

Our Lady of Walsingham Catholic Primary School

Stand Park Avenue, Netherton, Bootle, Merseyside, L30 3SA

Inspection dates 21–22 April 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher provides a clear sense of direction for the school.
- All staff and governors work well as a team. Their successful actions have secured improvements in the achievement of all groups of pupils and in the quality of teaching since the previous inspection. The school continues to improve.
- Teaching is good and standards in reading, writing and mathematics are rising rapidly.
- The provision for disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those who are disadvantaged is good.
- Provision in the early years is good. Children are eager to learn new things and are encouraged to be inquisitive. They achieve well.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning. They behave consistently well. This makes a very positive contribution to their good progress and the school's harmonious atmosphere.
- Pupils feel safe at school and are well cared for by adults and by each other.
- Provision for pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good. Visitors and trips bring learning to life. Pupils enthusiastically engage in sports and music.
- A strong ethos of nurturing and caring pervades the whole school. Families are warmly welcomed when they require help and support.
- Virtually all parents support the school's values and express positive views about the school.
- Governors know the school well and offer a good level of challenge and support to leaders.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally, the work set, especially for the most able pupils, is not hard enough to enable them to reach the highest standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise and apply their writing skills in subjects other than English.
- There is not always enough time for pupils to respond to teachers' marking and learn from their mistakes.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in a range of lessons. In addition, they made a number of short visits to lessons and listened to pupils from Year 2 and Year 6 read. They also gathered other evidence relating to the quality of teaching over time.
- The inspectors observed two lessons jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and senior and middle leaders. They also met with five governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body, and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors took into account the responses to the school’s survey of parents’ views and held discussions with parents who brought their children to school. The number of responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) was too few to be meaningful.
- Inspectors considered the views expressed in the 34 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed the school at work and scrutinised the work in pupils’ books, the school’s own data on pupils’ current progress, improvement plans, planning and monitoring information and minutes of governing body meetings. Inspectors also reviewed records relating to behaviour and attendance and documents relating to safeguarding and child protection.

Inspection team

Anthony Kingston, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Nicola Kearney

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Our Lady of Walsingham Catholic is slightly smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is slightly below average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, who are eligible for support through the pupil premium, is well-above average. The pupil premium is additional funding that the school receives for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are in the care of the local authority.
- The very large majority of pupils are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language.
- Children attend part time in the Nursery and full time in the Reception class.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching further and increase pupils' progress by ensuring that:
 - work is always hard enough, especially for the most able pupils, to enable them to reach the highest possible standards in reading, writing and mathematics
 - pupils are provided with more opportunities to apply their writing skills in subjects other than English
 - pupils are provided with enough time to respond to teachers' written comments in order to learn from their mistakes
 - teachers check that pupils follow up on the advice given in their marking.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher leads the school with a clear vision and determination. She is extremely well supported by the deputy headteacher, senior leadership team, a close-knit staff and a skilled and committed governing body. Teamwork is strong and morale is high.
- Leaders evaluate the school's strengths and areas for improvement thoroughly. Their plans for further school improvement are well judged and are based on careful analysis of pupils' progress. Leaders have recently introduced a new system of assessing pupils' achievement in line with the new National Curriculum's higher expectations. They use this new approach to meet individual pupils' needs very well.
- Strong leadership of teaching and learning is leading to increased consistency in classroom practice. Staff are reflective and keen to improve their work. They receive regular feedback from senior leaders on how well their teaching is helping pupils learn.
- Leaders manage staff performance extremely well. They check the quality of teaching carefully and give staff challenging targets that reflect the school's priorities and high expectations. Leaders at all levels give staff good support towards meeting these targets. As a result teaching in the school is improving rapidly.
- Subject leaders are very effective. They contribute to the monitoring of teaching and support other staff very well. They have helped to make sure that staff have a good knowledge of their subjects, thereby ensuring that the school has been prepared well for the implementation of the new National Curriculum.
- The local authority has a very strong partnership with the school. It has worked closely with staff since the previous inspection to improve teaching and learning. The school has welcomed this support.
- The rich and vibrant curriculum provides a wide range of activities both in school and beyond. Pupils do well in sporting competitions. They develop a love of the arts through, for example, dance and the many musical activities available such as playing the guitar or belonging to the school's brass band. Pupils have a good grasp of using new technologies to support their learning.
- The school prepares pupils very well for life in modern British society. Assemblies, classroom activities and the process of electing members to the school council emphasise the importance of the democratic processes. This was exemplified by one pupil who explained, 'In just two weeks' time the country is holding elections to find the next Prime Minister.' The school promotes values such as individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and makes a significant contribution to their good behaviour and positive attitudes to school and to each other. Relationships are excellent. These are underpinned by a caring and nurturing culture. Staff do not tolerate discrimination of any kind.
- The school checks that all pupils have equality of opportunity to succeed. Overall, the needs of all groups of pupils, especially those who have special educational needs and those who are disadvantaged are identified promptly and support is provided where most needed.
- The pupil premium funding is used wisely. Each pupil is identified, their needs evaluated and funds used to provide additional support or assistance for educational visits. This is helping them to make progress similar to and often better than their classmates.
- The school sport premium is used to very good effect to broaden sporting opportunities. It also provides for specialist staff to develop the sports-coaching expertise of teachers. This has led to an increase in opportunities for pupils to try activities such as Gaelic football, hockey, table tennis and street dance. Since the introduction of the sports premium there has been an increase in the uptake and interest in sport. Most pupils now take part in a wide range of sporting activities to help them stay healthy and promote their well-being.
- The school has developed excellent relationships with parents. Virtually all parents who offered an opinion thought that the school was led well and would recommend the school to others.
- School leaders, including governors, make sure that staff and pupils are kept safe, and statutory requirements including safeguarding are met.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is very effective in challenging and supporting the work of the school. Governors provide a wide and relevant range of experience and expertise and are ably led by the Chair of the Governing Body. Together, they strengthen the school leadership. Governors share the ambition of all senior leaders to take the school forward. They have a good understanding of the priorities for raising achievement and improving teaching further. Governors seek appropriate training to support them in fulfilling their roles to the best of their abilities. They are fully informed about the management of teachers' performance and apply the link between this system, pupils' progress and teachers' pay. They hold the school to account well for its spending and have a good understanding of the way that

additional funds such as the pupil premium have been used to benefit pupils. The governing body ensures that it carries out its statutory duties effectively. Each governor has a year group to which they are linked. They visit the school regularly experiencing life in classrooms and speaking with pupils and teachers. They are very much part of the life of the school and are a highly committed and effective group.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are proud to belong to Our Lady of Walsingham Catholic School and relish opportunities to take on additional responsibilities such as acting as peer mediators, playground buddies and school ambassadors who escort visitors around the school.
- Their good attitudes and good behaviour make a significant contribution to the calm yet vibrant environment, the quality of their learning and the sense of belonging to a community in which everyone is valued. This was clearly illustrated by one pupil who said, 'If we carry out jobs around the school it's a way of giving something back to our teachers because they do a lot for us.'
- Pupils try hard with their work and they are keen to do their best. However, occasionally a few pupils become a little distracted if they find their work too easy or too difficult.
- Leaders have been relentless in their drive to improve attendance. Consequently, attendance has improved strongly since the time of the previous inspection and is now average.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. All parents who met with inspectors agree that their children are happy and safe at school. This overwhelmingly positive response was also reflected in the school's own questionnaire to parents. Pupils agree with this view, illustrated by one pupil who said, 'Our teachers are warm and comforting. They would put us first in everything. They are just amazing.'
- Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes bullying and the different types in relation to, for example, race, name-calling and cyber bullying. They understand the emotional effect bullying has, so are keen not to hurt anyone's feelings. They are confident that staff will always listen to and help them resolve their concerns. Pupils hold peer mentors in high regard, recognising their helpfulness in sorting out minor disputes on the playground.
- The school teaches pupils how to avoid risks extremely well. Pupils receive clear and unambiguous guidance on how to stay safe when using computers and other technology, on pavements and when riding their bicycles on the road.
- All parents who offered an opinion thought that their children were safe, happy and well looked after in the school.

The quality of teaching is good

- Hallmarks of the good teaching in this school are the excellent relationships which exist between all adults and pupils, well considered and probing questioning, which enables pupils to develop an in-depth understanding of their work, and pupils' willingness to engage in lessons. This results in a vibrant school in which pupils are valued and keen to learn.
- Displays in classrooms, corridors and communal areas of the school are of high quality. They show the richness of the curriculum and celebrate pupils' achievements, especially in writing.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils and generally provide them with challenging work that is matched well to pupils' different needs. However, observations of classrooms and pupils' books reveal that occasionally work is too easy, especially for the most able pupils.
- The teaching of reading is very effective and pupils develop a love of reading. Literature is used very effectively to improve pupils' writing. For example, discussion in a Year 6 class about Gwen Dunn's *Spinner* resulted in one pupil writing, 'The sun's rays glisten on silky threads as delicate as lace.'
- In English teachers now provide more opportunities for pupils to engage in and apply their writing skills to extended writing activities than at the time of the previous inspection. This is improving the rate at which pupils make progress and the standards they attain. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to engage in extended writing activities in their topic work. This limits the opportunities for pupils to apply and develop their skills in writing and, as a result, slows down progress.

- The teaching of mathematics is good. Pupils have well-developed calculation skills and apply them confidently to problem-solving activities. The use of computers in mathematics is very effective and helps to develop a range of mathematical skills. For example, Year 5 pupils inputted data into a program to generate line graphs representing the rainfall in Liverpool. They then relished the opportunities to analyse and interrogate the presentation of the data.
- Teaching assistants play a key role and are used well to support individuals and groups of pupils with particular needs. Support for disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those who are disadvantaged is good across the school. This is the reason why different groups of pupils achieve well.
- Teachers generally give pupils clear and constructive advice about how to improve their work. However, the time given to pupils to respond to marking is variable. Consequently, pupils do not always learn from their mistakes and continue making them in successive pieces of work.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Standards by the end of Key Stage 1 have been consistently slightly above average since the time of the previous inspection. From their below-average starting points on entering Year 1 this reflects good progress.
- By the end of Key Stage 2 overall standards have improved from well-below average in 2012 to slightly above average in 2014. Standards in 2014 were well-above average in mathematics, above average in reading but well-below average in writing. This was because in writing not enough pupils reached the higher Level 5. However, leaders have tackled this issue and school data and inspection evidence shows that pupils' progress in writing is now accelerating at a rapid rate.
- National test results in 2014 show that the proportion of pupils who made expected and better than expected progress from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 in reading was well-above average. They also showed that the proportion of pupils making expected progress in writing and mathematics was above average. However, the proportion making better than expected progress in writing and mathematics was slightly below average.
- Inspection evidence from pupils' books, observations of learning in lessons and school performance data on the progress made by each year group shows that pupils who are currently in Key Stage 2 are now making good or better progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Consequently standards are rising rapidly. This is as a direct result of improvements to the quality of teaching.
- Reading is a priority throughout the school.
- The teaching of phonics (linking letters and the sounds they make) is enabling younger pupils to tackle new and unfamiliar words with greater confidence. This is reflected in the above-average proportion of six-year-olds who achieved the expected level and above in the recent national screening check on phonics.
- As pupils move through the school, they continue to develop a love of reading. This was exemplified by a group of Year 6 pupils who agreed that they enjoyed, 'trying to imagine the characters, experience their adventures and feel their emotions'. They have well-developed skills to gain meaning from the books they read. This was demonstrated particularly well when pupils seized on the opportunity to discuss the underlying moral and ethical issues within Suzanne Collins' book, *The Hunger Games*.
- Standards in writing are improving rapidly. Writing is helped by the emphasis that is given to reading, which boosts the range of words that pupils understand and use, and to speaking and explaining ideas in lessons. Discussions before they set to work are enhancing pupils' fluency and the meaning of what they write. For example, among many other examples a Year 6 pupil described Scrooge from Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* as, 'a covetous old sinner with a heart of stone, which came from the coldness in the depths of his hunched body'.
- Pupils are very competent mathematicians and possess well-developed numeracy skills.
- Overall, the most able pupils achieve well. However, on occasions work in some classes does not provide them with sufficient challenge, especially in writing. Consequently, they do not always make the rapid progress of which they are capable. In 2014 no pupils achieved the very highest Level 6 in reading or writing.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are well supported by teaching assistants who understand each individual pupil's needs well. The plans for this support are put together carefully and are checked regularly to ensure that their needs are met successfully. As a result these pupils make progress similar to and often better than their classmates and become confident in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Results in national tests in 2014 show that non-disadvantaged pupils attained average standards in

writing, above average in mathematics and well-above average in reading.

- The standards attained by disadvantaged pupils in 2014 were similar to other disadvantaged pupils nationally. They were, however, below those standards reached by their classmates and all pupils nationally. For example, the standards reached were one term behind other pupils in the school in reading, three terms behind in writing and four terms behind in mathematics.
- As a result of the spending of the pupil premium funding, disadvantaged pupils make significantly better progress than all pupils nationally in reading, similar progress in mathematics but less in writing. The school checks that all pupils have equality of opportunity to succeed. Current data and inspection evidence show that disadvantaged pupils are now making rapid progress and catching up with their classmates and all pupils nationally. This demonstrates the school's success in narrowing the gaps between disadvantaged pupils and that of other pupils.

The early years provision

is good

- Most children start school with skills and knowledge that are below those typical for their age in most areas of learning.
- The early years leader has supported staff effectively in making changes to the indoor and outdoor learning environment, and to planning and assessment procedures to improve provision in the early years unit. This has ensured that all of the early years areas of development are planned for and generally taught well. As a result children's achievement has improved since the previous inspection. Hence, the proportion of children set to reach the expected level at the end of the Reception Year is now close to the national average.
- There is a well-considered balance between activities that children choose for themselves and those led by adults, such as when they help children to learn letters and sounds. Children use these new skills well as they begin to read and write. Some are at the very early stages of using phonics to sound out letters whilst others are well on their way to becoming confident readers.
- Children's behaviour is good. They behave well towards one another and spend much time working together happily and productively. Children's positive attitudes and achievements ensure that they are well prepared for Year 1.
- Early years teaching is good. Staff listen to children and offer them highly encouraging responses that develop their skills, understanding and enjoyment of learning. Staff make very good use of the attractive and stimulating indoor and outdoor classrooms to promote children's learning well.
- Assessments are used well to plan future learning experiences that match children's needs and interests. This promotes good gains in their learning.
- Teaching assistants are an invaluable resource and skilfully support and nurture children to develop skills in all areas of learning. They work as a strong team to plan learning, to check children's progress and to record small steps of development.
- Early years staff have excellent relationships with parents and carers and other pre-school providers. They work with them extremely well to ensure that children are ready to enter school. All parents who spoke with inspectors praised the work of all adults in the early years. They also commented on the excellent system of communication implemented by the school using up-to-date technology.

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	132198
Local authority	Sefton
Inspection number	462309

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	230
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter O'Brien
Headteacher	Bernadette Shiels
Date of previous school inspection	25 April 2013
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