

St Edmund's and St Thomas' Catholic Primary School

Oxford Street, Waterloo, Liverpool, Merseyside, L22 8QF

Inspection dates 16–17 April 2013

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.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They behave well and feel safe in school. Attitudes to learning are good. Pupils' good manners and friendliness contribute well to the welcoming atmosphere in the school.
- Children get off to an excellent start in the Nursery and make good progress overall by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- By the end of Year 6, pupils achieve well. Standards in English and mathematics are above average and continuing to improve.
- The quality of teaching is good overall and some is outstanding.
- Senior leaders monitor the quality of teaching regularly, check on pupils' achievement and manage teachers' performance well.
- The governing body provides strong challenge and support for the school.
- Parents have positive views about the school and are confident that their children are well cared for.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Good and better teaching is not yet found consistently across the school.
- Pupils are not given enough opportunities to work by themselves.
- Good marking is not a feature of all subjects in all classes and more should be expected of more-able pupils when they write.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 19 lessons and parts of lessons.
- Discussions took place with staff, pupils, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Also taken into account were the views of 59 parents who responded to the online questionnaire Parent View.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and examined a wide range of documentation including: national assessment data and the school's own assessments; the school's evaluation of its work; local authority reports; minutes from governing body meetings; samples of pupils' work and safeguarding documents.

Inspection team

Kevin Johnson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

John Shutt

Additional Inspector

Nina Heron

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Almost all pupils in this bigger-than-average primary school are White British.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action is below average.
- A below average proportion of pupils is supported by school action plus or has a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils in the school who are known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium funding is also below average. (The pupil premium is additional funding for those known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and children that are looked after).
- The school meets current floor standards, which are the government's minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning so that it is always good or better by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to work on their own without always relying on their teacher to show them what to do
 - making sure that teachers' expectations of what more-able pupils can achieve in writing are high enough
 - ensuring that teachers' marking is of a consistently high quality across all subjects in all classes so that it matches the good, helpful marking of literacy books, especially so that pupils are clear about what they need to do to improve
 - sharing the best practice effectively as a model for all teaching throughout the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- A significant proportion of children entering Nursery are below the stages of development typically expected in their communication skills and aspects of personal development, such as being confident about leaving their parents. However, they get off to an excellent start in the Nursery and settle to their learning very quickly because the quality of provision in the Nursery class is outstanding.
- Good progress continues in Reception class where teaching is consistently good. Children learn to enjoy stories and begin to read confidently by themselves. In Nursery and Reception, children make good use of the opportunities given to choose their own activities and develop their language, thinking and social skills through play. By the end of Reception, children are well prepared for their move into Year 1.
- Pupils continue to achieve well in Years 1 and 2. Attainment in mathematics at the end of Year 2 has been consistently above average. In reading and writing, attainment in 2012 was similar to schools nationally but current school assessments show a positive picture due to the increased school focus on phonics (the teaching of letters and sounds) and writing skills. Nevertheless, assessments show that there is scope for more pupils to achieve the higher Level 3 in writing.
- Attainment in Year 6 is above the national average overall and well above the average for similar schools in reading. While attainment in mathematics remained just above average in 2012, it dipped from previous years due to less effective teaching. The school took swift action to rectify this issue and current assessments and pupils' work show that pupils are on track to attain above national expectations in mathematics, with some pupils likely to reach the highest possible Level 6. School leaders acknowledge that more rigorous writing targets for more-able pupils would lift standards further to match those seen in reading.
- Pupils throughout the school read well. An effective programme for phonics, spelling and grammar has been introduced recently and is already showing good results, particularly lower down the school. Pupils in Year 2 have very positive attitudes to books. They say that reading 'makes you more confident' and 'is very exciting', with one pupil adding, 'I just really love it'. They like the way their teachers teach them to 'crack open words'. Pupils read regularly in school and at home. They read accurately and know how to find information from books.
- At the end of Year 6, pupils read fluently and have a good understanding of what they read. They choose from a wide range of books and authors and often prefer to read books they bring from home. All pupils enjoy reading and are confident that they have reached a high standard.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well from their starting points. Their learning is carefully planned to match their particular needs and the teaching, as well as the pastoral support they receive, is very effective. As a result, all of the group make at least the progress expected, and some do better than that.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, achieve well in English. The funding is used effectively to provide additional help such as one-to-one teaching, improved learning resources and full access to the curriculum. While there is no identifiable gap between different groups in English, the school's focus is centred on bringing into line those pupils who are approximately one term behind others in the school in their mathematics achievement.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Most teaching is good with some examples of outstanding teaching. However, there are some aspects of teaching and learning that could be better.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is good and their willingness to use technology in lessons makes learning more exciting for pupils. Teachers and pupils make good use of tablet technology, for example for research work or for recording what they have done.

- Other interesting methods and resources are also used effectively to enliven learning. Being dressed as the story characters in *Jack and the Beanstalk* and acting out the story while the teacher read it really helped 'actors' and 'audience' and brought the best out of pupils in their language, speaking and listening skills. Not all lessons result in such a good rate of learning and leaders agree that the best practice seen in lessons is not yet shared as well as it could be throughout the school.
- Planning is good so that pupils build well on what they have done. Teachers assess pupils' learning through questioning and monitoring what they do accurately during the lesson. Although different abilities are usually catered for either through work or more support, pupils do not have enough opportunities to work on their own to find out facts, solve problems with others or test their own ideas.
- Some marking is good and never fails to show pupils how their work can be improved. The best quality, usually seen in literacy books, is not always evident in other subjects and across all classes where it is too often unclear about the next steps for improvement.
- Literacy and numeracy are generally taught well. There are good opportunities for pupils to use their varying experiences as starting points for their writing. Nevertheless, expectations of what more-able writers could achieve should be higher. Teachers' recent evaluation of the mathematics curriculum has led to a stronger focus on pupils' application of skills and understanding of mathematics.
- Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. They work well with class teachers to plan and monitor work in the classrooms. They know pupils well and are very sensitive to pupils' particular needs when working with small groups.
- Teachers' good relationships with pupils underpin good learning. Pupils' contributions to lessons are valued. Consequently, pupils are confident about their learning and more willing to share ideas.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are always polite and well-mannered in school. They show respect for adults and towards one another. They are attentive in lessons, work hard and behave well.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the cultures and lifestyles within different communities and gain good appreciation of art, music and literature through the curriculum.
- Attitudes to school are very positive. Attendance is above average and pupils enjoy lessons. They find it difficult to choose the best things about their school because, they say, 'There are too many of them.'
- Pupils feel safe in school and share trusting relationships with adults who work there. Parents overwhelmingly agree that their children are well cared for. Pupils know about the different forms that bullying can take, including internet bullying. They are adamant that incidents take place extremely rarely, if ever, and that they know how to deal with them. They say there is no name-calling and that everyone is treated equally.
- Pupils contribute well to the everyday life of their school. The active school council sees that every pupil has a say and promotes charitable work for overseas projects. The eco-club takes a particular interest in energy conservation and prefects ensure the safe movement of pupils around the school.
- By the end of Year 6, pupils develop sensible attitudes about their place within a community. They willingly take on additional responsibilities and are well placed to move successfully to the next stages of their education.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher's good leadership has consolidated the school's good performance over time and helped it continue on an improving path. Since the school's previous inspection, improvements have been made in curriculum provision, staffing and teaching quality, the learning environment and standards in pupils' work.
- The headteacher is very ably supported by a knowledgeable and hard-working deputy headteacher, senior team, governing body and supportive parent community. The school's own view of its work is based accurately on careful and regular checking by leaders. The local authority recognises the school's good ability to bring about any further improvement.
- The vision for the school's future and the commitment to achieve the best for all pupils are clearly shared by the staff who are entirely supportive of the school's aims and confident about its leadership.
- The management of teaching performance is good. There are well-established systems for checking the quality of teaching and providing relevant training and support where needed. Teachers' accountability for standards and progress is reflected in performance targets as well as their pay progression.
- The curriculum provides good opportunities for pupils to develop skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. Pupils achieve well in art and music and enjoy a good variety of clubs and activities outside school. Residential visits that broaden pupils' horizons and help them to develop good personal qualities are also popular.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are strongly committed to the school's success. A good depth of expertise and well-focused training mean that the governing body has good capacity to challenge the school and hold its leaders to account. Governors analyse national assessment data on pupils' performance to monitor progress throughout the school; they check on the management and quality of teaching with school leaders to ensure value for money is maintained and the pay structure is consistent with teaching performance. Governors are fully aware of how the pupil premium is used to provide equality of opportunity for all pupils and of its impact on narrowing achievement gaps in the school. Safeguarding arrangements meet all government requirements. The management, well-being and safety of all staff and pupils are given 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	104928
Local authority	Sefton
Inspection number	402956

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	373
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Claire Newbery
Headteacher	Kieran Loftus
Date of previous school inspection	21 November 2007
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