

# St Aloysius Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	131332
<b>Local Authority</b>	Knowsley
<b>Inspection number</b>	315783
<b>Inspection date</b>	19 June 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Jean Kendall HMI

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	299
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr P McLachlan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Belinda Basnett
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 November 2004
<b>School address</b>	Twig Lane Huyton-with-Roby Liverpool Merseyside L36 2LF
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 4778110
<b>Fax number</b>	0151 4778111

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following aspects: the progress that pupils make; their personal development and well-being; the care, guidance and support provided by the school; and leadership and management. Teaching was sampled in the Foundation Stage, Year 2, Year 5 and Year 6. Evidence was gathered from the school's own self-evaluation (SEF), national published assessment data and the school's own assessment records, policies and reports; observations of the school at work; discussions with pupils, staff, parents and governors; and the parents' questionnaire. 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 the SEF, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

St Aloysius is a relatively large voluntary aided Catholic primary school situated in the Huyton-with-Roby area of Liverpool. The area served by the school experiences considerable social and economic disadvantage. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is more than double the national average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above the national average although there are currently no pupils with a statement of special educational need. There are few pupils from ethnic minority groups. A below average proportion speak English as an additional language. The population is settled, although a number of pupils joined the school in September 2006 following the closure of a nearby school.

The school has gained several awards for many aspects of its work, including the Basic Skills Award, Healthy Schools Award, Leading Aspect Award, Activemark, Football Charter Mark, Artsmark silver and Eco School. It is currently working towards becoming an accredited International Primary Curriculum (IPC) school.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

St Aloysius is an outstanding school. It provides a happy, safe and caring environment which nurtures pupils' academic and personal development. The excellent ethos enables all pupils, whatever their ability, talents or learning needs, to achieve exceptionally well. The school is popular with parents and very much at the heart of the community it serves. The vast majority of parents feel welcomed and are pleased with the progress their children make. Pupils are rightly proud of their achievements and appreciative of the work teachers put into making their learning interesting and meaningful for them. The excellent quality of education is underpinned by the clear vision of the headteacher, and by the drive for continuous improvement, which is shared by all staff.

Pupils' achievement is outstanding. Children enter the Foundation Stage with knowledge and skills that are much lower than those expected for children of their age. They make excellent progress to achieve standards that are consistently close to or above the national average in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave school. In 2007 standards in Year 6 were well above the national average. These high standards are being sustained in the current Year 5 and Year 6 classes. Standards in Year 1 and Year 2 have been less secure over the past three years due to instability in teaching. Staffing has been stabilised and the most recent Year 2 assessments show significant improvement and excellent progress by pupils. School leaders have put additional support in place for the lower achieving pupils in Year 3 and Year 4 and this is beginning to have an impact. The majority of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because they receive very good support focused on their personal learning targets and individual education plans.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. 'Respect' is at the heart of the school's code of conduct, which is strongly upheld by everyone. Pupils are respectful and considerate towards each other and their teachers, resulting in harmonious and constructive relationships. Pupils feel safe in school and are confident that their teachers will deal effectively with any inappropriate behaviour. Pupils have an extremely good understanding of how to keep healthy and take full advantage of healthy eating options and opportunities to participate in the wide range of physical activities provided.

Pupils enjoy their lessons and most are keen to come to school and participate in the exciting range of activities. However, attendance continues to be a challenge to the school, mainly due to the persistent absence of a few pupils. Strong systems are in place to identify and support families who do not send their children to school regularly but actions are not yet having an impact on the overall attendance rate. Pupils rise to the responsibilities given to them as members of the school council, team leaders and playground buddies. Their charity and environmental work also supports them in developing important life skills. Together with well developed skills in literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT), pupils are exceptionally well prepared for the future.

Care, guidance and support are integral to all aspects of the school and are outstanding. Staff know the pupils exceptionally well and constantly promote their personal development and academic achievement in lessons and through marking their work. As a result, pupils' self-esteem grows and they become enthusiastic and confident learners. They have good knowledge of ways in which they can improve their work. Provision is greatly enhanced by the work of the learning and parent mentors and the extended school provision. The mentors provide excellent

support for vulnerable pupils and a range of courses for parents, which develop their ability to promote the health and achievements of their children. There are rigorous systems to keep pupils safe and arrangements for safeguarding meet all requirements.

The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good and there is much outstanding practice. Lessons are well prepared with activities well matched to pupils' learning needs and interests. Teaching assistants and those who work with individual pupils are thoroughly prepared and provide very good support. Above all, teachers and teaching assistants strive to make learning fun and relevant for their pupils. They use a range of teaching approaches which maintain pupils' interest and plan topics which capture their imagination. Their enthusiastic approach to teaching is reflected in the enthusiastic response of pupils. Teachers, for the most part, provide timely support when pupils are working independently and encourage them to make active use of resources and display to aid them in the completion of their work. Pupils find this approach helpful and it provides necessary support when pupils are embarking on new tasks. However, opportunities for pupils to work at tasks completely independently and at their own pace are more limited.

Excellent curriculum provision enthuses and motivates pupils. They thoroughly enjoy the International Primary Curriculum's (IPC) thematic approach and particularly relish opportunities for investigative work and research. The curriculum is well matched to pupils' needs and enables pupils of all abilities to make excellent progress. Literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills are effectively integrated into learning. The school enriches pupils' learning experiences through international links, the teaching of Spanish, and numerous additional activities such as relaxation, visitors to the school and visits out. The numerous activities offered through breakfast, lunchtime and after-school clubs are popular and well attended.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher provides clear vision and dynamic and forward-looking leadership. She is well supported by the senior leadership team and subject leaders who have a good understanding of their own responsibilities and lines of accountability. All staff share high expectations of what pupils can achieve and set challenging targets for themselves as well as for the pupils. They are constantly seeking ways to enrich the experiences of pupils and initiatives are enthusiastically embraced by the whole staff. Excellent systems are in place for tracking pupils' progress, evaluating the impact of the school's work, monitoring the quality of provision and securing improvements. The school has secured improvement in the last five years through rigorous monitoring and performance management and it has excellent capacity to make further improvements. Governors provide strong support and challenge to the school's staff and bring a good range of expertise. They are fully focused on sustaining high levels of achievement and critically evaluating the impact of new initiatives.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 1**

The quality of provision in the Foundation Stage is outstanding. Children enter the Foundation Stage with knowledge and skills that are much lower than those expected for children of their age, particularly in communication and language skills, and social and emotional development. Children are provided with stimulating and meaningful learning opportunities so that they become interested and motivated learners. The high quality of language skills teaching supports their rapid development of skills in this area and is well matched to their needs. Assessment is used very effectively to identify next steps in learning. Children's personal development is excellent: they learn to play cooperatively, take turns and relate well to each other. As a result

of the excellent provision, children make very good progress across the Foundation Stage. The majority achieve very close to the expected goals in all areas of learning by the time they leave the Foundation Stage and are well prepared to begin Year 1.

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

- Continue to develop opportunities for pupils to work independently and at their own pace within the revised curriculum.

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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 <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
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?	2
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

<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>	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

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

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school recently. I was most impressed by the way you uphold your school's values of 'honesty and respect for all'. Your considerate behaviour and enthusiastic approach to learning helps to make your school a happy place where all of you achieve exceptionally well.

These are the findings from my visit.

St Aloysius is an outstanding school!

- You make excellent progress in your learning and do really well in English, mathematics and science tests.
- You enjoy your lessons and work very hard.
- You especially enjoy topic work and opportunities to practice your skills.
- Your behaviour is very good.
- You are considerate and show respect towards each other and your teachers.

You told me that your teachers are kind and they make your learning fun and meaningful. I found that they work extremely hard and are always looking for ways to enrich your experiences. They are looking at ways to make your learning even more exciting and give you more opportunities to work independently.

Your headteacher and governors do an excellent job in running the school and have very high expectations for you.

It has been a privilege to visit your school. I know you take great pride in your work and your parents are proud of your achievements too.

**WELL DONE!**

I wish you every success for the future.