

St Kentigern's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119599
Local Authority	Blackpool
Inspection number	339478
Inspection dates	5–6 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Alison Thomson

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	214
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Fr John Foulkes
Headteacher	Mrs Frances Wygladala
Date of previous school inspection	1 October 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 14 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and analysed 47 questionnaire responses from parents and carers and 99 questionnaire responses from pupils. The team also looked at the data the school had collected about pupils' progress, and at the school's records of its monitoring of the quality of teaching.

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

- attainment and progress in 2009, with particular respect to reading and writing in Key Stage 1 and English in Key Stage 2
- how teachers use assessment to help pupils improve their work, particularly the extent to which higher-attaining pupils are involved in checking their own learning
- the effectiveness of leaders at all levels in monitoring and evaluating areas that are less strong, such as reading and writing in Key Stage 1.

Information about the school

St Kentigern's is an average-sized primary school in the centre of Blackpool. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is average and the proportion of those who speak English as an additional language is higher than average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is much higher than average. An average proportion of pupils have a statement of special educational needs. A significant number of pupils enter and leave the school during the year. The school has many awards, including the Healthy Schools Award 2006 and the ICT Becta Award 2009 for the promotion of information and communication technology (ICT) in learning.

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 Kentigern's is an improving school that provides a good standard of education in a very caring, family-like environment from Reception through to Year 6. The majority of parents and carers are very positive about all aspects of the school and their views are captured well by the following comments. 'The support from everyone in the school has been exemplary – headteacher, teachers, support assistants and office.' Another said, 'The school has an open door policy, I feel I can go into the school and ask anything at any time. This gives me peace of mind.'

Since the previous inspection, the school has experienced many challenges, including an increased number of pupils who join school throughout the year, many of whom speak English as an additional language. With help from the local authority and other partners, the school has risen to these challenges, reversed the decline in standards and narrowed gaps between the achievement of the different groups of pupils.

Improvements are evident in many areas, such as in the quality of teaching and in the sustained rise in attendance, which is now above average.

Pupils are very polite and courteous. They enjoy helping others and are proud to take on roles of house captains, monitors and playground leaders. Pupils feel very safe in school and feel that the school values their views. They are proud of having the toilets painted in the colours of their choice. The school has very good relationships with parents and carers and also with the local community. Pupils told us that they enjoy raising money for many charities, including one for homeless people. One pupil commented, 'The school spends money on us and we raise money for other charities.'

Teaching is good and pupils achieve well. The school has improved standards so that they are now in line with the national average overall at the end of Year 6 and above average in reading and science. It acknowledges that standards could be even higher still, particularly in writing. Relationships in lessons are very positive and pupils are eager to answer questions and to participate. Their behaviour contributes well to their learning. Pupils welcome the chance to work independently, but they are not always given clear enough success criteria or enough opportunities to be involved in assessing how well they are learning. As a result, they do not progress as quickly as they might do in some lessons. The school tracks the progress of pupils regularly. This ensures the early identification of any underachievement. Good individual and small-group support ensures that pupils soon make up lost ground. The curriculum is adapted well to meet the needs of all pupils and it is enhanced by many visits and visitors.

The headteacher and her leadership team effectively monitor and evaluate the school's work. The school knows the strengths and areas for development well. Governors play

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an important role in supporting the strategic development of the school. They have an increasingly active role in the life of the school and hold the headteacher to account well. The fact that the school has made good improvements in many areas indicates that the capacity to improve even further is good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment further, particularly in writing by:
 - enriching pupils' vocabulary
 - making writing tasks more relevant to pupils' interests
 - introducing writing into as many other curriculum areas as possible
 - improving the quality of pupils' handwriting.
- Ensure that all teaching is good or better to accelerate pupils' progress by:
 - providing clear criteria for success so that the learning of individual pupils can be checked easily
 - involving pupils more in assessing their own learning
 - improving questioning to encourage pupils to develop their thinking and expressive language skills.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The quality of learning and progress in lessons is good. Pupils behave well and contribute enthusiastically to discussions. They concentrate well on the tasks they are set. As a result, current learning and progress are improving rapidly. Pupils make the good progress they do because most lessons are well organised and have interesting, challenging activities. In a Year 6 lesson on problem solving in mathematics, one boy said, 'My brain hurts – but it's good.' However, in some lessons, pupils could not say if they were learning well as it was not clear what was expected of them.

Attainment at the end of Year 6 is average, with the previous decline in attainment in English, mathematics and science having been reversed. Attainment at the end of Year 2 is also average, with improved standards in reading and writing. However, the school acknowledges that attainment in writing for pupils of all ages is still not high enough. Small-group teaching of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, pupils who speak English as an additional language and the most able pupils has helped to ensure that all groups of pupils make equally good progress from the generally below average skills with which many join the school.

Pupils are very clear about how to stay safe and they have a good understanding of what it means to be healthy. They enjoy the many opportunities to take part in sporting activities and clubs. They have good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, the spiritual aspect being particularly strong. Pupils are prepared well for their future economic well-being by having particularly good ICT skills and a keen sense of cooperation and consideration for others when working together.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Good teaching typically has good pace and caters well for pupils' differing needs. Teachers maintain the interest of the pupils through innovative activities, including the use of pupils' personal mini-laptops. In one history lesson on ancient Egypt pupils enthusiastically carried out research into mummification using an interactive website. This was further brought to life by a visitor showing the pupils artefacts, one of which was a shoe from that period. Good assessment is evident in nearly all lessons in helping pupils to improve their work, and teachers' marking is usually clear and helpful. In lessons where learning is less secure teachers talk too much from the front of the class, giving pupils less opportunity to be involved in their own learning. Questioning does not always encourage pupils to think or to express themselves clearly. This hinders their progress in writing.

The curriculum meets statutory requirements and is tailored to suit the needs of different groups of pupils. ICT is particularly strong and has made a big impact on learning. Having their own mini-laptops has extended learning from school into home. One pupil told us she was very excited that she could use her mini-laptop to help her do

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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her homework. There are increasing links between subjects and this has helped to raise the standard of writing. Pupils' personal qualities are being developed well through a wide range of interesting activities which they appreciate and enjoy. For example, they are excited about the launch of their book of war poems soon to happen at the town hall.

The school rightly says one of its strengths is the way it looks after its pupils as individuals, particularly the most vulnerable. The school makes good use of external agencies to ensure that their different needs are met well. Planning for individuals' needs is robust and their progress is carefully monitored. Evidence was seen of significant successes in the way in which the school helps pupils overcome difficulties to achieve well. Links with secondary schools are strong, preparing the pupils well for the next stage in their learning.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The drive to raise attainment is ensuring that learning and progress are improving. The senior leadership team has a robust system for tracking pupils' progress and its analysis identifies those pupils, both individuals and groups, who are in danger of underachieving. Quick action leads to strategies to address this. For example, the focus on reading last year had dramatic effects across the school in raising standards. Currently, all groups of pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress, reflecting good equality of opportunity for all pupils. There has been a clear ambition to overcome challenges and to raise the standard of teaching and learning to ensure that pupils make good progress. Some subject leaders are relatively new in post, but already they are playing a significant part in monitoring and evaluating the work in their areas. Governors know the school well and what it needs to do to improve. They act as critical friends effectively, but they are not sufficiently involved in evaluating their own performance. The procedures for ensuring the safety of pupils are good. The school has carried out an extensive evaluation of the three aspects of socio-economic, religion and culture in community cohesion. While the promotion of community cohesion within school and locally is excellent, planned links with schools nationally and internationally have not yet come to fruition.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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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

Adults ensure that all groups of children are well integrated and successfully supported in their welfare and learning. Most children join Reception with skills and knowledge that are below expected levels. By the time they leave Reception, in response to good-quality teaching they have made good progress and attainment is average overall, although communication and literacy skills are still below expectations. Children are enjoying learning about themselves this term and are safe, happy and secure in their learning. They enjoy joining the older children at lunchtime and choosing healthy meals, remembering the need to wash their hands, 'to get rid of germs and nasties'. They behave well, listen carefully to adults and most work independently with particularly good levels of motivation when they write out letter sounds and match the sounds to objects in the room.

The indoor learning environment is spacious, well resourced and provides stimulating activities for children to plan their own learning as well as receiving well-focused support from adults. The exciting displays on the theme of autumn provide very good stimulation for children's imaginative paintings. Although the outdoor space is used continuously by children, the resources there are less effective in providing them with challenge, such as problem solving.

Good-quality leadership and management ensure that the team works successfully together to give children a happy and productive year in Reception. Good induction procedures with parents and carers help children get a confident start to their school life. After much successful work developing procedures over recent months, assessment is very thorough and used well to extend children's learning. The use of a specific tool for parents and carers to support the learning of their children at home has been

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particularly successful in accelerating learning and progress in language development and mathematics.

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

Most parents and carers are very positive about all aspects of the school. They are particularly happy with the way the school keeps them informed of their children's progress and meets their needs. Their comments reflect their appreciation of the school's good care and support for their children as individuals. The inspectors agree with their positive statements.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Kentigern'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 inspector received 47 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 214 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	60	69	26	30	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	54	61	34	39	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	50	58	32	37	2	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	51	54	39	41	4	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	57	65	28	32	2	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	52	59	32	36	4	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	50	58	32	37	2	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)	50	60	26	31	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	38	45	39	46	2	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	38	45	34	40	8	10	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	45	53	33	39	4	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	52	60	28	33	4	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	59	67	25	28	4	5	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 St Kentigern's Catholic Primary School, Blackpool, FY3 8BT

Thank you for welcoming the inspection team to your school recently. We enjoyed talking with you and seeing how well you learn in class.

We worked very closely with your headteacher and also spent time talking to your teachers and governors and looking at your work. Your questionnaires told us that you all feel that the adults in school care about you and that you learn a lot in lessons. They also told us that you feel teachers explain to you how to improve your work.

Yours is a good school. It is a happy environment; children from Reception to Year 6 enjoy being there. Your teachers know you very well and find lots of different ways to help you learn and develop as young people. This helps you achieve well in your work and to develop good personal skills, such as helping others. We think that you do this very well. We were very pleased to see how well you all attend. We were particularly impressed by your use of mini-laptops to help you learn well. You seem very excited about using them and also like to involve your parents and carers in your learning.

Your headteacher, teachers and governors work together well as a team to keep improving the school. The school keeps a careful check on the progress you make and it finds out what you and your parents and carers think. We have asked your teachers to help you do even better in your writing and to give you more opportunities to check for yourselves how well you are learning. You can help by asking your teachers to make it clear to you how you can tell if you are doing a good job in each of your activities in class.

We would like to wish you all the best for the future.

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