

# Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	104929
<b>Local Authority</b>	Sefton
<b>Inspection number</b>	336388
<b>Inspection dates</b>	27–28 April 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Stephen Rowland

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	144
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Anthony Kellett
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr David Iliff
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 June 2007
<b>School address</b>	Kepler Street Seaforth Merseyside L21 3TE
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Seven lessons and eight teachers were observed. Meetings were held with staff, pupils, governors, parents and local authority staff who are working with the school. They observed the school's work and looked at relevant policies, the school improvement plan, records of meetings, the school's monitoring records and analyses of pupils' attainment and progress. Thirty four questionnaires returned by parents were also analysed.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. He looked in detail at the following:

- how well the school ensures that pupils make good progress
- does challenging and engaging teaching ensure that pupils make good progress and enjoy learning?
- is assessment used to support learning?
- do managers at all levels evaluate the impact of their work and help to bring about improvement?
- how effective is the Early Year Foundation Stage, particularly in developing language and social skills?

## Information about the school

This is a smaller-than-average primary school. It has part-time nursery provision. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. Since the last inspection a new headteacher has been appointed and the school's senior leadership team has been restructured. The school has the Basic Skills Quality mark.

A privately-run after-school club operates on site five days a week. It is subject to separate inspection arrangements.

**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. Since the time of the last inspection there has been a period of considerable change. However, the new headteacher supported by a newly reorganised leadership team has been able to set a clear sense of purpose and direction which is enthusiastically embraced by all staff and governors. The school evaluates its work effectively and has been able to identify worthwhile priorities for development and improvement. All staff understand their role in moving these issues forward and are increasingly gaining confidence as they see the fruits of their hard work. The issues raised at the time of the last inspection have been successfully addressed. This, along with a clearly emerging picture of success shows that the school has a good capacity for sustained improvement.

The school has set out a clear programme for improvement. Much of its work is very good. A particular strength is the detail of assessment of the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and also the needs of vulnerable groups of children. This, along with the excellent support provided for them, is beginning to have a clear and marked impact on their learning and well-being. Much teaching is good and none is inadequate but on rare occasions teaching lacks the pace to engage all pupils so that they do not make as much progress as they could. The school's strong focus on healthy lifestyles has ensured that virtually all pupils demonstrate a commitment to protecting their health and well-being.

The school has developed appropriate strategies for tracking the academic progress of pupils. Assessment during lessons is good and teachers are able to respond to any misconceptions swiftly and effectively.

Pupils are very proud of their school. A typical comment was: 'Great staff: great school!' The positive views of pupils are echoed by those of parents. Parents say: 'If there is a problem then it is sorted out effectively and promptly.' They assert that a great strength of the school is that every child is well known and their individual needs are addressed.

The school is at the heart of its local community and has close links with its church. It is constantly seeking out ways to work with parents.

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

- Increase the proportion of good teaching by:
  - structuring lessons so that there is a brisk pace throughout
  - developing questioning skills so that pupils are challenged to extend their learning and understanding

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- allowing time for pupils to consolidate their learning and to check understanding.

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

Pupils work hard during their lessons. They are happy to share their ideas and are willing to respond to the challenges provided to them. Pupils maintain a keen interest in learning because they are responsible for initiating some activities. Moreover, they often reflect on what they have learned so as to consolidate their understanding.

Lessons are well structured and, as a result of the school's tracking system, teachers can respond quickly to deal with any misconceptions so that good progress is maintained. In the most recent national tests pupils at the end of Year 6 reached standards which were just below the national average. Although there was a dip in standards in 2009, inspection evidence shows that there is now a strong upward trend. Scrutiny of pupils' work, analyses of the school's tracking information and evidence from observation in lessons show that standards and progress are improving rapidly. This is so for all groups of pupils, with no obvious gaps in achievement. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive very good support which effectively meets their needs. As a result, they achieve well and enjoy their time in Our Lady, Star of the Sea.

Pupils say they feel safe in school and parents confirm that this is so. Behaviour is good. Pupils are considerate and polite and have a good sense of right and wrong. They understand the consequences of their actions on others and support the expectations for conduct which the school places on them. They have a very good awareness of healthy lifestyles and enthusiastically join in with the wide range of sporting activities the school offers them. An increasing number of pupils are walking or cycling to school. Many pupils have taken on roles of responsibility and there is an active school council which has influenced school management decisions, for example by ensuring the fencing around the school site was improved. Older pupils support other by acting as peer mentors, providing support and advice when requested. Pupils support a wide range of charities both locally and nationally and express a sense of responsibility for the well-being of others. Although attendance has improved significantly over recent years, it is still low. The school is aware of this and is working very hard to deal with this issue. Through development of roles of responsibility, such as working together to organise events to support charities, pupils learn about skills that they will need in the world of work. However, low attendance has restricted the school's success in this area. The school's Christian ethos ensures that pupils develop a strong sense of moral and social responsibility.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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<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>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<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>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	4
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

Much teaching is good, with some outstanding features. The majority of lessons are planned carefully to meet the needs of all pupils and they have a brisk and businesslike pace. In a very good mathematics lesson with a Year 4 class, for example, pupils were constantly challenged to tackle increasingly difficult work and they responded quickly with tremendous energy and enjoyment. Questioning is usually good, although on occasions, this could be taken further so that learning is taken even further. On a few occasions, the pace of learning flags so that pupils lose focus and made only satisfactory progress. At times, in a small number of lessons, pupils do not get enough opportunity to return to the lesson objectives, so they are not clear enough as to the purpose of the activities in which they are engaged. Generally, assessment is used effectively so that teachers have a good understanding of what pupils have learnt. Pupils are learning how to assess their own work and that of their peers.

The curriculum provides a sound base for the development of literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT) skills. It also promotes good personal development. A varied and imaginative curriculum is being developed and this is beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' engagement and enjoyment. The school offers an impressive range of extra-curricular activities and enrichment. These include musical, sporting and cultural activities as well as offering every pupil the chance to participate in a residential experience.

Pastoral provision is strong. The needs of all pupils, including vulnerable groups are assessed thoroughly and detailed programmes of support are provided. The impact of this work is carefully monitored so that support can be modified as required. There are

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some striking examples of some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities making very strong progress as a result of the support the school has offered them. Outside partners are used extensively to strengthen further this area of provision. Although attendance remains low, the school works very hard to improve it and has adopted a broad range of strategies to achieve this with considerable success.

*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 school has a very clear understanding of what it has achieved and what it needs to do next. Its self-evaluation is honest and accurate if somewhat modest in that it understates slightly how much has been achieved so far. This shows a determination to set and reach even higher standards. This is a goal which is shared actively by all staff and governors. This is an experienced and committed group who have devoted time and energy to support the school. They fulfil their statutory obligations correctly and provide the school's leadership with strong support and rigorous challenge. Partnerships with parents and carers are good. The school sees itself as being at the heart of the local community and works very hard to make school as open and welcoming as possible for parents. Initiatives such as the Fast Course, which dealt with mathematical skills, enable parents to support their child's learning. There are also shared learning activities such as cookery and textiles.

The school has a good understanding of its own community and functions very well as a community in its own right. However, although the school has audited its work to promote community cohesion, it has not yet evaluated the impact of this work on pupils' attitudes and understanding of different social, religious and ethnic groups. Child protection procedures and safeguarding arrangements fully meet statutory requirements and the school has adopted good practice in all respects. Discrimination has no place in the school and all pupils are given an equal chance to benefit from their education.

*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>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 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>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills which are generally below expectation for their age and make good progress so that they enter Key Stage 1 as capable, independent learners. The development of language and communication skills is a particularly important focus.

Children learn how to share and to be considerate. They are encouraged to work and play together so that they develop these skills. They are confident and relate well to each other and to the adults who look after them. The environment is stimulating and exciting with a wide range of indoor and outdoor activities. Children are able to choose freely from these activities supported by staff who guide their learning and understanding. Children have a good awareness of healthy lifestyles and enjoy the variety of healthy snacks provided for them. Planning is detailed. Adults observe and keep careful notes so that they have a record of each child's learning. Parents and carers are involved as much as possible as full partners in their child's learning. The key worker system allows for a point of contact for parents and children providing a secure base for each child's welfare and learning. The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed and has received valuable support from the local authority to strengthen this further. The staff, led by the Reception class teacher, evaluate their work thoroughly and are constantly seeking out ways to improve the provision. Staff are appropriately trained and have the skills needed to ensure that children are safe and to support their learning. Safeguarding, as with the main school, is well managed and all statutory requirements are met.



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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

A relatively small proportion of parents and carers responded to the parental questionnaire. The inspector was also able to meet with a group of parents. A large majority of responses were positive. A small minority of parents who responded to the questionnaires felt that the school did not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour. A slightly smaller minority of respondents disagreed that the school was well led and managed. A large majority of parental responses, both verbal and written, did not support these views and inspection evidence strongly supported the judgement that both behaviour, and leadership and management are good.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Our Lady Star of the Sea 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 34 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 144 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	20	59	14	41	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	21	62	12	35	1	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	18	53	15	44	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	19	56	10	29	3	9	1	3
The teaching is good at this school	15	44	17	50	1	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	15	44	17	50	2	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	13	38	19	56	1	3	1	3
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)	13	38	12	35	3	9	1	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	13	38	17	50	1	3	1	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	12	35	12	35	7	21	2	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	44	15	44	3	9	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	12	35	13	38	7	21	1	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	16	47	14	41	3	9	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.**



29 April 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Our Lady, Star of the Sea Catholic Primary School, Seaforth, L21 3TE

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited Our Lady, Star of the Sea recently. I was particularly grateful for those of you who agreed to meet me during your lunch break. The comments you made were very helpful. I am also grateful for those of you who returned questionnaires. These contained many positive comments about your school. I was very impressed by much that I saw at Our Lady, Star of the Sea. I was particularly impressed by how many of you have chosen to walk or cycle to school. You must all be very fit and healthy!

Our Lady, Star of the Sea is a good school. Nearly everyone who spoke to me or wrote to me had good things to say. You behaved very well during the inspection and worked very hard. Many people in your local community are very proud of the school.

There are a few things I want your school to do to make sure all of the teaching becomes even better:

- make sure that lessons always start quickly and move along quickly
- make sure that you get lots of questions including really hard ones to make you think
- check regularly in lessons to make sure everyone is keeping up.

I am glad that you are proud of your school. You can help your teachers and other adults make it even better by always getting into school every day, on time and always trying your best. I thank you once again for your help with the inspection. My best wishes to you all.

Yours sincerely

Mr Stephen Rowland

Lead inspector

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