

INSPECTION REPORT

**ST WULSTAN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Wolstanton

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124359

Headteacher: Mrs P J Walters

Reporting inspector: Dr B Blundell
23868

Dates of inspection: 11th - 12th June 2002

Inspection number: 195905

Short inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Church Lane Wolstanton Newcastle Staffordshire
Postcode:	ST5 OEF
Telephone number:	(01782) 627524
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr M Gould
Date of previous inspection:	July 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St. Wulstan's Catholic Infant and Junior School is a school for boys and girls aged 3 to 11, situated in Wolstanton, Staffordshire. There are 385 pupils on roll, including 57 children in the Nursery; the school is bigger than most primary schools. The ethnic background of the pupils is largely white with UK heritage. No pupils have English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The percentage of pupils with statements of special educational needs is well below the national average and the proportion of pupils identified within the school as having special needs is below average. The nature of pupils' special needs includes moderate learning difficulties, hearing impairment and physical difficulties. Pupil mobility is relatively low. Pupils' attainment on entry is average, overall.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The overall effectiveness of the school is very good; standards for pupils currently aged eleven are well above national expectations in science. In English and mathematics, they are above the national expectations. The overall quality of teaching is good; leadership and management are very good.

The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 attain above average standards in English, mathematics and science because of the high expectations which the school has of them.
- Leadership and management by the headteacher are very good; the school has a very clear educational direction.
- The overall quality of teaching is good, with a high proportion of it being very good.
- Pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour and the excellent relationships in the school promote a happy environment for learning.
- The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.

What could be improved

- The school lacks a suite for information and communication technology; this is impeding pupils' further learning.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in July 1997. Standards of attainment in the core subjects have been maintained. The key issue to raise the quality of teaching has been met. The quality of the curriculum has been appropriately improved. Assessment procedures are now satisfactory. The members of the senior management team now have clearly defined roles. The school's provision for information and communication technology now meets statutory requirements. Resources are now satisfactory and the accommodation has improved well. The school has a very good capacity to succeed. The school has made good improvement since the last inspection.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	C	A	B	B
mathematics	B	B	C	C
science	B	A	B	B

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Standards attained by pupils aged eleven in the 2001 national tests were above the national average in English and science and matched the national average in mathematics. Compared to results in similar schools, results were also above average in English and science, but average in mathematics. Over the last three years taken together, pupils have left the school over one term ahead of pupils nationally in English and science and half a term ahead in mathematics. Boys have generally performed a little better than girls in English and mathematics, but there have been no discernible differences in performance in science.

Standards attained by pupils aged seven in 2001 were well above the national average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics. Compared to schools of a similar type, pupils' attainment was well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Over the three years from 1999 to 2001 taken together, pupils have left the infant phase with standards one term ahead of pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. The school's targets are appropriately ambitious.

In the work seen during the inspection, standards for pupils currently aged seven were above national expectations in reading, writing, mathematics, science and music; in other subjects, standards meet national expectations. Standards for pupils currently aged eleven were above national expectations in English, mathematics and music and well above national expectations in science. In all other subjects, standards meet national expectations. The reasons for the difference in performance between previous test results and inspection findings in mathematics and science include the school's efforts in improving the quality of teaching and differences between year groups. No differences were observed in the performances of boys and girls. Children aged five are on course to exceed the Early Learning Goals. (The Early Learning Goals are the nationally expected standards for children at the end of the Foundation Stage.) Pupils' achievement is good, overall. Standards at this school are now sufficiently high.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to school are very good. Pupils mirror the enthusiasm of their teachers.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour, both in and out of the classrooms, is very good. Pupils are kind to one another.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development is very good; relationships are excellent. Staff and pupils show mutual respect towards one another.
Attendance	Attendance is very good and well above the national average; unauthorised absence is nil.

Pupils are very enthusiastic and enjoy coming to school. Relationships, both between pupils and with adults, are excellent.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

The overall quality of teaching is good, with a high proportion of it being very good. Examples of very good teaching were observed throughout the school. The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is good; the skills of literacy and numeracy are well taught. Particular strengths in teaching include the way in which teachers emphasise the learning targets in lessons, especially in English, mathematics and science and the quality of teachers' planning. This has a most positive impact on pupils' learning. The school meets the needs of all its pupils well and fully includes all its pupils. Particular strength in pupils' learning includes their interest, concentration and pace of working and their awareness of their own progress.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The quality and range of the curriculum are good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Not applicable.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for pupils' personal development is very good, overall. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good and, for their cultural development, it is good. The school has a very good ethos.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares for its pupils well, overall.

The school works well in partnership with parents. Particular strengths in the curricular opportunities offered to pupils include the teaching of literacy and numeracy skills and the provision of extra-curricular activities. All areas of the curriculum meet statutory requirements. Child protection procedures are satisfactory.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Leadership and management are very good. The school has a dedicated headteacher and senior management team.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their responsibilities very well and bring a wide range of expertise to the running of this school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school's evaluation of its performance is very good. It reviews its achievement in national tests very well and ensures that teachers know future areas for improvement.
The strategic use of resources	The strategic use of resources is very good. The school spends its money wisely.

The school's accommodation has greatly improved with the construction of new classrooms and is very well maintained by the site manager and cleaners. Learning support assistants work well with teachers to help pupils' learning. The school's administrator and assistant help ensure the smooth running of the school. Lunchtime supervisors and catering staff fulfil their roles effectively.

A particular strength in leadership and management is the headteacher's quiet determination to move this school onwards and upwards. The school applies the principles of best value very well.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • The school helps their children to mature and become responsible. • The school sets high expectations. • Behaviour is good. • Teaching is good. • The school is well led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A small number of parents would like to see a greater range of extra-curricular activities. • A small number would like more information about their children's progress. • Some parents are not happy with the level of homework.

The inspection team agrees with parents' positive views; it finds that the range of extra-curricular activities is good, information for parents is also good and that the level of homework is appropriate.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 attain above average standards in English, mathematics and science because of the high expectations which the school has of them.

1. Over the last three years taken together, pupils have left the school, on average, over one term ahead of pupils nationally in English and science, and half a term ahead in mathematics. Pupils currently aged eleven are also exceeding national expectations in all three subjects.
2. Over the three years from 1999 to 2001, pupils have left the infant phase, on average, with standards one term ahead of pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics.
3. If we look at the performance of recent eleven-year-old pupils and compare it with their results when they were aged seven, we find that they have made generally at least satisfactory and often good progress. Progress has been particularly good in science because of the school's greater attention to this subject.
4. In English, the skills of pupils currently aged eleven in reading, writing, speaking and listening are all above national expectations. Pupils review their own work and that of others thoughtfully and effectively. They attain above national expectations in their work on Haiku. They understand the patterns of syllables well, the pattern of rhymes and the use of auxiliary verbs. Pupils aged seven write logically sequenced instructions for making a finger puppet. Standards of writing are above national expectations. Pupils identify instructional words in their sentences correctly.
5. In mathematics, pupils aged eleven work out the perimeters and areas of complex shapes successfully by reducing them wherever possible to a series of rectangles. They are both adept and versatile in their mental strategies and are able to explain clearly how they arrive at their answers. Pupils aged seven carry out division sums competently, working out the "remainder" accurately. They recognise division as sharing equally and also understand that in some calculations, for example 16 cakes divided between three people, equal division either requires a remainder or more cakes. There has been appropriate attention to the issue raised in the last inspection about pupils applying their mathematical knowledge in everyday life. Not all pupils in the school have a good enough instant recall of their multiplication tables and this is not helping their learning.
6. In science, pupils aged eleven carry out investigations well. For example, they work out the best mixture for making soap bubbles systematically. They answer questions such as "Does the highest concentration of washing up liquid make the largest bubbles?" Pupils record their work in a logical, scientific manner and draw accurate diagrams with correct scientific vocabulary. Younger pupils understand that a complete circuit is needed for devices such as a motor to work; they experiment well when putting switches as breaks in circuits.

Leadership and management by the headteacher are very good; the school has a very clear educational direction.

7. In the four years since the current headteacher took up her position, she has guided the school purposefully and skilfully in the right educational direction. The school is now very well placed for further improvement; targets for national tests have been raised realistically.
8. The senior management team is most effective and works well together. It has monitored teaching and learning through the school, giving teachers worthwhile written and verbal feedback, with "growth points" for improvement where appropriate. Much work has recently been done in raising standards of the sessions that take place at the end of lessons, which assess to what extent the

- learning targets have been met. The senior management team has guided the school in refining and improving planning. The role of the curriculum coordinators has improved appropriately.
9. The governing body is most conscientious and brings a wealth of expertise to the school. It is effective in its function as a critical friend. Governors have an appropriate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They are regular visitors to the school and monitor the delivery of the curriculum appropriately.

The overall quality of teaching is good, with a high proportion of it being very good.

10. The overall quality of teaching throughout the school is good, with examples of very good teaching being seen in the foundation, infant and junior sections of the school. Overall, teaching was excellent in nine per cent of lessons seen, very good in twenty three per cent, good in fifty three per cent and satisfactory in fifteen per cent of lessons. Teaching standards have improved considerably since the time of the last inspection due to the efforts that the school has put in to improve the consistency of lessons.
11. At St Wulstan's, pupils know and understand the precise purpose of their lessons. At the outset, teachers explain in appropriate language what the learning targets are for the lesson. At the end of each lesson, the learning targets are looked at again to see how far they have been achieved. This was a particular feature of nearly all literacy and numeracy lessons observed. Learning targets for more extended work are detailed on the walls of the classrooms. This is all very effective in increasing the rate of pupils' learning. Time is not wasted in lessons because everybody realises that they have a learning target to meet. However, in a literacy lesson in the lower juniors, the pace was too slow and learning was not as good as it could have been.
12. Planning is particularly effective at this school. Nothing is left to chance. Teachers of pupils in same age classes plan well together. Teachers manage their classes well; expectations are high in terms of both behaviour and standards of work.
13. In an excellent music lesson for Year 1 pupils, the use of resources was excellent. Instruments were used very well indeed to maximise pupils' learning. In a very good physical education lesson for children in the foundation stage, the teacher continually emphasised key vocabulary connected with the dance activities that the children were taking part in.

Pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour and the excellent relationships promote a happy environment for learning.

14. In every lesson observed during the inspection, pupils' attitudes were at least good. They behave very well indeed and want to learn. They mirror the enthusiasm of their teachers and really enjoy coming to school.
15. Pupils take part in question and answer sessions eagerly, as in a Year 5 numeracy lesson on decimals. They are very keen to explain what they are doing and demonstrate their thorough understanding of place value.
16. Relationships both between pupils and with adults are excellent. Staff treat pupils respectfully and this is reciprocated by the pupils. Pupils help around school, with the older ones, for example, looking after younger children if the weather is too bad for external play.

The school's overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.

17. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is a strength of the school. There are close links with the adjacent Catholic church; ministers from other faiths also visit and take assemblies. The school provides well for the study of other faiths. The school also provides very well for pupils' moral

development. Appropriate anti-bullying and anti-racism policies are in place. Adults set a very good example to pupils.

18. Personal, social and health education is very well provided for and taught across the curriculum effectively. The result of the very positive provision for pupils' social development is seen in the excellent relationships around school. Cultural provision is good and multicultural provision has improved since the time of the last inspection. Provision for pupils' cultural development is enhanced with the school's work in music. Singing that is above national expectations is heard in assemblies regularly. Musical studies, ranging in topic from Beethoven and the classical period in Year 6 to basic sound effects in the infant phase, produce work that exceeds national expectations.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The school lacks a suite for information and communication technology; this is impeding pupils' further learning.

19. There have been improvements in the provision for information and communication technology (ICT) since the last inspection and the provision now meets statutory requirements. Nevertheless, the lack of an ICT suite hampers the work of staff and pupils.
20. The hard working and committed coordinator has half a day of release time most weeks and visits four classes on each of these afternoons. She teaches the class, working alongside the classteacher. Pupils have to crowd round the monitor to observe the techniques being demonstrated and then practise one at a time afterwards. This means that progress in the subject is very slow. The school recognises this as a problem and is seeking to rectify the situation.
21. In a lesson for pupils in Year 4, for example, in which pupils were learning to reinforce their knowledge of fields and records, pupils had virtually no opportunities to actually use the computer.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to improve the school further, the headteacher, governing body and senior management team should:

- seek to provide the school with a suite for information and communication technology, in order to improve pupils' learning, as recognised in the school improvement plan. (Paras 19, 20 , 21)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	34
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	12

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	8	18	5	0	0	0
Percentage	9	23	53	15	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents nearly three percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	28	328
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	19

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	40

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	2
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.5

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2001	30	21

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	28	29	29
	Girls	20	21	20
	Total	48	50	49
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (91)	98 (94)	96 (94)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	28	28	29
	Girls	20	20	20
	Total	48	48	49
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (94)	94 (91)	96 (94)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2001	33	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	27	22	31
	Girls	26	21	26
	Total	53	43	57
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	85 (89)	69 (74)	92 (96)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	27	22	31
	Girls	26	21	26
	Total	53	43	57
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	85 (70)	69 (77)	92 (87)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	1
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	272
Any other minority ethnic group	1

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	15
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.5
Average class size	25.3

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	130

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	28
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32
Number of pupils per FTE adult	28

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2.5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2.5
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1.0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	3	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
	£
Total income	675269
Total expenditure	675994
Expenditure per pupil	1893
Balance brought forward from previous year	22830
Balance carried forward to next year	22105

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	226
Number of questionnaires returned	141

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	67	29	3	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	54	40	4	2	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	44	51	2	1	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	44	35	14	6	1
The teaching is good.	62	32	3	2	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	42	40	12	5	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	62	29	7	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	64	32	2	1	1
The school works closely with parents.	43	44	8	4	1
The school is well led and managed.	57	35	6	1	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	60	35	3	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	39	28	16	4	13