



Our Lady of Pity Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 105083
LEA Wirral
Inspection number 277289
Inspection dates 3 October 2005 to 4 October 2005
Reporting inspector Mr Mark Madeley CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Rigby Drive
School category	Voluntary aided		Greasby
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Wirral, Merseyside CH49 1RE
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0151 677 6262
Number on roll	440	Fax number	0151 677 5609
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Father Lester
Date of previous inspection	20 March 2000	Headteacher	Mr M Cotton

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 3 October 2005 - 4 October 2005	Inspection number 277289
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by a team of three Additional Inspectors under Section 5 of the 2005 Education Act.

Description of the school

This is a large school drawing pupils from three parishes in socially advantaged areas of Wirral. Children join the school with above average abilities. The number of children eligible for free school meals is lower than average. The percentage of children with a statement for their learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The school has two buildings a few miles apart. The main building has classes for 4 to 11 year olds; the small 'annex' in Hoylake has a class for 4 year olds. The school is part of a local Primary Learning Network, participates in the Primary Leadership Programme and has a Healthy Schools award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Our Lady of Pity is an outstanding school. It has a great many strengths and only minor weaknesses. The inspection team believes that the school is better than its own evaluation because the new headteacher has been overly modest in some of his judgements. Standards are very high. Quality teaching helps all children make very good progress through the school. Central to school life is 'Joy through respect.' Using this message, the headteacher encourages the children to put themselves last and to take responsibility for their actions. For staff, teamwork is now a major feature and they also feel professionally empowered to fully lead their subjects.

Children are well cared for and kept safe. Staff are extremely conscientious and hardworking. This attitude, coupled with robust monitoring, leads to consistently effective teaching in all age groups. Children's spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is of exceptional quality. The provision in the Foundation Stage is high quality and the standards reached by children when they enter Year 1 are well above those commonly found.

The school gives excellent value for money. Its spending for each child is extremely low and yet it helps them achieve very high standards. The school has a very good capacity to improve because it resolved all the issues from the last inspection.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide children with a greater breadth of curriculum in order to further challenge young minds.
- Develop the library as a learning resource for staff and children.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Children join the school with above average skills. During their time in reception, they make good progress because teaching is very effective. Most children achieve the standard for 5 year olds before they join Year 1.

Standards in Year 2 were very high in 2004, and all children made good progress because teaching was high quality. The provisional 2005 results were still above average but were slightly lower than previous years, with fewer children than usual achieving the higher grades. This represented good progress for these children.

Children's standards of attainment in Year 6 are very high. They have been at this level for many years; provisional 2005 results are equally good. The children are set demanding targets and they reach them because teaching is consistently good or better in all the junior year groups. In 2004, children made very good progress in English and science. The school has quickly analysed and remedied the minor problems with the 2004 mathematics results, and standards in 2005 were very high once again.

Achievement in information and communication technology (ICT) is much improved because the full programme is taught well.

Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make very good progress against the targets in their individual plans. Their problems are quickly identified and they receive well-directed support from staff.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is excellent. Children's first experiences of school in reception are very positive and help them to settle quickly and make very good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Through the school's ethos, captured in its message of 'Joy Through Respect', where Joy translates to 'Jesus first, Others second and Yourself last', pupils are given an excellent education in matters that are spiritual, moral and social. Pupils gain a good awareness of our multicultural society through subjects such as religious education and geography. They behave exceptionally well and show enthusiasm for everything. They clearly enjoy school. This is evident not only in their comments but in the very high levels of attendance. Pupils display high levels of cooperation in lessons, as in a Year 5 group work session on play scripts. They have a good awareness of safety issues and a very good knowledge of healthy living. They learn responsibility for others through systems such as the School Council and Buddies. A particular feature is their sympathy for people in difficult times, promoted very effectively by the staff in relation to natural disasters or Third World poverty. Children design fundraising events and this helps them to develop valuable life skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Throughout the school, teaching and learning are of high quality. Most lessons have excellent features that lead all children to make very good progress. The rapid pace of lessons keeps pupils on their toes. Mental starters to mathematics lessons are challenging and pupils use individual whiteboards efficiently. Teachers promote pupils' speaking and listening skills very well. An excellent English lesson in Year 2 developed children's awareness of adjectives. In this lively session, pupils reacted positively to facial expression and body language. Teachers make very good use of the interactive whiteboards to enliven their teaching. A 'Big Book' presentation captured the interest of the reception children, especially when characters began to move on the screen; Year 5 children identified key features of a play script from the good multimedia presentation. A developing aspect of ICT is the use of software and the Internet to promote learning in geography. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and make detailed assessments of children's progress, especially in English, mathematics, science and ICT. Children are set challenging targets. Assessments are also used to identify

pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school supports their needs exceptionally well with effectively deployed classroom assistants.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is well matched to the needs of all children and meets statutory requirements. In the Foundation Stage, the high quality curriculum is practically based to help children learn. Provision for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is outstanding. Excellent support from teachers and well-trained teaching assistants meets their needs particularly well.

Regular curriculum reviews are effective. The greater use of drama ensures lively lessons that build children's confidence and vocabulary. Sessions with qualified sports coaches help them stay fit. Library facilities are inadequate, limiting children's research opportunities. The school already has plans to improve these.

A very good programme of personal, social and health education successfully develops children's knowledge of how to stay safe and be a good citizen. It helps to create the respect pupils show towards everyone. The curriculum is enriched by visits, visitors and well-attended after school clubs. Most are for sports activities with few covering the arts.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The level of care is an outstanding feature of this school. This is a place where every child is valued and kept safe. This sets all children a good example and helps them to live up to 'Joy through Respect'. Staff know children exceptionally well and relationships are excellent. Child protection procedures are robust. There are regular, thorough assessments of each child's progress during the year. This close monitoring ensures that the specific learning needs of every pupil are met. Well targeted support from teaching assistants is particularly effective.

Children trust the staff to keep them safe and help them. 'Guardian Angels' on the infant playground ensure no child feels lonely or threatened. Nearly all parents are highly supportive of the school. They know that their children are extremely well cared for. One remarked, 'we feel very fortunate that our son attends here'.

The school has a Healthy School Award. Pupils are encouraged to consider healthy eating and exercise.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The leadership and management are outstanding. The new headteacher displays excellent leadership qualities. By explaining his vision he has empowered staff, children, governors and parents. The vision is firmly rooted in the saying 'Joy through Respect'.

The staff have fully embraced the new professional opportunities his style of leadership has given them. Subject coordinators enjoy the challenge of skilfully leading their subject. Parents agree that the school is a happy place, and well led and managed.

The school knows itself well, even though it was a little cautious in some judgements. It accurately identifies the key areas for improvement. There is strong commitment to maintaining the highest standards whilst providing a well-rounded education for all. Monitoring is very effective. The headteacher has an excellent understanding of the quality of teaching and enables senior managers to take on new challenges. The school has effectively tackled the issues from the last inspection. ICT provision is now much better, the outdoor environment has improved and the curriculum has greater breadth, but there is still more to do.

The school uses its very low funding remarkably efficiently to enable children to reach very high standards. However, because of financial constraints, resources and the environment are not as good as the school would like. The governing body supports the school fully. It has been very active in trying to improve funding. As yet, governors do not have sufficient, first hand, information about the school because few of them visit other than for school plays and assemblies.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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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?	1	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	1	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	1	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	NA

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

N/A

What a fantastic school you have!

You are really keen to learn and behave very well in class and in the playground. We think that your headteacher and staff work very hard to make learning interesting for you. They also help each of you to grow as a person. We were particularly impressed by how well you understood 'Joy through Respect' and lived up to the saying.

Other things we liked about your school were:

- Teaching was interesting in all year groups and staff really care about each and every one of you.
- The headteacher is really good at his job and everyone likes the way he leads the school.
- The school council is very well organised, gives you all a voice and helps make school a better place.
- The reception classes give you a really good start to your education.
- Your parents support the school and help your learning, sometimes by providing equipment like that for the reception class playground.

Even a really good school like yours has to look for ways to improve so we have asked your teachers to:

- Give you a more useful library.
- Find even more interesting things to teach you.

We really enjoyed our brief visit and thank you for being so friendly and helpful to us.