



Haydock English Martyrs' Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Better
education
and care

Unique Reference Number 104818
Local Authority St. Helens
Inspection number 287042
Inspection dates 20–21 November 2006
Reporting inspector Paul Bamber

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Piele Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Haydock, St Helens
Age range of pupils	3–11		Merseyside WA11 0JY
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01942 723552
Number on roll (school)	317	Fax number	01942 273706
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr P Barr
		Headteacher	Mrs Karen Prescott
Date of previous school inspection	28 January 2002		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3–11	20–21 November 2006	287042

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The pupils who attend this slightly larger-than-average sized school come from a wide range of backgrounds and most are of White British heritage. A slightly lower than average proportion have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. As with most schools in the area, numbers of pupils are falling. The school has achieved recognition for its provision as a Healthy School, has Investor in People status, an Active Mark Gold Award, a Quality Kite Mark and Artsmark Silver status.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This school is satisfactory with some good features. A warm ethos reflects its catholic status and contributes significantly to pupils' good personal development and the good quality of care and support provided. Because staff establish positive relationships with pupils and manage pupils' behaviour well, lessons are conducted in a pleasant atmosphere that is conducive to learning. While teaching is satisfactory overall, it varies from very good to barely satisfactory. This means that although overall achievement is satisfactory, pupils progress at different rates. Children have a good start to their education in the Nursery and Reception class (the Foundation Stage) because they are well taught and supported. They continue to make steady progress through Years 2 to 6 with some better progress in Year 6, because in this year group assessment is used to match the work set to pupils' needs more sharply. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because of well targeted work and support. Leaders and managers have taken effective action to improve pupils' achievements and standards in English, particularly in writing. Some weaknesses in teaching and in the use of assessment information mean that the same good improvements have not been made in mathematics, which remains a relative weakness throughout the school.

Pupils enjoy a good range of interesting out-of-class activities within an otherwise satisfactory curriculum. Very good sporting provision contributes very effectively to pupils' good health and to their social and moral development. The school has an enviable record in competitive sport.

Pupils are well cared for and supported which means that they are safe and secure. Several pupils commented 'We feel happy and safe in this school' and this is endorsed by parents, who are overwhelmingly supportive of the school's work. 'My child feels comfortable in school, is happy and confident enough to approach teachers if he is worried, upset or struggling with his work' was a typical response.

The headteacher works diligently in the pursuit of higher standards and better achievement, with varying levels of success. Good improvements in pupils' performance in English have resulted from effective leadership at senior and middle management level. However, despite some higher Year 6 test results in 2006, pupils' achievement in mathematics still requires improvement, as does the teaching of the subject. Recent changes to systems to check on pupils' progress mean that teachers are now in a better position to match the work they set to pupils' particular needs. However, expectations about how much progress they will make over time need to be clearer and more challenging. The school knows its strengths and limitations and has made satisfactory progress in addressing issues from its previous inspection. It offers satisfactory value for money and is in a sound position to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and improve achievement in mathematics.
- Ensure that teaching is consistently good throughout the school.

- Ensure that teachers use day-to-day assessments of pupils' knowledge and understanding to match work to their needs better, especially in mathematics.
- Simplify and clarify procedures to track pupils' progress so that staff fully understand what they need to do to help all pupils make good progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are broadly average across the school and all pupils make satisfactory progress from the time they enter the Foundation Stage to the end of Year 6. Effective provision in the Foundation Stage helps children to have a good start to their education. Partly as a result of long-term staff absence, pupils' performance in the end of Year 2 assessments in 2006 fell from above average to average. Contrastingly, standards improved in the 2006 Year 6 tests, especially in writing, which has been a school focus for improvement. Mathematics improved marginally but pupils are still not achieving as well as they should in this subject. For the first time for some years the school met its targets for performance in the Year 6 tests, improving on some previous underachievement. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because they are set work that meets their needs well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Most pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school. They are polite, welcoming, open and articulate. Pupils are aware of the benefits of regular exercise and healthy eating although they do not always put theory into practice in their choice of snacks. They have a keen sense of fair play and a social conscience, effectively contributing to the school and to the wider community. Their cultural awareness has heightened since the last inspection because of specific action by the school. They take responsibilities willingly as school councillors, as play leaders and as co-learners in lessons. They have a satisfactory understanding of the economic world and their satisfactory acquisition of basic skills, such as attending school regularly and on time, prepares them well for their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Good teaching in the Foundation Stage and in Year 6 matches the children's needs well and enables them to make good progress. Elsewhere, the quality of teaching is too variable. As a result, progress varies from class to class. Staff quickly establish very good relationships with pupils. This means that lessons are conducted in a very positive atmosphere and pupils are eager to learn. Teachers make a significant contribution to pupils' good personal development

and their ability to work harmoniously together. Another good feature of older pupils' learning is their ability to assess each other's work in a sensible way so that they help both themselves and others to improve. In some mathematics lessons, weak subject knowledge and teachers' ineffective use of assessment mean that pupils do not achieve as well as they should. In contrast, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because they are well supported to achieve the appropriate targets set for them. Although there is good use of the computer suite, teachers only make limited use of information and communication technology (ICT) in the classroom to enhance pupils' learning and enjoyment.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Curricular provision is satisfactory overall and good in the Foundation Stage, and meets statutory requirements. There has been a successful focus on literacy that has resulted in good improvements to writing. The school acknowledges that it now needs to do more to improve pupils' basic skills in mathematics, which remains a relative weakness in its provision. The curriculum was reviewed in 2005 and as a result pupils now engage in activities that help them understand how subjects are interrelated and they make more visits out of school to support their learning. For example, Year 5 pupils recently visited the opera and subsequently used this experience as a basis for work in design and technology, art, music and literacy. The skills learned in these lessons will be used in the forthcoming school production. There is a strong emphasis on personal development and this helps pupils to behave well and become good young citizens. They take part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities, such as sports, drama and music, which add to their learning and enjoyment. There is good support within the curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of care is good with strengths that support pupils' personal development and well-being. Procedures to safeguard pupils are in place and meet current government guidelines. Parents feel that their children are happy, safe and well cared for. The support of outside agencies is used effectively. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported and make good progress. Internet safety is taken seriously and other risk assessments and safety checks are carried out appropriately and regularly. New systems to monitor pupils' academic progress are currently being trialled so that it will be easier to check on how well they are doing. Pupils in some classes have a good understanding of their targets and of what they need to do to improve, but in others the targets are in language that is too hard for pupils to understand. An emerging strength is pupils' own assessment of their work and that of others. This provides them with skills of analysis and the ability to give and take constructive criticism.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher and other senior staff contribute well to the school's positive ethos, to pupils' good personal development and to how well pupils are looked after and supported. While effective steps have been taken to bring about improvements in literacy, it is in bringing about effective improvement in mathematics, in ensuring consistently good teaching and the sharper use of assessment that leaders and managers have been less successful.

Effective partnerships with other local schools, organisations and agencies contribute well to pupils' good achievements in sport and in the arts. They have also helped the school make good improvements in pupils' competence in using ICT. The school knows its strengths and weaknesses and has an effective plan for improvement and this means that there is satisfactory capacity to improve. Governors perform their duties satisfactorily and are very supportive of the school. Together with the headteacher, they are responsive to parents' concerns and suggestions. For example, arrangements for homework have been revised to better meet the different needs of families.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for making us welcome during the days we spent in your school. We very much enjoyed our visit to your school. This is what we thought was good about it.

What is good about your school?

- You are well behaved, polite and friendly to each other and visitors.
- The school looks after you very well and gives you lots of help if you are worried or upset.
- The children in the Nursery and Reception classes, and those of you who find your work more difficult than others, do well in your learning because of the help you are given.
- You have a lot of interesting activities to enjoy out of lessons and the school does very well in sport.

There are a few things I have asked Miss Prescott and the teachers do to help to improve the school.

- To make sure that all your lessons are good
- For teachers to always set you work that is neither too hard nor too easy
- To make simpler and clearer the ways in which your teachers check on how well you are getting on with your work.

Thank you for helping us with the inspection of your school. We hope that you continue to really enjoy school and work hard.