

St Edward's Catholic Primary School

Wivern Place, Runcorn, Cheshire, WA7 1RZ

Inspection dates 9–10 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- As a result of good provision, children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress from their starting points.
- Achievement is good and has improved steadily. Consequently, pupils leave Year 6 with standards that are broadly average.
- The quality of teaching is good and some is outstanding. Teachers plan interesting tasks which make pupils eager to learn and helps them to progress quickly.
- Behaviour is excellent. Pupils are very welcoming and polite to visitors. They are keen to share their positive views about school. Pupils say they feel very safe at school and supported extremely well by the adults who work with them.
- Skilled leadership of the headteacher, supported by an effective governing body, is a key factor in the school's success. Leaders have a clear view on what it needs to do to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement further.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- By Year 6, pupils' achievement in reading is not as good as in writing and mathematics.
- Pupils are not given enough opportunities to improve their reading skills across the areas of the curriculum and to read more widely across different subjects.
- In some lessons, the work is not hard enough for the most-able pupils.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching in all classes. He observed eight lessons including the groups being taught their letters and sounds.
- Meetings were held with staff, parents, groups of pupils, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Pupils from different classes read to the inspector who also reviewed samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector analysed eight responses from staff to the inspection questionnaire.
- Thirty-five responses from parents via the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) were also taken into account along with the most recent parental surveys undertaken by the school.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documents, including the school's plans for future improvements, evaluation of its work, minutes from governing body meetings, safeguarding documentation and assessment data.

Inspection team

Michael Hewlett, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-size primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above 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 children looked after by the local authority.
- An above average proportion of pupils is supported through school action.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The school operates a breakfast club which is managed by the governing body
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has gained an Artsmark Gold award as well as an award for being a Healthy School.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' achievement in reading by providing greater opportunities to improve and extend their reading skills across the curriculum and encouraging them to read more widely across different subjects.
- Improve the quality of teaching to outstanding by ensuring that more-able pupils are always sufficiently challenged.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The majority of children start school with knowledge, skills and understanding that are below those typically expected of their age, especially in communication, language and personal development.
- From their different starting points, children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress. This is due to the good teaching and individually tailored support they receive. As a result, most are well-prepared for learning in Year 1, with the majority displaying skills typical for their age.
- Between Years 1 and 6 pupils make good progress and their attainment by the end of Year 6 is broadly average. Attainment in English and mathematics shows an improving picture over the last three years and this is confirmed by an examination of pupils' current work in school. The proportion of pupils achieving and exceeding the expected levels of progress is similar to that found nationally which represents good progress from their starting points.
- Achievement in reading by Year 6 is not yet as good as in writing or mathematics but is improving. Results of the Year 1 phonics (letters and sounds) check in 2012 were below national expectations. As a result of changes and increased consistency in how phonics is taught, the most recent results show that pupils are now in line with national expectations in this area of learning. Younger pupils use their knowledge of letters and sounds well to work out unfamiliar words. However, throughout the school, pupils do not have enough opportunities to improve their reading skills across all areas of the curriculum or to read more widely across different subjects.
- In 2012, pupils supported through the pupil premium funding, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, achieve well and reached standards above those of similar pupils nationally in English and mathematics. Nevertheless, those same pupils did not do as well as their classmates and were approximately a year behind their peers in English and mathematics. Current school data show that this gap is closing rapidly. This is due to the effective allocation of pupil premium funding, which clearly demonstrates the school's commitment to equal opportunities for all.
- Pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs receive good support and make good progress. Their needs are quickly identified and they are supported very well by a range of well-qualified adults.
- Using primary school sport funding, coaches have been employed to improve the quality of teaching of physical education. This is already showing an impact. More pupils now join the wide range of after-school sporting activities as well as the extensive range of other extra-curricular opportunities that are on offer.
- Overall, the learning and progress of pupils who are most able are good. Despite some tasks being set for them that are too easy, their good rates of progress are confirmed by school data, through lesson observations and by the scrutiny of work in their books.
- Both pupils and their parents feel that the school supports them in making good progress and achieving well.

The quality of teaching is good

- The majority of teaching is good and a small proportion is outstanding. Lessons are well-planned and this helps to motivate and engage pupils in tasks which are generally matched well to their different needs. Just occasionally, work set for more-able pupils is too easy as, for example, in a mathematics lesson where a group of pupils was asked to find multiples of six on a number chart. On reflection, the teacher recognised that there was insufficient challenge in this task for the most-able members of the group.
- English and mathematics are generally taught well across the school with a suitable priority

given in all year groups to these key subjects. Teachers ensure that pupils experience a wide ranging and enriched curriculum supported by many visits and visitors. Parents and pupils are impressed by the quality of teaching that pupils receive with one pupil commenting, 'Teachers make us work hard here but they also make our learning fun.'

- Teachers' good subject knowledge and well-developed questioning skills are used effectively to explore and challenge pupils' understanding. In a successful lesson with Year 6 pupils, the teacher's questioning required pupils to think more deeply about the words they were using and predict what impact they might have on the reader. Pupils were encouraged to review their writing more critically and, as a result, they produced finished texts which were of high quality and of which they were justifiably proud. Such approaches have led to pupils' improved achievement in writing.
- Pupils' work is marked well and they are given clear guidance on what they need to do to improve their learning and to reach a higher level in their work.
- Teaching of reading, particularly the teaching of letters and the sounds they make, is good. However, teachers do not always provide enough opportunities for developing and extending pupils' reading skills through other curriculum subjects.
- Teaching assistants form very good relationships with teachers and their pupils. They are used well and make a positive contribution to pupils' learning, particularly for those pupils who need extra help. In these lessons, pupils develop skills and make progress that is consistent with the achievement of all other pupils.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils in lessons and around the school is impeccable. Pupils are extremely polite and well-mannered and are very welcome towards visitors.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and enjoy their lessons. Relationships between pupils themselves and between pupils and adults are exemplary. This promotes very positive attitudes to learning and enables pupils to work well together. As one school council member commented, 'This school is a great place to be.....we all look after each other.'
- Pupils say they feel safe in and out of school because they are cared for so well by teachers and other adults. They understand how to keep themselves safe. For example, they learn about Internet safety, 'stranger danger' and how to swim.
- Bullying is rare and pupils are adamant that if it does happen at school it is dealt with effectively by school staff.
- The responses to the parental survey carried out by the school are positive. They indicate that the vast majority of parents agree that pupils behave well in school, that they are not bullied and that they are cared for well.
- Pupils have numerous opportunities to take on additional responsibilities such as play leaders, energy monitors and school councillors. Through their council representatives, all pupils have contributed to selecting and organising new resources for the playground. Pupils are actively involved in raising money for charities such as Comic Relief and CAFOD and to support families overseas through WaterAid. This develops their social, moral, spiritual and cultural understanding very well as they reflect on their own good fortune and appreciate the needs of others.
- Some pupils attend the before-school breakfast club. Here, pupils are supported very well through effective supervision and a good range of activities in a lively, caring and secure setting.
- Attendance levels are above average and have been improving steadily in recent years. The school places a high emphasis on the importance of pupils' good attendance and it is monitored very carefully.

The leadership and management are good

- Skilled leadership of the headteacher, supported by an effective governing body, is a key factor in the school's success. As a coherent group, they have a clear vision for the continuing improvement of the school and this is shared fully by the staff. School leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and plan effectively for areas that need to be improved.
- The headteacher and senior leaders rigorously check on the quality of teaching and manage teachers' performance well. Performance management arrangements are linked appropriately to pupils' progress and increases in salary. Training for all staff is successfully based on school improvement priorities.
- Pupil tracking has improved in recent years and school leaders set ambitious targets for pupils' progress. They work closely together as a team to ensure that individuals and groups of pupils who may be at risk of underperforming are quickly identified. School leaders then rigorously monitor the effectiveness of the support that is put in place.
- The local authority has provided light touch support for the school. Consequently, the school has commissioned an impressive range of additional support services and training from other sources and that has been tailored to meet the school's particular needs. Support for teaching assistants in teaching phonics, help with analysing data and an external consultant's evaluation of the learning environment are good examples of how the headteacher has used this flexibility to beneficial effect.
- The school has used its allocation of funding for pupil premium well by investing in small-group work and planned interventions, as well as providing pupils with access to enrichment activities. These activities are having a very positive impact on narrowing the gap between these pupils and their peers and in raising their confidence.
- The curriculum is good and closely meets the needs of the pupils. They comment positively on the interesting and exciting work that they are asked to complete. In addition, the curriculum offers many enrichment opportunities through clubs and extra-curricular activities. It doesn't yet provide enough occasions when pupils' reading skills are developed and improved across the full range of curriculum subjects.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body understands the school's strengths and where improvements are needed. Governors have an accurate picture of the school's performance and are well-informed about the progress being made towards achieving targets set out in the improvement plan. Governors are well-trained and able to hold the school to account and challenge school leaders about areas for improvement. They have a good understanding of the impact of improving achievement on pay progression of staff. Governors also check regularly on the performance of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding to ensure that the funding is spent wisely and that these pupils have the same equal chance as that of their peers. Governors fully meet their statutory duties including safeguarding.

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	111319
Local authority	Halton
Inspection number	427236

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	120
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs A Farrell
Headteacher	Mrs K O'Hare
Date of previous school inspection	16 March 2009
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