

St Werburgh's Catholic Primary School

Park Grove, Birkenhead, Merseyside, CH41 2TD

Inspection dates 15–16 January 2014

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.

- Parents and pupils agree this is a happy and extremely caring school.
- Pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics is good. Standards have risen well, in all year groups, since the last inspection because the quality of the teaching has improved significantly.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make a good start to their learning and are well prepared for Year 1.
- All groups of pupils in the school achieve well because teaching is good and at times outstanding. Exemplary relationships between adults and pupils are a key strength.
- Pupils who join the school with English as an additional language benefit greatly from the skilled staff who support them. As a result, they make at least good progress from their individual starting points.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. The school has clear policies to help pupils understand how important it is to get on well together. As a result, most pupils behave well and work hard in lessons.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. It provides strong pastoral care for pupils and their families.
- The subjects pupils study have interesting topics that promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- The leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher is outstanding. Together with senior leaders and governors, they have eliminated poor teaching and improved pupils' achievement well since the last inspection and this is set to continue.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not outstanding because work in lessons is not always set at a hard enough level, particularly for the most able, to help them to achieve their best.
- Marking of pupils' work does not consistently show them how to improve and teachers do not always provide them with enough time to act upon the advice given.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 16 lessons or parts of lessons, one of which was a joint observation with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, staff, members of the governing body and groups of pupils.
- Inspectors examined the school's own documentation relating to pupils' progress, school self-evaluation and policies relating to safeguarding. They carried out a scrutiny of pupils' work in their writing and mathematics books.
- The inspectors listened to pupils read and spoke informally to pupils during playtimes and lunchtimes.
- There were only four parental responses received at the time of the inspection from the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) which could not be viewed by the inspectors because of the low response. However, the inspectors took account of the school's own parental survey and spoke informally to parents at the end of the school day.
- Inspectors took account of the 33 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Clare Henderson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Ian Wellens

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well 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 those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Four new teachers have joined the school since the last inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching so an even greater proportion is outstanding in order to ensure pupils' excellent achievement by making sure that :
 - work set in lessons is consistently hard enough, particularly for the most able pupils, to enable them to achieve their best
 - teachers' marking consistently shows pupils how to improve and that have enough time to act upon the advice given.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start school with skills which are well below those expected for their age. High-quality care means that children settle quickly. Their happy faces show they feel safe as they eagerly explore the good range of activities they meet indoors and outside. By the end of the Reception class, most children have made a good level of development and are well prepared for Year 1.
- Attainment at the end of Year 2 has improved significantly since the last inspection and particularly in reading which is now average. Although attainment is below average in writing and mathematics, it has improved well over the past three years. This is because the quality of teaching has improved significantly. These levels of attainment represent good progress from pupils' individual starting points.
- By the end of Year 6 in 2013, attainment was broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. All groups of pupils, including the most able, made good progress from their individual starting points.
- School records and pupils' work in books show that, as the quality of teaching has improved, a higher proportion of pupils are securely on course to meet and exceed the progress expected of them. However, achievement is good and not outstanding because, in some lessons, teachers do not set work at the right level to challenge pupils and particularly the most able, to achieve the very best they can.
- Pupils in all classes show they love books and reading. An increasing proportion now read with their parents and weekly visits are organised by the school, to the local library.
- The daily letters and sounds (phonics) lessons are successfully giving pupils the skills to become confident when tackling new words. This is reflected in the 2013 phonics screening check for Year 1 pupils when the proportion reaching the expected level was well-above the national average.
- Older pupils read fluently and enjoy a wide and varied range of material. Their good quality reading skills support them in all the subjects they study and equip them well for future learning.
- Pupils' achievement in mathematics is rapidly improving. This is because of the strong focus given to extending pupils' mathematical skills, through problem-solving activities, and good use of information and communication technology (ICT) which demand pupils use their thinking and reasoning skills.
- Extra support and working in small groups enable those supported by the pupil premium funding to progress at the same rate or faster than their classmates. Their attainment meets that of similar pupils nationally but, in Year 6 in 2013, was about two terms behind that of their classmates. School information shows this gap is rapidly closing.
- Pupils who join the school with English as an additional language benefit greatly from the skilled staff who support them. As a result, they make at least good progress.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are fully included in all learning activities. This reflects the school's commitment to equal opportunities. As a result, they make good progress and achieve well.

The quality of teaching is good

- Pupils are eager to say how much they enjoy lessons and that teachers prepare 'fun and interesting lessons'.
- Teaching across the school is good. Poor teaching has been eliminated and consequently, progress rates are good and rapidly increasing.
- Most of the teaching observed during the inspection was of a good quality with examples of some outstanding teaching. A scrutiny of the work in pupils' books and the school's records of the checks made on teaching indicate that teaching is typically good and improving.

- In most lessons, lively introductions whet pupils' appetites for the tasks to come. In a Year 4 mathematics lesson, for example, all groups of pupils are very clear about what they are learning because they are provided with clear instructions and the opportunities to test out their ideas both with partners and on their own. They do this with confidence and are absorbed and engrossed in learning which is set at the right level for them to achieve the very best they can.
- Where learning is strongest, staff frequently check pupils' understanding during the lesson. Skilled questioning based on excellent subject knowledge gets pupils thinking hard, with time to reflect and explain their answers. This was observed when most able older pupils were asked to scale a recipe for curry up or down, an activity that really appealed to them. They persevered well and made rapid progress by the end of the lesson.
- In the few lessons where learning is less successful there is too little difference in the activities given to different groups of pupils. In particular, in some lessons, work is not set at the right level to challenge the most able pupils to achieve their best in English and mathematics and because of this, some pupils do not achieve the higher levels of which they are capable.
- In most instances, teachers make good use of what pupils already know to identify what they need to do next to improve. However, occasionally teachers miss valuable opportunities to help pupils speed up in their learning because they do not always mark pupils' work in a way that provides them with advice about what they need to do next or if they give them enough time to do this.
- Teaching assistants are well informed and work in close partnership with teachers. They provide sensitive and work-related advice and support for pupils who need extra help or are at risk of not doing as well as they could.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour observed by the inspectors in lessons was good and at times outstanding. This has a positive effect on their good achievement. School records show that behaviour is typically good in classes, around the school and over time.
- Pupils are respectful, polite and courteous and behave well, whether on the playground, along the corridors or in the dining hall. Those groups of pupils inspectors spoke to in formal meetings, whilst they were walking along corridors, playing outside or in the dining hall, say that they feel safe and secure in school.
- Pupils generally engage positively in their work and participate well in class discussions. For example, in a Year 4 science lesson, they eagerly and successfully worked together to draw around one member of the group and set about enthusiastically labelling as many of the bones in the body that they could remember. During this time, they listened well to each other's ideas and were attentive to their feelings and abilities.
- The school has well-established and clear expectations of behaviour which staff apply and with which pupils comply consistently. Pupils say that behaviour in the school is good. The school's records of parents' views indicate that they are overwhelmingly positive about behaviour and safety of pupils in the school.
- Behaviour is judged as good rather than outstanding. Occasionally, when the pupils are expected to work without direct supervision from the teacher, they chatter to friends rather than concentrate fully on their learning.
- Pupils say that bullying and racism are rare and they trust staff to follow up if they have any concerns. The school's records also confirm this. Pupils have a good understanding of different forms of bullying, including cyber bullying.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils say, and their parents agree, that they feel safe and well supported at school. They know how to keep themselves safe from everyday hazards, including e-safety and road safety.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are safe and cared for well. They rapidly learn to take turns and happily follow school routines.
- Pupils have good opportunities to take responsibility. Some are lunchtime leaders on hand to

help the young pupils. Others act as school councillors to seek out and act upon the views of other pupils. Such roles enable them to learn to act responsibly and develop leadership skills.

- Pupils' attendance has improved rapidly and they are generally punctual. Attendance is average for all groups of pupils.

The leadership and management are good

- Senior leadership is outstanding. It has successfully overcome a range of teaching issues affecting the school and pupils' progress and has created a strong team who share their values, support them very well and play a strong part in raising standards. As a result, a culture of good teaching and behaviour flourishes.
- These improvements are supported by valuable training for all staff and particularly for middle leaders. The excellent opportunities for them to work and learn from experienced senior leaders and form strong partnership links contribute well to the good achievement of all groups of pupils.
- There are thorough procedures in place for checking the school's work, which includes making sure that targets set for teachers are met and that teachers are helping pupils to achieve the best they can.
- However, leadership is not outstanding overall because middle leaders do not always fully check that teachers mark pupils' work in a way that gives them clear guidance in how they can improve. This means that opportunities are missed to speed up the progress some pupils are capable of because occasionally, work is not set at a level which makes them think hard enough.
- Senior leaders make good use of the helpful links with and the support of the local authority to check the quality of their work. The school's improving track record shows good capacity for further improvement.
- The area of care for those groups at risk of not doing as well as they could is very well managed. This ensures all groups of pupils have the same chances of success. In this way, everyone is respected and discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.
- The subjects pupils study promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils respond enthusiastically to the good range of artistic, sporting and cultural activities provided.
- Arrangements for safeguarding meet all statutory requirements. Records are maintained carefully and child protection and first-aid training are up to date.
- The school uses the Primary School Sports funding well to allow a sports specialist to develop teachers' expertise and give pupils access to specialist sports provision. The school effectively checks the quality of teaching in physical education and pupils' participation in sport.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body's positive action played a strong part in eliminating poor teaching because they acted swiftly alongside the senior leadership team. Governors know the school well because they regularly visit and talk with teachers to find out how well pupils are learning. They check the information available on pupils' progress and attainment and hold leaders to account for how well the school is doing. The governing body keeps a careful watch on the achievement of those pupils eligible to pupil premium funding and check what impact additional funding has. They use performance management well to check the quality of teaching and link performance carefully to pay and professional progression.

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	105091
Local authority	Wirral
Inspection number	440339

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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	220
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lynn Ireland
Headteacher	Monique Stevenson
Date of previous school inspection	13 September 2010
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