

St Wulstan's Catholic Primary School

Church Lane, Wolstanton, Newcastle, ST5 0EF

Inspection dates 27–28 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The school's values and beliefs are at the heart of what pupils, parents and staff agree is a safe, caring and harmonious community.
- Pupils achieve standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are above and, frequently, well above the national average.
- Pupils make good progress from their entry into the school to their leaving at the end of Year 6. Progress is particularly rapid in the Nursery Year and the Reception Year.
- Teaching is nearly always good and some is outstanding, with strong and positive relationships between teachers and pupils.
- Teachers give good levels of support for those who are finding learning hard and offer a high degree of challenge for the more able.
- Pupils' behaviour is good, both in lessons and around the school. They show courtesy and respect to staff and to each other.
- The school is improving and the high expectations of senior leaders, the staff and the governors for good teaching and achievement are helping pupils to do well.
- Pupils make the most of the wide range of clubs and activities and are particularly active as charity fundraisers.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- School leaders do not always examine information about pupils' achievement thoroughly enough.
- Teachers do not always show pupils how their own work compares with work at a higher level and what they need to do to get to that level.
- Teachers' planning of learning, particularly in mathematics in Year 3 to Year 5, does not always take enough account of the needs and interests of boys.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 19 lessons, of which four were joint observations with the executive headteacher or the deputy headteacher. In addition, the inspection team looked at pupils' work in their books and listened to them read.
- There were meetings with groups of pupils, senior leaders, representatives of the governing body and the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 68 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and talked to parents at the start of the school day. Inspectors also considered the 31 responses to a staff questionnaire.
- The inspection team examined the school's own data on pupils' current progress; planning and monitoring documentation; records relating to behaviour and attendance; and documents relating to safeguarding.
- One of the two Year 6 classes was away from school on an educational visit during the two days of the inspection. Inspectors examined pupils' books from this class.

Inspection team

Richard Boswell, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Janet Catto

Additional Inspector

Verna Plummer

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Wulstan's is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- A below-average proportion, just over a tenth, of pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium. This is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those in local authority care and those with a parent in the armed services.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported by school action is below average. The proportion supported by school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is also lower than national levels.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- St Wulstan's is in a formal collaboration with a neighbouring Catholic primary school. Both are currently led by the executive headteacher.
- The school runs both breakfast and after-school clubs.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure all school leaders have a positive impact on all aspects of pupils' achievement by regularly and rigorously evaluating information about pupils' performance.
- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching so as to raise pupils' achievement further by:
 - ensuring all pupils know how their own work compares with work at a higher level and what they need to do to get to that level
 - adapting the planning of learning, particularly in mathematics in Year 3 to Year 5, to take greater account of the needs and interests of boys.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils make good progress throughout the school and typically achieve standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are well above the national average. Some boys and girls also performed better than others nationally in achieving the higher levels in both English and mathematics.
- In 2012, while their progress was broadly similar, fewer boys than girls left the school having achieved the expected level in mathematics.
- Pupils make very good progress from low starting points in the Early Years Foundation Stage. When pupils leave the Reception Year, they achieve standards in all areas of development that are above the national average.
- Pupils show rapid progress in learning about sounds and letters (phonics) in their first years at the school. Results from testing in Year 1 show pupils performing above the national average.
- The school promotes equal opportunities and tackles discrimination very successfully. This is evident in the closing of the gap between the standards achieved by all pupils and the standards achieved by pupils who are supported by the pupil premium. In 2012, the small number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals in Year 6 made better progress from their starting points than other pupils. They were, on average, only one month behind the others in their attainment in English and two months behind in mathematics. School records show that the pupils currently supported by this funding are on track to achieve broadly similar results to their peers.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make broadly similar progress to that of other pupils. This is because the school quickly identifies specific needs and offers timely assistance to give these pupils extra help on a one-to-one and group basis. Skilled support staff provide these sessions both in class and in lunchtimes.

The quality of teaching is good

- There is some outstanding teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage. In one Reception Year lesson, pupils confidently discussed the symmetrical patterns on butterfly wings. The teacher skilfully blended the topic of 'mini-beasts', the concept of symmetry and work on phonics so that all pupils made outstanding progress.
- In the Reception Year, there are strong links with parents who are kept well informed and very involved in the start to their children's education. The move to Year 1 is particularly well managed with topic work carried over from one class into the next, allowing pupils to settle quickly with minimum disruption to their work.
- Teaching is typically at least good and the best practice in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 has excellent pace and fully engages all of the pupils throughout the lesson. In one French lesson, Year 5 pupils made rapid and outstanding progress using games and visual aids to learn new vocabulary. The teacher constantly spoke the language and the pupils enjoyed repeating it and testing each other.
- Teachers make good use of different activities to match the abilities of their pupils. In one

literacy lesson in Year 6, pupils made excellent use of their recent class visit to York in a task that was challenging and well planned. Some worked on paper with the assistance of support staff and others worked independently on computers to produce a tourist guide for the Year 5 pupils' visit next year. All pupils showed good knowledge of technical vocabulary and made outstanding progress.

- Not all teachers in Key Stage 2 consistently ensure that pupils understand what level they are aiming to achieve and what they need to do to achieve it. This means that older pupils are not always sure about their National Curriculum levels and targets. However, pupils in Year 2 were able to show inspectors the level they were working towards by reference to a wall display, with their names written on kites that climbed up into the sky.
- From Year 3 to Year 5, not all teachers are adapting their planning of learning to include a clear focus on improving the achievement of boys in mathematics. This means that boys in these lessons are not consistently challenged in order to accelerate their progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils, parents and staff comment on the caring and friendly attitudes that are shown in this school. There is a culture of respect and courtesy among pupils and staff and they establish strong and positive relationships in lessons. Pupils respond well to teachers' instructions and willingly cooperate with each other, for example, when working in pairs and small groups.
- Pupils are aware of the importance of staying safe and show sensible and considerate behaviour in the playground. Pupils say that bullying, itself, is not an issue at this school and school records and discussions with parents confirm this view. Pupils learn about e-safety and dangers associated with use of the internet and cyber bullying.
- Pupils' behaviour is well managed and school records show that there has been a considerable decrease in reported incidents over time. The school works hard to be as inclusive of all pupils as possible and there have been no exclusions this year and only one in the last three years.
- The school has robust safeguarding arrangements and all staff and governors receive regular training in appropriate aspects of child protection. The school site is secure and parents' views on the safety of their children at school are, rightly, very positive. The breakfast club and after-school club are well attended. Pupils receive nutritious snacks and are well cared for with activities that are coordinated with classroom teachers in order to strengthen pupils' learning.
- The school successfully places more emphasis on rewards than sanctions. For example, pupils are eager to achieve gold certificates for 100% attendance. With a robust system of checks in place to address any absences, attendance has steadily improved and is now above the national average.

The leadership and management are good

- This is an improving school because school leaders have a significant impact on the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. Staff are unreserved in their support for senior leaders and have high expectations for their pupils. The school monitors teaching closely and leaders are quick to tackle any underperformance. Regular lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' books and listening to pupils' views all contribute to an effective appraisal of the quality of teaching in the school.

- The spiritual aspect of school life is particularly strong. Pupils are encouraged to participate in prayer and contemplation at regular points during the school day as well as in assemblies. During the inspection, Year 5 and Year 6 pupils attended Mass at the adjacent church, which was also attended by parents and members of the community. Pupils also learn about other faiths and spoke to inspectors about a recent visit to a synagogue.
- The school's current system for tracking the performance of individuals and groups of pupils does not always provide a clear enough view of their progress. This means that both middle and senior leaders are not always responding quickly enough to the pupils' changing needs.
- The curriculum is good. It is varied and designed to meet the needs and interests of the pupils. Pupils regularly go out on educational visits and visitors come into the school to enrich topic work. For example, a local, wildlife centre brings live specimens into the school for pupils to observe. Teachers look for opportunities for developing literacy skills in other subjects and information and communication technology and numeracy skills are explored in science and geography, for example.
- Citizenship is promoted throughout the school. It is evident in the pupils' effective fundraising activities as well as musical performances at a care home and strong links to a school in Zimbabwe. Pupils are also engaged in a variety of activities and clubs after school. These include a successful gardening club for which the school has won a silver award from the Royal Horticultural Society.
- The school's collaboration with a neighbouring school is helpful in sharing good practice. Other partnerships include: the local Rotary Club providing regular support in hearing pupils' read; additional teaching of mathematics to more-able pupils at one of the local secondary schools; Stoke City Football Club providing coaching and resources for a variety of sports activities.
- The improvements the school has made since the previous inspection have meant that the local authority has only needed to give 'light-touch' support, such as involvement in aspects of staff training.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the governing body have a good understanding of the school's performance, including the quality of teaching, and how pupils' test results compare to those of other, similar schools. They make regular visits to the school and hold senior leaders to account for progress in raising pupils' achievement. Governors know how the management of staff performance is helping to improve the quality of teaching, and understand the link between staff salary increases and promotions and the meeting of targets for pupils' progress and achievement. They know how pupil premium funding is being used and the successful impact it is having on pupils' achievement. For example, they endorse the one-to-one coaching and help with payment for educational visits and residential courses. Governors regularly undertake training to improve their own skills. They make sure that policies, including those relating to safeguarding pupils, are regularly reviewed and updated, and are implemented effectively. Governors closely supervise the school's finances, so that St Wulstan's makes the best use of available resources.

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	124359
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	400125

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	444
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dorothy Lowe
Headteacher	James Devine
Date of previous school inspection	21 June 2011
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