

St Julie Catholic Primary School

Brooklands Road, Eccleston, St Helens, Merseyside, WA10 5HG

Inspection dates 16–17 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Achievement is outstanding. The pupils make rapid and sustained progress across the school from their starting points. By the end of Key Stage 1 and 2, attainment is significantly above average. Standards have been above average for a considerable period of time. Progress in mathematics and reading has improved considerably since the last inspection.
- Attainment in English has been stronger than the mathematics. However, there are significant signs of improvement in all areas of mathematics.
- The quality of teaching is outstanding over time. The teaching seen during the inspection was consistently at least good and some was outstanding. This high quality teaching helps to raise standards quickly for all pupils.
- All teachers have an accurate understanding of what pupils are able to do. This means that the work pupils are given meets their varying learning needs.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils' standard of work are very high. Pupils are challenged to achieve their very best across all subject areas.
- Teaching ensures that all pupils are well motivated and thoroughly engaged in all their work. The pupils' attitudes to their work and their behaviour are exemplary.
- Leaders' actions to improve the school have been very effective and their ability to constantly improve the school is impressive.
- Leaders have ensured that all teachers accurately assess pupils' abilities. As a result, information about pupils' achievement is reliable and accurately reflects the school's performance. Staff are rigorously held to account for the progress of all pupils in all subjects.
- Leaders are regularly given a range of opportunities to review the quality of provision in their areas of responsibility. Their skills in evaluating pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching are well developed.
- There is some exemplary practice in place for the effective teaching of reading. However, systems of monitoring are not yet resulting in consistent practice across the school.
- The governing body has the knowledge and the skills that they need to hold the school to account for its performance.
- Attendance is well above average and has been over a period of time.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 20 lessons. They also made a number of short visits to lessons and listened to pupils read in Years 2, 4 and 6. Observations were made of the teaching of letters and the sounds they make (phonics) in the Reception class and in Year 1. Inspectors looked at the work in pupils' books.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior and middle leaders, teaching and support staff, two groups of pupils, members of the governing body and representatives from the local authority.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation, including national assessment data, school assessments, and the school's evaluation of its own effectiveness, the school development plan, local authority reports, curriculum information and safeguarding documents. They also looked at minutes of meetings of the governing body and the headteacher's reports to the governing body.
- Inspectors took into account 82 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). They also took into account letters sent into the inspectors from parents.
- Questionnaires representing the views of 15 members of staff were analysed.

Inspection team

Jean Tarry, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Louise Murphy

Additional Inspector

David Woodhouse

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Julie Catholic Primary School is similar in size to an average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils who are supported by pupil premium funding is well below the national average. The pupil premium is additional government funding provided for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is much lower than average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is much lower than average.
- In 2012, the school met the government's current floor standards that set minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure the exemplary practice for the teaching of reading is consistently operated throughout the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Achievement is outstanding because pupils make rapid progress from their individual starting points. Pupils' knowledge and understanding in English and mathematics is excellent. The vast majority of pupils make at least the expected progress over time. The proportion of pupils who make more than expected progress compares favourably to the proportion that do so nationally. As a result, standards at the end of Year 2 and 6 are significantly above the national average. Inspection evidence indicates that this rapid improvement is set to continue in all year groups.
- Children generally join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are just above those typically expected for their age. In the Reception year, their learning gets off to a good start and children make good progress. This is because teaching is well organised and the teachers take account of children's varying abilities when planning activities, such as when they learn about letters and the sounds they make.
- Between Years 1 and 6, progress is good and often outstanding over time which results in sustained progress for all pupils. The most-able pupils, who are capable of achieving the higher level of attainment, do very well. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 at the end of Year 6 is well above the national average.
- Achievement in English is outstanding. In 2012, in a national check of pupils' skills in phonics at the end of Year 1, a well-above average proportion of pupils reached the expected standard. The phonic skills of pupils currently in Years 1 and 2 are highly developed.
- Over time, pupils read widely and often enough to develop their reading skills at the expected rate and beyond. This is particularly strong in Years 2 and 6 where provision is excellent resulting in consistently above average standards of attainment. In writing, pupils' achievement is rapid because pupils are given many opportunities to use and apply their skills, including when they complete work as part of other curriculum subjects. Pupils' handwriting is well developed and they are developing greater accuracy in using correct grammar, spelling and punctuation.
- The school has effectively focused on improving pupils' achievement in mathematics. In Year 6 in 2013, more pupils made the expected rate of progress than in 2012. A large majority of pupils made more than the expected progress and as a result, standards in national tests were high. Pupils have excellent recall of number facts and are proficient in using them to solve number problems in real-life contexts.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make outstanding progress as they are very well supported by teaching assistants.
- Pupils supported through the pupil premium achieve exceptionally well. In 2012, in Year 6, the attainment of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals was about one term in front of their classmates and two terms in front of similar pupils nationally. All of the eligible pupils reached the nationally expected Level 4 in English. Strengths in the school's systems to assess pupils' skills and therefore to measure their progress support the school's excellent efforts to promote equality of opportunity.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Teaching is outstanding over time and results in pupils' rapid progress. This is confirmed by the work in pupils' books. Teachers have an accurate understanding of what pupils are able to do. Teachers make excellent use of this information to challenge pupils effectively and set work that is well matched to their varying abilities.
- The teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving are high and this helps to raise their achievement very quickly. Only work that is of a high standard is accepted. The pace of learning is rapid.
- Outstanding examples of practice for the teaching of reading are evident in some year groups. For example, in Year 2 and Year 6 regular opportunities for guided reading and rigorous systems

for hearing pupils read result in rapid progress. This outstanding practice is not yet as consistently evident in all classes and results in a slight dip in the rate of progress, for example, in Years 3 and 4.

- The quality of the teachers' marking is excellent. Teachers' comments in books ensure that pupils know what they need to do to next to improve their work. These next steps are addressed well by pupils or if needed they are given the chance to complete a further task to improve their learning.
- Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are well developed because the teaching of the basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics is outstanding. Teachers provide pupils with many opportunities to develop their skills when they complete work as part of other curriculum subjects. This results in outstanding progress and significantly high attainment for pupils over time.
- In many lessons, teachers' introductions are a way of setting the scene. There is a high level of engagement in lessons and a good pace to the pupils' new learning. Pupils are totally engaged and motivated to learn more. In an outstanding Year 6 lesson observed, pupils were engaged in algebra and problem solving. The teacher challenged and extended their numeracy knowledge, skill and understanding, resulting in rapid progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. The pupils are friendly, polite and very considerate. Pupils really enjoy coming to school, they are excited by their learning and all try their very best to succeed. Their exemplary attitudes to learning contribute to their high levels of attainment.
- Pupils behaviour around the school and outside in the playground is exemplary. All pupils are well-mannered, respectful and extremely polite. The lunchtime monitors help to organise the outdoor provision and look after the younger pupils.
- Attendance is well-above the national average. There are effective monitoring systems in place and this has resulted in excellent attendance and punctuality in recent years. Parents and staff believe that pupils' feel safe and happy in school. Pupils know about name-calling and physical bullying and say that it seldom occurs. However, they do know who to talk to if this happens. They know how to keep themselves safe and talk sensibly about the dangers of inappropriate use of the internet.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Leaders and managers clearly demonstrate that they have the ability to improve the school to maintain outstanding achievement for all pupils. Standards are continuing to rise quickly because leaders' actions to improve the school are very effective. As a result, pupils are achieving exceptionally well.
- The headteacher supports the school community and regards it as a family. She has established a very clear vision for continually raising standards. She drives forward the need to concentrate on the progress pupils are making from their starting points. New initiatives aimed at improving the school are introduced timely and effectively. A new letters and sound scheme, for example, is continuing to make a significant difference to the development of pupils' early reading skills.
- The monitoring of the quality of teaching by leaders at all levels is in the main carried out effectively. This has led to continuous improvement with several examples of outstanding practice resulting in consistently above average standards of attainment. Monitoring of the teaching of reading however, has not been consistent enough to ensure that the exemplary practice evident in some year groups is shared across the school.
- A great deal is being done by leaders to hold staff to account for the progress of pupils, including the link between this and teachers' movement up the pay scales.
- Strengths in the teachers' ability to assess pupils' knowledge and skills with accuracy mean that

the school's data that tracks pupils' attainment and progress is reliable. As a result, leaders are able to establish an accurate view of how well the school is performing and ensure that achievement and teaching improves where it is in most need.

- Leaders regularly check how well additional funds, such as pupil premium or sports funding is used to improve pupils' achievement, health and well-being. The impact of this funding can be seen in outcomes for pupils which are outstanding and how well pupils are prepared for their transition to high school.
- The school has established very effective partnerships with external agencies and this is helping to ensure disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make the same outstanding progress as their peers.
- The curriculum is outstanding and meets the needs of all pupils effectively. There is an appropriate focus on reading, writing and mathematics. The leaders have also ensured that pupils' basic skills are developed well through all subjects. There is a very positive impact on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of learning and their development.
- The local authority has provided a range of support at the school's request. The school leadership value this as a means of professional development and constant school improvement. This support and help has resulted in rapid and sustained improvement in the teaching and pupils' achievement over time.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body have the knowledge and skills needed to hold leaders and managers to account for the school's performance. Governors have an accurate view of pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching. This is because they have questioned sufficiently the accuracy of the data they have received from leaders. Governors have ensured that leaders have addressed identified weaknesses in teaching and checked that performance management systems are implemented effectively. Governors ensure that the pupil premium funding is allocated to support the learning of those pupils for whom it is intended. They have checked closely why this support has been very effective in narrowing the gap in the attainment of these pupils compared with similar pupils nationally. The governing body is very committed to continually improving the school. They share the headteacher's drive to continually improve standards. Governors ensure that the school's arrangements for safeguarding are in place and that government requirements are met. The safety and welfare of the pupils is a high priority.

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	104819
Local authority	St. Helens
Inspection number	427229

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	242
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Teresa Sims
Headteacher	Catherine Morris
Date of previous school inspection	18 July 2008
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