

St Catharine's CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106464
Local Authority	Wigan
Inspection number	355956
Inspection dates	13–14 October 2010
Reporting inspector	Mike McLachlan

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	161
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Virginia Brookes
Headteacher	Mrs Gwen Armstrong
Date of previous school inspection	4 February 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 17 lessons and eight teachers. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body, the School Improvement Partner and staff. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at the self-evaluation document and development plan, reports from the governing body and the School Improvement Partner, records of lessons observed by the senior management team and a range of policy documents, including those related to safeguarding and the teachers' planning. In addition, questionnaires completed by pupils, staff and 48 parents and carers were scrutinised.

- How well pupils progress from starting in Reception to leaving in Year 6.
- How well teachers use assessment data to inform pupils of their levels of attainment and what they need to do to improve.
- How effective the school is in widening pupils' cultural and social experiences.
- Why the school considers its care and guidance systems to be outstanding.
- How effectively leaders and managers are improving their monitoring systems to improve learning and progress for all pupils.

Information about the school

The school is a smaller-than-average-size primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. The number of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well below average. The number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average and the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is average. The school has achieved the Eco Schools' award and Healthy School status.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

St Catharine's is a good school. At the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is broadly average. Overall, this represents good progress and achievement because a substantial proportion of pupils' start in reception with well-below average skills. Teaching is good. Lessons are well planned, taught by teachers with good subject knowledge and well supported by effective teaching assistants, who contribute significantly to the learning of all pupils. The use of assessment to promote learning, while improving, is currently satisfactory because marking is used inconsistently across subjects and classes and does not always inform pupils what they need to do to improve. Attainment and descriptions of what has to be learned at each level are effectively shared with pupils in English, but not in other subjects. This limits some pupils' understanding of how well they are doing. Pupils particularly enjoy the wide range of additional activities the school offers to support its good curriculum.

Outstanding care, guidance and support, combined with excellent links with parents and carers and other partners, ensures high levels of confidence and satisfaction with all that the school offers. The school's full-time 'key worker,' together with strong links with external agencies and quick and effective identification of needs, ensures outstanding support for all and particularly for the most vulnerable in the school. This enables all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities to make good progress, not only in the subjects they study, but also in their personal development. Pupils say they feel safe in school and develop good understanding of health-related and work-based skills. Attendance is average and improving.

The school is well led by the senior staff and the headteacher, who has given many years of service to this community. Systems for ensuring pupils are safe are good and meet requirements. A good start has been made in improving the school's monitoring and tracking systems but this has yet to raise attainment significantly. Links with the local community are strong, although opportunities for pupils to meet people from other cultures are underdeveloped. Issues raised in the last inspection report, particularly with regard to English, have been addressed. Senior managers through their good self-evaluation have accurately identified further areas for improvement. Care and guidance systems have improved and the school's reputation in the community remains high. Consequently, the school has good capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Before the end of this school year.
- Further raise pupils' attainment and rates of progress through improving the use of assessment to promote learning, by:

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- ensuring consistency in marking across subjects and classes so that pupils are clear what they need to do to improve their work
 - extend the good system currently used in English to other subjects so that pupils know their attainment grades and what steps are needed to reach the next level
 - embed the good work done to date with the new tracking system so that all staff are aware of how well individuals and groups are progressing so they are more able to effectively target support.
- Provide greater opportunities for pupils to have first-hand contact with children from a wider range of social and cultural groups.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils show great enthusiasm for learning, particularly in response to activities which are challenging, related to first-hand experience or arising from the work done with them by visiting experts. For example, pupils in Year 3 were enthusiastically using skills learned with the visiting poet to develop their own performance style and advise each other how to improve. In a Year 6 science lesson, pupils were accurately identifying the physical and emotional impact of smoking and then responding in a very mature way to a range of challenging personal dilemmas they might meet. Learning, however, is slower in situations where tasks are more mundane or where pupils are not given sufficient time to work independently.

Overall, children's skills on entry to the school are well below average, particularly in their language and communication skills, numeracy and social and personal development. Good teaching combined with outstanding care, guidance and support enables the pupils to catch up, so that by the end of Year 6, attainment is broadly in line with the national average. This represents good progress overall for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Consequently, pupils' achievement and enjoyment are good. Pupils say they feel very safe in school and this view is supported by their parents and carers. Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. They show a good understanding of what is needed to keep healthy. Year 6 pupils contribute well to school life, particularly as buddies to younger pupils. Pupils' views are well represented by their form members on the school council. Attendance is average and improving. Pupils develop a good understanding of other work-related skills through enterprise days. The school's Christian ethos, supported by many cultural and social activities, ensures that pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural education is good.

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	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	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

How effective is the provision?

Teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan lessons well. Pupils say they are taught well and this view is supported by their parents and carers. Teachers' lively presentations and good uses of resources ensure most learning proceeds at a good pace. Relationships are a significant strength in the school so that pupils feel valued and are prepared to 'have a go' when work is challenging. Experienced teaching assistants play a valuable role in supporting pupils' learning. There is satisfactory rather than good use of assessment to promote learning. This is because marking is sometimes used inconsistently to inform pupils what to do and pupils are not always clear at what level they are working.

A significant strength of the good curriculum is that it meets the needs of all pupils and is enhanced by many visiting speakers and organisations and the opportunities provided for experiences outside school. For example pupils were excitedly preparing for the annual 'Second World War Evacuees Day' and were also enthralled by a visiting poet. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to have direct contact with people from other cultures. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities, although the pupils say they would like more opportunities for non-sporting activities and more team competitions.

Staff know the pupils and their families extremely well, some having taught a number of generations. The outstanding strength in care, guidance and support is well recognised and valued by parents, carers and pupils. There are excellent links with a wide range of agencies and organisations to support the curriculum and the pupils' personal

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development. For example, during the inspection, the school hosted a three day visit by the 'Life Education Caravan,' which provides a programme of personal development activities for all pupils and for some of their parents and carers. Vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are exceptionally well supported and consequently, they make good progress. Year 6 pupils were confident, mature and said they felt very well prepared, even at this early stage, for their move to their next school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

There is a strong drive by all staff to ensure that pupils achieve well. Leaders know what needs to improve and have recently introduced a very good and detailed tracking system to identify those pupils not making sufficient progress. The governing body knows the school well and brings a good range of expertise which enables it to support and challenge the school to improve. Safeguarding arrangements are good and pupils have been made well aware of current issues, such as how to use the internet safely. The school works well in promoting equal opportunities and tackling discrimination. Work with families and agencies to support them and their children and to support pupils' learning and well-being are outstanding. Consequently, many of the barriers to learning and deficiencies in pupils' experiences are removed so that all, and particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve well. Community cohesion is satisfactory, as pupils do not yet have sufficient opportunities for first-hand contact with a wide range of other social and cultural groups. The school give good value for money.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children get off to a good start, entering with skills that are well below that expected for their age in most areas of learning. Children make good progress so that by the end of the Reception Year they are working within many of the expected learning goals. However, overall they are still below their expected age-related levels when they move into Year 1. There is a good focus on developing children's personal, social and emotional skills so that they learn to behave well and share toys and equipment. The good balance of teacher-led activities and those that children choose for themselves helps children to develop independence. Good systems for assessing progress provide a sound basis for planning the next steps in learning. The classroom is well resourced for activities, although planning for outdoor learning does not always sufficiently reflect what children learn indoors or provide challenging opportunities for exploration and play. Leadership is good. Children are very well cared for by staff who are watchful over their safety and know them and their families well. Relationships with parents and carers are very strong and families appreciate the opportunities they are given to share in their children's learning.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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 of the Early Years Foundation	2

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Stage

Views of parents and carers

The overwhelming view of parents and carers is that their children enjoy and feel safe in school. They expressed high levels of satisfaction for all that is on offer. They particularly think the school is well led and the vast majority agree that they are happy with their child's experience in school. A very small minority of parents and carers expressed concerns over the management of behaviour. Inspectors looked at behaviour in lessons and around the school as well as examining related policies and records. They found behaviour and its management to be good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Catharine's CofE 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 48 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 161 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	36	75	11	23	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	35	73	13	27	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	35	73	12	25	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	35	73	12	25	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	33	69	15	31	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	29	60	17	35	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	35	73	13	27	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)	33	69	14	29	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	35	73	11	23	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	27	56	16	33	4	8	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	29	60	15	31	1	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	34	71	14	29	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	39	81	8	17	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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



15 October 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Catharine's CofE Primary School, Wigan, WN1 3LP

The other inspectors and I would like to thank you all for the way you helped during our inspection. We agree with you that you feel very safe and go to a good school, which is well led and supported by staff who know you and listen to you and respond well to your views and concerns. We think, like you and your parents and carers, that your school cares for you extremely well and that it works with you and your parents and carers, and with a wide range of other people very well indeed.

We judged that by the end of Year 6 you reach average levels in English, mathematics and science. Given your starting points this shows that you make good progress while you are in the school. We think you are well taught and that you are given a good range of subjects to learn. We think that the way the school adds to this by inviting in guest speakers is very good. We had the opportunity to see two of these in action, the Poet and the 'Life Skills Caravan', and we were very impressed by your enthusiastic response to these high quality experiences.

We have asked the school to work on some things to make it even better. Some of you said in your questionnaires that you are not sure how well you are doing. We have suggested that the school should extend the system used in English, where you know your level and what is needed to improve, to other subjects. We have also suggested that your teachers make clear what you have to do to improve each time they mark your work. We have also recommended that the new tracking system, which staff have introduced to identify those of you who are making slow progress, needs to be used as soon as possible. While the school and you work well with your local community, we suggest it would be helpful for you to have more opportunities to meet people and children from a wider range of social and cultural groups. We wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Michael McLachlan

Lead Inspector

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