

Ladymount Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105084
Local Authority	Wirral
Inspection number	308761
Inspection date	25 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Geoff Lawrence

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	244
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs B Sharp
Headteacher	Mrs S Lyonette
Date of previous school inspection	24 May 2004
School address	Portal Road Pensby Wirral Merseyside CH61 5YD
Telephone number	0151 6484326
Fax number	0

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: teaching and learning; personal development and well-being; care, guidance and support; and the quality of leadership and management at all levels. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation form, nationally published assessment data, the school's own assessment records, relevant policies, observations of the school at work including visits to lessons, and analysis of parents' questionnaires. Discussions were held with staff, the chair of governors, pupils and parents. 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 form, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

This average sized school serves an area of economic advantage. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. Children enter Reception with knowledge and skills in line with those typical for their age. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, as is the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals. A privately run pre-school Nursery class operates on the site. The school holds the following awards: Activemark and the Healthy Schools Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Ladymount is a good school with outstanding features, and one to which parents are proud to send their children. Typical views are that, 'The school pushes the children academically whilst meeting their emotional and social needs,' and, 'My child loves school, she bounces into school everyday.'

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is of the highest quality. Throughout their time at school they make outstanding progress in developing their personal skills and attributes. This helps them to develop into articulate, thoughtful and mature young people whose behaviour is impeccable in class and around the school. They are fully engaged in their lessons and work together exceptionally well. They feel safe and confident in school because, in their words, 'You have no need to worry because teachers will help you if you have a problem.' Consequently, attitudes to learning and their enjoyment of school are outstanding. That is why attendance is well above average. They know how to stay safe and have a thorough understanding of healthy lifestyles. This is reflected in the choices they make at lunchtime and the high numbers that take part enthusiastically in the many sporting activities on offer.

School council members speak passionately about how they have helped to make changes in the school, such as taking part in 'tasting sessions' to review proposed alterations to the school lunch menu. They have a well developed social conscience and fully understand their responsibilities to each other in school and in the wider community and enjoy raising funds for numerous charities. They are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Pupils reach above average standards in English and mathematics, and well above average standards in science by the end of Year 6. This represents good achievement. Standards in Key Stage 1 declined a little two years ago, but prompt and effective action taken by the school reversed the trend very quickly so that standards now are above average at the end of Year 2. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve outstandingly well because of specialist teaching and because the support they receive is tailored specifically to meet their needs.

Teaching and learning are effective because everyone works very hard to ensure that the pupils enjoy lessons. As a result, pupils respond with real enthusiasm. Planning and lesson preparation are thorough and ensure that work in class is well tailored to individual needs. Lessons have an obvious focus, which teachers share with pupils. This means that pupils are very clear about what they have to do and what they are aiming to achieve. Information and communication technology aids pupils' enjoyment of learning. Some commented, 'You can do so much more now because the computers are faster.' The school's assessment practice is well established and rigorous. As a result, most pupils have a good understanding of their targets. However, the marking of their work varies between subjects and classes and does not always show pupils how to improve.

Pupils have many interesting things to do. The school has made a positive start at integrating Spanish into the already good curriculum. Furthermore, pupils who are recognised as more able are given extension work within the curriculum to suit their needs, which they say is 'challenging'. The care, guidance and support which pupils receive are outstanding and child protection procedures are fully in place. All adults in the school are concerned to provide the very best

for the pupils in their care. They emphasise strongly the importance of academic and personal well-being in each individual.

Leadership and management are of the highest quality. They are judged highly by the inspection because they have been so effective in many areas since 2004. As a result, the school has gained a very accurate picture of its performance. There have been some notable improvements in pupils' personal development and teaching and learning. Moreover, standards have risen strongly over the three years. Challenging targets have often been surpassed. The headteacher has been very successful in developing staff as leaders and they have become highly motivated. Moreover, the governing body holds the leadership rigorously to account. Partnerships with others have not only contributed significantly to pupils' personal development but also to the excellent progress made by those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Ladymount is, without doubt, a school that lives up to its mission statement, 'To strive to provide a happy and secure environment where children are challenged to achieve academically, but not at the expense of losing their identity as individuals.' Based on recent improvements, the school has an outstanding capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Good communication with parents and a close liaison with on-site pre-school Nursery ensures that staff know the children well before they enter school and this helps them to settle very quickly. Good teaching helps children make good progress in all areas of learning, especially in language and personal development. Therefore, they leave the Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge above those typical for their age. Personal development has a high priority and children very quickly become self-assured. This is demonstrated by their confidence to show visitors what they are doing and just how much they are enjoying it. Leadership and management are good, and assessment systems are robust with adults' observations of children contributing to the overall picture of their development and achievement. Partnerships with parents are strong and many support their children's learning by helping in the classroom or by hearing their children read at home. Classroom activities are well planned but the outdoor curriculum is underdeveloped. This restricts opportunities for children to practise and extend their experiences in all areas of learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that marking clearly identifies how pupils are to improve their work.
- Enhance the learning experiences of children in the Foundation Stage through more engaging and purposeful outdoor activities.

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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	1

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	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	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

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	2
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	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

Inspection of Ladymount Catholic Primary School, Wirral, CH61 5YD

Thank you for making me welcome during the recent inspection. I really enjoyed talking to you and seeing you work. I was impressed by your excellent behaviour and must tell you that you are the friendliest group of children I have met. It was so nice that everyone knew my name and spoke to me. It made me feel extremely welcome. I enjoyed my meeting with the school council and finding out about the things you liked in school.

Your pride in the school shone through your comments and you, and most of your parents, are right in thinking you go to a good school. What is more, it has some excellent features. Those responsible for leading and managing the school do their job very well indeed. Staff care deeply for you and they work very hard not only to help you learn as much as you can but to help you to develop into very mature and confident people. You told me your teachers find ways to make learning fun and help you to reach good standards in your work. You are right here, too. You also know what a healthy lifestyle is and how to keep yourself and others safe.

Within all of its good work, there are two things the school could do to help you make your school even better. I have asked all the teachers that when they mark your books they make it very clear to you what you have to do next to improve your work. I have also asked the adults in the Foundation Stage to arrange more outdoor activities for the children in that class.

Thank you once again for helping me. I enjoyed my time with you and your teachers. I hope you that you continue to work hard and enjoy school.