

# Our Lady and St Edward's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	105086
<b>Local authority</b>	Wirral
<b>Inspection number</b>	336423
<b>Inspection dates</b>	28–29 June 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Mr Michael Hewlett

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	254
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Elizabeth Farrelly
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Elaine McGunigall
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	December 2006
<b>School address</b>	Price Street Birkenhead Wirral CH41 8DU
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 19 lessons and observed 12 teachers. They held meetings with governors, senior staff and groups of pupils. The inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised a range of documentation including that related to school management, safeguarding, pupils' attainment and progress. They also took into account questionnaires returned by 32 parents and carers, 100 pupils from Key Stage 2 and 26 staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- pupils' achievement by the time they reached the end of Key Stage 2
- attendance levels
- the consistency of teaching and feedback to pupils
- the impact of leadership and management.

## Information about the school

This school is of average size. Most pupils are of White British heritage. Few are from minority ethnic groups and very few are learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for a free school meal is high at almost four times the national average. Above average numbers of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school has recently achieved the Healthy Schools Award.

Rooms on the site are used for a pre-school group and an after-school club, both managed independently of the school. These settings were not subject to this inspection.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate**  
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**1**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**1**

## Main findings

Our Lady and St Edward's is an outstanding school. It is successful because leaders, staff and governors have concentrated on the right priorities. They set about raising attainment by improving the quality of teaching and learning and introducing an excellent curriculum, which pupils find interesting and engaging.

Overall, children begin school with skills which are typically well below average. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage because of the high priority adults give to improving children's personal, social and literacy skills. Similar rates of progress are maintained throughout the other two key stages, so that by the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment is broadly average in reading and mathematics. In writing, it remains just below average and this is the weaker subject. This is because, in some classes, there are too few opportunities for pupils to produce extended pieces of work. Progress for those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is excellent. This is because the skilled interventions from teachers and support staff accurately meet individual pupils' needs.

The school's work has some outstanding features. These include pupils' positive attitudes to learning and their exemplary behaviour. They are ready to share their good understanding of the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle and they say they feel extremely safe. Excellent care, guidance and support are enhanced by first-rate partnerships with parents and carers and a host of agencies. Pupils have a genuine voice in the school and they are constantly encouraged to share their opinions. As one member of the school council commented, 'We talk about everything. We even helped decide what equipment we should have outside'. Good and improving teaching, an outstanding curriculum, and the exceptional focus on providing equal opportunities allow all pupils to develop their individual strengths. The headteacher's drive and determination are exceptional and have been instrumental to improving learning for all pupils. Attendance is average and improving, but for a small minority of pupils, attendance is erratic. Key to the improvement in pupils' achievement is the rigorous self-evaluation which is highly accurate and honest in its judgements. The school has an extremely clear view of its strengths and areas for improvement. For example, it recognises that pupils' contact with other cultures could be better. Staff and governors are united in their pursuit of excellence. This demonstrates the school's excellent capacity for sustained improvement.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in writing by ensuring that:
  - there is a consistent emphasis on writing across the school
  - staff ensure pupils complete enough writing in lessons.
- Improve attendance further, especially that of persistent absentees
- Broaden pupils' understanding of the richness of the wider world and their contact with it.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

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Pupils enjoy coming to school and their achievement is good. 'Our teachers make the lessons interesting and that is why we work so hard' was a comment that summed up pupils' views. In all lessons observed by inspectors, behaviour was exemplary. Pupils apply themselves to their work and consequently make good progress in their learning. They show an eagerness to learn and enjoy the positive encouragement that they receive.

Overall, pupils make good progress from their starting points, leading to broadly average attainment in reading and mathematics by the end of Year 6. Pupils seen to be making slower progress and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are quickly identified and they receive excellent support from all staff. As a result, they make excellent progress. Although good progress has been made in improving standards in writing, it remains the weaker subject.

Pupils participate enthusiastically in the many sporting activities that are available, often provided by the school's sports coach. Pupils respect the needs of others and have a well developed sense of right and wrong. They readily cooperate with one another and share common values. This was confirmed by pupils who said, 'In our school we all try to think about one another'. They are keen to take on responsibilities and make a good contribution to the school and wider community. For example, the head boy and head girl regularly take visitors around the school. They take their roles very seriously and make sure the school is seen in the best possible light.

Pupils work well in teams, enjoy decision making and most have high aspirations. Their ability to use and apply the key skills of oracy, literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) that would contribute to their future economic well-being is good. Whilst attendance is average, and the school has made good progress in this area, persistent absence is still too high. In addition, pupils have a limited appreciation of and contact with cultures beyond those in the school and in the immediate locality.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective is the provision?**

Excellent behaviour and relationships are important factors that contribute to the good quality of teaching. Strengths include teachers' high expectations of learning and clear lesson plans that explain how the needs of different groups are to be met. Importantly, pupils are given good feedback on their work both orally and in the written comments in their books. These qualities were illustrated well in an outstanding Year 3 mathematics lesson, where pupils were using compass points to describe directions. Pupils thrived within a learning environment where the teacher encouraged them to apply their new found skills in practical situations. They assessed their own progress and could explain what they found difficult. Skilful questioning checked on levels of understanding and, as a result, rapid progress was made by the different groups represented. However, on a few occasions, teachers do not place enough emphasis on ensuring that pupils complete their written tasks.

An excellent curriculum impacts positively on pupils' attainment, for example, by providing many relevant opportunities for pupils to produce extended pieces of writing in subjects such as history. The move to a thematic approach that links subjects together has increased pupils' enjoyment and engagement. It has made topics more relevant and encourages pupils to pursue their own interests. They make the most of, and thoroughly enjoy, the numerous opportunities they are given to join in sporting, social and artistic activities. The curriculum is enriched by an excellent range of educational visits and visitors.

Most parents say that the school is very caring and supervises pupils well to ensure their safety. Inspection findings confirm that care, guidance and support are excellent. Staff know pupils as individuals and provide support that is tailored to their specific needs. There are excellent partnerships with outside agencies and first-class transition arrangements with the on site pre-school group and the local high schools. These contribute to very smooth transfers. The school's imaginative approaches to

<sup>1</sup>The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

encouraging and rewarding good attendance are beginning to have a positive impact.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides inspirational leadership and, well supported by colleagues in the leadership team, has established a clear educational direction and ambition to improve. The culture established in the school is one of promoting equality for all, evident in the excellent support for different groups of pupils and the impressive use of data to monitor the progress of individual pupils. The governing body is effective in supporting and holding the school to account. It makes sure that all statutory requirements are met and the school's procedures for safeguarding are good. Systems are very effective and regularly checked. All aspects of the budget are carefully monitored in order to get the best value from it. For example, staff deployment is regularly reviewed to ensure that it has maximum impact on pupils' learning. The management and monitoring of teaching and learning are rigorous, supportive and highly effective. As a result, teaching is improving with an increasingly secure base of good and outstanding practice. Self-evaluation informs the strategies for school improvement that have successfully increased the rate of progress that pupils make. The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion. It sees itself at the heart of its local parish. This partnership enables the school to contribute greatly to its local community and pupils benefit from the excellent partnerships with parents and carers. These are important factors in the pupils' good achievement. The school promotes amongst pupils a sense of tolerance and understanding of a range of cultures and faiths. Opportunities to make the most of the diversity and richness of the wider world and pupils' contact with it are not as well advanced.

*These are the grades for the leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	
The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage from starting points mostly well below those typically expected for their age. Very good transition arrangements ensure they settle quickly into a safe, secure and welcoming environment. They make good progress as a result of the good input from teaching and support staff who provide children with challenging and exciting activities. When they move to Year 1, children are generally still working below the age-related expectations for their age in all areas of learning. Nevertheless, they have made impressive strides in acquiring language skills and in their personal and social development. This is because adults provide regular opportunities for children to discuss what they are doing. This improves their spoken language and provides good opportunities and reasons for writing. Children's personal development, including their behaviour, is good. They are given clear boundaries and know what is expected of them. They play together happily, learn to share and form good relationships with adults and with each other. Children are given tasks that challenge and interest them, often linked to visits or visitors. For example, they manage their 'Seaside Café' with great enthusiasm, taking food orders and then writing out the bill. Children talk confidently about the similarities and differences they notice when they compare their own 'business' with real one at a nearby resort. As one child explained, 'We only sell pizza here because we cannot cook chips'.

Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. There are rigorous tracking systems which ensure individual needs can be identified early and suitable support offered. The excellent curriculum takes full advantage of the newly refurbished, attractive environment inside and outside the classroom. Children's welfare and progress are carefully monitored and all aspects of safeguarding are well in place to match the rest of the school. Plans are in place to further improve and embed the continuous provision now that recent building improvements are complete.

### *These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## Views of parents and carers

Just under a fifth of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. Of these, the vast majority are highly satisfied with the school. They comment very positively about the quality of leadership and management, the impact of teaching and the overall provision in the school. Many positive comments were also received by inspectors about how caring the school is and how much children enjoy school. Overall, parents' and carers' views reflect the inspection findings. Very few comments raised concerns. Where they did most related to the amount of information that parents and carers received about their children's progress or about the way the



school dealt with complaints. During the inspection, no evidence was found to support these concerns.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Our Lady and St Edward's Catholic Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 32 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 254 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	25	78	7	22	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	30	94	2	6	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	27	84	5	16	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	22	69	10	31	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	26	81	6	19	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	24	75	8	25	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	23	72	9	28	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	21	66	7	22	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	23	72	9	28	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	24	75	8	25	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	20	63	12	38	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	26	81	5	16	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	27	84	5	16	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



29 June 2010

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Our Lady and St Edward's Catholic Primary School, Wirral,  
CH41 8DU**

Thank you for the welcome you gave to me and the other inspectors. We enjoyed our visit. You were eager to talk to us and tell us how much you like your school. This helped us to find out about the school and how well it is doing.

Your school provides you with an outstanding education. You told us you always feel safe when you are in school. We saw that you enjoy learning and behave extremely well. You know a lot about staying healthy and you try your best in all the things that you do. This is helping you to make good progress in your learning. The adults in school take good care of you and all want the best for you. Teachers find topics that interest you and help you to learn.

The school has three areas for further development. Firstly, we want you to have more opportunities to practise your writing. Secondly, we want those of you who have too many absences to improve their attendance. This is to help these pupils to learn even faster. Thirdly, we want you to find out more about the wider world.

You can play your part in bringing about these improvements by coming to school regularly and always doing your best to finish your writing.

Well done and best wishes for the future!

Yours sincerely,

Mr Michael Hewlett  
Lead inspector

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