

St Hugh's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104652
Local Authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	336343
Inspection dates	13–14 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Kathleen McArthur

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	153
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Miss A Glanville
Headteacher	Mrs Collete Denby
Date of previous school inspection	18 September 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 13 lessons, eight teachers were seen and meetings were held with groups of pupils, governors, staff and local authority representatives. The inspectors observed the school's work, looked at documents relating to pupils' progress and the management of the school and considered the responses in the 57 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

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

- whether teaching is sufficiently skilled and challenging to sustain the gradual upward trend in attainment
- actions to boost reading and writing at Key Stage 1 and English at Key Stage 2
- leadership's focus on raising standards whilst providing high quality care
- the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage and whether it ensures all children make good progress

Information about the school

The school is smaller than average. Pupils come from a very wide variety of minority ethnic groups, the largest being of Czech heritage. Two-thirds speak English as a second language, and about 17 different home languages are represented in the school. Mobility into and out of the school is very high and only a minority of pupils spend all their primary years there. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is twice the national average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.

The school has the Healthy School, Dyslexia Friendly and Investor in People status, has received an Artsmark and holds the International Schools Intermediate award.

The school is part of a hard federation with Chatham Place Nursery. The Nursery has Children's Centre status and shares a new building with Picton Children's Centre. The headteacher is head of all three establishments. Chatham Place Nursery and Picton Children's Centre were not part of this inspection.

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 where pupils of all ages and cultural backgrounds work, learn and play together happily and harmoniously. Outstanding care, guidance and support ensure that pupils feel very safe and secure, especially those experiencing school for the first time in a new country. Pupils are clearly proud of their school, and parents and carers all agree that their children enjoy school and feel very safe there.

Achievement is good and standards are broadly average. Pupils make a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Good behaviour and enthusiastic attitudes ensure they progress well throughout the school; as one said, 'We learn a lot and always feel safe.' However, attendance is low, despite the best efforts of the school, which have on occasions included collecting pupils from home. This hinders the progress of a significant number of pupils. Good arrangements for equality of opportunity ensure boys and girls, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those learning English as an additional language progress equally well. Good teaching provides well-planned lessons that pupils find challenging and fun, although occasionally staff miss opportunities to reinforce and extend language and vocabulary. A curriculum firmly based on pupils' interests is helping to enhance reading and writing skills, but pupils often find it hard to acquire the specific words needed in different subjects. The very rich range of additional activities provides experiences beyond the classroom and increases pupils' enjoyment of learning, including residential and local visits and popular clubs. Outstanding care, guidance and support show strong commitment to inclusion. All pupils are able to participate in all activities, with very skilled and sensitive support for those with additional needs.

Very effective leadership, with the full commitment of staff and governors, has successfully embedded a clear vision for school improvement. Since the last inspection, standards have gradually risen and there is evidence of some improvement in attendance. Thorough self-evaluation ensures the school knows what needs to be done to sustain and accelerate improvements and there is good capacity to do so.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards, by:
 - ensuring staff take every opportunity to model, enhance and reinforce pupils' communication skills
 - extending pupils' vocabulary so they know and understand the specific technical words needed in literacy, numeracy and science

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- Raise attendance by building on existing good links with parents and carers and the community to ensure all groups fully support regular, punctual attendance.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

'We learn a lot' and 'sometimes Year 3 get Year 4 work' were typical comments, showing that pupils enjoy their lessons and feel challenged. Good and often very good behaviour was observed in all classes, making a strong contribution to good progress. High quality relationships were seen; pupils cooperate well with each other and take a pride in their work.

The school's and national data show clearly that pupils who enter the school in the Reception class or Key Stage 1 and stay until the end of Key Stage 2 reach broadly average standards. However, almost half of the pupils enter and leave at different times during their education, usually with little or no understanding of English, and may be experiencing school for the first time. They have a very long journey to attain the standards expected for their age, made more difficult if they do not attend regularly. Some make very rapid progress. One pupil arrived not speaking English, yet made over two years progress in reading in less than a year. Many struggle to learn vocabulary specific to each subject, and although they can read the words, do not always understand their meaning. The work in pupils' books shows that those currently in Year 2 and Year 6 are on course to reach their challenging targets. Pupils at an early stage of learning English, who are unable to express themselves in writing, discuss their ideas with staff. These are recorded in pupils' individual 'learning journals' ensuring they progress well and gain a sense of achievement.

Pupils think school is a place of safety where, 'The teachers respect and care for us.' They know the importance of looking after their health and know treats are reserved for 'Free Fridays'. Although some pupils think others do not always behave well, they are confident that staff will sort out any difficulties and bullying is not a problem. They see rules and rewards as fair and try to gain awards and certificates for work, behaviour and attendance. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are caring and considerate towards others. 'Be A Frienders make sure that newcomers are not lonely, pupils are keen to be school, eco and international councillors and helped to create a local community garden. Good personal skills and events such as 'Aspirations Week' help prepare pupils for their future economic well-being. However, this is only satisfactory, due to attendance which, although showing some improvement, remains low despite the best efforts of the school.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	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
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	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The school's 'family' atmosphere ensures that pupils feel secure and they respond by working hard and progressing well. They cooperate well with staff, enjoy lessons and say 'Teachers help us with our work.' Well-planned, varied lessons often involve practical activities. For example, a walk around the building helped Year 1 pupils learn the words in order to sequence events. Learning assistants are well deployed, and skilfully support pupils learning English or those with special needs and/or disabilities. Sometimes, staff miss opportunities to model language and reinforce new words and occasionally sessions are too lengthy, particularly for younger pupils. Rigorous assessment using good quality tracking systems and analysis ensures that staff know each individual's learning needs well and can adapt activities and direct extra help exactly where it is needed.

The curriculum equips pupils with a good balance of academic, personal and social skills. By building on their interests to promote language and capture their enthusiasm, pupils are encouraged to reflect on and question what they want to learn in each topic. Links between subjects are gradually developing. Year 6's studies of the eruption of Vesuvius made links with literacy, history and current affairs. Pupils appreciate the additional activities that really enrich their learning. Frequent trips, including a residential visit, broaden their experience beyond the classroom and locality. They particularly enjoy using the school's 'WOW' room where technology helps to immerse them in different subjects. The after-school clubs are very well attended and range from sports and athletics to crafts and the 'Children's University'.

Pupils enjoy learning, are treated as individuals and feel secure in the warm, nurturing

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ethos and attractive, well-maintained environment. Staff know pupils and their families well and vulnerable pupils are particularly well supported. The school has striking examples of how pupils with particular needs have progressed well due to care, guidance and support of the highest quality. Strong partnerships with external health and support agencies, often through the Children's Centre, benefit pupils and families. Home visits are made where appropriate, often with a translator to help parents and carers who do not speak English. Good induction and transition procedures ensure that pupils enter school and move to the next stage of their education confidently.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The strong, united team of leaders and staff set challenging targets for the school's improvement. Team leaders rigorously monitor the quality of teaching and analyse pupils' progress. Areas for development are tackled through performance management targets and professional development. Good governance has a vision to serve the community, brings valuable local knowledge, and provides well-informed challenge and support.

The school successfully ensures that all pupils have equal access to activities and there is no discrimination. Pupils with additional learning or language needs receive well-organised, skilled support. The school reaches out to parents and carers through home visits, translations of letters and reports and links to external support agencies to help them support their child's learning. However, some parents and carers have yet to fully appreciate the importance of regular school attendance. Good partnerships offer additional activities for pupils and their families that the school alone cannot provide, for example, with the Children's Centre and nursery. The school's expertise and good practice are recognised and shared through local network activities, for example, provision for pupils learning English as an additional language.

Arrangements to promote community cohesion ensure pupils' wide cultural backgrounds are respected, celebrated and blend harmoniously. Elected pupils are members of the International Schools Council and meet with pupils from other schools to discuss global matters. Good procedures for pupils' safeguarding ensure that they are safe and secure. Child protection training is regularly updated and shared so all staff are fully aware of policies and procedures. The school gives good value for money.

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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	2
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

Attainment on entry is low. Many children do not speak English when they start school. Some may have only recently arrived in the country and few have had nursery or pre-school experience away from their parents and carers. Staff are very aware that children must feel happy and safe in order to begin learning. Sensitive to the need to gain the confidence and trust of children and their parents and carers, they provide a calm, welcoming and warm, very caring environment. Pictures enable non-English speakers to indicate what they need; for instance, of coats or the toilet. Parents and carers are encouraged to 'stay and play' with their child each morning. Consequently, children settle happily, ready to explore the well-planned activities on offer. Good teaching ensures children make good progress, especially in language and personal development. Skills are still well below those expected at the end of their time in the Reception class.

Adults are well deployed, especially in small group sessions that really concentrate on each individual child's needs. They focus on developing oral skills as a basis for learning in all areas, making good use of home-language teachers where appropriate. On a few occasions, not enough visual cues or repetition are used to reinforce new vocabulary. A balanced mix of adult-led activities and those the children choose themselves ensures learning is practical and fun both inside and outdoors. For example, children imagined they were jumping across a river as they practised the sounds 'ch', 'th' and 'sh'. Activities are well planned and provide good opportunities for discussion and talk, with plenty of visits out of school to provide new experiences and broaden their vocabulary.

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After a trip to the local garden centre, children created their own garden and enjoyed digging, planting seeds and watching them grow.

Good leadership has clear action plans to develop the provision further. All health, safety and welfare requirements are fully in place. The staff team is totally committed to ensuring children make the best possible start to their time in school.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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

A good proportion of parents and carers returned questionnaires, and responses were very positive. Everyone agreed their child enjoys school and is kept safe there. The overwhelming majority are happy with their child's experience at the school.

They were especially positive about the quality of teaching, their child's progress, how the school meets their child's particular needs and deals with any unacceptable behaviour.

A very small minority felt their suggestions or concerns were not always considered. Inspectors found the school carries out regular parent surveys, is always willing to discuss matters, and will make home visits if required.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Hugh'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 57 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 153 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	42	68	20	32	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	40	65	22	35	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	44	71	15	24	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	34	55	27	44	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	42	68	19	31	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	39	63	21	34	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	34	55	24	39	1	2	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)	28	45	29	47	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	36	58	25	40	0	0	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	28	45	33	53	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	29	47	27	44	3	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	35	56	25	40	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	44	71	17	27	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). 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">■ 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.



17 May 2010

Dear Children,

Inspection of St Hugh's Catholic Primary School, Liverpool, L7 6HE

We had a very enjoyable time when we inspected your school. Thank you everyone for making us very welcome and being really friendly, polite and helpful. We were most impressed by your good behaviour, especially in lessons. Your families must be very proud of you and they told us they are very happy with the school. There are so many clubs and trips out of school, even a residential visit, and the WOW room is something really special!

We could tell you are proud of your school so we thought we would tell you what we found.

You go to a good school. The staff care for you exceptionally well and you told us you feel really safe. The teaching is good and makes learning interesting. You work hard and make good progress, even though many of you are still learning English. However, many children have too much time off so they struggle to catch up and reach the right standards for their age.

The leaders do a good job and are always looking for ways to make school better and help you make even more progress. So we have asked them to:

- look for even more opportunities to develop your language knowledge and skills
- work with your parents so they make sure you all come to school every day.

We know you will want to help, so keep enjoying school, working hard and be sure to come to school every day.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Kathleen McArthur

Lead Inspector

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