

# St Catharine's C of E Primary School

Scholefield Lane, Scholes, Wigan WN1 3LP

**Inspection dates** 23–24 September, 2015

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have worked tirelessly in setting a clear direction for school improvement which is actively shared by all stakeholders, including parents. As a result, staff morale is high.
- All groups of pupils, including those who benefit from pupil premium funding, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, make expected or better progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare are strengths of the school. Pupils behave safely and responsibly in and out of lessons. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Attendance has improved and is now in line with the national average.
- Early years provision has improved and is now good. Children now achieve good levels of development in line with national averages.
- Teaching and support staff work collaboratively to ensure that pupils enjoy learning and achieve well.
- Senior leaders, including a rapidly improving middle leadership team, have ensured that all staff are accountable for the work they do because of robust performance management systems. Pupils' progress and outcomes have improved as a result.
- The school has established strong working relationships with parents.
- Governors provide effective support in moving the school forward because of their high levels of skill and knowledge. They challenge leaders and hold staff to account.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally, the most-able pupils are not fully challenged in lessons to reach higher levels, especially in writing.
- The quality of writing among boys in Key Stage 1 is not as high as it should be.
- The checking of pupils' grammar, punctuation and spelling by subject leaders is not consistent as errors are sometimes overlooked.
- The early years outdoor environment needs further development and resources to increase opportunities for learning, especially for the most-able children.

## Full report

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

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment further by:
  - providing opportunities for the most-able pupils to practise and develop their writing skills, including grammar, punctuation and spelling
  - consistently checking the information about pupils' writing abilities to inform teachers' planning, especially in Key Stage 1
  - improving the early years outdoor learning environment to increase learning opportunities, especially for the most-able children.
  
- Further develop the capacity of subject leaders to more accurately check on and follow up:
  - the progress more-able pupils are making towards reaching higher levels of achievement
  - boys' progress in writing in different subjects, especially their use of grammar, punctuation and spelling and especially in Key Stage 1.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The new headteacher, ably assisted by the deputy headteacher, have led from the front in charting a clear direction for school improvement. With the support of rapidly improving middle leaders and a strong governing body, the issues from the last inspection have been addressed and the school is now good.
- The school promotes good learning and behaviour by ensuring that all pupils are valued and are then taught to respect and be tolerant of others. Leaders have worked hard to improve attendance and to reduce persistent absence so that they are now both in line with national averages.
- The plans for school review and improvement are clear and comprehensive. These are further enhanced by subject and other leaders' action plans to ensure that all staff are working towards similar ends. The improved use of information about pupils' targets, progress and outcomes informs these plans.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved because leaders, supported by governors, hold staff to account with regard to pupils' achievement. Performance management systems are now robust and clear to all concerned. All staff benefit from, and appreciate, targeted professional development that focuses upon the improvement of teaching and learning.
- The headteacher has made good practical use of available external support from the local consortium partnership and local authority advisors. For example, early years provision has rapidly improved over the past 12 months so that children's levels of development are now good. The deputy headteacher has very effectively taken the role of special educational needs and disability coordinator so that provision in this area is strong, leading to good outcomes for pupils.
- Subject leaders are benefiting greatly from the challenge and support provided by the headteacher and deputy. They are beginning to have a good impact upon school improvement and are further developing their lesson observation skills to focus more accurately upon specific aspects relating to pupil outcomes, such as boys' writing or the progress of the most able pupils.
- The school's curriculum is broad, balanced and exciting. The teaching of physical education, French and music provide enrichment as well as the after-school activities, such as dance classes. Woodland activities and local educational visits as well as residential trips that provide further extension to pupils' learning. Equality of opportunities is promoted well because of the wide range of activities offered by the school, for example, after-school sport events. Pupils become more confident in developing their reading, writing and mathematical skills in different subjects and contexts.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very well promoted, for example through links with the local community, especially the church. Also, pupils have been involved in developing wider cultural links with Gambia. British values of tolerance and democracy have been clearly emphasised through pupils' involvement in the election of the head boy and girl as well as through school council membership.
- Partnerships with parents and the local community are strengths of the school's work. Parents are overwhelmingly complimentary about the support they receive from staff, for example in understanding how to support their children's reading and homework. Parents' feedback indicates that the school's pastoral support and care systems are very strong.
- The pupil premium funding is targeted effectively to meet the needs of disadvantaged pupils. Governors know that this funding and its use for agreed interventions has led to improved outcomes for these pupils so that they are either in line with their peers or closing the gap to just one and a half term's difference in the higher levels of attainment at Key Stage 1. Additional funding to develop physical education and sport has led to improved teaching and resources, as well as after-school sporting activities that are accessed by a greater number of pupils.
- **The governance of the school**
  - The school's governing body has been reconstituted and now provides strong support and effective challenge to school leaders. Governors are skilled and knowledgeable regular visitors to the school. They know the school's performance well, ensure that pay progression for staff is linked to pupils' progress and oversee the school's sound financial management. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities diligently.
  - The school's arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff and governors have regular update training and all staff are fully aware of the policies and procedures that must be followed if there are concerns. The headteacher is the named safeguarding officer. Records are well maintained and securely kept. The headteacher ensures that parents are fully informed about any safeguarding issues in school and related policies are available for parents on the school's website.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Leaders have worked well to oversee improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Good teaching and effective assessment underpin the improved outcomes for pupils in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Key strengths are in teachers' subject knowledge, planning and the pace of learning they set. Staff's skills in observing pupils' learning and questioning pupils' explanations to check the depth of their understanding are also good. A clear system of marking and assessment of pupils' work is increasingly successful because pupils are fully involved in its use. They say it helps them to think about their work and then to make progress against their targets. Occasionally, the checking of pupils' work by subject leaders fails to pick up errors in grammar, punctuation and spelling. This reduces the extent to which such pupils can achieve their very best.
- Teaching and support staff work very effectively together so that they can then respond quickly to pupils' learning needs. Classrooms are set out attractively and grouping arrangements are based upon good assessment of needs linked to appropriately pitched resources. Pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, feel secure and supported in their learning because of this and make good or better progress. Within this environment, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very well promoted. As a result, equal opportunities are well promoted.
- At Key Stage 1, the teaching of reading ensures that pupils build upon the good progress they have made in the Reception class. Teachers, supported by carefully deployed support staff, provide writing activities that engage and motivate less-able pupils to blend letters to make words or for the most-able pupils to investigate fractions and the halving of numbers.
- At Key Stage 2, pupils show resilience and persevere well when investigating the relationship between division and multiplication because they are encouraged to share ideas and talk about their work.
- Staff teams work very well to instil a sense of pride in pupils in the work they produce by providing targeted, small-group lessons in mathematics, reading and writing. Pupils have good opportunities to correct or edit their work.
- Homework is regularly set and checked. Parents appreciate their full involvement in this through school advice and support, especially in reading.
- Occasionally, work provided in lessons and follow-up marking by teachers can lead to a lack of challenge, especially for the most-able pupils. Sometimes, writing opportunities are limited because the most-able pupils in Key Stage 1 do not extend their work beyond what has been set by the teacher.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils take a pride in their school and in their work.
- Pupils speak confidently about how they keep safe and about different forms of bullying. They recognise that their school is a safe and secure place for them to learn and get on well together.
- Pupils' attendance is now in line with national average and there are now very few pupils who are persistently absent or late to school.
- Partnerships with the local community, including the community police officer, benefit pupils' development and welfare effectively.
- Staff encourage and support pupils to respect and value each other so that the school is both calm and welcoming. For example, there was a real sense of community during a whole-school assembly when pupils sang together and talked about friendship and helping others in need.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning, especially when lessons are appropriately challenging, are very positive. They want to learn and value the input they receive from teaching and support staff to improve and make progress. They understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality. They also value homework and the school's focus upon them becoming good readers.
- Pupils appreciate participation in school life, for example, through using the suggestion box for improving

the school or by sharing their ideas with the school council.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. There have been no fixed-term exclusions for two years and no reported racist incidents. Pupils' behaviour in and out of lessons is good. Any off-task behaviour in lessons is managed well by staff. Pupils' behaviour around the school, for example at breaks and lunchtimes, is invariably good. Pupils are polite and well-mannered. They hold doors open for visitors and are helpful around school. They follow instructions well because of the calm, skilful behaviour management of staff and the positive relationships that have been established between staff and pupils.
- Parents spoken to and those who responded to Parent View are overwhelmingly of the opinion that the school promotes good behaviour and that children are safe and happy in school.

### Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Leaders have successfully overseen improvements for all groups of pupils so that they achieve well in all key stages in reading, writing and mathematics. They have accurately determined that further work is required to improve outcomes, particularly for the most-able pupils and in boys' writing at Key Stage 1.
- In Key Stage 1, all groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and those who are disadvantaged, make at least expected and often better-than-expected progress in their learning. The gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged has now closed at the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 has risen and is now higher than the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Outcomes in the Year 1 phonics screening check (knowledge of letters and the sounds that they make) improved in 2015 compared to 2014 and were close to the national average. The school has implemented additional reading support to speed up pupils' progress even further, particularly in challenging the most-able pupils.
- Because of the impact of staff training (including for support staff) and the success of targeted extra support, the progress of pupils in reading at Key Stage 2 led to attainments, including the higher levels, that were in line with national averages. There was a positive picture in other subjects, but there is still work to be done to ensure that a greater proportion of pupils attain at the higher levels in writing and English grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- Reading is promoted well. Parents are informed about how to support their children to read widely and with enjoyment at home. Pupils spoken to about their reading say that they are encouraged to read on a regular basis. They partake enthusiastically in targeted, small-group reading and phonics sessions in school, run by support staff.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well in all subjects as a result of good teaching and support.
- Pupils are encouraged to talk about their work, for example when asked to explain their mathematical thinking during lessons about positive and negative numbers. Pupils of all abilities demonstrate great confidence and perseverance in such activities.
- Pupils have the opportunity to practise and reinforce their skills in mathematics, for example, when measuring and recording each others' heights in a science lesson.
- Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 2. By the time they reach the end of Key Stage 2, they have acquired good skills in reading, writing and mathematics to prepare them well for the next stage in their education. They now reach standards that are broadly in line with national averages in these subjects.

### Early years provision

is good

- The early years leader, with the close support of the headteacher and the local authority advisor for early years, has successfully transformed the early years provision so that it is now good.
- Children enter the Reception class with skills and knowledge lower than those typical for their age. By the time they leave the Reception class, the large majority have achieved good levels of development, including in reading, writing and mathematics. They are well prepared to enter Key Stage 1. These good levels of development indicate a great improvement from the previous year's outcomes.

- The teacher and support staff work very well together to ensure that each child is accurately assessed in each development area. Vulnerable or less able children receive targeted provision so that they become increasingly self-confident and ready for more formal learning. Staff record and share their observations well to inform extra support.
- Parents say that they are well informed about their children's progress. Work in books shows that children are learning to record their work, for example when counting and ordering numbers between one and 10. Teachers' observe children's developing skills closely.
- Teaching and support are good. For example, children respond enthusiastically when learning new letters and sounds. They enjoy acting out stories about a pirate to reinforce their learning. They confidently practise their writing grips and letter formation skills.
- Children listen well and respond to staff instructions. They behave and settle well to learning. They are happy, socialise and play safely both indoors and outdoors. They are keen to demonstrate how to build a tower with bricks and show resilience when working with a partner to rebuild it when it falls and comes apart. The most-able children make effective use of language to describe their actions. The indoor environment has been upgraded and well-resourced so that children are able to actively explore their surroundings. The outdoor environment is not as well developed and provides is a more limited range of opportunities for children, especially for the most able, to apply their learning in writing and mathematics.
- Safeguarding arrangements for the early years provision are effective.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	106464
<b>Local authority</b>	Wigan
<b>Inspection number</b>	10002185

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11 years
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	187
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Darren Fletcher
<b>Headteacher</b>	Nicola Goulding
<b>Telephone number</b>	01942 733081
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stcatharinesprimary.co.uk">www.stcatharinesprimary.co.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:enquiries@admin.saintcatharines.wigan.sch.uk">enquiries@admin.saintcatharines.wigan.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	24–25 September 2013

## Information about this school

- The school is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. There is a small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported by pupil premium funding is above average. Pupil premium funding supports pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is above average.
- The school offers full-time early years provision in the Reception class
- A breakfast club is provided at the school, managed by the governing body.
- The school participates in a local consortium with three other schools. These are Aspull Church, Woodfield and Haigh St David's schools.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The headteacher has been in post for one year.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors made observations in all classes, conducting some joint observations with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors observed pupils in assembly, at break times and at lunchtimes.
- Inspectors observed a range of displays in classrooms and around the school.
- Inspectors held discussions with school leaders, the early years advisor from the local authority and four members of the governing body. An inspector held a telephone conversation with the school's external advisor.
- Inspectors met with small groups of pupils about their views on the school or about their work. Inspectors heard a small group of pupils read.
- Inspectors took account of 10 responses from Parent View (Ofsted's online questionnaire) and met with 10 parents in school.
- Inspectors took account of 27 staff questionnaire returns.
- Inspectors looked at documents and policies about school self-review and improvement; middle leaders' action plans; safeguarding policies and procedures, including case studies relating to attendance; information about pupils' progress, including their work books; minutes of governors' meetings; leaders' reports on observations of teaching and learning and records about behaviour and attendance.

## Inspection team

Jon Ashley, Lead Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Barbara Dutton

Ofsted Inspector



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