

St Lewis Catholic Primary School

Mustard Lane, Croft, Warrington, WA3 7BD

Inspection dates

6–7 December 2012

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------|
| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Good | 2 |
| | This inspection: | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Achievement of pupils | | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Quality of teaching | | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | | Good | 2 |
| Leadership and management | | Requires improvement | 3 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Teaching in some lessons is not good enough, therefore, pupils' progress is not consistently good across all year groups, especially that of boys.
- While there are examples of good teaching across the school, too often not enough activities in lessons meet the needs of all pupils. They have too few opportunities to work independently and there is an over use of worksheets.
- Marking and feedback to pupils on their work is not consistently good across all classes and subjects. Not all pupils know how to improve their work as a result.
- Pupils reach standards above and often significantly above those expected nationally by the end of Key Stage 2. However, although most pupils make the progress expected, the proportion making better progress than this is too low for some groups and in some subjects.
- Middle and subject leaders do not yet sufficiently check on how effectively teachers use information on pupils' progress to plan lessons that fully meet the needs of all pupils.
- Although systems for checking on the work of the school are in place, these have not been thorough and the school has had somewhat generous a view of its own performance.

The school has the following strengths

- Behaviour and safety are good. Pupils are respectful towards each other, staff and visitors. Pupils say they feel safe and enjoy school.
- High quality relationships support pupils' good behaviour and they work well together. This supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- Children have a good start to their learning in the Reception class.
- Through both Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils make good progress in reading, particularly for those at the higher levels of attainment.
- Overall, the headteacher knows what needs to be done to make the school more successful.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 17 lessons or part lessons taught by eight different teachers.
- The inspectors listened to pupils read from two different year groups and talked with them and other groups of pupils about their lessons and school life.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors observed the school’s work and scrutinised documents relating to pupils’ progress and to the school’s management, including the arrangements for safeguarding.
- Inspectors took account of the 34 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), results from the school’s recent parents' questionnaires and questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Vanessa MacDonald, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Chris Maloney

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Lewis is smaller than the average sized primary school. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is below average and those at school action plus and those with a statement of special educational needs is in line with the average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below the national average.
- The school exceeded the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There is a privately run before- and after-school club which will be inspected separately.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
 - ensuring that all activities are matched to pupils' needs so that work is not too easy or too hard
 - ensuring that teachers consistently give pupils enough information on how to improve their work and they have time to respond to the advice
 - allowing pupils to start work when they are ready to do so
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to work independently by reducing the number of worksheets.
- Accelerate pupils' progress, particularly at Key Stage 1 and in mathematics by:
 - improving the achievement of boys to match that of girls
 - ensuring that all groups make consistently good progress across the school
 - providing opportunities for pupils to apply their skills in other subjects, particularly problem-solving skills in mathematics.
- Strengthen leadership and management by developing the role of middle and subject leaders so they have the skills and opportunities to regularly check on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress, so that prompt action is taken when any are not achieving as well as they should.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are generally in line with those expected for their age, with some children who are above. They make good progress and by the end of the Reception Year, the vast majority of children have developed skills that are above those typically expected.
- Pupils' overall achievement across Key Stages 1 and 2 requires improvement. Pupils' progress in Key Stage 1 requires more improvement than in Key Stage 2. Although there was some improvement in the proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels at the end of Year 2 in 2012, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is only just above the national average overall.
- By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is above the national average in English and mathematics. Although the rate at which pupils make progress improves through Key Stage 2, it is not consistent enough between different groups and subjects.
- Some pupils do not do as well as they should because the work they are set does not always enable them to make the best possible progress. In mathematics, in particular, there are weaknesses in pupils' abilities to solve problems independently because they are asked to answer too many questions of the same type and too often are given worksheets.
- Pupils enjoy reading. They usually use their knowledge of letters and the sounds they make to help them read unfamiliar words. During the inspection, the library was well used to support a group of pupils' understanding of information texts.
- Pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs, and those eligible for pupil premium funding usually achieve as well as their peers nationally and with the additional support they receive some are doing better, although this is not yet consistently the case.
- The school recognises there is a difference in the achievement between boys and girls across both Key Stages 1 and 2. There are signs of improvement in some year groups, showing the school's commitment to equality of opportunity. However, the more recent initiatives introduced have not yet had sufficient time to improve the achievement of boys across both subjects and classes so that it closely matches that of girls.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The overall quality of teaching over time requires improvement. The quality of teaching is not yet consistently good across the school, and although there are strengths in teaching, there are no examples of outstanding practice. As a consequence, pupils' progress is uneven.
- In some lessons, there is too much whole-class teaching that does not meet the needs of all pupils. Pupils are asked to complete tasks that are too easy or too hard so the pace of learning is not rapid enough and not all pupils make the best progress possible. In addition, some teachers' overuse of worksheets limits pupils' opportunities to solve and explain problems independently.
- Pupils rightly feel that at times the work is too easy and that they sometimes sit and listen to teachers' explanations for too long when they have already understood what it is they have to do and how to do it.
- Marking is regular but varies in quality throughout the school. Pupils do not always have detailed enough guidance about how to improve their work and there is not always time given for pupils to respond to the advice given.
- When teaching is good, activities are planned which meet the needs of all pupils. Pupils apply their previous learning successfully and are keen to find out things for themselves. They work cooperatively to discuss and check their work. In these lessons, the pace of learning is quicker which leads to pupils' progress speeding up.

- Evidence of these strengths was seen in a Year 2 mathematics lesson, where higher attaining pupils worked independently taking on a 'question master' role to ask their peers to apply their knowledge to answer questions about bar charts. The class teacher used a good range of questioning techniques to challenge other pupils' understanding well.
- In the Reception classroom, children have good opportunities to use their imagination as they play and learn. There is a good balance between activities that children can choose for themselves and those directed by adults. One group of children were skilfully questioned by the teacher to help to develop their understanding of addition and subtraction through both practical and written skills.
- Teaching assistants and other adults are generally well used to support the learning of groups and individuals, including those who are disabled or with special educational needs and those identified by the school for additional support. This enables them to make progress that is consistent with that expected nationally.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils in lessons and around school is good. Older pupils play well with the younger children and act as good role models.
- Pupils show respect for each other, the staff and visitors to the school and this leads to a strong school community where pupils are happy. Most parents say they are happy with the school and would recommend it to others.
- Pupils are keen to learn and show positive attitudes to their work and one another. When given the opportunity to work in pairs or small groups they do so sensibly and with enthusiasm. Pupils expressed a preference for working with friends and doing tasks that are active, such as role play, rather than whole-class work. They listen attentively to others and respect each other's views.
- Pupils have very good relationships with adults. They say they feel very safe and although they say that bullying is very rare they are confident that it would be dealt with quickly. They have a good understanding of the different forms of bullying and how to keep themselves safe.
- Pupils enjoy the range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities, including trips, residential visits and visitors. The school council represents the views of pupils and is involved in different events, including fundraising for different causes. This contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Most pupils are punctual at the start of the school day and they say they enjoy coming to school. Attendance is consistently above average.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The headteacher and senior leaders demonstrate a clear commitment to continued improvement and undertake a variety of planned and regular checks on how well the school is doing. Although priorities for improvement are generally accurate, the school's view of its own performance is somewhat over generous.
- Although the school has identified that there is variation in the progress of different groups, this has not always been checked closely enough and has resulted in uneven progress being made, especially in Key Stage 1.
- Teachers have targets as a result of their performance management. These are set regularly and based on whole-school priorities. Staff have training to help them develop their skills although this has not always been effective in securing improvements in the quality of teaching.
- Middle and subject leaders are involved in some activities to check on the school's performance and in identifying areas which require further development. However, their role is underdeveloped because they do not fully have the skills or opportunities to accurately evaluate the quality of teaching, or the progress being made by pupils in each year group, so that action

can be directed where it is most needed.

- The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well and is enriched with clubs, visits and visitors. The curriculum provides pupils with a range of opportunities for learning, both within school and beyond.
- The local authority has provided light touch support since the last inspection, although its view of the quality of the school has been more positive than that found by inspectors. More recently, it has identified with the school the key areas for improvement, including the differences in progress between different groups of pupils and the need to develop middle leaders' skills further.
- There are good partnerships, particularly with parents, to support pupils' development. The school regularly holds parent information sessions about a range of different areas of the school's work. There are good links with local high schools to support pupils' transfer to secondary education.
- The pupil premium funding is used for additional teaching assistant hours to provide one-to-one tuition and small group support. This shows the school's commitment to making sure all pupils achieve equally well.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is highly committed and supportive of the school. It has a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas which need to be improved. Governors are aware of the need to improve the quality of teaching, with a focus on developing this through performance management. They understand the variations between different groups and know that as well as attainment information, more scrutiny of pupils' progress is needed so that they can challenge the school more fully. The efficiency of spending is scrutinised, including the effectiveness of the use of pupil premium funding. Governors undertake their statutory duties effectively, ensure that safeguarding requirements are met and receive appropriate training.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| 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

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| Unique reference number | 111368 |
| Local authority | Warrington |
| Inspection number | 403150 |

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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| Type of school | All-through |
| School category | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils | 5-11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 179 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mr Tony Webster |
| Headteacher | Mr Michael Boland |
| Date of previous school inspection | 30 January 2008 |
| Telephone number | 01925 762268 |
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