

# St Werburgh's and St Columba's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	111384
<b>Local authority</b>	Cheshire West and Chester
<b>Inspection number</b>	378294
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24–25 April 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Judith Straw

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>	325
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Russell Cooke
<b>Headteacher</b>	Kathryn Oates
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 January 2009
<b>School address</b>	Lightfoot Street Hoole Chester CH2 3AD
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## Introduction

### Inspection team

Judith Straw  
Philip Martin  
Gillian Hunter

Additional inspector  
Additional inspector  
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 18 lessons taught by 13 teachers. In addition the inspectors visited several shorter sessions taught by teaching assistants, observed an assembly, heard children read and visited the school's before and after-school club. They held meetings with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at the school's self-evaluation evidence, the school improvement plan, safeguarding documentation, records of external monitoring of the school and the work in pupils' books. The inspectors analysed questionnaires completed by 115 parents and carers as well as those returned by pupils and staff.

## Information about the school

This is a larger-than-average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is below average. The great majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds with small proportions coming from minority-ethnic backgrounds or who speak English as an additional language. The school meets the current government floor standard, the minimum standard set for attainment and progress.

A new headteacher took up her post in April, having previously been the acting headteacher and, before that, the deputy headteacher.

Year 4 pupils were on a residential trip during the inspection. Inspectors looked carefully at the work in their books.

The school has recently gained the National Sing-Up platinum award and the ECO silver award in recognition of its work in protecting the environment.

**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

<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key Findings

- St Werburgh's and St Columba's is a good school. It is not yet outstanding because attainment in reading and mathematics is higher than it is in writing, and the proportion of outstanding teaching is relatively small.
- All pupils make good progress in their learning and achieve well. Attainment is above average by the end of Year 6. Pupils develop good skills across the curriculum and become confident, articulate learners. Handwriting and presentation, however, is not always as good as it could be for some pupils. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school.
- Teaching is consistently good across the school with an increasing proportion which is outstanding. The school provides excellent support in lessons and in extra small groups for disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs, those who speak English as an additional language and for higher attaining pupils. As a result, all pupils have good opportunities to achieve as well as they can, although occasionally scope for working independently can be limited.
- Pupils' behaviour is excellent because pupils enjoy school and have very positive attitudes to learning. Parents and carers are unanimous in indicating that behaviour is good and that their children are safe. The example set by the adults in school, combined with thoughtful lessons and a stimulating curriculum, result in pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils have a well-developed sense of social responsibility which is seen particularly in their work for different charities.
- The drive and determination, together with the vision to provide the best possible education for all pupils, of the headteacher and deputy headteacher have been key factors in the school's continual quest for improvement. Their leadership of teaching and management of performance have lifted teaching from satisfactory to consistently good. They know that the challenge now is to increase the proportion of outstanding teaching.

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

- Raise attainment in writing to match the high standards in reading by:
  - ensuring that teachers promote high standards of literacy in topic work and other subjects
  - improving the handwriting and presentation in some pupils' books
  - providing more opportunities for extended writing.
- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
  - creating wider opportunities for independent learning
  - sharing the good practice which already exists in school.

## Main Report

### Achievement of pupils

Children flourish in the bright, stimulating environment in the Early Years Foundation Stage provided in two Reception classes. The children start with skills and abilities broadly in line with what is expected for their age. By the time they enter Year 1 most have made good progress and many are working above the expected levels. During the inspection the children's learning was around the theme of pirates which captured the imagination of everyone and led to deep involvement in all areas of learning. Children respond well to adult-led activities and show enthusiasm when choosing their own activities. They develop good language skills and in numeracy offer ideas and methods to solve problems. The enthusiastic singing of pirate songs illustrated how much the children were enjoying their work.

Pupils' achievement in reading is excellent and attainment is significantly above average in Year 1 and at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. Boys and girls enjoy reading and respond well to the language-rich environment the school provides. In mathematics pupils enjoy the challenge of problem-solving, work quickly and with concentration and are keen to succeed. For example in an outstanding Year 5/6 mathematics lesson, pupils were ambitious and competitive, working almost in partnership with the teacher rather than under her direction. Pupils' achievement is less evident in writing. Pupils of all abilities, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs respond well to lessons because work is set at exactly the right level to challenge and inspire them to do their best. The quality of the relationships within school ensures that pupils are confident and develop excellent communication skills.

An outstanding example of the achievement of pupils with special educational needs and those whose circumstances make them vulnerable is that after some of these pupils had worked with a computer biofeedback package they developed such confidence that they became the school's 'Healthy Champions'. In this role they taught other pupils, other schools and members of the wider community how to use the package because of the success they had achieved themselves. One of the pupils involved commented, 'I learnt that it feels good to teach other people and to help them to learn.'

Of the many parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire, the vast majority were delighted with the progress their children make and wrote at considerable length to express

their approval of the school's work. A very small minority felt that progress was slower in mathematics and wondered if there was enough challenge for the more able. Inspection evidence shows that progress is good in all subjects and that there is high expectation and challenge in the work provided, for example, some pupils in Year 6 have special sessions to access work at the higher Level 6.

## **Quality of teaching**

Good teaching in the Reception classes develops children's zest for learning. They enjoy opportunities to work and play both indoors and out. Adult-led activities are outstanding and develop children's learning to above average expectations. Outstanding relationships ensure that children respond to the high expectations for behaviour and participation in learning activities.

Teaching across the school is brisk and very carefully tailored to what pupils already know and can do. Teachers' subject knowledge is strong and questioning skills are a particular strength. In an outstanding mathematics lesson in Key Stage 1 all pupils made excellent progress, regardless of ability, because the lesson was planned to consolidate prior learning and to give every pupil the opportunity to investigate new learning and to learn independently. This emphasis on independent learning is often the difference between the lessons which are good and those which are outstanding. In good lessons the teachers tend to keep too much control on the pace and planning but in outstanding lessons children rise to the challenge to go that little bit further. In another outstanding lesson, this time in music, pupils were composing their own songs, singing and playing instruments, using information and communication technology skills and reflecting on their excellent achievements. Marking and assessment have improved significantly since the last inspection so that pupils know how to improve their work and take ownership of it. Sometimes, however, opportunities are missed to promote literacy skills in other subjects and some pupils do not take enough care in the presentation of their work. In some classes there are fewer opportunities for pupils to produce extended pieces of writing, which reduces their achievement in writing

Teaching assistants are skilled, very well briefed and make a significant contribution to the learning in class and in smaller groups. Disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language flourish because they are given work at the right level of challenge and are supported, encouraged and given confidence.

The curriculum is rich and varied and is developed according to pupils' interests and enthusiasms. For example, there have been projects on super heroes, Olympic dreams and the importance of saving the rain forest. Teachers put great emphasis on the core skills but not at the expense of creativity, enrichment and enjoyment. Parents and carers are pleased with the teaching their children receive. Many commented on the commitment and approachableness of the staff and the way in which staff are 'generous' with their time. Inspection evidence endorses these views.

## **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Pupils' behaviour is typically excellent in lessons, at playtimes and in the after-school club. The pupils are mature, polite, courteous and respectful of others. Their very positive attitudes to learning make a significant contribution to their good achievement and progress.

Pupils say they feel entirely safe in school because they trust the adults in all situations. Pupils understand the different kinds of bullying which exist but say that there is virtually no bullying in school. Pupils talk about feeling 'happy' in lessons and say that this is a very 'friendly' school. The pupils have contributed to the behaviour management policy, along with staff and parents. They enjoy taking on responsibilities and contributing to the life of the school with their talents and time. Attendance has been consistently above average over time.

Parents agree unanimously that behaviour is good or better and that their children are safe and well cared for in what one described as, 'a wonderful introduction to education in a safe and caring environment'. Another wrote, 'My children have blossomed into well-behaved, confident children.'

## **Leadership and management**

The outstanding leadership of the headteacher, ably supported by her acting deputy with input from the senior leadership team has driven the school forward so that most aspects of its work have improved since the last inspection. The leadership of teaching and monitoring of performance have been highly successful in building a committed, effective and dynamic staff team. In the questionnaire responses, many staff praised the senior leaders, describing them as, 'instilling confidence, supporting, motivating and inspiring'. Senior leaders and the governing body know their school extremely well because of their robust and accurate self-evaluation. Middle leaders are given many opportunities to extend and develop their skills and have an accurate awareness of how well the school is doing and where it can improve, for example, writing is currently a whole-school focus. Leadership of the Early Years Foundation stage is good because of careful and appropriate planning, effective team work and clear expectations.

The governing body is committed to its role of safeguarding pupils and its systems are robust and effective. Governors are fully involved in school life and regularly challenge the school and monitor its performance. All leaders are committed to tackling discrimination and ensuring equality of opportunity for all pupils. Gaps in performance for pupils known to be entitled to receive free school meals have been eliminated and girls and boys do equally well.

Assemblies are celebratory and spiritual, whether applauding pupils' achievements, thinking about peoples across the world or singing and making music together. The broad and rich curriculum ensures that pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is excellent but there are comparatively fewer opportunities for pupils to understand and appreciate people from backgrounds other than their own and this is a school priority.

The school's capacity to improve further is good. This is because leaders have acted decisively on areas for improvement in the last inspection report. Consequently, attainment has risen, most pupils, including higher attaining pupils, are achieving well and the marking and assessment of work ensures that pupils know what they can do to improve. The school has proven strategies to further improve teaching and to narrow the gap between achievement in reading and writing.

## 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	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.



## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**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.**



26 April 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Werburgh's and St Columba's Catholic Primary School,  
Chester CH2 3AD**

Thank you for making us so welcome when we inspected your school recently. We enjoyed meeting so many of you, seeing you in lessons and sharing your wonderful assembly. You were thoughtful and confident and left us with many happy memories of your school.

You told us that you feel entirely safe in school and that everyone behaves very well. We agree. Your attendance is above average and your behaviour is excellent because you enjoy coming to school. Children settle quickly in the Reception classes and enjoy learning because there are lots of interesting activities for them to take part in.

Yours is a good school and you make good progress in your work. You do your best work in reading and mathematics and need to make sure that your writing becomes just as good. Teaching is good and sometimes it is outstanding. We have asked your school to try to make more of the lessons outstanding. One of the reasons you make such good progress is your own excellent attitudes to learning. We found you to be curious, interested, keen to do well and happy to concentrate and work hard. Your school is well led by adults who care passionately about education and want the best for you.

You can play your part in improving the school by improving the quality of your writing as well as you can, and taking care with the presentation of your work. We hope you will continue to enjoy your lively, stimulating lessons.

We wish all of you the very best for your future.

Yours sincerely

Judith Straw  
Lead inspector

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