

Much Woolton Catholic Primary School

Watergate Lane, Woolton, Liverpool, Merseyside, L25 8QH

Inspection dates 10–11 December 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		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Pupils' progress has been variable across year groups over time and is not yet consistently good.
- The overall quality of teaching over time is not consistently good, particularly in mathematics. There is not yet enough outstanding teaching.
- Teachers do not always match the activities they have planned well enough to pupils' needs, including for the most able.
- Teachers' marking is not consistently good across the school. Pupils are not always given guidance on how to improve their work and they are not always given opportunities to respond to teachers' comments and improve their understanding.
- Additional adults are not always used well in lessons so that pupils' progress can improve more rapidly.
- Middle leaders do not fully measure how effective the targets which they have set have been on improving pupils' progress.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils are polite, well behaved and have respect for the school and each other. They say they feel safe and have a very good understanding of how to keep themselves safe.
- Attendance is consistently above average.
- Teaching is improving and much of the teaching observed was good, which is resulting in improvements in pupils' achievement.
- The headteacher and senior leaders, who work as a strong team, are taking effective steps to improve the school. They are rigorous in checking the performance of teachers. As a result the school is improving and is demonstrating that it can improve further.
- Governance is good. Governors know the school well and what needs to be done to further improvement. They work well with the headteacher and provide support and challenge.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 23 lessons or parts of lessons, two of which were joint observations with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- The inspectors listened to pupils from two different year groups read, 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, representatives of the governing body and representatives of the local authority and diocese.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised documentation relating to pupils' progress and to school management, including the arrangements to ensure safeguarding.
- Inspectors took account of the 84 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and took account of the school's consultation with parents.

Inspection team

Vanessa MacDonald, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Sandy Dixie	Additional Inspector
Susan Walters	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Much Woolton Catholic Primary is larger than the average-sized primary school. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. A small number of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well-below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, is below the national 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 by the local authority.)
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- There is a privately run after-school club which will be inspected separately.
- The breakfast club, which is run by the school, formed part of the inspection.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been significant changes to the leadership and management of the school, with the appointment of a new headteacher in September 2011, a deputy headteacher in January 2013 and an assistant headteacher in September 2013. There has also been a significant restructuring of middle leadership.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better in order to raise achievement across all year groups and particularly in mathematics by:
 - making sure that all activities are well-matched to the needs of pupils, including the most able
 - ensuring that marking consistently gives pupils next steps in their learning and that they have time to act on the advice given
 - making sure that additional adults are always used effectively in lessons in order to improve pupils' progress more rapidly.
- Strengthen leadership and management further by developing the role of middle leaders to ensure that the plans they write to improve performance in their areas have measurable criteria to check accurately on pupils' progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because progress has been variable over time and between year groups and subjects. Although this is improving, it has not yet been sustained over a sufficient period for achievement to be judged as good.
- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills which are overall in line with those expected for their age. Good teaching means that they make good progress and are well prepared for Year 1. In a focused mathematics session children were confidently using numbers to play bingo and were enthusiastically 'telling' Father Christmas what numbers they knew.
- Progress in mathematics has not been good enough in the past two years. The proportion of pupils making expected progress from their starting points by the end of Key Stage 2 was below national figures. The recent introduction of a consistent approach to the teaching of mathematics has improved the progress of pupils across the school and most, including the most able, are now making good progress from their starting points.
- Standards in writing have improved and the majority of pupils made expected progress from their starting points by the end of Key Stage 2 in 2013. However, too few made better than expected progress. Increased opportunities for writing in a range of subjects, including through the use of 'BookArt' cross-curricular books has improved progress in writing across year groups.
- In 2013 the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the check on phonics (the matching of letters and sounds) at Year 1 was below national expectations. The school took swift action, leading to greater consistency of approach, with teaching well matched to pupils' needs. Pupils are now using their knowledge of letters and sounds well to read different words.
- Standards in reading at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 are above national. The majority of pupils make good and sometimes better progress from their starting points. The proportions making and exceeding expected progress was above national in 2013. Pupils read regularly and enjoy reading a range of books.
- By the end of Key Stage 2 the attainment of the small number of pupils eligible for a free school meal is a year behind other pupils in English and mathematics. Test data shows that the majority of these pupils made progress expected of them from their starting points, though there was a gap between them and their peers. School data shows that this gap is closing and that pupils eligible for pupil premium funding are making progress similar to that of their peers because of the measures put in place, particularly at Key Stage 1. This shows the school's commitment to equality of opportunity.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs has been inconsistent over time. However, they are now making accelerated progress from their individual starting points because of well-targeted support, particularly in reading.
- The most able pupils have not always made as much progress as they could. This is improving, particularly in mathematics, with most of them now making effective progress.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement overall because, despite much good teaching being observed, it has not been good enough over time to make sure that pupils make good progress in all classes and subjects.
- Although some teaching is planned well to meet the needs of different pupils, teachers do not consistently plan activities which are at the right level and work is sometimes too easy or too hard. The most able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged in lessons, which slows their progress.
- Teachers mark pupils work regularly and there are some good examples of marking which provides pupils with guidance on how to improve their work. However, this is not consistent across all year groups and particularly in mathematics, where pupils are not always given clear

guidance. Pupils do not always have an opportunity to respond to teachers' comments to improve their performance.

- Although in most lessons additional adults are used well to support different groups of pupils in different parts of the lesson, there are occasions where they could be more effectively used to ensure more rapid progress.
- In some lessons, teachers use questioning well to check pupils' understanding and enable them to discuss their ideas. In a Year 2 mathematics lesson the teacher tested the pupils' mathematical knowledge by encouraging them to ask questions to determine a secret number.
- Pupils say they enjoy learning, especially when it is fun. In a Year 5 lesson the teacher used the Victorian topic to teach pupils in a 'Victorian classroom', all suitably dressed for the occasion. Pupils were actively engaged and responded well to rehearsing their times-tables.
- Where teachers plan for pupils to work collaboratively, pupils show that they enjoy the opportunity to share ideas and discuss their understanding. In a Year 5 lesson, for example, pupils were enthusiastically developing their ideas to persuade the council why they should not close Croxteth Hall, using their first-hand knowledge well.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour in classrooms and around school is good. They show a respect for one another and are polite and courteous.
- They say they feel safe in school and have a very good understanding of what constitutes an unsafe situation. The vast majority of parents agree. The school uses different visitors, such as the fire service, road safety trainers and 'bullybusters', to ensure that all pupils are made fully aware of the different ways of keeping safe.
- Staff manage behaviour very well and pupils respond well to adults' direction. School records show there are few instances of poor behaviour and when these occur they are followed up appropriately.
- Pupils show a good understanding of the different types of bullying, including cyber bullying. They felt that there was little bullying and that any instances were appropriately dealt with.
- The curriculum is enriched with additional visits and visitors and it has close links with the church and local community. This promotes pupils spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- Pupils willingly take on different responsibilities. The introduction of older pupils as 'friendship buddies' has been positive in supporting younger pupils with any concerns they might have. School councillors have been involved in making decisions about how to improve playtime with the purchase of equipment and are involved in discussing issues in the wider community with other school councils.
- Pupils are eager to learn. Occasionally, when activities are not pitched at the right level, pupils lose interest and some do not behave so well.
- Attendance is consistently above the national average and is well promoted by the school.
- The breakfast club provides pupils with a good start to the day.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has a clear and determined vision and demonstrates high expectations and ambition for staff and pupils. He is well supported by senior leaders and governors, who are fully committed to driving further school improvement.
- The new leadership team works effectively with the headteacher and together they have made improvements in achievement and the quality of teaching. The quality of teaching has improved and much is now good. This is resulting in improvement in the achievement of current pupils, with more consistency across year groups. This includes improvement for those eligible for the pupil premium and those with special educational needs, because support is now well-targeted.
- The school has a very good system to track the progress of individuals and groups. This has led

to the early identification of pupils who are in danger of falling behind and shows that progress across groups is more consistent.

- Arrangements for the performance management of teachers are robust. Movement up the pay scale is carefully reviewed. It is linked to the national teaching standards and the progress made by pupils in their class. Regular meetings about pupils' progress ensure that teachers are held to account. They are supported through well-targeted professional development.
- Middle leaders have a good understanding of their areas of responsibility and have identified accurately the areas for development. They check on the quality of teaching and pupils' standards. However, they do not measure how effective the targets they set have been on improving pupils' progress.
- The curriculum is balanced and promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education well. One example was an outstanding and imaginative Spanish lesson, where pupils showed excellent understanding and confidence in the use of the language. There are numerous enrichment opportunities which pupils thoroughly enjoy, including working with a photographer, who attended a Victorian Christmas day at Croxteth Park.
- The primary school sport funding has been effectively used to employ specialist staff to promote good quality sport and physical well-being. It is also improving the skills of staff, thus ensuring sustainability. There are increased opportunities to take part in sport and to compete against other schools, which has led to greater participation.
- The local authority checks on the school's effectiveness and provides a moderate level of support through training and, most recently, in supporting the improvements in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The school benefits from partnerships with different schools, including local high schools. Pupils have opportunities, through these links, to extend their mathematics and sports skills, which promotes good transition to secondary school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are clearly aware of the school's strengths and where it needs to develop further. It is well informed and has a good understanding of school data, as well as how the school is doing compared to national data. They have a clear understanding of performance management and how this is linked to pay progression and pupils' progress. They manage finances well and have made significant changes to the leadership structure. This has ensured improvements in pupils' achievement, including those who are eligible for pupil premium funding. Through their links with year groups and reports from subject leaders, they have a good understanding of the quality of teaching and are well-placed to offer support and challenge. Governors undertake regular training to make sure they fulfil their duties well. Arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils meet requirements.

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	104636
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	426216

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	410
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Carol Chapman
Headteacher	Matthew White
Date of previous school inspection	30 October 2008
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