

# St Margaret Mary's Catholic Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	104481
<b>Local Authority</b>	Knowsley
<b>Inspection number</b>	336315
<b>Inspection dates</b>	26–27 April 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Nigel Cromey-Hawke

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>	3–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	475
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Cllr Robert Maguire
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss P Deegan
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 November 2006
<b>School address</b>	Pilch Lane Liverpool Merseyside L14 0JG
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. They visited 14 lessons, observing every teacher and all classes. They also held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and parents and carers. They observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation, including development planning, self-evaluation records, policies and performance data. Eighty nine parental and 10 staff questionnaires were scrutinised.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- how the school has reacted to the change in its intake over the last two years
- how effectively staff use the recently introduced systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress to inform teaching and learning, and to ensure that at least good progress is made by all groups of pupils
- how effectively all leaders and managers monitor learning and use the information gained to shape the school's provision.

## Information about the school

This is a larger than average infant school. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage, with some of Asian heritage. The proportion of pupils whose first language is not English is broadly average, but has increased rapidly over the last three years. The proportions of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those known to be eligible for a free school meal are broadly average, but both are increasing. The school has Healthy Schools and Activemark awards. It operates a before- and after-school club as part of its provision.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

This is a good school. One parent, reflecting a typically positive view, commented that her daughter enjoys every single day at school. The headteacher, staff and governors have responded well to changes in the school's intake since the last inspection. It has adapted its provision and maintained pupils' good progress. Children enter the school with increasingly lower skills than those typical for their age. Good progress is made through the Early Years Foundation Stage due to the effective teaching and support. This continues through Key Stage 1, so that by the time they leave, attainment for nearly all pupils matches the national average. Given children's increasingly below average starting points, this represents good achievement. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the increasing number who speak English as an additional language, also make good and sometimes very good, progress.

Teaching in Key Stage 1 is good with some that is outstanding. It places a priority upon developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, but in some cases does not stretch the more-able nor does it provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to work independently. The good curriculum engages pupils well with their learning and makes good use of information and communication technology (ICT) and the arts to engage pupils' interests and to provide them with effective life skills. Pupils enjoy their time in school, behaviour is good and pupils say they feel safe and well looked after. The good quality of care, guidance and support ensures that the school is a warm, tolerant and harmonious environment where difference is respected and learning valued. Pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is good.

The school has a clear understanding of its strengths and weaknesses through its accurate self-evaluation ensuring that capacity for sustained improvement is good. Subject leaders have considerable responsibilities and carry these out well, monitoring what goes on in their areas effectively. There is a clear focus upon continued improvement by all staff, although senior leaders' analysis of whole-school performance data is too infrequent for them to have a regular update of how well pupils are progressing. Governors are very knowledgeable and challenge and support the school's work well.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all pupils make the best possible progress by developing teaching strategies across all classes that allow for more independent learning, and for providing more challenging work for the more-able.
- For senior leaders to more frequently analyse assessment data in order to gain a

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more accurate picture of pupils' ongoing progress.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**2**

Pupils achieve well and enjoy school. Their attainment is broadly average. For the vast majority learning and progress are good, and sometimes very good, often from low starting points. Pupils acquire knowledge, develop understanding and learn new skills well. They are very keen to do well, apply themselves responsibly in lessons and work at a good pace. They effectively apply their basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT across a broad range of their learning. Previous underperformance by girls has been addressed and the proportion reaching higher levels in mathematics has increased. By the time pupils leave Year 2 their attainment matches and is sometimes slightly above national averages. However, a smaller proportion than average attains higher levels in writing. Nearly all pupils are on track to meet the challenging targets the school has set. Pupils clearly enjoy working in the colourful and stimulating learning environment. Their behaviour is good and sometimes excellent. The school is a harmonious and happy community in which pupils say they feel safe and from which they benefit enormously. They respond by taking on many responsibilities, for example, as members of the school council, as playground buddies and by helping around the school. Their involvement in the local community is extensive, especially in the local parish and through contacts with the nearby Children's Centre. Pupils have a good awareness of what it means to lead a healthy lifestyle, reflecting the school's awards. Attendance is satisfactory, but improving strongly, and punctuality is excellent. The development of personal qualities, wider skills and attitudes to learning, means that pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their learning. They are also clear about what this is, due to the good transition programme with their partner junior school.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

<b>Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate</b>	
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b> Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	<b>2</b>
	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching and the use of assessment within classrooms are good. There is some outstanding teaching. In the best lessons, teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and use this and different teaching methods successfully to make learning interesting and relevant. New assessment systems have been put in place that identify individual pupils' needs more rapidly and better track their progress. Class teachers use these well to target the wide range of support strategies now in use for vulnerable pupils. Individual targets for literacy and numeracy, whole-class targets and helpful marking, ensure that pupils know what level they are working at and what they have to do to improve their work. This leads to a clear pride in their achievements and a positive attitude to learning. Some literacy and numeracy lessons are too teacher led. This results in too little challenge for the more-able and pupils being given insufficient time to work independently.

The curriculum is good and helps to engage pupils' interests and to develop their learning. The recently introduced international primary curriculum uses real life situations within its thematic approach. This, the extensive use of visits and visitors, and the better promotion of the arts and ICT, are having a positive impact upon pupils' learning. The international dimension is well supported by focused work on different cultures and faiths, reflecting the wide variety of pupils' backgrounds. Pupils' understanding of the diversity of the world is, as a result, good. Personal, social and health education is well promoted, and supports pupils' personal development well. Extra-curricular provision is good and well supported by pupils.

The positive effect of the good quality of care, guidance and support is seen in the good progress made by pupils by the time they leave the school. The school works effectively with a wide range of agencies to support vulnerable pupils in their learning. Individual education plans reflect clear and appropriate strategies for supporting these pupils' needs and detailed lesson briefs ensure that teaching assistants are able to provide well focused support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The work of the learning mentor is especially valued by pupils, staff, parents and carers and provides very good support for pupils' personal and learning needs and, in particular, in leading the successful drive to improve attendance. A good family learning programme is provided in the Children's Centre that is well attended by parents and carers.

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*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher, governors and staff have a clear, shared vision for the school and have maintained good outcomes and provision during a period of considerable change. Subject leaders have been given increased responsibility since the last inspection to monitor pupils' progress and this has been effective in improving teaching and better meeting pupils' needs. The school has taken concerted action to promote equality of opportunity and to narrow gaps in the performance of different groups. Self-evaluation is good, although the leadership team's analysis of progress data is insufficiently frequent to give them an accurate picture of the ongoing progress of some groups of pupils. The school has detailed and appropriate plans for moving the school forward. The school engages with parents and carers well. They are especially supportive of the good provision provided by the school at their request through the 'Magpies' before and after-school club. Community cohesion is good, especially locally and pupils have a good understanding of the diversity of the modern world through the curriculum, visits and visitors and links with other countries. Safeguarding procedures are good, and fully meet requirements, with site safety a high priority. Governors challenge the school well, leading the drive on underachieving groups of pupils and supporting literacy development through classroom visits.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>

<p><b>Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate</b> Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms</p>	
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Comprehensive induction arrangements, including home visits, ensure that children and their parents and carers receive a warm welcome to the school. Children settle happily in the safe environment. The majority enter the Nursery class with knowledge, understanding and skills that are below and increasingly well below, those typical for their age, especially in personal development and language acquisition. Throughout their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage, children make good progress in their learning, helped by the good care and support they receive. Progress in personal development is particularly good. By the time they enter Year 1, the majority have skills close to those expected of them, although these are weaker in literacy. This overall good progress is because of the effective teaching they receive in an environment which caters well for their needs. Support for those who speak English as an additional language is good and these children make good and often very good progress. Teachers communicate regularly with parents and carers and are well aware of children's interests. They plan a good range of activities that children enjoy, with a good balance between activities they direct and ones children choose for themselves. Behaviour is good, with clear expectations and routines established. Children play and work well together as a result. Teachers regularly assess day-to-day learning and use this information well to plan children's next steps. Leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. The staff work well as a team, training is up to date and all safeguarding requirements are met.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers who returned the questionnaires are very happy with all aspects of the school. They feel that it provides a safe and caring environment for their children and that it is well led and managed. Inspectors agree. No significant concerns were expressed.



## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Margaret Mary's Catholic Infant School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 89 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 475 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	72	81	17	19	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	71	80	16	18	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	46	52	38	43	4	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	55	62	32	36	2	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	62	70	26	29	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	50	56	38	43	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	55	62	33	37	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	46	52	38	43	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	54	61	33	37	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	44	49	41	46	2	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	39	44	48	54	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	53	60	35	39	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	71	80	17	19	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



28 April 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Margaret Mary's Catholic Infant School, Liverpool, L14 0JG

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave me and the team when we inspected your school recently. You were very friendly, polite and enthusiastic about what you do. You told us a lot of interesting things about your school and you are clearly very proud of it.

St Margaret Mary's is a good school. You get a good start to your education in the Nursery and Reception classes and this continues throughout the rest of the school, so that you reach average standards by the time you leave in Year 2. For very nearly all of you this is good, and in some cases, very good progress. You say you enjoy school, feel safe and valued, as a result of how well you are looked after. Your behaviour is good. Well done! Your attendance is satisfactory but improving rapidly. The teaching is good, with some that is outstanding. You learn lots of different subjects, especially those important ones, English and mathematics. You say you particularly enjoy the new afternoon activities, introduced this year, that help you to see the importance of your learning and your understanding of the wider world. Your information and communication technology skills are well developed.

I have asked the school to do the following things that will help it to be even better:

- to help you to work more on your own in lessons
- to give those of you who learn more easily than others harder work to do
- for the adults in charge to check more often on how well you are learning so that they can better improve things even more for you.

You can help by telling your teachers how best you learn and continuing to improve your attendance. I wish you the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Dr Nigel Cromey-Hawke

Lead inspector

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