

# St Lewis Catholic Primary School

Mustard Lane, Croft, Warrington, Cheshire, WA3 7BD

**Inspection dates** 26–27 June 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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 headteacher, staff and governors have worked effectively together to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement since the last inspection. As a result, the school's overall effectiveness has significantly improved.
- Achievement is good. From starting points that are broadly typical for their age, pupils make good progress and by the time they leave Year 6, their attainment is well above the average.
- Teaching is good. Teachers know their pupils well and plan activities that help to make learning interesting.
- Pupils are polite and friendly and their behaviour is good. They feel safe and well cared for by the school. Attendance is improving because pupils enjoy school.
- Parents are supportive of the school and most say they would recommend the school to another parent.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well and they benefit from a curriculum that provides them with a good range of experiences both inside and outside school.
- Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They provide effective support and challenge to school leaders. There are rigorous arrangements in place to check how well the school is doing and to ensure that it continues to move forward.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Over time, attainment in writing is not as good as in reading and mathematics because pupils have limited opportunities to develop their skills across a range of subjects.
- Teachers do not have consistently high expectations of the presentation of pupils' work.
- Learning is not always effective for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage especially when they are not supported by adults.
- Leaders' checks that the school's marking policy is being applied consistently have not been sufficiently rigorous.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 lessons or parts of lessons, of which one was a joint observation with the headteacher.
- Inspectors listened to pupils reading in Year 2, and held meetings with pupils drawn from across Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and other leaders, including the school’s two assistant headteachers, the Early Years Foundation Stage coordinator and the special educational needs coordinator. Inspectors also met with a small group of governors and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors undertook a detailed scrutiny of pupils’ current work.
- A range of other evidence was also considered by inspectors. This included the school’s evaluation of its own performance, development planning, records of teachers’ performance management, data about the achievement of pupils currently in the school, governing body information and records relating to attendance, behaviour and safeguarding.
- Inspectors took account of 50 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and a number of parents shared their views of the school with inspectors during the inspection.
- Inspectors analysed three returns by staff to the inspection questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Neil Dixon, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
John Shutt	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is below 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 for whom the school receives the pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium is additional funding to support pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups, or who speak English as an additional language is well below the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which is the minimum expectation for pupils' progress and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- There is pre-school, breakfast club and after-school provision on site. These are run by external providers and are inspected separately.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve further the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement by:
  - making sure that learning is always effective for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, including in the outdoor areas, especially when they are not supported by adults
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to write across a range of different subjects
  - ensuring that teachers have consistently high expectations of the standard of presentation of work across all areas of the curriculum.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that school leaders rigorously check that the school's new marking policy is being consistently and effectively applied in all classes.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start school with skills and knowledge that are broadly typical for their age, with particular strengths in many children's communication skills and social development. Children make good progress during their time in the Reception class.
- Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 have improved since the previous inspection. In 2013, pupils' attainment was above average in reading, writing and mathematics, representing good progress from pupils' individual starting points. Inspection evidence confirms that pupils in the current Year 2 class are making particularly rapid progress and that levels of attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 are continuing to improve.
- Achievement in Key Stage 2 is good overall, and by the end of Year 6 pupils' attainment is typically well above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics and the proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels is increasing.
- Pupils' progress in reading is good. The youngest children quickly develop a good understanding of books and stories, and the school has successfully put in place a structured approach to the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make.) As a result, by the end of Year 2, pupils confidently use their knowledge of phonics to help them decode new words.
- Pupils make good progress in writing. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils write complex sentences using appropriate punctuation, and this good progress continues across Key Stage 2. However, fewer pupils in Year 2 or Year 6 achieve the higher levels in writing compared with in reading and mathematics. This is because they do not always have sufficient opportunities to develop their writing in different areas of the curriculum.
- Achievement in mathematics is good. Pupils work well together to use their basic numeracy skills when tackling problem-solving tasks. When faced with mathematical challenges that they find difficult, such as tackling basic algebraic problems in the Year 6 class, pupils show positive attitudes to learning in their determination to get to the right answer.
- Overall, the most able pupils make good progress and some make outstanding progress. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is above the national average and increasing. In mathematics, some pupils in Year 6 are working confidently on challenging tasks at the highest level (Level 6.)
- All groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, those from minority ethnic groups and those with a first language other than English, make good progress during their time in the school and achieve well. The school makes regular checks on their progress and effective support from skilled and enthusiastic teaching assistants ensures that they achieve well.
- The school has effectively addressed the difference between the achievement of boys and girls in the school and this gap has closed rapidly so that, particularly in Key Stage 1, the difference is now negligible. This is indicative of the school's effective promotion of equal opportunities.
- The funding for those pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium is being used increasingly effectively so that the attainment of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is improving. In 2013, by the end of Year 6, the small number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals were 18 months behind their classmates in writing and mathematics and just over a year behind in reading. The school's detailed monitoring and tracking shows that for pupils currently in Year 6 the gap is narrowing rapidly.

### The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching over time across the school is good overall, and as a result, pupils make good progress.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, staff effectively support children in developing their reading, writing and number skills through well-planned activities that extend their skills. Good

relationships help the children to enjoy their learning and make good progress. Learning is not always as effective when children are not supported by an adult, particularly in the outdoor area, when activities are not always challenging enough to develop their skills and knowledge.

- Pupils respond well to teachers' high expectations, and enjoy activities that challenge them to develop their skills and understanding. This was evident when mathematics was being taught in Year 6 where pupils showed enthusiasm and determination in tackling different types of word problems, with one girl delightedly saying, 'I did it. I got there in the end,' when she completed a challenging task. Expectations of the presentation of work are not as high and some work is not presented neatly.
- Teachers, effectively supported by skilled and enthusiastic teaching assistants, demonstrate good subject knowledge across the curriculum and topics interest and sustain pupils' learning.
- Reading is taught effectively, and pupils across Key Stages 1 and 2 have plenty of opportunities to develop their reading skills across the curriculum, such as when conducting research about different topics.
- Since the previous inspection, school leaders have revised the school's policy and procedures for marking pupils' work. As a result, the quality of marking has improved and typically pupils understand better how to improve their work. However, marking is not yet fully consistent across different year groups and subjects, and as a result, it does not always accelerate pupils' progress.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are polite and welcoming. They say that poor behaviour in their school is very unusual.
- At lunchtimes and playtimes, pupils mix well and get on with each other. They enjoy using the well-equipped outdoor playground, where they can access an exciting range of balancing and climbing equipment, and their play is supported very effectively by older pupils acting as 'play leaders'.
- Pupils show positive attitudes to learning and say that they enjoy coming to school; one pupil's comment, 'I just love school,' was an opinion shared by the vast majority of his classmates. In class, pupils cooperate well together and behaviour in lessons is consistently good. However, pupils do not always take enough care with their handwriting and presentation.
- Attendance over time is good and persistent absenteeism is decreasing rapidly because pupils are happy coming to school.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say that they feel very safe in the school and can confidently explain how to keep themselves safe in different situations, including when using the internet. Displays around school further reinforce messages for the pupils about staying safe online.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of different forms of bullying, including name-calling and racist bullying, but say that incidents of bullying in their school are extremely rare, and all are confident that the adults in school would deal effectively with any problems or concerns that they may have.
- Parents' responses to the 'Parent View' online survey, and informal discussions with inspectors during the inspection, show that the very large majority of parents are pleased with the standard of behaviour and safety in the school. Almost all of the parents who responded to 'Parent View' said that they would recommend the school to another parent.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The headteacher, well supported by the senior leadership team and other middle leaders, has successfully addressed the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection. As a result of the actions that have been taken, the quality of teaching across the school has

improved and standards are rising.

- School leaders have a clear understanding of the strengths of the school and where it could do better. The detailed school improvement plan is based on a robust and accurate view of the school's performance and correctly identifies the key priorities for improvement. Leaders, including those with responsibility for different areas of the curriculum, make regular and thorough checks on pupils' attainment and progress and this information is used to target extra support where it is most needed. This is indicative of the increasing effectiveness of middle leaders in the school.
- The headteacher ensures that targets set for teachers' performance are clearly linked to pupils' progress and attainment, and that there is a clear link between teachers' pay and performance. Regular checks are made on the quality and impact of teaching and the headteacher has an accurate view of the strengths in teaching across the school. However, checks on the quality of teachers' marking have not always identified occasions when the school's new marking policy has not been consistently applied.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils enjoy having opportunities to learn about the lives and experiences of others, such as by writing letters to children in Africa, and show care and respect for others both in school and beyond.
- The curriculum provides good and interesting tasks for all pupils, whatever their starting points or academic ability. It is very well enhanced by a wide range of extra-curricular clubs and visits out of school, such as an annual trip to London for the older pupils and a trip to a local farm for children in the Reception class.
- The school makes highly effective use of the additional funding for primary school sport. Specialist coaches work alongside teachers to provide pupils with engaging sessions that help to improve pupils' sporting skills while developing teachers' skills and confidence. An increasing number of children are having the opportunity to represent the school in sports teams.
- The local authority has provided effective support for the school in areas such as staff training and developing links with other schools. This has contributed to improving teaching and achievement. The school has also made effective use of external consultants to further accelerate improvements
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are heavily involved in the life of the school and are regular visitors in a variety of roles. They responded decisively to the outcomes of the previous inspection, establishing a committee to monitor attainment and progress and to ensure achievement improved. As a result, governors have a very clear understanding of the school's performance and provide appropriate challenge to school leaders. They have a good knowledge of data relating to pupils' attainment and progress.
  - Governors, working closely with senior leaders, ensure that the school's finances are well managed and enhance the quality of learning for pupils. They are aware of how the pupil premium and the primary sports funding is used and the impact that this has on pupils' progress and well-being.
  - Governors ensure that the statutory duties of the governing body are fulfilled, particularly with regard to safeguarding and checks on procedures for managing teachers' performance. They ensure that there is a clear link between pay progression and teachers' performance and have a clear view of the quality of teaching throughout the school.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	111368
<b>Local authority</b>	Warrington
<b>Inspection number</b>	442365

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	182
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Tony Webster
<b>Headteacher</b>	Michael Boland
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 December 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01925 762268
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