

# St Laurence's Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	104461
<b>Local Authority</b>	Knowsley
<b>Inspection number</b>	324054
<b>Inspection date</b>	11 December 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Clare Henderson

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)	404
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>	Fr Nick Wilde
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr P Cronin
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	30 November 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>	Leaside Avenue Southdene Kirkby Liverpool Merseyside

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection date</b>	11 December 2008
<b>Inspection number</b>	324054

**Telephone number**  
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: standards and achievement; the quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS); and the quality of leadership and management. Evidence was gathered from: the school's self-evaluation; national published assessment data and the school's own assessment records, policies and minutes; observation of lessons; interviews with senior members of staff, governors and pupils; and the parents' questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in the self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

## Description of the school

This school is larger than average. It is situated in an area of high social disadvantage. A much higher than average proportion of pupils is eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. A few pupils are of minority ethnic heritages. None of these is at an early stage of learning English. There is EYFS provision for children aged from three to five years. The school has an out-of-school club and holiday play scheme on site which are run by the governing body and formed part of this inspection. The school has gained a number of awards in recognition of its work, including the Healthy Schools Award, Artsmark, FA Charter School, Young Business Enterprise, Basic Skills Quality Mark and Sports England Gold Activemark.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school truly living out its mission of 'developing our gifts and talents for the good of all'. Pupils flourish in this exceptionally caring and welcoming school so that they make outstanding progress in their academic and personal development. Pivotal in its success is inspirational leadership by the headteacher and exceptional teamwork of all the staff. Every family agrees and their overwhelming response is testament to their support for the school. Typical comments are, 'If you ever have a problem there's always someone you can talk to as the headteacher and teachers are always there,' and, 'The children's education and welfare always come first in this school.'

Achievement is outstanding. Pupils start Year 1 with skills below those expected for their age overall. However, an extremely strong emphasis on promoting children's personal and social needs in the EYFS enables them to start Year 1 as independent, confident young learners eager to embrace all the school has to offer. All pupils continue to make excellent progress as they move through the school. This is because staff pay close attention, through rigorous assessment and tracking systems, to the progress each pupil makes. Staff address meticulously any identified gaps in pupils' learning with programmes of work set to meet their needs exceptionally well. As a result, when they leave Year 6, standards are consistently above average in English and mathematics and well above average in science.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Teachers deliver their lessons with the learning style of each pupil in mind. For instance, in a Year 3/4 lesson, tracks of popular music were used to stimulate pupils' interests and imaginations and to bring their mathematics lesson to life in a meaningful and memorable way. Consequently, in these lively and challenging lessons all pupils make rapid progress while thoroughly enjoying their learning. Pupils' attitudes to school are excellent because they feel valued and know their contributions are respected and important to staff. Highly skilled support assistants enable those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to make the same outstanding progress as their peers.

Pupils are excellent ambassadors for the school. Their personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. Attendance is good and behaviour is impeccable. Pupils treat their classmates and others with dignity and respect. For instance, pupils who are playground leaders ensure that everyone is happy and safe at lunchtime, helping younger pupils to benefit to the full from the activities available. The school council does much to represent the views of pupils in all years and is proud to share what it has done to promote healthy and safe lifestyles and to develop enterprise skills. The council's actions, for example, resulted in improved toilet and playground facilities. Community cohesion is central to all the pupils learn and do. They speak enthusiastically about the improvements they have brought about internationally through raising money for those less fortunate than themselves. They are willing to share their talents with others, for example, in doing 'keep fit' with the elderly citizens in a local care home. As a result, pupils develop into caring, mature young citizens, prepared for their future lives exceptionally well.

The outstanding creative curriculum encourages pupils to be imaginative in their work and gives them maximum opportunity to reach the highest standards in all subjects. Excellent use is made of information and communication technology (ICT) as reinforcement for new learning and as a tool for pupils' personal research. Pupils' achievement in the arts, sports and music is equally impressive. They benefit from an exceptionally wide range of extra-curricular activities,

weekly family nights and excellent before- and after-school and holiday facilities in the St Laurence out-of-school care club. These do much to raise confidence, self-belief and general well-being among pupils and their families who, subsequently, are always busily engaged in meaningful, enjoyable activities.

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Making sure that all pupils are nurtured in the excellent caring and supportive environment so that they can reach their full potential is never off the school's agenda. Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements and supervision is at a high level at all times. The words of one parent sums up the views of many: 'Children thrive and learn to take part in all kinds of activities.' A particularly excellent feature is the quality of marking, where targets are set for pupils to know clearly their next steps in learning. Pupils commented on this and said that they found it extremely helpful.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The school has been modest in some judgements of its success. This is because it is not happy to 'rest on its laurels'. All staff and the outstanding governing body are involved in a continual and relentless drive to make the school even better. Central to its success are the extremely high expectations shared equally by all those working in the school. Outstanding partnerships with local schools and within the community mean ideas and expertise are shared for the benefit of pupils and the school is highly effective in promoting community cohesion. All staff have a strong leadership role and they are encouraged to develop their individual expertise in different subjects to the full. The school has been successful, not only in maintaining and extending its outstanding status from the last inspection, but in sustaining a whole-school belief that every pupil and every family are treated as individuals and that their unique needs are met. Consequently, the value for money it offers and its capacity for future improvement are outstanding.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Children join the Nursery with skills well below those typical for their age and exceptionally low in their personal and social skills. Owing to the rich, vibrant and stimulating environment they experience, they get off to a flying start and make rapid progress in the EYFS, particularly in their personal skills. This is because teachers and teaching assistants make learning fun and children are helped to learn in an atmosphere of sheer enjoyment. Parents comment on this, saying, 'They even want to come at the weekend!' The school makes excellent use of the space outdoors to stimulate children's learning and enjoyment in both the Nursery and Reception classes. A wide range of resources and carefully planned and relevant themes mean that all children can relate to, and have a first-hand input into, what they are being taught. Children's personal development and well-being are outstanding. Learning stories, which celebrate the milestones children achieve in their first year at school, are shared with parents. As a result, they too can quickly see how well their children are doing and can also make their own contributions. Children's welfare is promoted exceptionally well. The school has excellent links with a wide range of outside agencies and these provide very high levels of support for children and their families. As a result, by the time they transfer to Year 1, children's skills, in most areas of learning, have improved enormously despite remaining below those expected. By contrast, their skills in personal development are above those typically expected. Given their starting points, this represents outstanding progress. Leadership and management are outstanding. This is demonstrated by the fact that staff share their expertise with practitioners in other schools and the school is justly regarded as a centre for excellent EYFS provision.

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

- The school has an extremely clear view of how it can continue to develop. There are no further areas for improvement that the school has not already identified in its school improvement plan.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	1

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<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>	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
The extent to which 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

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

## 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 eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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 Laurence's Catholic Primary School, Liverpool, L32 9QX

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. You were all very friendly and helpful and we enjoyed finding out from you how much you enjoy learning. We particularly enjoyed watching the Nursery children have such fun entertaining everyone with their splendid Christmas play! You told us that you think your school is excellent. We are sure that you will be pleased to know that we agree with your opinion – you do have an outstanding school.

You are right to be proud of your school. Children in Nursery and Reception get an excellent start and have so many opportunities to learn with each other through play. You continue to make outstanding progress in all other years and, by the time you leave at the end of Year 6, you reach above average standards in all your subjects. This is because the teaching you receive is outstanding and you also work very hard.

Your behaviour is excellent and you look after each other so well. You enjoy working in groups and you like to help your classmates when they find things difficult. Members of the school council work hard to find out what you think and, as a result, have made your school even better. You particularly like the very wide range of extra-curricular events, the out-of-school club and family nights, and you take a full part in arts, sports and music activities.

Your teachers and teaching assistants take very good care of you. They make sure that everyone feels safe and secure. They also give you a lot of advice about how you can improve your work. Your headteacher and all your other teachers know exactly how to make sure that your school continues to improve.

Please continue to work hard and keep helping your teachers to make sure that St Laurence's stays an outstanding place in which to learn. We send you our best wishes for the future.