

St Wulstan's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124359
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	366772
Inspection dates	21–22 June 2011
Reporting inspector	David Jones HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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	417
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dorothy Lowe
Headteacher	James Devine (Executive)
Date of previous school inspection	30 September 2009
School address	Church Lane Wolstanton, Newcastle ST5 0EF
Telephone number	01782 296140
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and one additional inspector. St Wulstan's Catholic Primary School was found to require special measures in October 2009. The school was visited by HMI on 4 previous occasions in March, June and November 2010 and in March 2011.

The inspection team observed twenty lessons taught by ten teachers. Inspectors held meetings with the executive headteacher, his deputy, nominated staff, groups of pupils, governors, representatives of the local authority and the Diocesan School Commission. HMI spoke with a significant number of parents and carers when they brought their children to school on the second day of the inspection. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation provided by the senior staff. The inspection team scrutinised the pupils' work and visited the extended school provision, before and after the school day.

- The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.
- What has been the impact of recent initiatives to raise attainment and accelerate learning and progress for all groups of pupils?
- How successful has the school been in improving the quality of teaching in order to ensure consistently good progress for all pupils?
- How effective is the leadership and management in developing capacity for sustained improvement and overcoming the barriers to good progress?

Information about the school

St Wulstan's Catholic Primary is a larger-than-average primary school that draws most of its pupils from the surrounding area. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is less than half the national average. The percentage of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or a statement of special educational need is low.

The large majority of pupils are of White British or European heritage. A few pupils speak English as their second language. The Diocesan Schools Commission established a partnership with a local outstanding school in September 2010 and an Executive headteacher assumed responsibility for both schools; his deputy acts as headteacher in his absence.

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

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

This is now a good school as a result of the dedication of all concerned. The senior management team have raised expectations and standards, enhanced pupil progress, eliminated inadequate teaching, and improved behaviour and attendance. Parents were keen to praise the school and the efforts made by the staff to HMI.

Outcomes for individuals and groups are now above the national average. The 2010 Key Stage 2 national tests showed evidence of rising standards and stronger pupil progress. This trend has been maintained and provisional results from the recently completed 2011 Key Stage 1 teacher assessments are notably more positive. Similarly, evidence from the school's robust assessment data base, corroborated by the inspectors' scrutiny of the pupils' work, indicates that the proportion of pupils working at or above the level expected for their age in the current Year 6 is likely to be stronger than in previous years. Overall, pupils make good progress; those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are making at least satisfactory progress and a large minority of those pupils are making good progress. Equality of opportunity is good and provision for vulnerable students and those who find learning difficult is good.

Inadequate teaching has been eliminated and the impact of effective teaching on the quality of learning is evident in the pupils' current work. Teaching is good overall and outstanding teaching was seen in Year 1, in music, and in the individual support provided for vulnerable pupils. Satisfactory lessons were not sufficiently focussed on the quality of learning to foster good progress. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching is good; this is a real strength of the senior staff. Marking is satisfactory and there are examples of good practice although inconsistencies remain in some lessons. Where teaching was outstanding, the match of task to the pupils' learning needs was a positive factor. The teaching and curriculum changes implemented in the last year have had a positive impact on pupil progress although the consistency of literacy and numeracy skills development in Key Stage 2 requires further enhancement.

Behaviour is good; this is a reflection of the school's caring ethos and the value placed on positive pupil/staff relationships by the headteacher. The school has worked hard and to considerable effect to improve attendance which is now above the national average. The care, welfare and guidance provided are good and this has been a key factor in the significant improvements secured in behaviour and attendance. Pupils were keen to explain that they felt they could seek support from any member of staff and that they were respected.

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Governance is good; the new committee structure and the work of experienced governors have helped the governing body become a 'critical friend'. The current leadership team has done well to secure the substantial improvements in standards, teaching and learning, equality of provision, behaviour and attendance; capacity to improve is good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to enhance the quality of teaching by
 - modelling provision on the best practice seen within the school,
 - enhancing satisfactory teaching by focussing on the quality of learning of higher attaining pupils and those who find learning difficult.
- Use the staffing changes planned for September 2011 to build consistency in the teaching of key literacy and numeracy skills in Key Stage 2.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Children's skills on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage have been broadly average for some years. Pupils make good progress and the provisional results from the 2011 Year 2 teacher assessments are above average. The 2010 Key Stage 2 results were significantly above the national figure and the 2011 Year 6 teacher assessments indicate further improvement. Progress is good and the pupils' current work makes clear that the improvements in teaching and curriculum opportunities are the significant factor. Vulnerable pupils have benefited significantly in the improved support programmes developed since January and all pupils now make at least satisfactory progress.

In the large majority of lessons pupils make good progress and all make acceptable progress. In less effective lessons higher achieving pupils do not always progress as rapidly as they could. Lesson outcomes are strongest where there is a clear focus on what the pupils are expected to learn and pupils respond very well to this challenge. In a vibrant music lesson, provided by a visiting specialist teacher, all present left feeling they could compose and play their own masterpiece! Enjoyment and achievement is good overall, with strengths evident in higher standards, pupil progress, improved attendance and good behaviour.

Inspectors found the pupils to be very positive on 'feeling safe' and observed excellent staff /pupil relationships to support this view. A good range of healthy school meals were available and the proportion of pupils engaged in sport is rising. The pupils' contribution to the school and wider community is good and they are pleased with the opportunities to be prefects, playground buddies and prayer leaders. Overall, the range of skills the pupils develop towards their future economic well-being are good because of rising standards and above average attendance.

The pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They have responded well to a range of cultural opportunities; the moral and social maturity displayed by the pupils during this inspection is a testimony to the school's high expectations and good pastoral care.

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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	2
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	3
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	2
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?

All aspects of provision are good. Three quarters of teaching observed was good and three lessons were outstanding. In an excellent Year 1 numeracy lesson the structure of the number work provided allowed all to make outstanding progress. Each stage of the lesson provided manageable but challenging tasks that were well supported by good visual and kinaesthetic resources. Some good examples of marking were seen and it was clear from the pupils' books they had understood and tried to implement the guidance provided. Lessons are well-planned with tasks appropriate to need. However, where pupils made only satisfactory progress a number of factors hindered progress; in some lessons staff explanations lacked clarity or on other occasions the focus was on what the children would do and not what they would learn. Support staff are often good instructors but their contribution is not always well managed.

Curriculum opportunities have been enhanced with music, sport, and a modern foreign language now provided by visiting specialists. The quality of the curriculum provided in English and mathematics has been part of the improvements in the pupils' process secured in the last year.

The care, guidance and support provided to pupils and their families are good. Parents, carers and the children speak positively about the personal support provided. Communication with parents and carers is good and the beginning and end of the school

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day consistently feature well-taken opportunities for pastoral care. Safeguarding is good with strengths in staff recruitment procedures and meticulous record keeping.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The executive headteacher and his deputy have embedded ambition and driven improvement effectively. The headteacher has high expectations of the quality of classroom practice required; the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning by senior staff is accurate and has been at the heart of much of the progress made. As a result, standards are improving rapidly and pupils make good progress towards challenging targets. Staff and the governing body go to considerable lengths to ensure equality of opportunity is good.

Governance is good with a clear focus on school improvement. A budget deficit has been cleared in one year and costs reduced as a result of very good day-to-day financial management. Community cohesion is good with strengths locally and internationally through the Diocesan group of schools. Engagement with parents and carers is good; they speak well of the quality of communication provided and the impact of this work can be seen in the above average attendance figures. Safeguarding procedures are good.

The strong school improvement work developed in partnership with a high performing local school is a credit to all involved. The promotion of equality of opportunity is good and has been critical to the rise in standards and achievement. Senior staff and the governing body deploy resources effectively and the school provides 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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

All aspects of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision are good. The children feel safe, they are confident, happy individuals who are nurtured and challenged. In a beautifully managed numeracy session Reception children showed their mental arithmetic skills as they moved from sequential counting to subtraction from ten. The transition arrangements from nursery into reception are particularly well-managed. Children's skills on entry are just below average and all children make good progress. Reception planning is detailed and stronger than in the nursery but all staff know their pupils very well. The staff team is well led and the progress since the last inspection report is a transformation.

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 Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The inspection team spoke to parents and careers at the beginning of day two on this inspection. All responses were positive and the school's efforts to communicate with

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families were particularly appreciated, with text message reminders a popular development. Parents and carers consistently noted the strength of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Year 1. A number acknowledged the difficulties the school had experienced in recent years but were positive about the way the school was progressing.

As this inspection was conducted under section 8 of the 2005 Education Act and began as a special measures monitoring visit there was no provision for parental consultation.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Parental questionnaires are not normally distributed for inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so.

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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



23 June 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Wulstan's Catholic Primary School, Newcastle, ST5 0EF

As some of you will remember, three inspectors visited your school recently. We all enjoyed meeting you and we were always greeted in a very polite and friendly manner, thank you.

A few years ago your school was struggling to do its best and special measures were brought in to organise the help needed. As a result Mr Devine became the executive headteacher and the school has made real progress. This inspection report removes special measures because all key aspects of your school are good.

Inspectors were very impressed by your behaviour and how regularly you come to school. It was good to hear you feel safe in school, that all of the adults are kind to you and respect your ideas.

I have asked the headteacher to bring all of the teaching up to the best we saw and provide consistent help with literacy and numeracy in all classes.

I look forward to hearing about your future success.

Yours sincerely

David Jones

Her Majesty's Inspector

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