

Our Lady of Walsingham Catholic Primary School

Stand Park Avenue, Netherton, Bootle, Merseyside, L30 3SA

Inspection dates 25–26 April 2013

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

- Pupils' achievement requires improvement. Their progress is uneven across the key stages, particularly in writing and mathematics. Attainment overall is not as high as it should be and is lower than at the time of the last inspection.
- Teaching is not always good and a small amount is inadequate. Teachers do not always expect enough of pupils; they do not always fully explain new work. As a result pupils do not make enough progress in some lessons, especially in Key Stage 2.
- Pupils are not always given enough time in lessons to check on how well they are doing or to act on the next steps for learning provided by teachers' marking.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage there are not enough opportunities for children to learn through outdoor play or for them to develop early reading skills in the Nursery class.
- Leaders' evaluations of how well the school is doing are sometimes too positive. Targets for raising achievement are not sharp enough to enable leaders to measure the success of improvement actions.
- The regular checks leaders make on the quality of teaching do not focus enough on the impact of teaching on pupils' learning and progress.
- Governors have not challenged school leaders strongly enough about why some pupils do not make the progress expected of them.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils in Key Stage 1 and in Year 3 make good progress in English and mathematics because teaching is better in those classes than in the rest of the school.
- Pupils feel safe and happy in school. They behave well and enjoy helping others.
- Relationships are very positive. Pupils enjoy school and the range of activities provided for them.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 17 lessons or parts of lessons, one of which was a joint observation with the acting headteacher. The inspectors also looked at examples of pupils' work. They listened to some pupils read and observed the teaching of early reading skills.
- Meetings were held with two groups of pupils, and inspectors spoke to pupils about their work. Inspectors held meetings with four members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and members of the school staff.
- In the course of the inspection, inspectors spoke to parents at the start and end of the school day and took account of the school's own questionnaires to parents. There were too few responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) to generate a summary of parents' views. Inspectors took account of the views of staff expressed in the questionnaire completed during the inspection.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including a summary of the school's self-evaluation, development plan and analysis of current data. Minutes from the governing body meetings and external reports from the local authority were also considered.

Inspection team

Lyn Pender, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Susan Walters

Additional Inspector

Sheila Loughlin

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school. Numbers have declined since the previous inspection.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is much smaller than average.
- An above-average proportion of pupils are supported at school action. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is higher than average. (The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children that are looked after.)
- A number of pupils join the school at other than normal times in the school year. The proportion is similar to that of other schools.
- A breakfast club is provided for pupils.
- The school met the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- A major building programme has taken place since the school opened in September 2006. The school community relocated to the new and refurbished single site in January 2012.
- The school has experienced some instability in staffing since the previous inspection. This includes a period of long-term absence of the headteacher. The deputy headteacher is currently acting as headteacher.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that all pupils make at least the progress expected of them, particularly in mathematics and writing by ensuring that:
 - pupils are given enough time in lessons to use the feedback given in marking to improve their work and use their personal targets to regularly check how well they are doing
 - teachers and pupils have higher expectations of the amount of work that can be produced in lessons, particularly in writing
 - teachers use examples to explain new learning rather than just talking about it
 - the Early Years Foundation Stage team make more effective and regular use of the outdoor area to engage children in their learning, and children in the Nursery class have more opportunities to develop their early reading skills.
- Strengthen leadership and governance so that improvements in achievement and teaching are more rapid by:
 - ensuring that leaders' observations of lessons give a clear indication of the progress of pupils and provide teachers with guidance that is focused on pupils' learning
 - extending the governing body's understanding of achievement data and providing more first-hand experiences of the quality of teaching to enable governors to challenge school leaders more robustly
 - ensuring a sharper focus is brought to development plans so that it is easier to evaluate the impact of actions.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because progress, although good in Key Stage 1 and Year 3, is inconsistent across other year groups. Pupils' attainment in reading is higher than it is in writing and mathematics.
- In Key Stage 2, pupils' current attainment in writing is below average and is lower than it was in 2012.
- The more-able pupils in Key Stage 2 are not doing as well as they should be doing in mathematics in the current year. Although most pupils met the nationally expected level in mathematics in 2012, the proportion of pupils who reached the higher level was significantly below average. The school is starting to address this, but there is still more to do to ensure all pupils do as well as they possibly can in this subject.
- Children's skills, especially their communication skills, are usually below the levels expected for their age when they start school in the Nursery class. Although children's skill levels at the end of the Reception Year improved in 2012, they remained below expectations for their age and were inconsistent across the areas of learning. In the current year, children's early literacy skills are not developed sufficiently in the Nursery but they do better in the Reception class.
- Despite relatively low starting points in Year 1, attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 has been consistently in line with the national average in reading, writing and mathematics for a number of years. This is because good teaching in Years 1 and 2 enables pupils to make good progress.
- The strong focus on teaching letters and sounds (phonics) is enabling pupils to make good progress in reading in Key Stage 1. In 2012, most pupils in Year 1 met the required standard in the new national checks on phonic skills. Pupils reach broadly average standards in reading by the end of Year 2 and show interest and enjoyment in reading. This continues to be the case in Key Stage 2 and pupils' reading skills are at nationally expected levels by the time they leave the school in Year 6.
- Pupils with special educational needs do at least as well as other pupils in the school in relation to their abilities and starting points.
- At the end of Key Stage 1 in 2012, pupils known to be eligible for the pupil-premium funding did as well as all other pupils in the school. In 2012, such pupils in Key Stage 2 were one year behind other pupils in the school in English and mathematics and a term behind similar pupils nationally. Current data show that better use of this funding is helping to close the gap between these pupils and others in the school. However, the school's drive to ensure that all pupils have an equal chance to succeed is not yet fully successful, as progress still varies between groups of pupils.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- School leaders judge teaching to be good; however, inspectors found that the quality of teaching requires improvement as pupils' progress is not consistently good across the school. Although inspectors observed examples of good teaching, a small amount is inadequate and the overall quality of teaching is not yet consistently good enough to ensure that all pupils make fast enough progress.
- Ineffective use is made of the Early Years Foundation Stage outdoor area. This means opportunities for children to explore the world around them and practise their skills independently are missed.
- Where teaching requires improvement, teachers talk for too long rather than showing pupils what to do. However, in more effective lessons, like those in Years 1, 2 and 3, lessons are well planned and teachers help pupils to understand new learning through the use of well-chosen examples.
- Pupils say they find, 'next steps' advice given in marking helpful. However, too few opportunities

are provided to allow pupils to act on this advice. Individual targets set for pupils are used more effectively in some classes than in others. Some teachers do not expect enough from pupils, particularly in written work, and this means that pupils are sometimes content to produce little work.

- In all lessons good relationships exist between pupils and adults. Pupils enjoy lessons and are encouraged to, 'have a go' and learn from their mistakes. In some lessons pupils are given the time to assess for themselves how well they have done. This encourages pupils to think more deeply about their learning but it does not happen often enough.
- Throughout Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils' handwriting and the presentation of their work is a credit to them and their teachers.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, especially in the Nursery class, opportunities to help children develop early reading skills are sometimes missed. However, these skills are being developed well in Key Stage 1 and Year 3 because here teachers set a brisk pace and make learning about letters and the sounds they make, interesting and exciting. As a result of this, and good teaching of reading further up the school, pupils become increasingly confident readers.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The school provides a friendly, welcoming and calm environment in which to learn. Typically, pupils are polite and sensible. Behaviour is not yet outstanding as occasionally pupils' progress slows when they do not work as hard as they can in lessons. The attendance and punctuality levels of a few pupils remain too low.
- Staff know individual pupils well and all are valued and cared for. Relationships between adults and children are good. Pupils say they enjoy coming to school and parents' comments, in the questionnaires they completed for the school, support this view. Parents and their children value the breakfast club, which helps get the day off to a good start for the pupils who attend.
- Pupils feel safe in school. School rules are well understood, and clear procedures for dealing with any misbehaviour are in place.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the different types of bullying including discriminatory language and prejudice-based and cyber-bullying. They say that incidents are rare and are dealt with swiftly if they do occur.
- Pupils value opportunities to make a contribution to school and the wider community. Peer mediators are well trained and take their roles very seriously. Other pupils respect and welcome their help on the playground and say that this helps make playtime a happy time of day. The school council leads the other pupils very successfully when raising funds for others.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The areas for improvement identified at the last inspection have been tackled by school leaders with some success but there is still work to do on all aspects if the school is to achieve higher outcomes for pupils.
- Leaders undertake a range of activities to check how well the school is doing, such as lesson observations and tracking pupils' progress. However, they are sometimes too generous in their interpretations of what the information is telling them and have an over-optimistic view of the school's performance.
- Leaders are not accurate enough in their assessment of the impact of new initiatives because improvement plans lack specific targets for pupils' achievement and do not have precise timescales.
- The headteacher and her deputy have established the school on a single site and developed the staff team. The way the performance of teachers is managed has been strengthened. This is linked to pupils' progress and staff training needs.

- Parents are warmly welcomed to the school. They value the family learning sessions run by the school's parent support adviser.
- The school takes a pride in its community. Discrimination is not tolerated and leaders successfully promote the key value of respect. For example, when talking about how some pupils sometimes need a little extra help with their work one boy told the inspector, 'It's about personality and how you act, not what you can do.'
- Good attendance is celebrated in the popular weekly assembly. However, there are too few reminders in classrooms or around school to encourage pupils to develop good attendance habits.
- The additional activities provided after school are popular. The sporting success enjoyed by pupils when participating in competitions with other schools is highly prized.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements.
- The local authority provides a range of support including consultant help for improving teaching and learning.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is committed to improving the school. Throughout the lengthy building programme for the new school governors provided effective support for school leaders during this challenging time. Through the headteacher's report, members of the governing body are made aware of the quality of teaching in the school and how teachers' performance is managed. However, they do not always ask searching questions of school leaders because they do not have all the skills needed to thoroughly check data about pupil achievement, including that of pupils supported through the pupil-premium funding. Arrangements to help governors gain first-hand knowledge of teaching and pupils' progress are not yet in place.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
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

Unique reference number	132198
Local authority	Sefton
Inspection number	411704

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	253
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paula Boal
Acting Headteacher	Neil Metcalf
Date of previous school inspection	24 February 2010
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