

St Saviour's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	135505
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	384892
Inspection dates	4–5 July 2012
Lead inspector	Angela Westington 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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	218
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cynera Livera
Headteacher	Keith Powell
Date of previous school inspection	6 July 2010
School address	Seacombe Drive Great Sutton Ellesmere Port Cheshire CH66 2BD
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Angela Westington
Derek Barnes

Her Majesty's Inspector
Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with one day's notice. Inspectors observed 20 lessons or part lessons, totalling over 10 hours of direct observation, plus one assembly and observations of pupils at break times. All teachers, some teaching assistants and a specialist external coach were observed teaching. Meetings were held with pupils, the headteacher and deputy headteacher, members of staff and members of the Interim Executive Board. As is usual for a monitoring inspection which turns into a full inspection, Ofsted questionnaires were not sent out to parents and carers; however, inspectors took account of the responses to the school's own parental survey which took place in June 2012 and they met with some parents and carers at the start of the second day of the inspection. Inspectors observed the school's work and, among other documents, looked at pupils' books; the school's records on progress made by pupils; case studies for individual pupils who are potentially vulnerable to underachieving; the school's records on monitoring and improving the quality of teaching; the local authority's review of the school's work; minutes of the Interim Executive Board and the school's action planning. Inspectors looked in detail at how the school teaches reading, writing and mathematics. They heard pupils read and scrutinised in depth the reading records and the planning for reading and writing.

Information about the school

St Saviour's is an average-sized primary school. The school's size and population has changed significantly since its previous inspection in July 2010 when it was deemed to require special measures. The school is approximately half the size it was then and the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is now broadly average. Lower than average proportions of pupils are of minority ethnic heritage or at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also lower than average.

The school exceeds the current floor standards; these are the minimum standards that the government expects pupils to achieve in English and mathematics.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher were appointed to the school in September 2011.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is now a good and rapidly improving school. It is not outstanding because although most teaching is good, there remains some satisfactory teaching and improvements have not had time to impact fully on the academic standards attained by pupils. 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.
- Pupils' achievement is good. They are making good and sometimes outstanding progress in reading, writing and mathematics. The vast majority of pupils are achieving well and the gaps in attainment between different groups that existed previously are being narrowed. More-able pupils could still attain more highly. All other groups of pupils are achieving well. Reading is taught well, although in the Early Years Foundation Stage children are not consistently taught to read through the use of early decodable books.
- The overall quality of teaching is good; there is some that is outstanding. However, some satisfactory teaching remains, mainly as a result of missed opportunities to stretch and challenge more-able pupils. The leadership and management of teaching are good. Senior leaders have been rigorous in driving up the quality of teaching. The curriculum is a strength of the school's provision.
- Behaviour and safety are good. Inspectors observed instances of exemplary behaviour by pupils. Instances of poor behaviour are few. Behaviour is well managed across the school; however, there are some inconsistencies in how individual teachers record behaviour incidents. Attendance is rising and is now above average.
- Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide clear, unequivocal direction for the school; staff morale is high and leadership skills are developing across the spectrum of staff.

Governance, via the Interim Executive Board, is exceptionally strong. All adults are good role models for pupils, and the curriculum and school's Christian ethos promote very well pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching even further, so that it is all good or better and so that it always challenges the more-able pupils.
- Raise the proportion of pupils gaining the higher levels, Level 3 and 5, in national assessments.
- Ensure that children in the Early Years Foundation Stage learn to read using decodable books.
- Ensure consistency in the way teachers record behaviour incidents.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils are making good progress overall and, in some instances, they are making outstanding progress. For example, in Key Stage 1, pupils' writing has improved so much that previous significant underperformance has been eradicated. In both Years 1 and 2, pupils, who in the autumn term struggled to write simple sentences independently, now write lengthy extended narratives using full stops, capital letters and commas, spelling words using their knowledge of letter sounds and the high frequency words in English. Their reading has come on apace and many are making rapid progress in closing the gap between their reading age and their chronological age. They read regularly and with enjoyment. Many have made 12, 18 or more months progress in reading over a period of a few months; some now have reading ages well in advance of their birthday age. A similar picture exists in mathematics. Results of the unvalidated 2012 Key Stage 1 assessments suggest that more pupils are attaining the higher levels. Evidence from lesson observations confirms this picture. In a highly effective Year 2 mathematics lesson, more-able pupils were challenged to use their knowledge of simple fractions to calculate half and three quarters of various amounts. The problems required several steps, yet pupils expressed their ideas clearly, using correct vocabulary, for example 'denominator', and their knowledge of number facts to arrive at the correct answers. Attainment, including in reading, by the end of Key Stage 1 is now at least average.

A similar picture is observed in Key Stage 2 where pupils are making comparable gains in reading, writing and mathematics and thus eating into the legacy of underachievement that was previously present. The work in pupils' books is now consistently of a good standard and well presented; pupils complete a good volume of work. Their reading skills are much improved and they enjoy reading a wider range of books and authors. The greatly improved reading provision across the school is having a dramatic impact on pupils' broader literacy skills. In the non core

subjects, such as history and science, pupils' writing is, increasingly, as good as it is in their English books. Inspectors observed several examples of pupils being required to use literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects.

The school's performance arts programme makes a significant contribution to pupils' communication skills through the use of drama and dance. In lessons, pupils are expected to respond to questions in complete sentences and are given time to formulate their thoughts and express themselves clearly. Attainment, in reading, by the end of Key Stage 2 is average and rising.

On entry to the Reception class, children's skill levels are broadly in line with expectations. They make satisfactory progress overall. The proportion of children attaining a good level of development is in line with national expectations. This is an improvement on 2011. The teaching of early reading has improved as a result of the improved provision for reading across the school, including the systematic teaching of letter sound combinations. All children are heard to read regularly and take home reading books. However, they do not daily and consistently read decodable books, so some rely heavily on picture cues to read rather than 'sounding out' the words.

Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are also making good progress, in line with their classmates. They are well supported in lessons and their progress is monitored carefully.

Eighty-three parents and carers completed the school's questionnaire in June 2012. Of these, 94% believed that their children were making good progress, up from 90% in the previous school survey. Inspectors agree with parents and carers that their children are making good progress.

Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is now good overall; but inspectors observed some that was outstanding and some that was satisfactory. Where teaching is satisfactory this is mainly because it does not always stretch the more-able pupils or the overall level of challenge could be higher. In contrast, the best teaching is characterised by excellent teacher subject knowledge, high levels of challenge and superb use of open-ended questioning. Target-setting and marking are used well and consistently and pupils know their targets. However, not all pupils spoken to knew exactly how to make their work better and meet their particular target. Outstanding teaching was observed, among others, in a performing arts session where the cooperation between the class teacher and specialist external coach led to pupils producing remarkable performance sequences.

Provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is good. Well-targeted support for individual pupils is resulting in them making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. The school's work with individual pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable to underachievement is also good and a number of pupils who have benefited from the care and support provided by the school have seen their academic attainment improve considerably.

The provision for the teaching of reading is now good. Reading is a central part of the school's curriculum and the reading curriculum is well planned and organised. The teaching and the curriculum promote very well pupils' personal development.

Ninety-six per cent of parents and carers who completed the school's survey consider that their children are taught well. Inspectors endorse this view.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour in lessons is at least good and much is exemplary. They are eager to learn, willing to take part and try out new strategies. They are courteous, polite, helpful and take responsibility for others. Pupils consistently make it easy for others to learn and for teachers to teach. According to the school's survey, parents and carers overwhelmingly consider that the school is safe and that behaviour is good. There have been no exclusions and no pupils are in out-of-school provision or any 'internal exclusion' groups. Pupils say that bullying is rare and that 'falling out' is often perceived as bullying. They are well aware of dangers to themselves and to others and take a mature view of what is right and wrong and how to avoid unsafe situations. Behaviour logs are kept by individual staff and these show that the few incidents recorded are followed through rigorously. The recording, however, lacks consistency. Attendance is improving and the proportion of persistent absences is decreasing.

Leadership and management

The headteacher and deputy headteacher together provide very strong leadership and direction for the school. They have the full support of staff and the Interim Executive Board. They have driven the improvements to teaching and, when necessary, taken difficult staffing decisions to ensure high quality teaching. Professional development of staff is linked to school priorities and development points are followed up quickly. The impact of the leadership and management of teaching is evident in the rapid rates of progress now being made by pupils. Individuals and groups who were previously behind are now catching up.

Staff morale is high and there is a sense of optimism and joy in the school as adults realise that the school is on an upward trajectory and that they can bring about improvement. Leaders at other levels are developing the skills and capacity to drive further development and increasingly show initiative and take on responsibility.

The school's good curriculum has quickly become a strength of its provision and contributes significantly to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. All pupils have equal and full access to what is on offer.

The Interim Executive Board provides extremely good challenge and support to school leaders and monitors the school's performance constantly. The members' specific skills are used to good effect, for example to analyse data or scrutinise at first hand pupils' work. The shadow governing body is in place. It is undertaking training for the role and is working alongside the Interim Executive Board in preparation for the formal handover. The board has ensured that all statutory

requirements in respect of safeguarding are met.

Parents and carers are very supportive of the school's work. They identify and value the changes set in place by school leaders. Several commented to inspectors that they had thought about taking their children out of the school but were now 'glad that they had stuck with it!'

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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).

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.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
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.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
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.



28 June 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Saviour's Catholic Primary School, Ellesmere Port, CH66 2BD

As you know, I recently visited your school with Mr Barnes to see how you were getting on. Some of you will remember that I have been visiting your school for nearly two years. Thank you to all those of you who have been so kind and friendly during those visits, for telling me and the other inspectors about your school and about how it is getting better.

I am absolutely thrilled to tell you that your school no longer needs the extra help that we call 'special measures'. This is because yours is now a good school. Isn't this great news?

Thank you to all of you for helping to make your school better and to your parents and carers who stuck with the school when it needed help.

These are some of the best things about your school:

- You are all making good progress and working hard to catch up. Well done!
- Your teachers are teaching you well and trying very hard to make all the teaching as good as it can possibly be.
- You behave very well; you know how to keep yourselves safe. You are a credit to the school and to your families.
- Mr Powell, all the teachers and the adults who manage the school look after you well and run the school well. They work very hard to make sure that the school gets better and better for you.

To make your good school even better, we have asked Mr Powell and the adults to make all the teaching as good as possible so that those of you who can reach higher standards in your reading, writing and mathematics and other subjects, do so. We have also asked them to make sure that the youngest children learn to read using easy readable books. And we have asked the adults to look again at how they record when anyone is naughty, but we know that this is not very often!

I know that you are proud of your school but now you have more reasons to be so! I shall miss coming to see you every term. Continue to work hard and to help make St Saviour's even better!

Yours sincerely

Angela Westington
Her Majesty's Inspector

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