

# St Oswald's Catholic Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	104659
<b>Local Authority</b>	Liverpool
<b>Inspection number</b>	336344
<b>Inspection dates</b>	18–19 March 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Michael Hewlett

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>	335
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs V Amos
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss J Mosinski
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 November 2006
<b>School address</b>	St Oswald Street Liverpool Merseyside L13 5SB
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 228 8436
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors spent the majority of time observing and checking learning, visited 15 lessons and observed 14 teachers. They held meetings with governors, senior staff and groups of pupils. The inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised a range of documentation including that related to school management, safeguarding, pupils' attainment and progress. They also took into account questionnaires returned by 90 parents and carers and 13 staff.

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

- the achievement of pupils in Key Stage 1, with a particular focus on their writing and mathematics to determine whether the teaching is sufficiently challenging
- the quality of the provision in Early Years Foundation Stage and whether it is adapted to meet children's needs
- the school's success in bringing about improvements to determine the impact of leadership and management.

## Information about the school

This school is larger than average. Most pupils are White British. Few are from minority ethnic groups or have English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are eligible to receive a free school meal is broadly average. An above average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school received the Basic Skills Quality Mark for the third time in 2009.

**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

St Oswald's is a good school. It is successful because leaders, staff and governors have focused on the right priorities. They have set about raising attainment by improving the quality of teaching and learning and making the curriculum more interesting and engaging.

Children begin school with skills which are typically well below those expected for their age. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage because of the high priority adults give to developing children's speaking and listening skills as well as their personal and social development. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' results are broadly average in reading and mathematics, but not so in writing which remains below average and is the weaker subject. Pupils' current work and the school's detailed tracking systems show that their progress is good overall across the school, including for those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those whose circumstances make them more vulnerable.

The school's work has some excellent features. These include pupils' positive attitudes to learning and their exemplary behaviour. They are keen to share their excellent understanding of the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle and they say they feel extremely safe. Pupils have a genuine voice in the school and they are constantly encouraged to share their opinions. As one member of the school council commented, 'Our job is to make the school a better place'. Good teaching and an exciting curriculum provision allow all pupils to develop their individual strengths. Whilst most of the teaching is good, in some of the satisfactory lessons, too much teacher input slows the pace of learning. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have worked very successfully to improve learning for all pupils. The attendance of a small minority of pupils is erratic. Key to the improvement in pupils' achievement is the rigorous self-evaluation which is accurate and honest in its judgements. The school has a clear view of its strengths and areas for improvement and all staff and governors contribute to the review of the school's performance. This demonstrates the school's good capacity for sustained improvement.

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

- Raise standards in writing, by:
  - providing more regular opportunities for pupils to write independently
  - ensuring that pupils receive clear guidance about what they need to do next to improve their work.

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- Raise levels of attendance still further, especially that of persistent absentees.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that the school's best practice is reflected throughout, by:
  - ensuring the pace of lessons is consistently brisk and that pupils do not spend too much time listening to teachers
  - avoiding an overemphasis on worksheets or workbook activities.

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

Pupils enjoy coming to school and their achievement is good. 'Our lessons are not too easy, they are just hard enough but sometimes we have to try something again and again to learn it' was a comment that summed up pupils' views. In all lessons observed by inspectors behaviour was exemplary. Pupils apply themselves to a task and consequently make good progress in their learning. They show a willingness to learn and enjoy the positive encouragement that they receive.

Pupils' make rapid progress from their starting points leading to broadly average attainment in reading and mathematics by the end of Year 2. Recent improvements in the curriculum at Key Stage 1 are beginning to result in more opportunities for pupils to produce extended pieces of writing. Pupils seen to be making slower progress are quickly identified and supported.

Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to live healthily. They participate enthusiastically in the many sporting activities that are available, often working with staff and pupils from the local sports college. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent and pupils think about the needs of others as well as themselves. This was confirmed by pupils on the school council who said, 'We are all fair here, we take turns and if anyone is left out we always let them play.'

Pupils are keen to take on responsibilities and make a good contribution to the school and wider community. For example, a group of older children has been 'lobbying' the local council to install a pedestrian crossing near the school. They wrote letters and held meetings explaining that, 'the road is dangerous since the new store opened'. The ability of pupils to use the key skills of oracy, literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) that would contribute to their future economic well-being is satisfactory. Whilst attendance is average and the school has made progress in this area, levels of persistent absence are still too high.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<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.

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<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>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</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>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective is the provision?**

Highly effective management of behaviour and excellent relationships are key factors that contribute to the good quality of teaching. Strengths include teachers' high expectations of learning and clear lesson plans that explain how the needs of the different groups are going to be met. These qualities were evident in the successful teaching, including a Year 1 information and communication technology (ICT) lesson. Pupils accessed the internet independently, after suitable safety warnings from the teacher, and selected labels to attach to a scene from one of their favourite stories. They were excited by the topic and were keen to edit and improve their work. Finally, they assessed their own work, sharing with their classmates the strengths and weaknesses. Such high quality teaching is not yet fully evident in all lessons and, occasionally, the pace of learning is not fast enough with pupils spending too much time listening to the teacher or completing workbook and worksheet activities that fail to engage them. As a result, they are not always clear on how to move on to the next step in their learning. Nevertheless, skilled teaching assistants ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make the same good progress as their peers.

Pupils make the most of, and thoroughly enjoy, the many opportunities they are given to join in sporting, social and artistic activities. The move towards a more creative, thematic curriculum by extending the six areas of learning from the Early Years Foundation Stage into Year 1, has impacted positively on pupils' work. It has increased their desire to become involved because it is more practically based. The curriculum is suitably organised to ensure that it meets the needs of the different groups of pupils represented in the school. The school's active involvement in the West Derby Learning

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Community provides good opportunities to develop closer curriculum links with other pupils and schools in the area.

Staff supervise pupils well to ensure their safety. They know them as individuals and offer them support that is well tailored to their needs, whether it is time for a quiet conversation or practical help for parents in managing their children's needs.

Well-judged provision for those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities ensures that they make similar good progress to their peers and achieve well. Good partnerships with outside agencies, such as speech and language therapists, enable pupils to develop the necessary skills to improve their learning.

*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?

Good leadership by the headteacher and deputy headteacher has been instrumental in providing clear direction and improvement. This has resulted in an impressive picture of pupils' progress as well as improvements in the quality of teaching and in the curriculum. School leaders have established rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning with the results shared with all staff. The school knows itself well and has a very clear picture of how it can improve still further. The ethos established in the school is one that successfully promotes equality for all and tackles any discrimination. This is evident in the many aspects of support for different groups of pupils, such as the additional interventions for those pupils with speech and language difficulties. The school leadership ensures that the personal and educational needs of those with additional needs are very well met.

The governing body exerts a strong influence in determining the strategic direction of the school and makes sure that all statutory requirements are met. Governors are supportive of, but also challenge, the school's work. The school's procedures for safeguarding are good. It ensures that staff are suitably recruited and vetted and that the required policies and procedures are in place. Partnerships with others are strong, particularly in promoting pupils' well-being and their social and emotional development. Parents and carers say how delighted they are with the school and how welcome they are made to feel. They are confident that any concerns raised will be dealt with promptly and fairly. The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion. As a result, pupils' involvement within the local and parish community is very strong. This has been extended to provide them with first-hand experiences of meeting pupils and adults

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from different religious and cultural communities in Britain and beyond.

*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>
<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

Children make good progress towards the early learning goals from a very low starting point when they arrive in Nursery. They settle quickly into a safe, secure and welcoming environment. This is the result of good teaching and staff who provide children with challenging and exciting activities. When children move to Year 1 they are generally working below age-related skills in all the areas of learning. Nevertheless, they have made impressive strides in their language skills. This is because there is a strong emphasis on providing regular opportunities for children to discuss what they are doing and they are given clear boundaries and expectations. Children's personal development is good and their behaviour is excellent. They play together happily and they have warm, friendly relationships with adults and with each other. Importantly, they are motivated to enjoy learning by being given tasks that they enjoy and that keep them actively involved. For example, in one group children recreated the story of Jack and the Beanstalk. This involved planting seeds and finding out what conditions they would need to grow successfully. Children confidently shared their knowledge with adults explaining, 'If we don't keep giving them water they will die'.

Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and it has introduced a varied curriculum that has imaginative play and children's interests at its heart. Children's welfare and progress are carefully monitored and all aspects of safeguarding are in place.



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*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

The vast majority of the 89 parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire are highly satisfied with the school. They comment very positively about the quality of care, the quality of leadership and management, the impact of teaching and the overall provision in the school. Many positive comments were also received by inspectors about how caring the school is and how much their children enjoyed school. Very few comments raised concerns. Where they did they related to the amount of information that parents and carers received about their children's progress. Inspectors found no evidence to support these concerns. Overall, parents' and carers' views reflect the inspection findings.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Oswald'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 90 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 335 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	74	82	16	18	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	72	80	18	20	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	60	67	28	31	2	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	56	62	32	36	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	66	73	23	26	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	60	67	29	32	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	58	64	30	33	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)	37	41	41	46	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	55	61	30	33	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	48	53	37	41	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	45	50	39	43	1	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	60	67	25	28	2	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	68	76	20	22	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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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"><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.**



18 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Oswald's Catholic Infant School, Liverpool, L13 5SB

Thank you for the welcome you gave to me and the other inspectors. We enjoyed our visit. You were eager to talk to us and tell us how much you like your school. This helped us to find out about the school and how well it is doing.

Your school is providing you with a good education. You told us you feel safe when you are in school. We saw that you enjoy learning. We were impressed by your excellent behaviour and how much you knew about staying healthy. You try your best in all the things that you do. This is helping you to make good progress in your learning. All the adults take good care of you. They all want the best for you. Teachers work hard to find things that interest you and help you to learn.

We want the school to improve three things. First, we want to see you have more opportunities to practise your writing. Second, we want all the lessons to be as good as the very best ones that we saw. This will help you to learn even faster. Third, we want you to attend school more regularly.

I hope you will play your part in bringing about these improvements by listening carefully in class, trying even harder with your writing and coming to school regularly.

Good luck in the future!

Yours sincerely,

Mr Michael Hewlett

Lead inspector

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