

Our Lady and St Swithin's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104632
Local Authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	336338
Inspection dates	8–9 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Brian Dower

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	269
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Jane Troy
Headteacher	Mr J McCaul
Date of previous school inspection	2 July 2007
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They visited 11 classes and looked at a broad range of pupils' work. School documents were read, including policies and improvement plans, and monitoring records and analyses of pupils' attainment and progress were examined in detail. Meetings were held with staff, groups of pupils and a small number of parents. A telephone call was made to the chair of governors. Inspectors analysed 87 questionnaires returned by parents.

- pupils' learning and progress in English and the level of development of their skills in oracy
- assessment to support learning and the use of targets for improvement
- the development of cross-curricular links to give coherence to pupils' learning experiences.

Information about the school

The school is above average in size and serves an area of significant economic and social deprivation. Almost all pupils are from White British families. The proportion of pupils joining or leaving the school at times other than the start or end of an academic year is higher than normally seen. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is also higher than normal.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Our Lady and Saint Swithin's Catholic School is a satisfactory school. Over the last three years attainment has been average by the end of Year 6, apart from in English, where results in national tests have been well below average. Test results rose this year in all key subjects and though attainment remains low, learning and progress are good. The standard of work seen during the inspection shows that current pupils are on track to maintain the improvement. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory.

The rise in results this year and the current good learning and progress show that this is an improving school. All groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those who are more able and the very small number who originate from countries abroad, are making good gains in their knowledge and understanding and leave the school with the learning skills to make the most of the next stage in their education. This is because teaching is good and the curriculum meets their needs well.

Parents are positive about the school and recognise the quality of the care and support their children receive. Pupils enjoy school and feel safe and secure. They grow in maturity, although there are pupils who lack confidence when asked to speak in front of large groups because their skills in oracy are not well developed. Pupils take part in regular exercise and eat healthily. The take up of opportunities to contribute to the school and wider communities is large. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Attendance is average and is good when compared with schools in similar circumstances.

Leadership and management are good because of the improvement in standards, pupils' good personal development and the warm and supportive atmosphere in the school. The school's capacity for sustained improvement is therefore good. However, the outstanding teaching skills demonstrated by some teachers have not been used well enough to bring all teaching up to that of the best. The lack of a designated Early Years Foundation Stage leader means that there is a lack of focus for improvement in this area of the school's work.

Governors are knowledgeable and supportive of the school and give generously of their time to become involved in its day-to-day life. Governance is satisfactory.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Establish cohesive leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage so that:
 - there is vision, drive and an action plan for improvement
 - there is consistency in the monitoring and evaluation of provision and

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outcomes.

- Improve pupils' skills in oracy so that:
 - they become confident and articulate when speaking
 - they take the initiative in asking questions of the teacher when they do not understand
 - they offer constructive criticism of each others' views and ideas.
- Improve teaching by disseminating more effectively the outstanding and good practice which exists so that:
 - questioning skills challenge all pupils to explain their thinking confidently and succinctly
 - opportunities for self- and peer-evaluation lead to improvements in pupils' analytical and critical skills
 - all pupils are clear about their potential, where they are now and what they have to do to move on.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Pupils in Years 2 and 6 are on course to meet challenging attainment targets in reading and mathematics. As a result of the strong focus on writing, standards are now good and pupils' targets are realistic and attainable. Good work is being done in science throughout the school, leading to pupils' growing awareness of the natural and physical world around them. Year 6 test results for 2009 in science also showed improvement.

Standards and achievement are good in physical education and contributing significantly to pupils' well-being. Skills in information and communication technology have improved and they are now being used effectively by pupils in their learning, as seen in the use of spread sheets for recording data in science and for calculation and problem solving in mathematics. The school judges standards and achievement to be satisfactory in other subjects of the curriculum. Lessons in those subjects were not observed but the quality of the work in pupils' books and their own views on how well they are doing confirm that pupils are making satisfactory progress.

Behaviour in school is good and the few pupils who find school routines difficult to adjust to are managed well and make the same good progress as others. Pupils develop well spiritually and morally because of the school's Christian ethos and values which pervade its work. They have a good understanding of beliefs and cultures which are different from their own. The school council meets regularly and has been successful in securing improvements to the play areas.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	4
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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching seen during the inspection ranged from outstanding to satisfactory. In the good and outstanding teaching the work was challenging and adapted to meet the needs of all groups in the class. For example, Year 5 pupils were learning to marshal and present arguments for improvements in local recreational facilities. All were using computer animated models to test the strength of the case they were putting forward. Having to anticipate possible objections to their proposals stretched the more able: they enjoyed the intellectual challenge this presented. The key factor in this lesson was the rigour of the teacher's questioning skills which got pupils reasoning and talking at length. Such rigour in promoting pupils' analytical and critical skills and the use of self- and peer-evaluation to hone them are not being used consistently throughout the school. There is also inconsistency in the use of learning targets so that pupils know where they are now in their learning, what they are capable of and what they have to do to improve.

Curriculum provision is good. It provides well organised, imaginative and effective opportunities for learning and meets the needs of all groups, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who have particular talents. It is enriched by a wide range of extra-curricular clubs and activities which are well attended. There are many visitors to the school, for example, Indian dancers during Cultural Week, and various trips away, such as to Liverpool in the Community to foster

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

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cooperation, team building and fair play. The school is looking to extend opportunities for pupils to write at length and use mathematical problem solving skills across the curriculum. The development of cross-curricular links to give pupils a more coherent educational experience is on-going.

The care and support for all pupils are good. As a result they develop well socially and make good gains in their learning. For example, this is apparent in the progress made by vulnerable pupils, whose emotional and behavioural difficulties are understood and managed well. Effective partnerships with other providers and outside agencies ensure that these pupils get the expert support they need to promote their well-being and academic progress.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders and managers have been successful in driving improvement, leading to the significant rise in standards this year and the continuing good progress seen during the inspection for all groups of pupils. The school is very successful in promoting equality of opportunity and eradicating discrimination. There have been improvements since the previous inspection, particularly in the planning and delivery of lessons and the monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance.

Teachers and teaching assistants are clear about the priorities for improvement. Development plans are in place but they are not being reviewed and up-dated with sufficient rigour. They therefore lack milestones and success criteria to enable staff to judge confidently how well they are doing and to know exactly what to do to move learning and progress from good to outstanding.

Child protection and safeguarding procedures are well established and work effectively. An appropriate policy underpins this but its review and up-dating is not done at sufficiently regular intervals. Risk assessments are routine so that visits away, for example, are conducted safely. Health and safety audits are carried out, leading to a secure and safe working environment for staff and pupils.

Governors are supportive and committed to the school's success. They care about the pupils, respect the staff, give generously of their time to meetings and are involved in its day-to-day life. They play an effective part in creating a cohesive learning community and ensuring that resources are used well to achieve good value for money. They are not clear, however, about the school's underlying capacity to be better than it is and the

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part they can play in bringing about further improvement.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children join the Nursery with skills which are well below those expected for their age. Their language skills and social and emotional development are particularly low. They make good progress and, by the time they start in Year 1, their attainment is below average. Such progress is as a result of good teaching and care, and good team work. Children settle quickly because of effective induction arrangements and close partnerships with parents and external agencies. They become happy and independent learners and take part in a range of stimulating and varied activities with enthusiasm, such as parachute games, role play and construction tasks. Most are confident to tackle new challenges such as the, 'Who wants to be a millionaire?' phonics game, complete with, 'phone a friend'. Children behave well and most respond to instructions. Those who have difficulties with the Nursery and Reception class routines are supported effectively by able staff, who guide them well. Assessment of children's learning is good and informs planning. Health and safety are paramount and children are well cared for. They say they feel safe and secure and inspection evidence shows that they are. The leadership and management of this stage of children's development are satisfactory. The teachers manage this stage in children's education very well, but there is no one person designated to lead and, therefore, there is not that cohesive leadership which would focus ambition and drive for further improvement.

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

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
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	3

Views of parents and carers

Parents are positive about the school and recognise the quality of the care and support their children receive. They feel that their children enjoy school and are making good progress. There were a very small number of concerns raised but these related to particular past incidents and did not reveal any pattern of dissatisfaction.

A small number of parents met the lead inspector on the first day of the inspection. They were overwhelmingly positive about the efforts of the staff and the quality of the education their children were receiving. They did want their children to bring books home more regularly so they could see how well they are doing.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Our Lady and St Swithin's Catholic Primary 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 87 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 269 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	114	67	50	29	4	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	116	67	52	30	4	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	102	59	66	38	6	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	102	59	66	38	4	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	108	63	60	35	2	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	90	52	76	44	2	1	2	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	98	56	74	43	2	1	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)	84	49	84	49	4	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	88	51	78	45	6	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	100	57	72	41	2	1	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	88	51	78	45	4	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	104	60	70	40	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	124	72	42	24	4	2	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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



Inspection of Our Lady and St Swithin's Catholic Primary School, Liverpool L11 0BQ

Thank you for the warm welcome we received on our recent visit to your school. We enjoyed the two days we spent with you and only wish we had had more time to see all the interesting things you are doing. We found your school to be providing you with a satisfactory standard of education.

You have a lot to be proud of. The standard of former pupils' work has been average, apart from in English which has been below average. The Year 6 test results in 2009 improved on this and standards in English rose significantly. The learning and progress of those pupils was good. You are making the same good progress in your learning and are on track to attain similar standards.

We were impressed by your hard work. Many of you completed the pupil questionnaire and some concerns were raised about the behaviour of a few pupils in lessons. We found behaviour to be good. Those few pupils whose conduct is not always as good as it should be are managed well by the staff and do not hinder the learning of the majority. The teaching you receive is good and you told us that you enjoy your lessons. You like being made to think hard and solve difficult problems and we have asked that teachers give you more work like this. You also said that the many after school activities and trips away are popular and well attended. You do particularly well in sport and in competitions. You have won a National Year of Reading award and a song writing award. Well done to all who were involved.

Yours is an improving school and to make it even better than it is we have asked that more attention be given to helping you explain your ideas at length. You can talk about your work in small groups but some of you lack confidence when you have to talk in front of the whole class. Such confidence will come with practice.

The children in Nursery and Reception are making good progress because of the good teaching they receive. We have asked that someone be put in overall charge of their education so that provision for them can become even better.

Our very best wishes to you all.

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