

St Wilfrid's Catholic Primary School

Greenbank Lane, Hartford, Northwich, CW8 1JW

Inspection dates 17–18 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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.

- All pupils achieve well and make good progress from the time they join the school to the time they leave. Attainment at the end of Year 6 is well above average.
- Teaching is usually good and there are some examples of outstanding teaching.
- Pupils are polite, well behaved and want to learn and do well at school. Pupils feel safe and understand how to keep themselves safe.
- Pupils, including those who are disabled and those who have special educational needs, are fully included in the life of the school and well supported by all adults.
- Pupils take on additional responsibilities and this prepares them well for their later lives.
- Initiatives introduced by leaders have successfully improved the school. Teaching and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics are better than at the last inspection.
- Governors play an active role in supporting and challenging school leaders.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and not enough is outstanding. Time is not always used well and marking is variable.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 do not break down words into their sounds or blend sounds together to help them work out difficult words when they are learning to read.
- Leaders do not observe teaching regularly enough to identify what can be improved and then take action to address this.
- Information about pupils' progress is not always used effectively to spot where additional support is most needed to raise attainment.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 21 lessons, of which two were joint observations with the acting headteacher. In addition, the inspection team made a number of short visits to lessons.
- Meetings were held with two groups of pupils, the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, members of the governing body, and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 51 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) during the inspection and previous survey information collected by the school. They also spoke to parents as they brought their children to school. Questionnaires from 10 staff were also scrutinised.
- The inspection team listened to pupils read, spoke with them about their learning and looked at the work in their books.
- The inspectors looked at a number of documents, including the school's improvement plans, own data on pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring files, minutes of the governing body meetings and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Heather Simpson, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

David Law

Additional inspector

Clare Daniel

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The largest group represented in the school population is of White British heritage and the overwhelming majority speak English as their first language.
- Very few pupils have minority ethnic heritage.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The deputy headteacher has been appointed as the acting headteacher for 12 months following the retirement of the previous headteacher. She is supported by two acting assistant headteachers.
- St Wilfrid's Pre-School is run alongside the Reception classes but is independently managed and inspected separately.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the consistency of teaching so that all lessons are good or better by ensuring that:
 - activities are matched accurately to the different abilities of learners
 - teachers' explanations are short and precise and pupils have enough time to think, discuss and complete their work
 - when teachers mark pupils' work, they give clear guidance on how to improve it and pupils then have an opportunity to put this into practice.
- Improve the teaching of early reading, especially the skills to blend letters and their sounds, in Years 1 and 2 so pupils draw on a wider range of skills to help them read.
- Improve the impact of leaders and managers by ensuring that:
 - evaluations of teaching are more regular and focused and lead to action which improves the quality of teaching
 - assessment information gained during lessons and through testing leads more swiftly to targeted and additional support for those who most need it.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join Reception classes with skills that are below those typical for their age. All groups make good progress because the curriculum is planned well and provides interesting and challenging activities that move learning forward rapidly. Indoor and outdoor environments are used effectively to promote literacy and numeracy skills, along with physical and social development. As a result, pupils achieve well and are in line with others of a similar age by the time they start Year 1.
- By the end of Year 2, pupils reach standards that are slightly above average. Attainment dipped in 2011, particularly in reading and mathematics but actions taken have led to attainment in 2012 being on a par with previous years. All groups of pupils make good progress, especially more-able pupils in mathematics and the percentage reaching the higher levels has increased. Pupils make better progress in writing than reading in Years 1 and 2.
- Pupils in Key Stage 2 make good progress overall and attainment by Year 6 is well above average. Attainment in English has historically been higher than mathematics but action by the school has successfully raised attainment in mathematics and both subjects are now similar. Writing is slightly higher than reading but both are well above average. Current data and work in books show that good progress is maintained.
- Progress throughout the school is good but varies in lessons when tasks are not matching pupils' ability and they could work at a faster pace.
- Reading is enjoyed throughout the school and pupils read regularly at home. Pupils from Years 1 and 2 use their knowledge of letters and sounds to attempt unfamiliar words, but the blending of sounds together is underdeveloped for lower-ability readers. Older pupils discuss and give opinions about what they read and more-able readers enjoy books which are challenging and extremely lengthy.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding make good progress in line with their peers. This funding is used effectively to provide a range of support such as additional adult time in lessons to accelerate literacy and numeracy skills and to subsidise school residential visits.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress due to the well-focused additional adult support they receive in lessons. Individual and daily support is also provided for those with specific difficulties, for example those with speech and communication difficulties or who are physically or visually impaired.

The quality of teaching is good

- Since the last inspection, the quality of teaching has improved. It is strongest in Reception and Years 5 and 6. Strong relationships between all staff and pupils help create a very positive climate for learning which ensures pupils are motivated and participate well in lessons. High expectations of behaviour are set.
- Planning in Reception classes ensures basic skills are taught effectively. For example, in a literacy lesson, children had to read, write and discuss the story of the Owl Babies. An imaginative text combined with probing questioning and careful guidance ensured that each skill was practised and developed fully. Successful teaching contributes to good progress.
- Throughout the school most teachers have good subject knowledge and build on what pupils already know. A variety of activities captures their imagination as was seen in Year 5 when pupils dressed up to become characters from a book. A brisk question and answer session between the pupils and the actors promoted good speaking and listening skills. Their writing was also all linked to the story which ensured the purpose of writing was relevant and interesting.
- Teachers make good use of resources, including technology. Laptops and i-pads are used as research tools and to help pupils develop technology skills. Children in Reception enjoyed seeing

their faces on the i-pad and then exploring how to distort the image.

- Where teaching is less effective, activities are not always matched carefully enough to pupils' individual abilities. Tasks lack challenge, as in Year 4, when pupils had to insert a joining word between two sentences. This was too easy a task for some pupils who then had to wait before the next part of the lesson.
- In other lessons that required improvement too much talk by the teacher and lengthy introductions and explanations reduced discussion time for pupils and limited the amount of work they completed.
- Additional adults are deployed effectively to support pupils and extend their learning. They add to the progress pupils make by asking questions and checking their levels of understanding. They are good role models and provide invaluable support, particularly for those who are disabled or have special educational needs. Additional one-to-one support is carefully tailored to meet the needs of individual pupils and additional advice and resources are provided by external agencies.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and on occasions add useful comments that tell pupils how well they have done. Some examples show pupils have evaluated their work. However, marking is inconsistent throughout the school and pupils are not always given the opportunity to respond to what teachers have suggested.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. They concentrate well and most persevere in order to complete tasks set. They behave well in lessons and around school and are polite, respectful and friendly towards visitors.
- The school's own surveys and responses to Parent View received show that most parents feel behaviour at the school is good and pupils are kept safe. Pupils also feel that behaviour is good and they are looked after well. They know and follow the school rules. Pupils say they enjoy the rewards they get for good behaviour, especially 'golden time', merits and raffle ticket prizes.
- The caring and religious ethos of the school is a strong feature and is promoted effectively through the respectful relationships between staff and pupils. There is no discrimination. All groups of pupils are fully included in the full range of activities provided. Older pupils readily take on additional responsibilities including looking after younger children and this helps prepare them for their future lives.
- Pupils say they feel safe and give examples of how to keep themselves safe. Their knowledge of types of bullying and internet safety is, however, limited. Pupils know who to approach if they are upset or feel threatened and are confident that when incidents are reported, they are dealt with effectively.
- Attendance is above average and continues to improve year-on-year. Pupils enjoy school and arrive on time.

The leadership and management are good

- The newly appointed acting headteacher and two assistant headteachers have a clear vision for school improvement. They are ably supported by other middle leaders who contribute to the effective provision for children in the Reception classes and disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. They have identified correctly the school's priorities and set out a clear plan of action for improvement.
- Leaders work together to monitor the quality of teaching but this is not regular enough or sufficiently focused on the impact of teaching on pupils' learning and progress. As a result, aspects of teaching still require improvement.
- Achievement has risen since the last inspection due to actions taken by leaders. Lessons with a

focus on basic skills have improved writing across the school. All pupils know what levels they are working at and also have a clear target of how to improve further. An effective training programme for all staff has also impacted on teachers' performance in the classroom.

- Systems are in place to track pupils' progress. However, information and data gathered are not always fully analysed or transferred into actions to provide additional support for those pupils who need it. This leads to slower progress for some individuals, for example in reading.
 - The curriculum is broad and balanced and enriched well by a variety of school clubs, visits and visitors. Topics, for example the Second World War, promote writing well. Information and communication technology is incorporated into many lessons and numeracy skills are used during science. Residential visits support history, geography and science work and pupils learn to play a musical instrument in Year 5.
 - Pupils' spiritual and cultural development is nurtured effectively through music, Spanish and arts and visits to place of worship. Social and moral development is promoted regularly through opportunities to work together and to appreciate what is right and wrong.
 - Partnerships with parents are very positive. They are kept well informed and many support their children at home, for example with reading and homework.
 - The local authority has provided light touch support in the past, but this has increased with the extra funding of a local headteacher to work alongside the new leadership team. Plans to provide a Local Leader of Education link will also support the school's leadership until a permanent headteacher is appointed.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the governing body challenge the school based on a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Governors take part in training in order to carry out their roles effectively. They ensure performance management is linked to achievement and with the guidance of an external adviser set the headteacher performance management objectives. Governors fulfil all of their statutory duties including meeting all safeguarding requirements. They allocate funding, including the pupil premium, wisely to ensure all pupils receive the required support to ensure equality of opportunity.
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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	111461
Local authority	Cheshire West and Cheshire
Inspection number	401185

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	354
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Elaine Morrissey
Acting Headteacher	Anne Weir
Date of previous school inspection	7 July 2010
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