

All Saints' Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134250
Local Authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	328866
Inspection dates	8–9 July 2009
Reporting inspector	Paul Bamber

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	431
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Fr Stephen Maloney
Headteacher	Mr J Barnes
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Oakfield Anfield Liverpool Merseyside L4 2QG

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	8–9 July 2009
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Many of the pupils who attend this much larger than average size school live in an area of considerable social and economic disadvantage. A smaller than average proportion is from a minority ethnic background. Of these a smaller than average percentage speaks English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The school contains a Resourced Provision for Severe Learning Difficulties for up to 16 pupils. Around twice as many pupils than normal are entitled to claim a free school meal.

The school's provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage consists of Nursery classes, one in the morning and one in the afternoon, and two Reception classes. The school also manages Anfield Children's Centre but this provision is not subject to this inspection and will be reported on separately. There is a breakfast club and after-school club which provide extended care for pupils. The school has the National Healthy Schools Award, is a Fair Trade school and in receipt of the Basic Skills Quality Mark. Following amalgamation of the separate infant and junior schools to form one school in 2003, the two departments moved to a shared site in July 2008.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This school gives pupils a good all round education. The leadership team, together with effective governors, has managed the consolidation of the amalgamated infant and junior schools onto one site extremely well. Parents are very happy with the school's work. Typically they comment: 'All Saints is very welcoming; leaders, teachers and support staff are always willing to help and support parents and children.'

Pupils achieve well overall. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children make good progress from below and sometimes well below expected starting points. However, the small outdoor area for Nursery children does not give them sufficient scope for extensive outdoor learning. Although progress, especially that of boys, slows in Key Stage 1, it picks up again in Key Stage 2. As a result, pupils achieve well overall and leave Year 6 with broadly average standards. Nevertheless, throughout the school, standards are below average in English and the standards boys reach by Year 2 are not high enough.

Pastoral care is outstanding and contributes significantly to pupils' strong sense of well-being and to their very positive attitudes to learning. The excellent partnerships the school has forged with the Children's Centre, with the church, with parents and with other local organisations, have helped pupils develop very well spiritually, morally, socially and culturally. Pupils are polite and welcoming, support each other very well and leave the school as responsible and concerned young citizens.

Teaching is good and, combined with an increasingly creative and relevant curriculum, serves most pupils' needs well. The best teaching, some of which was outstanding, involves pupils actively in learning and has high expectations of their ability to take independent decisions and to show initiative. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the many enrichment activities available. These include visits and visitors, instrumental tuition, French teaching and a wide range of after-school or lunchtime clubs. The curriculum provided for pupils in the resourced centre who have severe learning difficulties is very well suited to their needs and exemplifies the extremely inclusive nature of the school. In the mornings, these pupils join mainstream classes and are enabled to play a full part in lessons because they are skilfully supported by dedicated support staff. During the afternoons they follow a tailored curriculum which promotes their basic academic and life skills very well. Staff know their children and families very well and work closely with parents to ensure that all pupils, but especially those who are more vulnerable, settle in quickly, play a full part in school life and enjoy learning. Overall attendance is broadly average. The school's attempts to reduce the amount of persistent absenteeism have not been as successful as it would wish and the rate still remains well above average.

The school has improved well since the last inspection, especially in using its detailed analysis of test data and tracking information to trigger appropriate interventions and support, in order to curtail underachievement. The only area in which the school has been less successful is enabling boys in Key Stage 1 to achieve better. Leaders and managers have tackled weaknesses in provision rigorously, instigating improvements in the quality of teaching and of the curriculum especially over the last year. There is a unity in the school now everyone is on the same site and the ambition to consistently improve is evident in all who work there. The school knows itself well and uses this knowledge to plan appropriately for specific improvements. Governors challenge and support the school in equal measure. There have been good improvements made since the last inspection and in pupils' achievements recently. Together with the effective way

in which leaders and managers have created one school, this indicates a good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Good leadership and management ensure that provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good overall. Children enter Nursery with below and sometimes well below national expectations for their age particularly in language skills and personal development. They leave Reception with skills mainly in line with national expectations. Children have a positive attitude to learning and enjoy the activities in which they are involved. They respond well to the caring attitude of the staff and quickly follow adult requests. The children interact well with both adults and each other. Indoor provision is good and provides a stimulating environment in which to learn in both Nursery and Reception. While outdoor provision for Reception children is very good, with a wide range of resources, provision for those in the Nursery is only satisfactory, because the outdoor area is too small, limiting children's opportunities to learn outside. Teachers and teaching assistants work together to provide well planned activities and interventions to support all children. This planning reflects the children's own experience. For example, the two Reception classes – although working under the umbrella title of 'Our World' – are pursuing different aspects, for example, space and underwater. There is a good balance between child-initiated activities and those that are led by adults. Welfare requirements are met. There are excellent systems for children's transition, when entering Nursery, moving to Reception and moving to Year 1. Parents comment that staff are welcoming and provide them with the information to enable them to help their children settle well into Nursery.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards in English throughout the school, and raise the standards and achievement of boys in Key Stage 1.
- Improve the outdoor provision for children in the Nursery to enable them to learn and do more outside.
- Reduce the incidence of persistent absenteeism.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. Pupils enter Year 1 with overall skills that are broadly in line with national expectations, but lower in literacy and language. Overall, they make only satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 because boys do not do as well as girls and their standards are well below average by Year 2. Girls make more rapid progress, particularly in reading. In Key Stage 2, all pupils make good progress and leave Year 6 with broadly average standards overall. Standards are average in mathematics and science but below average in English. Challenging targets that were set for the proportion of pupils attaining at the expected Level 4 and at the higher Level 5 have provisionally been met according to the unvalidated 2009 Year 6 national test results. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language make good progress because of the school's very inclusive provision and sensitive, well focused support.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' social development is particularly strong. They behave well and are extremely supportive of each other in lessons and around the school. They accept responsibility willingly: for example, Year 6 pupils are attached to each class throughout the school to chat to and support pupils during the daily 08.30 to 09.00 settling in session. Pupils enjoy membership of the school council and of the enterprise team. They learn effective future work and life skills through writing applications to be members of these bodies, taking on roles as officers of committees and ordering, by telephone, extra stock from a local firm to replenish supplies in the healthy tuck shop they run. The latter exemplifies why the school has a national Healthy Schools Award. Pupils are well aware of and adopt safe practices around the school and their understanding of wider moral issues are cemented by participation in the Fair Trade programme. Attendance is broadly satisfactory but the proportion of persistent absentees is higher than in all and similar schools. Pupils enjoy learning and have positive attitudes both in lessons and to the many out-of-class activities on offer.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good overall enabling pupils to achieve well. Its quality ranges from satisfactory to outstanding. Where teaching and learning are at their best, pupils are rapt in their attention, lessons are pacy and very productive. No time is wasted as pupils work with sustained concentration at tasks which challenge their different abilities. Work is relevant and pupils are actively involved and independent. In a very good lesson concerned with persuasive writing, pupils prepared laptop computers for others to research adverts in order to elicit ways in which companies try to sell their products through language and presentation. All were fascinated, fully involved and much effective learning took place. Where learning is no better than satisfactory, pupils are talked at for far too long as a whole class. This limits the time available for them to practise and apply existing or newly learned knowledge and skills and at the level of difficulty that matches their ability. Where teaching assistants are effectively deployed, their contribution to pupils' learning is significant, especially in supporting those who learn at a slower pace and find their work more difficult. This is particularly reflected in the support provided for pupils in the resourced centre. On some occasions, especially in those lessons when introductions go on for too long, teaching assistants are underused.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Exciting initiatives in the curriculum have led to better opportunities for pupils, for example in music, modern foreign languages and enterprise. The newly introduced thematic, skills-based approach has had a positive effect on pupils' learning, but is not yet fully embedded. Enrichment opportunities are many and varied. The early morning provision encourages pupils to prepare for the day and is used by over half of them. Parents commented, 'They run in to school as soon as the gates open'. The extensive use of visits and visitors, for example the professional photographer who is working with pupils to produce books and photographs, enhances and extends their opportunities. Pupils comment that music is a strength of the school. They are encouraged to learn to play instruments and to join different bands and choirs, which perform

in a variety of venues. Pupils appreciate the wide range of extra-curricular opportunities and comment on the number available. The curriculum meets the needs of all pupils and this is particularly so for the pupils in the resourced centre. Provision for pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The outstanding pastoral care provided is a key strength of the school. It results in pupils feeling safe and secure, free to grow in self-confidence and to establish very positive relationships. The first-class links the school establishes with parents and outside support agencies contribute extremely well to the good progress more vulnerable pupils make, including those with severe learning difficulties in the resourced unit. All safeguarding and child protection requirements are met and the school's management ensures that health and safety procedures are rigorous and that all possible risks are assessed thoroughly. The school's systems to manage behaviour work well. Although overall attendance has improved during this academic year, the strategies to reduce persistent absenteeism have not been sufficiently successful. The school rigorously tracks pupils' progress and monitors the achievements of various groups closely. This has enabled it to intervene appropriately to try to limit any underachievement and to set relevant targets for individual pupils in literacy and numeracy.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

There is a shared ambition amongst all staff to consistently improve standards, achievement and provision. The driving force behind this is the headteacher who is fully and ably supported by the deputy headteacher and the new leadership team. Testament to their effectiveness are the improvements made in pupils' overall standards and in their achievement over the last two years, during a time of considerable disruption due to building work, staff changes and new ways of working. Governors have supported the school very effectively during this time but also have not shied away from asking challenging questions about aspects of the school's work and performance. Inclusion is at the core of the school's work. The wrap-around care provided by both the before-and after-school clubs and the Children's Centre, enables pupils and their families to take full advantage of the school's facilities and provision. Community cohesion is good, excellent within the school and local community. Links with schools in the North East of England have been established and visits from representatives from French schools have added to pupils' and staffs' understanding of European culture. The school is racially harmonious and pupils' studies of different faiths help to break down any religious discrimination. Leaders and managers rigorously pursue improvements in the quality of teaching and have taken appropriate action to ensure that practice improves where required. Recent changes to the curriculum, initiated by senior and middle leaders have resulted in improvements in pupils' achievement. However, some relative weaknesses in standards in English and in the achievement of boys in Key Stage 1 are still to be effectively addressed. Parents have full confidence in the headteacher and his team. Many are particularly pleased with how well the school addresses their concerns and goes out of its way to help them support their children's learning and development.

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Annex A

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?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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	2

The quality of provision

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

On behalf of the team may I thank you very much for the very polite and warm welcome you gave us when we inspected your school recently. Many of you were keen to tell us how much you enjoy lessons and the lots of other exciting things the school provides for you. You go to a good school which helps you to make good progress and to grow into very responsible young people. Here are some of the good things about your school:

- it includes all of you very well in lessons and in out-of-class activities
- it helps you to learn a lot because you are taught well
- the opportunities you have to learn to play musical instruments well and to enjoy music are very good
- you get on very well together and the way in which older pupils look after younger ones is lovely to see
- the school is well run by the headteacher and the governors.

One of my jobs is to suggest to the school what it needs to do to help to make it better. I have, therefore, asked your headteacher and staff to make sure that:

- you reach higher standards in English and that boys in Years 1 and 2 do better in their work
- the outdoor Nursery area needs to be made bigger so that children can learn and do more outside
- they make sure that those pupils who do not come to school regularly come in much more often.

You can all help by working as hard as you can in English lessons and especially for the boys to try as best they can to improve their work.