

# St Luke's Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	104460
<b>Local Authority</b>	Knowsley
<b>Inspection number</b>	324053
<b>Inspection dates</b>	12–13 January 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Diane Auton

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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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 (total)	212
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Vincent Cullen
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs M Clarke
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 December 2005
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Shaw Lane Prescot Merseyside L35 5AT
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 477 8580
<b>Fax number</b>	0151 477 8581

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This average sized school serves an area of some socio-economic disadvantage. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is slightly above average. A larger than average proportion of pupils has learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Although most pupils are White British, around a quarter are from a wide range of other cultural and ethnic heritages. The proportion of pupils who are at an early stage of learning English is larger than average. More pupils join or leave the school during the course of the primary years than in most other schools. The school is an Investor in People and holds the Healthy Schools award, the Activemark and the National Clean Air award.

The school offers additional services, including after school care and family learning opportunities. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) offers sixteen additional childcare places in the Nursery class, enabling children to attend for additional sessions if required; take-up of these places follows a variety of patterns, matched to the needs of individual children and their families.

## 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. It operates successfully in challenging circumstances and provides good value for money. An ethos of self-respect and care for others is central to its happy and effective learning community and pupils thrive in this supportive environment. This is reflected in their good academic progress and in their good personal and social development.

Pupils' achievement is good. From very low starting points on entry to the Nursery, children make good progress throughout each stage of the school and attain standards above average by the end of Year 6. Good support and well managed provision ensure that all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those learning English as an additional language, achieve well in relation to their abilities and starting points. The school tracks pupils' progress carefully to ensure that it is consistent. Expectations are high and areas for improvement are identified and dealt with effectively. An example of this was the whole school drive to improve attainment in writing, which has had a positive impact on standards in both Key Stages 1 and 2 in the last school year.

The quality of teaching is good and good organisation helps all pupils to receive very effective learning support. For example, the provision of ability grouped teaching in English and mathematics across Years 5 and 6 ensures that pupils' learning is well matched to their needs; this strategy contributes well to the rising standards in those subjects. The school has evaluated its good curriculum, looking for ways to make it even more vibrant and stimulating for pupils. With these aims in view, a new curriculum was adopted this year. This development has been received enthusiastically by pupils who say that lessons are interesting and learning is fun. Assessment is thorough and systematic. Work has begun to involve pupils in reviewing their own progress against individual learning targets in order to give them a clear understanding of how well they are doing. This is at an early stage, however, and has not yet been fully developed in all the year groups. Written marking is supportive and helpful in some classes, but this is not consistent across the school and, therefore, pupils are not always supplied with the advice they need on how to improve their work.

Pupils develop good social skills and moral values in this caring school. Their spiritual development is nurtured well through opportunities for reflection in assemblies and lessons. Good opportunities are provided to support their cultural development and prepare them for life in a multicultural society. They are active fundraisers for a range of charitable causes and pupils show concern for the needs of others. The school's strong focus on healthy living, ecological awareness and community involvement ensures that pupils are confident, sociable young citizens, well prepared to move on to the next stage in their education.

Good pastoral care ensures that pupils are happy and secure in school and that pupils who join throughout each year quickly feel part of the school. Parents express great confidence in the school. 'Our child loves school and continues to make good progress, year-on-year' 'we're very happy with the school,' and 'My child is learning in a way I would not have thought possible at this age and I'm learning with my child,' were typical comments, demonstrating how highly parents value all that the school provides. The school has struggled to tackle a persistent problem of low attendance, linked to population mobility in the locality. In partnership with the local authority, more successful outcomes have been achieved this year and attendance is now close to national targets.

The headteacher provides good quality leadership and sets an ambitious agenda for continuous improvement. The staff and the governors share this vision and work towards its achievement. Whole-school targets are accurate and challenging. Action plans are strategic and innovative. These factors, combined with the complementary skills and talents of senior staff and subject leaders, give the school good capacity for continued improvement.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Good provision in the EYFS including very effective leadership enables children to make a good start to their education and to become happy and receptive learners. From very low starting points on entry to Nursery, they achieve well, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development. By the end of the Reception year, although attainment is below expectations for the age group, children have gained significantly in confidence and enthusiasm for learning. Daily sessions focussing on letters and sounds are helping to boost early reading and writing skills and this has started to impact positively on children's achievement in literacy. The quality of teaching is good and stimulates learning well. The curriculum provides activities, indoors and in the well-resourced outdoor area, which are well matched to the children's needs, and provide them with interest and fun.

Children interact well with each other and enjoy warm relationships with the caring staff. Good arrangements ensure the welfare of those children in the Nursery class who attend for additional sessions. Parents appreciate the good communications between home and school and the good care provided for their children. The EYFS leader and an effective team work together well to promote the children's progress and well-being. Vulnerable children, those with additional learning needs and those at an early stage of learning English, are all supported well. Children's progress is observed carefully and assessment is systematic, so that additional support is given promptly to those who need it. Good links with external agencies promote children's health, welfare and progress. The after-school club provides a caring and enjoyable experience for the children from EYFS who attend it.

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

- Improve the quality and consistency of marking, so that pupils are always given clear advice on how to improve their work.
- Develop the consistent use of individual learning targets so that all pupils are given an accurate understanding of how well they are doing.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Achievement is good. From below average starting points on entry to Key Stage 1, pupils make good progress in all subjects in Years 1 and 2. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 were broadly average overall and above average in mathematics in 2008. Standards in writing in Key Stage 1 rose significantly in 2008 and inspection evidence shows that they are now securely within average bands and that improvement is continuing in the current year. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 were broadly average in 2007. The school took action to improve on this and inspection evidence confirms significantly higher standards in 2008 and in the current Year 6. The proportion of pupils who attained the nationally expected level in all subjects in Year 6 in 2008 was above average. An above average proportion also reached the higher level in English. The school's assessment information for the current Year 6 shows that a similar proportion of

pupils are on track to attain high levels in English, mathematics and science, showing that variations between the subjects have been eradicated. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and pupils with English as their additional language all achieve well in Key Stages 1 and 2, as a result of the good provision made for them in this inclusive school.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' good personal development contributes well to their good achievement. It is shown in their good behaviour, courtesy and positive attitudes to school. The school's nurturing ethos ensures that pupils grow in self-esteem and form good quality relationships with staff and with each other. Their spiritual, moral and social development is good. The school's multi-cultural character prepares them well for the future, as they grow and work together happily in friendships that cross cultures and heritages. The curriculum fosters a developing awareness of global issues and is starting to give pupils an insight into what life is like for children around the world. Pupils enjoy taking responsibility, for example, as reading buddies or as proactive school councillors. They collaborate well in groups or with a partner in lessons. These important life skills are developed well and, together with their good basic skills in literacy and numeracy, means that pupils are prepared well for the future. They have a good awareness of personal safety and healthy lifestyle issues reflected in the external awards the school has achieved. Pupils' smooth transition to the next stage in their education is supported well by the school's strong links with the high school. Attendance is satisfactory and has improved significantly over the past school year.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The overall quality of teaching and learning is good, with some outstanding practice, and this effectively underpins the good progress pupils make. Where teaching is most effective pupils are given a clear understanding of the purposes of their learning tasks. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well to make learning interesting and pupils are starting to be able to assess their own progress. Across the school, lessons are planned well to meet the range of pupils' needs, activities engage their interest and pupils are responsive and apply themselves well. Happy relationships in the well-managed classrooms enable them to feel secure and ready to learn. Teaching assistants work in partnership with class teachers, making a very effective contribution to all pupils' learning, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those at an early stage of learning English.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The good quality curriculum contributes well to pupils' personal, social, health and academic development. A focus on developing pupils' basic skills in English, mathematics and science has a positive impact on the improving standards and achievement. Skills in ICT are developed well. Pupils use computers and other everyday technology, such as digital cameras, with confidence in their work across subjects. The curriculum is enriched very well through visitors to school, educational visits, including residential trips and a good range of after-school activities in sport and dance. The revised curriculum is exciting and provides pupils with opportunities

to practise and develop key skills including a modern foreign language through topics and themes which link subjects together. Although it is too early for its impact on standards to be evaluated, pupils and staff have made an enthusiastic start. Some good examples can be seen of how it is helping pupils to improve writing. In Key Stage 1, teachers' planning is starting to build closer links with practice in the EYFS, in order to tailor provision more closely to the range of pupils' learning needs on transition to Year 1.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school provides very good pastoral care for its pupils. It supports its most vulnerable pupils very well, working sensitively with them and their families to help to tackle the barriers to learning they may be facing. Pupils are confident that adults are readily on hand to help with any problems that arise and this makes them feel secure. Those who have additional learning needs or are learning English as an additional language are supported well. The school liaises effectively with external agencies to promote pupils' progress, health and well-being and complies with statutory requirements for health and safety including safeguarding and child protection. Care is managed well in the after-school club and pupils enjoy the good range of activities on offer. The quality of the academic guidance for pupils is good overall and pupils are given good verbal feedback in lessons. A new system using individual targets to enhance pupils' learning is not yet being implemented consistently across the classes. Marking practice is currently under review to ensure that pupils are regularly given good advice for improvement. Effective measures are being taken to improve attendance, through the use of positive incentives and through working with families for whom regular attendance is a problem.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher provides good leadership. A clear vision for taking the school forward is shared by governors and staff at all levels. Systems for evaluating how well the school is doing are firmly in place and used well. Senior staff and, increasingly, subject leaders assist in ensuring the good quality of provision. Whole-school improvement targets are challenging and aspirational and leaders identify and plan appropriate actions to achieve them. A strong team ethos enables staff to share and develop their skills and to embark on curricular innovation with confidence. This reflects the school's status as an Investor in People. The supportive governing body is able to hold the school to account and act as its critical friend. The school addresses community cohesion well through a range of partnerships that promote pupils' well-being, through its activities in the community and the parish, and through its strong links with the high school and other local schools. Partnerships with parents are developed well through regular communications and family learning opportunities, which support parents' involvement in their children's learning.

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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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	2

<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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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?	2

## 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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

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

Thank you for the lovely warm welcome you gave the inspection team when we visited your school. We really enjoyed our visit and the conversations we had with you. As you know, we came to see how well the school is doing and how you are all getting on with your learning. This is what we found.

- You are given a good education at St Luke's: it is a good school and I know you think so too.
- You work hard and you reach good standards. Well done. Keep it up and carry on enjoying learning!
- You are taught well. The staff make your lessons interesting and enjoyable and they make sure you have the help and support you need.
- The school is well led and the headteacher and the staff are always on the lookout for ways to make it even better!
- The adults in school look after you and care for you well. Your behaviour is good and you are polite and caring young people. All of this means that your school is a happy place to be in.

I have asked the headteacher and the staff to work on improving the way your books are marked, to be sure that you are all given clear advice on what you need to do next to improve your work. I have also asked them to develop individual targets for pupils in all of the classes, so that you will all have a better understanding of the progress you are making in your learning and achievements.

You can help by listening to your teachers' advice and putting it into practice.

With my very best wishes for the future,