

Great Crosby Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104926
Local Authority	Sefton
Inspection number	331407
Inspection date	6 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Frank Carruthers

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.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	692
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
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Fr John Furnival
Headteacher	Mr P O'Dowd
Date of previous school inspection	21 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	The Northern Road Crosby Liverpool L23 2RQ

Age group	3–11
Inspection date	6 May 2009
Inspection number	331407

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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 aspects: the effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage; the quality of teaching and learning across all year groups; how the school promotes pupils' understanding of cultural diversity in today's society and the contribution the middle management team is making to the quality of the school's provision. Evidence was collected from observation of lessons, scrutiny of pupils' work and records of their progress, and examination of other documentation including completed parents' questionnaires. Discussions were held with pupils, staff and the Chair of the Governing Body. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in as much detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals in this much larger than average sized Catholic primary school is low. Almost all pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average. The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of three classes of Reception aged children and two part-time classes of Nursery aged children. The school has gained the Healthy Schools Award, Extended Schools and Basic Skills Quality Mark for the third time.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

The school provides an outstanding education for its pupils and has continued to maintain high standards of achievement and quality of provision thanks to the excellent leadership provided by the headteacher and senior leadership team. Pupils' achievement in both their personal development and their academic studies is exceptional. These outcomes are the result of outstanding teaching and learning and a curriculum that caters for the needs of all pupils extremely well. The school ensures that all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the more vulnerable, are very well cared for, guided and supported and that all government requirements as regards safeguarding and child protection are fully met.

Almost all pupils begin Year 1 with skills expected at this age or better, thanks to the excellent progress they have made in the Early Years Foundation Stage. All pupils, including the most able and those with additional needs, achieve very well in each year group. By the end of both Year 2 and Year 6, standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science are well above average. Results in tests and assessments, since the last inspection, show a consistent picture of high attainment and excellent achievement. By the end of Year 6, only a very small number of pupils do not reach nationally expected levels of attainment. The proportion reaching the higher Level 5 in English, mathematics and science is frequently well above the national average. Standards in the current Year 6 are slightly lower than last year. This is because of the greater than usual proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Nevertheless, records show that the progress of all groups of pupils in this year group has been at least good.

Pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour are outstanding. They very willingly take on responsibilities and contribute extremely well to the school community, as play leaders, peer mentors and school councillors. Pupils' relationships with one another and with staff are very positive. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent overall, though their understanding of the diversity of ethnicity and cultures in today's society is less secure. Attendance is well above the national average. Pupils report they enjoy school, feel safe and know what to do if they are unhappy with another child's behaviour. They have an excellent awareness of how to stay safe and lead a healthy lifestyle. The majority join clubs and activities after school and in the wider community, and have a healthy diet each day. The school has innovatively encouraged parents to appreciate the value of these aspects of their children's development. Parents have attended workshops, sampled school meals at parents' evenings and have been shown what constitutes a healthy packed lunch. Pupils take with them to secondary school excellent life skills and attitudes to help them to achieve well.

High quality teaching is a feature of all classes. Pupils' learning is enhanced by a major focus on developing pupils' speaking and listening skills. Teachers encourage pupils to participate verbally in lessons by using role-play, drama and listening partners. This helps them consolidate their ideas when they write reports, letters and stories and debate issues. Teachers use interactive whiteboards and computers very effectively in lessons. Teamwork among staff is a noticeable strength and this has enabled best practice to be shared openly, which was the area for improvement in the last inspection report. The curriculum is varied, covering the National Curriculum thoroughly, with many cross-curricular links made, for example, between English and other subjects, to consolidate pupils' understanding. Two modern foreign languages are taught and the curriculum is also enriched through a wide range of specialist teaching, in music, for example, as well as visitors to school and visits out of school. The focus on promoting pupils' personal, social and health education and citizenship is excellent. Pupils' independent learning

skills are encouraged extremely well by thematic and topic work (called Learning Journeys) that includes research for homework and presentations to classmates. Some fine examples of work on the topic of the solar system were displayed around school. All aspects of care, guidance and support, including partnerships with parents and outside agencies, promote pupils' well-being exceptionally well. Pupils from more vulnerable backgrounds and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive high quality support so that they achieve as well as other pupils. The quality of the support provided for these pupils and their resulting excellent achievement, provide a telling example of the school's outstanding promotion of equal opportunities and its determination to eliminate discrimination. The very good quality of teachers' marking helps pupils to understand very well the next steps or targets in their learning and to want to improve.

All aspects of leadership, management and governance are very strong. Since the last inspection, a new tier of middle managers has been established. They make a very significant contribution to monitoring pupils' performance and welfare across all classes and in ensuring the consistency of teachers' lesson planning. The school's self-evaluation is thorough, detailed and extremely accurate. The school's contribution to community cohesion is good and includes several international links. The overwhelming majority of parents value the work of the school very highly. There was a very high return rate to the inspectors' questionnaires, with many parents writing highly supportive comments. Frequent, positive comments were made about leadership and management, the quality of teaching and learning and the effective communication between home and school. To summarise their views from one comment: 'It is a fantastic school!' The school provides outstanding value for money given the below average cost of educating a pupil at the school and the exceptional outcomes. It has excellent capacity to maintain its high quality and performance.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The Early Years Foundation Stage provides an outstanding education for children. Children start in the Nursery with skills that are typical for their age. They make significant gains in their development because of the excellent opportunities they have. By the end of Reception the vast majority of children are working securely within the learning goals set for them nationally and many children are exceeding these. The children are independent, curious and diligent learners, behaving exceptionally well. They become articulate and confident, happy to investigate and solve problems. For instance, having built a tower and knocked it down, one Nursery child decided, 'I'm going to make the four corners of a rectangle and fill in the sides (with the blocks).' Children gain a very good understanding of being safe and staying healthy thanks to the excellent teaching. Staff are outstanding role models and this fosters very positive, warm relationships between adults and children and among the children. Children are clearly used to the vibrant learning environment available to them both indoors and outside. For example, when Reception children were given the opportunity to enact the story of Mrs Wishy Washy, they dressed up, made props and signs to set the scene and made full use of special effects, such as a bubble making machine! Outdoors there is a vast range of activities to enjoy. Children's welfare is extremely well addressed. A system of key persons responsible for groups of children has extended what was already a highly effective partnership with parents and the children. The provision is extremely well led and managed by the Early Years Foundation Stage leader who, new to the role and working alongside the former leader and together with all staff,

constantly reassesses and evaluates practice. As a result, provision runs smoothly, children are actively engaged in their learning and staff know how well they are doing.

What the school should do to improve further

- Further develop the pupils' understanding of cultural diversity in today's society.

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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 ¹ reached by learners	1
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

¹Grade 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

How good are 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
The extent to which 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	1

The quality of provision

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

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 eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	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**

It was a pleasure to inspect your school. You were all very friendly and helpful and my colleague and I enjoyed finding out from you how much you enjoy learning. Now I would like to share with you what we thought about your school.

It is providing you with an outstanding education. Children get a great start in the Nursery and Reception classes and have so many opportunities to learn with each other through play. You continue to make excellent progress in all other years and, by the time you leave at the end of Year 6, you reach well above average standards in English, mathematics and science. This is because the teaching you receive is excellent and you work very hard.

Your behaviour is outstanding and you look after each other so well. We were very impressed with the work of the school council, play leaders and peer mentors. It is great to see how much you enjoy school. The opportunities you have in lessons, in after-school activities and on visits are outstanding. Your teachers and teaching assistants take excellent care of you. They make sure that everyone feels safe and secure. They also give you a lot of very good advice about how you can improve your work.

Part of my job is to identify if there is anything that might need improving. There is one thing to do. I want your teachers to help you understand more about the similarities and differences that exist among the various people living in the United Kingdom. For example, I am thinking of those whose families come from other cultures and used to live in other parts of the world.

Please continue to work hard and enjoy school.