St Paul of the Cross Catholic **Primary School**



Milnthorpe Road, Chapel Lane, Burtonwood, Warrington, Cheshire WA5 4PN

Inspection dates	12-13 July 2016
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 governors have worked long Teachers and teaching assistants have high and hard to turn this school around and secure significant improvements since the previous inspection.
- The much-strengthened senior leadership team has been highly effective in improving the guality of teaching and pupils' outcomes.
- The restructured governing body has a very clear direction and remit. Governors have an accurate understanding of the school's performance and hold leaders tightly to account.
- Pupils' attendance is much improved. Pupils are respectful, highly inquisitive and enjoy finding out new things. Their behaviour is never less than good.
- Pupils benefit from an imaginative curriculum, which develops their appreciation of world faiths, cultural diversity, the performing arts and British values.
- Too few opportunities are available for pupils to refine their writing skills through documenting their scientific investigations.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- aspirations for pupils. They are skilled at developing pupils' confidence and resilience and promoting their love of learning.
- The progress of all groups of pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils, has continually improved since the previous inspection and is now good.
- The proportion of pupils that met the (indicative) national standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6 in 2016 was well above average.
- Parents regularly receive information on their children's progress. They are of the view that their children are safe and well looked after.
- The leadership and management of the early years provision are good. Children make good progress and attain well.
- Not all subject leaders are fully involved in improving the guality of teaching and learning.
- Early years staff miss opportunities to work with parents to chart their children's learning and development at home.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by providing pupils with more opportunities to practise and refine their writing skills, such as by documenting their scientific investigations and recording their findings.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by providing more training and development opportunities to support subject specialists in fulfilling their responsibilities.
- Further develop the leadership and management of the early years provision by working more closely with parents to get a fuller picture of children's learning and development at home.

Inspection judgements



Effectiveness of leadership and management

This is a much improved 'outward facing' school that has changed beyond recognition since the previous inspection. The headteacher has been steadfast in his determination to ensure that pupils enjoy learning and achieve their potential.

is good

- Leadership has improved rapidly over the last 18 months. The headteacher brought in a skilled leadership team and attended to team members' further development, enabling them to learn from leaders in other schools. This strategic action has had a dramatic impact on improving the quality of teaching in this good and rapidly improving school.
- Governors have supported the school well on its journey, as have the archdiocese and local authority, playing their part in ensuring that St Paul's is a purposeful, progressive school where Christian principles pervade and staff morale is high.
- Leadership of teaching is strong. Leaders gain an accurate view of teaching through regular visits to lessons, scrutiny of pupils' work and reviews of pupils' progress. Leaders meet frequently with each class teacher to check how well pupils are performing, exploring ways in which teaching could improve and arranging extra teaching or support for any pupils who are in danger of falling behind.
- Teachers are highly appreciative of their professional development opportunities, which they say have helped to improve their teaching practice. Those new to the profession value the mentoring and coaching support they receive from senior leaders. Teachers regularly modify and implement good and outstanding practice gained from various schools, including those within the local Catholic cluster of schools.
- Pupils benefit from a well-planned, exciting and stimulating curriculum, which promotes their reading, writing and mathematical skills well. It is also highly effective in developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. Pupils learn about different cultures and countries. They have Spanish pen pals and have had video conferences with South African pupils. Pupils have a profound empathy with others, use their keen entrepreneurial skills to raise money for different charitable causes and make donations to the local food bank. Pupils enjoy samba and the performing arts and are familiar with the work of Shakespeare. Pupils have many opportunities to visit local places of interest, as well as museums and galleries, and look forward to their residential learning opportunities in key stage 2.
- Pupils have a good appreciation of British values and participate in various national celebrations and commemorations linked to, for example, the first world war and the royal family. Pupils are tolerant, understand their rights and responsibilities and put democratic principles into practice when they apply for various positions of responsibility in school.
- The primary school sports fund is exceptionally well spent to promote pupils' health and well-being and increase their participation in a range of sports including handball, cricket, multi-skills and football. Funding is also used to increase pupils' participation in inter-school competitions in sports such as rugby and cross-country and to support teachers in delivering high-quality physical education and sporting activities.
- The school is respected within the community. The overwhelming majority of parents that talked with inspectors, completed Parent View and sent in text responses during the inspection, were positive about all aspects of the school. Parents were eager to indicate that they are well informed about the progress of their children, who they say are safe and well looked after.
- Quite rightly, senior leaders have focused on improving the quality of teaching, and outcomes for pupils, in reading, writing and mathematics. Here leaders have been very successful. However, other subjects have not been as well attended to. While leaders responsible for subjects such as science, art, music, computing and physical education are developing well in their roles, they are yet to be as effective as they could be. Senior leaders are well aware of this, and have made it a priority to enhance training and development opportunities for subject leaders to improve their effectiveness.
- The school has a highly productive relationship with the local authority. Most recently an adviser has supported the school with assessing the quality of teachers' marking, implementing performance management procedures and recruiting senior leaders. An adviser from the archdiocese has mentored the headteacher to become a highly effective leader and contributed to the development of the standards committee of the governing body.
- The governance of the school
 - Governance is strong. Governors are skilled and knowledgeable about educational matters and play a full role in the life of the school. This gives them a good understanding of the school's strengths, as well as what it needs to do to improve further. Recently a review of governance has taken place,

leading to a reduction in membership. This, coupled with an audit of governors' skills, has helped chart a clear course of action for governors to enable them to focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning.

- Governors know that there has been a marked improvement in the quality of teaching because they
 receive regular reports from the headteacher, scrutinise data on pupils' performance and are familiar
 with various reports which have been commissioned to assess the effectiveness of teaching. In
 addition to this, they have a regular presence in school.
- Governors ensure that pupils do not miss out on any aspect of school life because of their family or
 personal circumstances. They know that gaps in achievement between disadvantaged pupils and their
 peers are continuing to narrow and that extra funding, used for additional teaching and specialist
 support, is helping to boost the performance of those eligible for support through the pupil premium.
- Governors make sure that senior leaders closely monitor teachers' performance. They are prepared to
 reward teachers for their good work, but only if senior leaders can provide evidence that those
 teachers are raising standards for the pupils in their care.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Safeguarding policies and procedures to keep pupils safe and secure are good. All staff have regular training to enhance their awareness of child protection issues. Most recently staff have had training relating to the 'Prevent' duty. Most governors have received this training too. All staff, including those new to the school, know exactly what to do if a pupil approaches them with a concern that might have implications for their safety or welfare.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- The school has carefully devised a robust system for tracking pupils' progress and assessing their performance in reading, writing and mathematics. This system helps teachers plan different learning activities for pupils and supports senior leaders in monitoring teachers' effectiveness in raising standards.
- Assessment information, supported by inspection evidence, shows that almost all pupils are attaining at least age-related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics, with many exceeding them.
- Pupils learn in bright, stimulating classrooms, where their work is celebrated. They are encouraged to use the reading corner and writing areas to improve their grasp of the English language and develop an appreciation of books. Pupils use the mathematics area to help them to master various calculation methods and problem-solving techniques.
- Teachers' work to develop pupils' fluency in applying their calculation skills is good. This was shown in a fast-moving upper key stage 2 class, where pupils were working out the perimeter of a variety of shapes, some more complex than others, each with the length of one side unknown. Pupils demonstrated their good powers of deduction as they worked through different methods to find the perimeter of each shape and check their answers.
- Teachers make learning fun; this was exemplified in a lower key stage 1 class where pupils were developing their ability to estimate. The teacher selected three pupils, giving each a different shaped scoop. Pupils were required to move water from large buckets into smaller pots. At the end of the activity, the rest of the class were invited to describe how full different containers were. The teacher skilfully teased out concepts such as 'fuller', 'half full', 'half empty' and 'almost full' and then further extended pupils' language through questions such as, 'what's another word for bigger?' Pupils fully enjoyed their learning.
- Teachers ensure that pupils are fully prepared for the next stage of their learning in high school. This was shown in a Year 6 class where pupils demonstrated their excellent insight into how to conduct themselves in an interview. All pupils understood that making eye contact with the interviewer, good posture, clear confident speaking and a firm handshake were essential to securing a job, or position of responsibility.
- Teachers are skilled at engaging pupils' interests. This was evident in a key stage 1 class where pupils were writing a story based on a book on Australia. Pupils of different abilities were expected to include various adjectives and connecting words in their stories. They progressed exceptionally well because they found the topic exciting and were encouraged to be creative.
- Teachers make good use of questions to check pupils' understanding and encourage them to think deeply about their learning. Teaching assistants are at hand to provide support and assistance to pupils if they get stuck, careful to encourage pupils to work things out for themselves. Classes are calm, purposeful and productive places where pupils are eager to listen carefully and do their best.
- All teachers apply the school's marking and assessment procedures consistently well. Many pupils put considerable time and effort into their thoughtful work. Teachers encourage pupils to follow their

interests and use their skills in different subjects to present their homework projects. This is shown in the exemplary work of Year 6 pupils, presented in poetry, banners, collage and photographs, which documents and reflects on their journey through school from the Reception class onwards.

- Pupils take great pride in their work. The quality of pupils' writing is often exemplary, with well-researched extended pieces of writing in their religious education books on topics such as the world's greatest peacemakers. There are many examples of well-informed persuasive writing in pupils' English books. Topic books allow pupils to practise their mathematical skills in subjects such as geography and design technology and to tally results of, for example, local and national elections.
- Pupils' books show coverage of different areas of science, including human biology and chemistry. However, pupils' skills at writing for different purposes are not quite as refined as they could be, as there are too few opportunities available for pupils to practise their writing skills through documenting their scientific investigations and recording their findings.

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 are looked after well in this caring school. They display positive attitudes to learning and enjoy coming to school.
- Pupils are very studious. They enjoy being able to take responsibility for their learning and regularly challenge themselves to 'have a go' at difficult tasks in class.
- Pupils are courteous and make visitors feel very welcome. The way in which they listen carefully and considerately to the views of others, including their teachers and peers, is in keeping with the school's Christian ethos and values of tolerance and respect.
- Pupils, staff and the overwhelming majority of parents feel strongly that pupils are safe and well looked after in school. All respondents to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View) were of the opinion that their children are happy and safe at school.
- Pupils are clear about how to keep themselves safe, including when online. They know that cyber bullying can happen on mobile phones, hand-held games and 'anything connected to the internet'. Older pupils can give good advice to their younger schoolmates on how to stay safe when surfing the internet. They know to use privacy settings when using social media, not to click on 'pop-ups' or follow 'random people' and to always check with parents, or staff at school, if they are not sure of the security of a website.
- Pupils know that they should eat healthy food and are taught to make good dietary choices. The school has been recognised and awarded for promoting healthy eating and good oral health. It has achieved recognition for promoting pupils' awareness of bullying and hate crime.
- Visitors regularly come into the school from many different organisations, including children's societies, the police and fire services and ChildLine, to help develop pupils' appreciation of dangers and risks and of safe and unsafe situations.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Almost all parents, the overwhelming majority of pupils and all staff are of the view that behaviour is good. The school's behaviour records show that behaviour is typically good.
- Pupils' attendance is improving and is now broadly average. The school works well in partnership with a number of organisations, including the local authority, to reduce the absence of a small minority of pupils whose attendance is not good enough.
- Pupils wear the St Paul's school uniform with pride. They take great care with their appearance, and with the presentation of their work, and make sure that school buildings, classrooms and playing areas are kept tidy and free of litter.
- Pupils enjoy taking on various responsibilities. They demonstrate their care, compassion and leadership skills as play leaders, event managers, team captains, safety officers, reading and computer buddies and as members of the school council.
- Pupils move around the school sensibly, safely and with due care and consideration. They demonstrate 'fair play' as they enjoy participating in various games during break and lunchtimes such as football, bat and ball games, skipping and using hoops.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different types of discrimination such as racism, which they say is, 'when you judge someone because of their skin colour, religion, origin or uniqueness'. Older pupils say that there is never racism in school and that they would always help someone who was being 'picked on',

for whatever reason, and seek to help perpetrators realise that any form of bullying is wrong.

- Older pupils understand what homophobic bullying is. They say that such bullying is wrong and are adamant that it could never happen in school. All pupils say that bullying rarely if ever happens and indicate that they are confident in sharing any concerns that they may have with any member of staff, secure in the knowledge that they will be taken seriously and supported promptly.
- Pupils' behaviour at times is exemplary. The Year 4 choir showed this as they carefully followed instructions and demonstrated their excellent singing during a practice session. All pupils behaved outstandingly well as they showed their appreciation for Year 6 pupils' performance during a rehearsal of 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' ahead of an end-of-year show for parents.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Senior leaders have been relentless in eradicating teaching that was not good enough and helping pupils to make up for lost learning. Highly effective systems for assessing pupils' performance and tracking their progress have enabled leaders to create an accurate picture of pupils' skills and abilities. Specialist support is available exactly when it is needed to 'plug gaps' in pupils' learning. This is delivered by dedicated teachers and teaching assistants who are determined to help pupils achieve to their very best.
- At the end of Year 6 in 2015, pupils' attainment in mathematics and reading was broadly average, but below average in writing. At this time too few pupils made better than expected progress in reading. Their progress in writing and mathematics was not quite as good as it should have been. However, pupils' achievement was significantly better than in 2014 and at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils' overall attainment at the end of key stage 1 in 2015 was just above average and better than at the time of the previous inspection.
- This year senior leaders' and teachers' hard work has paid off. Inspection evidence, including work in pupils' books, indicates that almost all pupils made at least good progress across all subjects in all year groups in 2016. The proportion of pupils attaining the (indicative) national standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6 in 2016 was well above average.
- In this school pupils enjoy a good read. Teachers place a high priority on developing pupils' love of reading and encourage them to read as often as possible. Pupils are familiar with different authors and a range of genres. They regularly read and write poetry and enjoy 'book challenges'. Pupils have excellent diction and like to read in character. Younger pupils who find it difficult to read use their phonics skills well to break up, sound out and read unfamiliar words. An average proportion of pupils was secure in their phonics skills at the national phonics screening check in 2016.
- The vast majority of pupils reached the age-related expectations in the national tests in grammar, punctuation and spelling in 2016. Pupils' skills are especially strong in these areas because teachers insist that pupils use dictionaries and present their work with care, and they mark their written work consistently well.
- Teachers have strong subject knowledge in mathematics. School data and assessment information shows that pupils' progress in this subject has improved substantially this year in all classes. Pupils' books reveal many examples of work, which focus on applying mathematics to problem-solving activities. Pupils' confidence and their mastery of mathematics is developing well because of the many opportunities they have to practise and refine their skills in subjects such as geography and science.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported in class well by caring staff who are trained well. Highly effective support outside of class ensures that pupils get the specialist help they need to develop skills in all subjects. The school's own assessment information shows that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make the same accelerated progress as their peers, often from very low starting points.
- There are very few disadvantaged pupils in any year group. However, as with all groups, their performance is closely tracked. Funding for disadvantaged pupils is used exceptionally well to close any gaps, where they exist, between them, their peers in school and other pupils nationally.
- The most able pupils are challenged well in both key stages 1 and 2. Typically they are presented with work that requires them to think deeply about their learning and demonstrate their mastery of both mathematics and the English language. They frequently take leading roles on the school council and in fund-raising activities. The books of Year 6 pupils show that the most able pupils often make outstanding progress and attain highly.

Pupils made good progress in writing across most year groups in 2015. This year their progress has accelerated. Rapid improvements have been made in this subject, particularly in key stage 2. Pupils have many opportunities to practise writing at length. They regularly write in different styles, engage in independent research and recount their many trips and visits. Pupils' topic and religious education books contain many examples of thoughtful creative writing.

Early years provision

is good

- Children join the Reception class with different pre-school experiences and different skills and abilities. However, school baseline data indicates that the skills and abilities of the majority of children are similar to those typically expected for their age in all areas of learning.
- Children get off to a good start in the Reception class; this includes those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, disadvantaged children and the most able. By the time they left the Reception class in 2015, an above-average proportion was equipped with the skills necessary for a successful start to Year 1. This is a much higher proportion than at the time of the previous inspection.
- The skills and abilities of children when they entered the Reception class this year were not quite as well developed as in the previous year. However, currently children are making good progress. An average proportion attained a good level of development.
- The early years leader works closely with practitioners within a local cluster of early years providers to check the accuracy of her assessments and to ensure that staff are keep up to date with developments in early years teaching. The local authority provides further checks and support with assessing children's learning. Advice is given to staff to ensure that children have access to good-quality provision at all times.
- Children learn in a stimulating indoor learning environment. Here they thrive because teachers and teaching assistants have high expectations of them. In addition to this, children have the freedom to pursue their own interests. Staff are at hand to direct children in their learning if it is needed. They regularly assess children's development and check their progress in the different areas of learning.
- Children's behaviour is good. Children play safely and sensibly at all times, including when learning and playing outside. They enjoy using their climbing frames, taking turns, exploring the properties of different materials and playing various ball games.
- Children are highly cooperative. They share resources, listen to each other and work together to solve various problems. This was demonstrated when children were exploring the subject of sharing. Using shells, children were asked to say what a fair number of shells would be to give to each person. After much discussion children were asked to share 15 shells between five buckets. The teacher was careful to make sure that children understood and read out their challenge. With a little help, the most able children were able to divide the shells accurately and fairly and explain how they had worked the problem out.
- The quality of teaching is good. Staff have strong bonds with children and have a good understanding of how children learn and develop. They routinely plan different activities to ensure that children of all abilities make good progress and enjoy their learning.
- The leadership and management of the early years provision are not outstanding because outcomes for all groups of children are not yet outstanding. In addition to this, leaders are working to improve outdoor provision, linking it more precisely to the various areas of learning.
- Parents are of the view that their children are safe, well looked after and making good progress. Those who spoke with inspectors were complimentary about the early years staff and indicated that they are kept well informed about how well their children are performing. However, the early years leader is not always fully aware of children's learning at home. Sometimes opportunities are missed to encourage parents to chart their children's development and share this information with staff.
- The same stringent safeguarding procedures in operation in key stages 1 and 2 are fully implemented in the early years provision.



School details

Unique reference number	111367
Local authority	Warrington
Inspection number	10002180

This inspection 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	182
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	William Garner
Headteacher	Dominic Vernon
Telephone number	01925 224 686
Website	www.stpaulofthecross.org.uk/warrington/primary
Email address	stpaulofthecross_primary@warrington.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	24–25 June 2014

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well below average.
- A much smaller than average proportion of pupils is supported through pupil premium funding. (The pupil premium is additional government funding to support those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority.)
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. A very small minority of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- Children in the early years provision attend the Reception class on a full-time basis.
- The school meets current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school's website meets requirements for the publication of information.
- Since the previous inspection, a number of staff have been appointed, including three newly qualified teachers. The senior leadership team has been reorganised to include a new deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher. The governing body has been reorganised and includes two new members.
- Recently, a small number of pupils entered the school with little or no English.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a range of lessons in all year groups, as well as the teaching of small groups of pupils and sessions aimed at helping pupils to learn to read. Joint observations were carried out with the headteacher.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and held discussions with pupils from across the school. Pupils' work in books was scrutinised in class and separately with senior leaders.
- Inspectors considered the 26 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and 20 text responses. Inspectors met informally with parents at the beginning of the school day. Responses to the inspection questionnaires completed by 16 members of staff were also considered, as well as the school's own surveys of parents' and pupils' views.
- A meeting was held with three governors. A telephone conversation took place with the chair of the governing body. A meeting was held with leaders responsible for a range of subjects, including English, mathematics, science, art, music, physical education (PE) and computing. Meetings were also held with leaders responsible for assessing pupils' learning and progress, the early years provision and provision for pupils who have special educational needs or disabilities.
- Meetings were held with a representative from the local authority and the archdiocese.
- For the first day of the inspection pupils from Year 1 and children from the Reception class were on a school trip. Due to inclement weather, there were few opportunities to observe Reception children learning and playing outside.
- Inspectors examined a range of documents. These included the school's reviews of its own performance, development plans, checks on the quality of teaching, information about pupils' progress, safeguarding documentation and various records of pupils' attendance and behaviour.

Inspection team

Lenford White, lead inspector Lorna Rushton Ofsted Inspector Ofsted Inspector Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



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