion with them, the staff, and the chair of governors; and a scrutiny of school documents and parent questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation form, were not justified. These have been included where appropriate.

Description of the school

This school is broadly average in size. A below average proportion of pupils take up free school meals. The proportion of pupils the school identifies as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well below average. In recent years, an increasing number of children have joined the school from areas beyond the historic catchment area. In some year groups, there are more boys than girls. A tiny proportion of pupils are of minority ethnic heritage. The school has gained the Activemark award for sports.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

'Self-discipline, consideration for others, courtesy and tolerance,' are qualities that are fostered in this outstanding school. This representative comment from a parent illustrates how pupils become 'caring, creative and enthusiastic' individuals who develop exceptional skills for their future needs and acquire a zest for life and learning. This is brought about because everyone expects that all pupils will reach their potential. Everyone works together to ensure that personal and academic needs are met exceptionally well. Shared values and excellent relationships contribute to a warm climate of care and support and ensure that nothing impedes this aim. With unassuming but determined leadership, standards have soared to an exceptionally high level, having improved year on year since the previous inspection. Pupils have a thirst for knowledge and want to achieve highly. They cannot get enough of the rich experiences provided yet still relish the simplest of activities. For example, they sing and dance with huge pleasure and some learn how to knit from elders in the parish community. Many of the pupils talk delightedly of how they love art, sport, writing and 'everything'. They attribute their huge enjoyment of school to the staff, whom they trust and value for the efforts they take to make school fun. Equally, there is a youthful wisdom evident in pupils' understanding of safety issues, and of the importance of keeping fit and healthy, and making sensible decisions. They speak of other pupils with kindness and converse with a maturity and confidence well beyond their years. Similarly, they are respectful of and very interested in the differences between people and the diversity of cultures. These are the reasons why they achieve exceptionally well.

The school would be the first to say that some of its exciting developments have yet to pay dividends in raising standards even higher at the end of Key Stage 1. This is part of the school's continual drive to forge ahead with changes to benefit pupils' progress and early achievements. For example, where there are more boys than girls, curricular activities, learning styles and literacy development have been reviewed and modified to make sure that each pupil progresses really well, but also to ensure that pupils really enjoy learning. The outcomes are tangible in many instances. Learning is fun. It is also studious, investigative and lively. Examples of studies across subjects encompass international topics and links to countries such as Sierra Leone. Pupils love this wider dimension and talk eagerly about the outcomes with their friends. They expect and respond to challenge and the excellent guidance provided. They are taught to question, and to reflect on and articulate the targets they aspire to meet as a matter of course. This is why there is a high proportion of outstanding teaching, particularly in Key Stage 2, where progress accelerates. The quicker momentum here is in part because there have been fewer developments and reorganisation than in Key Stage 1, where teachers are getting to grips with a year group they have not previously taught and changes in approaches that are relatively new. Nevertheless, 'learning rather than teaching' is the key phrase that informs teachers' planning. Although patchy in some year groups, where this has most impact, curricular activities and teaching approaches are very well orchestrated to ensure that pupils understand how best to learn for themselves.

The outstanding leadership and management, including intelligent governance and the high level of professional development, have instilled rigorous systems for monitoring, accountability and responsibility. The vision of 'inspiring lives, building futures, together...' are key tenets in the school's improvement debate. The central question the school asks itself about any project is: 'What will it do for the pupils?' The school insists that change must add something special or an extra dimension and better meet the pupils' needs. Partnerships are grasped to bring

breadth and a wider range of specialisms to the curriculum. To answer the school's central question and in summary: the curriculum is transforming well into one that is widening pupils' skills for the future. Evaluation is sharp. This is why the changes work so very well. The school pinpoints exactly what action will move things on and reports succinctly on the perceptive questions it poses for itself.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

This journey of learning and personal development starts in the Foundation Stage, where very well reorganised provision helps children to move quickly and independently from their above average stages of development on entry. Typically, the children in both Nursery and Reception explore, investigate, design, build and absorb new experiences imaginatively and freely in this stimulating environment that makes best use of the limited outdoor space. This is why the children exceed standards expected for their age at the end of the Foundation Stage. They move smoothly into Year 1 because provision is seamless, having been thoughtfully redesigned to meet the pupils' needs.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that pupils are able to build consistently on their skills for working independently.

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	1
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 Luke's Halsall C of E Primary School, Crosby, Sefton.

Thank you so much for being really helpful to me during my visit, and for your interesting and lively conversations. I really enjoyed my visit. I found your school to be outstanding. I was enthralled by your singing and the enthusiasm of those of you I saw dancing. I'm not surprised that you are often invited to perform in front of audiences.

I enjoyed looking at some of your work too and listening to what you said during lessons. I agree with you that staff listen to what you have to say, take really good care of you, try to change what you feel is important, and make sure that you all do really well. These are some of the reasons why you mature into such courteous and caring individuals, who show great interest in other people. The personal qualities you gain are excellent and will equip you very well for life ahead.

There is always something that you can do for yourself too. I think that you might debate what new skills or knowledge you would like to study to widen your horizons even more. To start off your ideas, and to help you all to learn even better and achieve even more, I have asked the school to:

- make sure that there are opportunities in each year group for you to develop further the skills of learning for yourself.

Don't forget to give the school council your ideas about the litter bins outside. This is a great way for you to improve things though I do remember that you could barely think of anything to make the school better!