

St Luke's Catholic Primary School

Shaw Lane, Prescot, Merseyside, L35 5AT

Inspection dates

12–13 March 2014

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.

- Parents and pupils agree this is a happy and welcoming school.
- Pupils' achievement is good. Standards have risen well in most year groups since the last inspection because the quality of the teaching has improved over time.
- Children make rapid progress in their learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage and are well prepared for Year 1.
- All groups of pupils in the school achieve well because teaching is good and at times outstanding.
- Pupils who join the school speaking English as an additional language benefit greatly from the skilled staff who support them well. As a result they make good progress from their individual starting points.
- The behaviour of pupils is good and, at times, outstanding. The school has clear policies which pupils are eager to explain and follow.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is successful. It provides strong pastoral care for pupils and their families.
- The subjects pupils study have interesting topics that promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well.
- The leadership of the headteacher is outstanding. Together with the good leadership of the senior leaders and governors, she strives to make the school even more successful.
- Senior leaders' thorough checks of pupils' progress and the quality of teaching mean that progress is good and the proportion of outstanding teaching is increasing rapidly.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not outstanding because work is not always set at a hard enough level, particularly for the most able. This means that these pupils do not make as much progress as they could in some lessons.
- Middle leaders are not fully involved in checking the quality of teaching and pupils' learning in all subjects of the curriculum.
- A small proportion of pupils are absent from school too often.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 15 lessons or parts of lessons, two of which were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, staff, members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and groups of pupils.
- Inspectors examined the school's own documentation relating to pupils' progress, school self-evaluation and policies relating to safeguarding. They carried out a scrutiny of pupils' work in their writing and mathematics books.
- The inspectors listened to pupils in Years 1, 2 and 6 read and spoke informally to pupils during playtimes and lunchtimes.
- They took account of the 23 parent responses received at the time of the inspection from the online questionnaire (Parent View) and parent responses to the school's own parental survey.
- Inspectors took account of the 21 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Clare Henderson, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Ian Wellens	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above average. (The pupil premium is additional funding 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 above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well-above average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well-above average.
- The school provides an after-school club and day-care provision in the Nursery class.
- The school did not meet the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in 2013.
- During 2012 and 2013, a small proportion of pupils with complex behavioural and learning needs joined the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' achievement to excellent by making sure that work set in lessons is consistently hard enough, particularly for the most able, to enable them to achieve their very best.
- Raise attendance further by continuing to work with the small proportion of pupils who are absent from school too often.
- Raise the quality of leadership to outstanding by further involving the middle leaders in checking the quality of teaching and how well pupils learn in all subjects of the curriculum.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start school with skills that are well below those expected, particularly in their speaking, social and emotional development. They make outstanding progress in the Nursery and Reception classes because they have excellent opportunities to develop these skills through exciting play opportunities in high-quality indoor and outdoor provision. As a result, all children and, particularly those for whom English is an additional language, are extremely well prepared for Year 1.
- Standards at the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics, though below average in 2013, have improved steadily since the last inspection. These improvements are set to continue and inspection evidence shows that standards are rising rapidly in Years 1 and 2 and are currently close to the national average.
- Pupils' standards by the end of Year 6 were above average in 2011 and 2012. However, in 2013, they dipped to below average in reading, writing and mathematics. School information shows that this dip related to a small proportion of pupils with complex behavioural and learning needs who joined the class in Year 5 or 6. School records show that pupils in this year group who had been in the school from Year 2 onward made good progress from their individual starting points.
- School records and pupils' work in their books show that a good proportion of pupils currently in Year 6 are securely on course to meet and exceed the progress expected of them from their individual starting points.
- Pupils' achievement is good and not outstanding overall because, in some lessons, work is not consistently hard enough for pupils, particularly for the most able, to enable them to achieve their best.
- Pupils in all classes show they love books and reading. Daily letters and sounds (phonics) lessons are successfully giving pupils the skills to become confident when tackling new words. Older pupils read fluently and enjoy a wide and varied range of material. Their good quality reading skills support them in all the subjects they study and equip them well for future learning.
- Pupils' achievement in mathematics is good. This is because of the strong focus given to extending pupils' mathematical skills, through problem-solving activities, booster classes in school and at the local high school to extend the achievement of the most able pupils and demand pupils use their thinking and reasoning skills.
- The standards reached by pupils supported by the pupil premium funding in Year 6 in 2013 were about two terms behind those of their classmates. School information shows this gap is rapidly closing. Extra support and working in small groups enable pupils currently supported by the fund to progress at the same rate or in some classes faster, than their classmates.
- Pupils who join the school speaking English as an additional language benefit greatly from the skilled staff who support them. As a result, they make good progress.
- Those pupils who need extra help with their work are fully included in all learning activities. This reflects the school's commitment to equal opportunities. As a result, they make good progress and achieve well.

The quality of teaching is good

- A scrutiny of the work in pupils' books and the school's records of the checks made on teaching indicate that teaching is typically good and improving. This contributes well to pupils' good achievement.
- When pupils learn exceptionally well, as for example in a mixed Year 5 and 6 English lesson, all groups of pupils are very clear about what they are learning because they are provided with clear instructions and the opportunities to test out their ideas both with partners and on their own. They do this with confidence and are absorbed and engrossed in learning, which is set at

the right level for them to achieve the very best they can.

- When learning is rapid, staff frequently check pupils' understanding during the lesson. Skilled questioning based on excellent subject knowledge gets pupils thinking hard, with time to reflect and explain their answers. This was observed when the most able Year 6 pupils were asked to work out the mean, mode and median in a higher Level 6 booster mathematics lesson. They persevered well and made rapid progress during the lesson.
- When pupils fail to achieve their best, there is too little difference in the activities given to different groups of pupils. In particular, in some lessons, work is not set at the right level to make the most able pupils think hard enough.
- In most instances, pupils' work is marked in a way that provides them with advice about what they need to do next and the time to do this. This is particularly strong in Years 2, 5 and 6.
- Teaching assistants work in close partnership with teachers. They provide sensitive and helpful advice and support for pupils who need extra help or who are learning English as an additional language.
- Children learn well in the Early Years Foundation Stage because the adults plan extremely engaging activities that capture pupils' imagination, appeal to their interests and make them think deeply about the subject. For example, children happily explored the world of dinosaurs and investigated worms. This extended their speaking and social skills extremely well.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fully extended because of the interesting topics on offer. For instance, pupils in Years 3 to 6 reflected, wrote and recorded meaningfully, using ipads, about life in Britain during the First World War.
- A visit from a member of the Jewish community, which took place during the inspection, extended pupils' interest, knowledge and understanding of a religious group different to their own. Such work extends their skills of tolerance and acceptance of others extremely well and prepares pupils well for their future lives.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Behaviour observed by the inspectors in lessons was good and at times outstanding. This has a positive effect on pupils' good achievement. School records show that behaviour is typically good in classes, around the school and over time.
- Pupils are caring, respectful and polite and behave well, whether on the playground, along the corridors or in the dining hall. Those groups of pupils inspectors spoke to in formal meetings, or informally whilst they were walking along corridors, playing outside or in the dining hall, say that they feel safe and secure in school.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are safe and cared for extremely well. They rapidly learn to take turns and happily follow school routines. Reception children take their responsibilities very seriously as they help the children who are new to the Nursery to enjoy school and to develop a real thirst for learning from the moment they begin school.
- The school has well-established and clear expectations of behaviour. Pupils say that behaviour in school is good because they have drawn up the rules and so are eager to stick to them. The school's records of parents' views indicate that they are overwhelmingly positive about the behaviour and safety of pupils in the school.
- Pupils say that bullying and racism are unknown in their school and that they trust staff to sort out any concerns that may arise. The school's records also confirm this. Pupils have a good understanding of different forms of bullying, including cyber bullying and that based on prejudice.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils say, and their parents agree, that they feel safe and well supported at school. They know how to keep themselves safe from everyday hazards, including e-safety and road safety.
- A wide range of after school clubs including a homework club and opportunities for full day-care

sessions in the Nursery are welcomed by parents and pupils and contribute well to the pupils' enjoyment of school.

- Pupils have good opportunities to take responsibility. Some are lunchtime leaders on hand to help the younger pupils. Others act as school councillors to seek out and act upon the views of other pupils. Such roles help them to learn to act responsibly and develop leadership skills.
- Although over time attendance is improving, it is still below average. There is a small proportion of pupils who do not attend regularly or respond to the wide raft of rewards on offer for those whose attendance improves.

The leadership and management are good

- The school is very well led by the headteacher, all senior leaders and governors. They fully check to make sure their plans for improvement are working and enjoy the support of staff, who say school is a very happy place to work.
- School leaders regularly check the quality of teaching. Targets set for teachers concentrate on raising pupils' achievement and are well linked to training and to teachers' salary progression.
- The school's track record for generally above-average standards by the time pupils leave in Year 6 shows good capacity for further improvement.
- Leadership is not outstanding overall because middle leaders are not fully involved in checking pupils are achieving as well as they can in all subjects of the curriculum.
- The area of care for those groups who are learning English as an additional language or at risk of not doing as well as they could is well managed. This ensures all groups of pupils have the same chances of success. In this way, everyone is respected and discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well. Pupils' learning is greatly enriched by a wide range of residential visits, music, sports and drama activities built into the curriculum.
- The local authority provides effective support for the teaching of mathematics and English, which has improved the quality of teaching and pupils' learning in these subjects. They use the external reviews of the local authority to confirm their accurate view of the school's strengths, and the areas to improve.
- The new primary school sport funding has increased pupils' participation in physical education and sport and is contributing well to developing better physical well-being for pupils. The impact of this spending is checked regularly by the governors.
- Arrangements for safeguarding pupils and child-protection procedures meet statutory requirements.
- School leaders have strong relationships with parents. Parents say they are well informed about the work of the school because of regular newsletters, opportunities to attend assemblies and through the highly informative website. As a result, parents are very supportive of the school.
- The strong partnerships which exist with local schools provide excellent opportunities for staff to share their expertise and learn from each other.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are well informed and have received training to ensure that they have the necessary skills to carry out their roles. They know the key strengths of the school and areas to develop. They are fully aware of how the different groups of pupils are achieving compared with other schools nationally. The governing body keeps a careful watch on the achievement of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding and check what impact this and the sports additional funding has on pupils' learning. They use performance management, including that of the headteacher, well to check the quality of teaching and link performance carefully to pay and professional progression.

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	104460
Local authority	Knowsley
Inspection number	439524

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	212
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	A Green
Headteacher	M Clarke
Date of previous school inspection	12 January 2009
Telephone number	0151 4778580
Fax number	0151 4778581
Email address	stluke@knowsley.gov.uk

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