

St Leo's and Southmead Catholic Primary School Serving the Community

Lickers Lane, Prescott, Merseyside, L35 3SR

Inspection dates 31 October–1 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress and leave the school at the end of Key Stage 2 doing as well as similar pupils nationally. Standards across the school are rising and are set to nudge ahead of the nationally expected standards in the Year 6 tests this year.
- Teaching is good overall and at times outstanding, leading to excellent progress in some year groups.
- Behaviour is good and at times exemplary. Pupils are pleasant and polite to adults and each other. They feel safe in school because the care and well-being of its pupils is of paramount importance to the school.
- The school's systems for checking pupils' progress is meticulous, and support for individuals and groups who may be at risk of falling behind in their learning is swift.
- The school fosters excellent links with parents and encourages them to work in partnership with the school to ensure that pupils do as well as they can.
- The headteacher, together with the support of other leaders, staff and governors, has established a strong focus on improvement. This is helping teachers to increase their skills and pupils to learn more effectively; this ensures that the school continues to improve.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although teaching is good, not enough is yet outstanding. The quality of guidance pupils receive through marking and feedback is not always effective in showing pupils how to improve their work.
- The targets teachers expect pupils to achieve in their work are not always easily understood and therefore do not always contribute effectively to improving pupils' learning.
- Lesson observations are not routinely undertaken by leaders, at all levels, in order to measure the impact that teaching is having on pupils' learning, against clearly understood, shared criteria.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed eight teachers and 13 part-lessons. In addition inspectors visited sessions where small groups were working.
- Inspectors observed and spoke to pupils during lessons and at play and lunchtime. They met formally with two groups of pupils.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, members of the governing body, school staff and a representative from the local authority.
- Pupils from Year 2 and Year 6 read to inspectors.
- Inspectors reviewed work in pupils' books in lessons and also sampled pupils' writing books.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents. These included the school's data for tracking of pupils' progress, planning and monitoring documentation, the self-evaluation summary, the school development plan, the safeguarding and related policies and behaviour and attendance records.
- Inspectors also took account of the 11 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and others completed by staff.

Inspection team

Yvonne Mills-Clare, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jennifer Lawrence

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average size Catholic primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is far greater than average.
- The majority of pupils in the school is White British.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action is larger than average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is lower than average.
- The school meets the current floor standard which sets the government's minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school is part of a Children's Centre, 'Little Treasures' which is subject to a separate inspection.
- The school works closely with a collaborative of other, similar schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, so that all teaching matches the best in the school, to help pupils make consistently rapid progress by:
 - re-visiting school policy on teaching and learning so that teachers are confident in understanding the criteria against which they will be monitored
 - providing leaders at all levels with the opportunity to observe lessons routinely, providing marking and feedback that clearly identify what pupils need to do to improve their work
 - offering more opportunities for pupils to work together and discuss their learning in order to develop their formal speaking skills
 - using language that is easily understood by pupils when setting group and individual targets, so that they know exactly what to do to reach higher standards
 - ensuring that pupils have the opportunity to assess their work against the steps necessary to show how well they have understood the learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the Nursery with skills that are generally below those expected for their age. This is particularly true in language and communication and number skills where they are weaker.
- Children do well in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children's particular needs and interests are accurately identified and tasks and activities provided by teachers help children to learn extremely well. As a result progress is rapid and children leave the Reception class very well equipped to tackle Year 1 work.
- In Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 improved teaching is helping more pupils to make good and sometimes better progress from their starting points. School data and inspection evidence shows that standards are rising year on year and by the end of Year 6 are set to edge ahead of standards nationally.
- The school has successfully put in place a structured approach to teaching pupils their letters and sounds. They are linking this well to writing for the younger pupils, with the result that the rate of progress in writing across the school is coming closer to that of reading and mathematics.
- Pupils enjoy reading and read for information as well as pleasure. Parents read with their children at home and are invited to contribute to their reading record book. The majority of pupils read fluently and accurately and demonstrate reading skills expected for their age.
- Meticulous checking of all groups of pupils, combined with individual homework packs to accelerate pupils' learning, and well-targeted adult support ensure that all groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, do as well as they can.
- Careful attention is given to ensure that pupils supported by the pupil premium make progress similar to that of their peers. Funding is currently spent on small group and one-to-one support and help for pupils and their families from the learning mentor. This enables pupils to overcome difficulties they may have and be in a better position to take full advantage of the good teaching provided by the school.
- Pupils' increasing number and literacy skills and the many theme days organised by the school around other subjects, for example in history and art, develop pupils' personal skills well, consequently pupils are well-prepared for the future.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is good and some is outstanding. This is confirmed by the school's checking of pupils' progress, the work in books and lesson observations. All lessons include positive features such as good relationships that encourage pupils to learn well. Classrooms are colourful and vibrant with displays that celebrate and value pupils' achievements, alongside those that offer prompts to guide their learning. Teachers are good role models and encourage pupils to show respect and consideration for each other when learning.
- In the best lessons there is a brisk pace and teachers often set a time to complete a task that ensures that pupils work hard. Pupils are encouraged to work with a partner to discuss their work, share ideas and debate opinions. This was effectively used in a Year 2 class where pupils were discussing the different ways of allocating numbers of eggs to dinosaurs from a given number of counters using only odd numbers. Practice such as this, however, is not consistently used by all teachers and consequently pupils do not always have the opportunity to develop more formal language skills, adapting the way they speak for different listeners.
- Teachers generally have high expectations of what they want pupils to achieve. Planning is effective in ensuring that lessons make sure pupils are given work that gets the best out of them and makes clear to pupils what they are going to learn. Some lessons include criteria to be followed to enable pupils to see how well they have understood the lesson. However, these are not always given to pupils to assess their own learning and the opportunity to involve them more

fully is lost. Marking is conscientiously completed and offers praise to pupils. It does not always, however, offer clear guidance in a way that helps pupils to do better next time.

- Most pupils have individual and group targets to guide them on what they need to do next to improve the standards they are working towards. However these targets are not always written in language pupils can understand and so the effectiveness in providing such guidance is lost.
- Support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is effective because staff and teachers ensure that these pupils are fully included in lessons.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour is good. Play and lunchtimes are calm and when asked, pupils speak warmly about their school. Relationships for many are exemplary and there is no discrimination or harassment.
- The atmosphere in school is warm and welcoming and pupils are friendly and courteous towards adults and each other.
- Attendance is above average, reflecting pupils' enjoyment of school. Pupils talk openly about the many trips provided and the pleasure of spending time with their friends. They have positive attitudes to work and relate this to their teachers who they say are 'kind and helpful.'
- Pupils understand what is meant by bullying and say this is rare. Older Key Stage 2 pupils have a better understanding of the different forms of bullying, including keeping themselves safe on the Internet. Name-calling, if it does occur, is dealt with swiftly and effectively by the school.
- All parents who responded to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) feel that behaviour is good and their children are happy in school. There have been minimal exclusions over the last three years, indicating that behaviour is typically good.
- Pupils' well-being and safety is paramount and the care given to the pupils is exemplary. There is little wonder then that pupils and parents alike agree that the school keeps them safe, providing a 'safe haven' for all its pupils.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher shares her vision well, and as a result all staff and governors are committed to ensuring that pupils learn more effectively, through high expectations that are focused strongly on improvement. The strong teamwork in school is ensuring that the school continues to improve.
- Teachers know how well the pupils are progressing. Through regular meetings with senior leaders, they are called to account for how well the pupils in their class are doing. The school's procedures for gaining a view of its performance demonstrates that it knows its strengths and weaknesses and is well-placed to continue its drive for excellence.
- The headteacher has worked hard on creating a more distributed leadership and creating good teamwork. While leaders at all levels monitor aspects of the school's work, few leaders, other than the headteacher, are routinely involved in checking how well teaching is helping pupils to learn. The headteacher's monitoring has been regular and supportive and teaching has improved. Nonetheless, there remains variability since there are not clearly understood and agreed criteria. As a consequence the focus for observations can be inconsistent and teachers are unsure of the standards against which they are to be assessed.
- The use of performance management is effectively linked to pupils' achievement and staff training. This is central to the school's improvement and is helping to raise standards.
- The promotion of equality of opportunity and tackling of discrimination is good. Leaders check the progress of all pupils meticulously so that any support can be swiftly implemented. As a result, any inconsistencies in the progress made by the different groups of pupils are minimal.
- The school is committed to providing pupils with many varied first-hand experiences to enhance their life skills and sometimes, but not always, links these experiences closely to the theme days

which provide a good, imaginative curriculum, capturing the interest of pupils.

- The effective promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development leads to a harmonious community where all are valued. Although opportunities to experience a wider range of cultures is not as strong as other aspects, through its link with schools closer to home and abroad and religious study programmes, the school raises pupils' understanding of different cultures and beliefs.
 - The school is part of a collaborative of local schools. They provide opportunities to engage in joint training sessions and share expertise to improve teaching in order to raise standards for pupils.
 - The local authority provides support for the school, when requested, but is confident that leaders and managers are competent to drive school improvement still further.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body offers support and challenge in equal measure and shares its skills and expertise in ensuring that the school is constantly improving. Governors check that the pupil premium money is spent wisely and that they provide value for money in terms of the progress pupils make. They are well-informed and ensure that all legal requirements, including safeguarding are met.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	104475
Local authority	Knowsley
Inspection number	402948

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	209
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pauline Kelly
Headteacher	Jeanette Grundy
Date of previous school inspection	3 April 2008
Telephone number	0151 4778410
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Email address	Stleo.de@knowsley.gov.uk

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