

# Our Lady Mother of the Saviour Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|---------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 111378        |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Halton        |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 325365        |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 7–8 May 2009  |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | David Halford |

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>   | 4–11  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>  | Mixed   |
| <b>Number on roll</b>  |   |
| School (total)   | 155   |
| 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 P Moriarty   |
| <b>Headteacher</b>   | Miss S Rafferty   |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 15 March 2006   |
| <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>  | Lapwing Grove<br>Palacefields<br>Runcorn<br>Cheshire<br>WA7 2TP |

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|--------------------------|--------------|
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

This smaller-than-average primary school serves an area of significant social and economic disadvantage. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well-above average. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds, none are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. There are no pupils with a statement of special educational needs. An Early Years Foundation Stage unit includes one Reception class. There is a pre-school learning centre but this was not part of this inspection. The school has received awards for Artsmark, Activemark and Healthy Schools. The leadership of the school is currently undergoing a significant period of change, following the recent retirement of the headteacher.

## 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 providing outstanding elements of care for its pupils. Pupils' personal development and well-being are of the highest quality and the children know they are valued. They enjoy school and their attendance is improving. They are enthusiastic in their learning because of the interesting and varied curriculum, which they respond to well. Pupils demonstrate excellent attitudes to their work and good behaviour. Sharing a building with the church and being an active part of the 'parish centre' contributes significantly to the school's outstanding provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and very strongly to the community. The leadership of the school has managed a period of significant change well. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school; their comments are summed up by one who wrote 'Our Lady's is an excellent school with excellent teachers and staff. It is a privilege for my daughter to go to this school.'

All pupils achieve well in their learning as they pass through the school, including those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, because of the good teaching and effective support they receive. Many children enter the Reception Year with levels of skill that are well below those typically expected for their age. They make good progress overall in their learning. Many reach standards that are broadly average by the end of Year 2 and above average by the end of Year 6. Their progress is, however, uneven. The school records the academic progress of each pupil well but insufficient use is made of this information to bring consistent improvement across all year groups. This is especially so in the lower and middle years of Key Stage 2. However, rapid progress in learning in Year 6 enables a significant number of pupils to secure above-average standards by the time they leave. Overall, pupils make better progress in reading and mathematics than they do in writing, where standards are not yet high enough. The school has worked hard to improve standards in science and improvement can be seen in this subject.

The curriculum is good. It is stimulating and relevant to pupils' interests and levels of understanding. There are good opportunities for pupils to practise their skills in literacy and numeracy. A wide range of after-school clubs, extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors strengthen the curriculum. Leadership and management are good, despite the changes currently taking place. Staff know what needs to be done and are working together well to ensure that the school continues to improve. The strong desire to promote the best for every pupil results in a significant proportion of pupils gaining the higher level in national tests, as well as the particularly strong focus on pupils' care and welfare. The school is supported well by a knowledgeable governing body, which has helped ensure good progress since the last inspection. Governors' active involvement in the school and its community has ensured a strong contribution to community cohesion, which is supported by links nationally and internationally. The school is providing good value for money and has a good capacity to improve further.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children enter the Reception class with skills that are well below those typical for their age, with particular weaknesses in aspects of communication and language, and personal and social development. They make good progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage and most children enter Year 1 with the skills expected for their age. Teaching is good and has a positive impact on learning. Good induction procedures ensure that most children settle quickly into school routines. They are encouraged to gain independence in their development, for example,

as they self-register on entry to the teaching areas. They are cared for outstandingly well in a secure learning environment, show good attitudes to their work and behave well. Teachers' planning is thorough and children enjoy the practical activities. There is rightly a strong emphasis placed on the development of children's phonic skills, although more opportunities could be provided for children to develop their writing. Better use could be made of the outdoor areas to enable continuous learning experiences both indoors and out. Assessment systems are clear and straightforward and the setting is led and managed well.

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

- Improve pupils' standards in writing throughout the school.
- Make better use of tracking information to ensure that pupils make more even progress as they pass through the school.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils make good overall progress in Key Stage 1 and, by the end of Year 2, standards are broadly average in reading and mathematics, although in writing standards are below average. Girls progress better than boys. Progress through Key Stage 2 is good overall, but uneven. Satisfactory progress is made in Years 3, 4 and 5 followed by very rapid progress in Year 6, especially in English and mathematics, where standards are above average. Pupils continue to demonstrate significantly greater improvement in reading than they do in writing. Progress in science does not match that in English and mathematics. The school is doing much to improve the position in science. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar progress to their peers, due to the good support available to them and the careful tracking of their improvement.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development is excellent and lies at the heart of this school. Central to this success is the outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and the very strong contribution this makes to the school and wider community. Pupils' successes are celebrated at every opportunity. They have a very clear sense of right and wrong and have developed a strong awareness of others, through the school and parish working locally and internationally. For example, the school enjoys purposeful links with schools in Germany and Cameroon. Pupils know the school to be a very safe place where they are valued as individuals. They have a very clear understanding of how to keep healthy; the school's work has been recognised through the Activemark and Healthy Schools awards. Their behaviour is good, both in and around the school, and their enjoyment of school is reflected in good and improving levels of attendance. The good progress they make in their learning ensures that they develop good skills in literacy and numeracy, which has the potential to serve them well in adult life. There is an active school council which knows the school well. The representatives take their responsibilities seriously and know that their decisions are taken into account when issues of school improvement are considered.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Teaching is good overall and provides for good learning. Lessons are planned well to meet pupils' needs. Staff manage learning well, in teaching areas that are sometimes rather cramped. Most pupils are attentive, keen to learn and join in lessons eagerly. This was seen in good numeracy lessons in Years 1 and 2 and in an ambitious and exciting lesson involving planting seeds in science. Well-informed teaching assistants offer strong support to individuals and to small groups of pupils. Many teaching assistants are well-qualified, very competent and confident in their work. All staff have high expectations of pupils. Each term the school gathers detailed information about the progress individuals are making but does not always use this well enough to establish targets for further learning, especially in Years 3, 4 and 5. As a result, progress slows. Effective use of interactive whiteboards generates good levels of interest in and involvement by pupils, although in the lessons seen, pupils' opportunities to use computer skills were relatively few.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It is varied, interesting and relevant and is enriched by a wide range of extra-curricular activities, which are well-attended and enjoyed by pupils. Science has been the focus of recent attention and it now engages pupils' interest well. There is a wide range of good quality artwork on display, accurately reflecting the school's Artsmark award. Creative elements of the curriculum are good. Recent developments of teaching subjects via a themed approach are providing good opportunities to reinforce pupils' learning across the curriculum. The school enhances the curriculum further by offering pupils experience in learning to play musical instruments and in speaking three modern foreign languages.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

Provision for pupils' care is outstanding. Families and pupils are supported very well by the school community and there are strong links with the pre-school and with high schools. Safeguarding procedures are in place and meet current government guidelines. Great attention to detail is given to ensure that pupils are safe and secure in their environment. Child protection procedures and risk assessments are in place. Effective systems help track the academic progress of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. For them, this leads to well-targeted support and good progress in their learning. Pupils, generally, have a developing understanding of their targets and how to improve their work.

## Leadership and management

#### Grade: 2

Significant change is evident following the retirement of a long-serving headteacher. The acting headteacher and the leadership team are successful in carrying out their new responsibilities. They know the school well and have a good understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement. They are promoting excellent levels of care for pupils and maintaining the school's

desire to strive for further improvement. They are given good support by a knowledgeable and active governing body, which has a clear picture of the school's current position and discharges its duties well. The school's self-evaluation processes are good. Pupils' good overall standards are a testament to the school's desire to challenge them and ensure that every child has an equal opportunity to succeed. Resources are used well to achieve good value for money. Governors and staff work effectively to ensure that the school and its parish centre are at the heart of their local community. Community cohesion is promoted well, with a good policy in place and good links established both nationally and internationally.



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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 |
|---|----------------|

**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? | 1 |
| How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?                     | 2 |
| How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?                          | 1 |
| 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 |

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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   | 2 |
| 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

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <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**

My colleague and I really enjoyed our recent inspection of your school. Thank you very much, for your very warm welcome and for looking after us so well. You were very helpful in lessons when we asked you to explain what you were doing and also very friendly around the school. Particular thanks should go to everyone who spoke with us and who helped us to understand why it is that you enjoy your school so much.

Your school is a good and improving school, with some really interesting work taking place. The staff care for you very well and make sure you feel safe and secure. I shall remember what an exciting time Year 2 had planting seeds. I read some lovely 'Snow White' stories that were displayed on the wall and my colleague and I were impressed with your lovely artwork.

When we visit schools, we also look for things to help each school improve. At the moment, we think that the standards you reach in writing are not high enough and need to be improved. We think also that, although your teachers collect good information about your individual improvement, they do not use that information well enough. Because of that, some of you make uneven progress as you move from class to class.

Thank you once again for all your help when we visited you. We send you our very best wishes for the future. We hope that you continue to enjoy learning as much as you do at the moment.