

St Wilfrid's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111461
Local Authority	Cheshire
Inspection number	288969
Inspection date	26 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Judith Tolley

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	439
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Roy Newey
Headteacher	Mrs J Boyle
Date of previous school inspection	25 November 2002
School address	Greenbank Lane Hartford Northwich Cheshire CW8 1JW
Telephone number	01606 75669
Fax number	01606 784986

Age group	5–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

St Wilfrid's is a larger than average sized Catholic primary school. Children are of predominantly White British heritage. The proportion of children eligible for free school meals is low. The proportion of children for whom English is an additional language is low. The proportion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

St Wilfrid's is a good school. Standards are well above average and children's achievement is good. Children make outstanding progress in the Foundation Stage as a result of excellent teaching and learning, based on an excellent understanding of individual needs. In Key Stages 1 and 2 the rate of progress, although good, is not as fast as in the Foundation Stage because teachers do not use assessment information effectively enough in their planning to ensure all children progress as quickly as they could. Children's personal development is outstanding. This is a major factor in enabling them to make good progress. They enjoy school and are eager to learn. Attendance is well above average. Children have very good relationships with each other and their teachers. Behaviour is excellent. Children are frequently given opportunities to take responsibility, for instance as house captains and school councillors, and treat these responsibilities seriously. Standards of pastoral care, guidance and support are exceptionally high but information about academic progress is not always used effectively. The curriculum is excellent and provides a rich variety of experiences for children both within school and in the wider community. As a result, children become confident and articulate young people who take pride in their work and show consideration for others. They take full advantage of the opportunities they are given to pursue their interests, both in lessons and in extra-curricular activities. They speak enthusiastically about residential trips and visits. They also value opportunities, for example, to learn a musical instrument and to take part in drama and singing events, both regionally and nationally.

Good teaching, coupled with their very positive attitudes towards learning, ensure children attain above average standards and make good progress overall. Provision in the Foundation Stage is outstanding. Children join Reception with skills that are broadly in line with age-related expectations. By the time they enter Year 1 most have achieved the levels expected nationally, with a significant proportion exceeding them. This represents excellent progress from their starting points and provides a firm foundation for future learning. In Key Stages 1 and 2 children achieve well. By the age of 7 standards in reading and mathematics are well above average, and standards in writing are broadly average. By the age of 11, standards in science are high, in mathematics they are well above average and in English they are above average. All children display enjoyment, pride and high levels of concentration in their learning. Assessment information is used very effectively to monitor and plan their progress in the Foundation Stage. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are very well supported throughout the school and make the same good progress as their peers. In Key Stages 1 and 2 the use of assessment information in lesson planning is not always used effectively to meet the learning needs of groups of differing ability. As a result there are occasions when some children find tasks too easy or too difficult. Children respond well to problem-solving activities and are keen to share their ideas but they are not always given the chance to test out ideas for themselves or to learn from each other in smaller groups.

Leadership and management are good. The very clear direction and determined leadership of the headteacher has created a very effective learning environment where both staff and children can thrive. Effective planning for improvement, based on rigorous and honest analysis of assessment information, leads to the school having a clear understanding of its effectiveness and areas of relative weakness although its evaluation of its performance is sometimes too modest. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. Above average standards have been maintained year on year and strategies to improve standards in writing to match

those achieved in science and mathematics are having a positive impact. The school's capacity to improve further is good. It provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the use of assessment information in day-to-day lesson planning to meet the learning needs of all children more effectively.
- Increase opportunities for children to explore ideas for themselves and to learn from others in lessons.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is outstanding in the Foundation Stage. Children make excellent progress in developing their personal, social and communication skills and make great strides in reading and writing. In Key Stages 1 and 2 standards are well above average overall and achievement is good. The 2006 national test results were well above average for both key stages and children achieved very well in mathematics and science. Standards have been consistently higher than average for the last four years. The school's action to improve writing has resulted in sustained improvement across both key stages. Standards seen in writing during the inspection were above average. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language make the same good progress as their peers.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Children's outstanding personal development is reflected in their exemplary behaviour, the pride they take in their school and their work, and their positive attitudes towards learning. In the Foundation Stage in particular children display great enthusiasm in their activities and clearly think that learning is fun. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Children are very confident and articulate and know their views are valued and acted upon. They display a high level of respect for adults in the school and concern for others. The inclusive atmosphere, where the achievement and personal development of each child really matters, plays a significant role in ensuring that all children feel valued. Children welcome responsibilities; for example, as buddies for younger children, house captains and members of the school council. They play an important role in decision-making in the school. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is developed very well through this experience, as well as through fundraising for charity and participation in regional and national events. Children understand the importance of eating healthily and the value of regular exercise. The consistently well above average attendance figures are an endorsement of children's enjoyment of school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Children make rapid progress in the Foundation Stage as a result of outstanding teaching and the excellent use of assessment information which enables them to build very effectively on their learning from one day to the next. Activities and resources are very carefully planned to accurately meet the needs of individuals so that children learn very effectively indeed. In particular children make outstanding progress in developing their reading and writing as a

result of a range of exciting and engaging activities which they clearly thoroughly enjoy. In Key Stages 1 and 2 the quality of teaching and learning is good. Children quickly understand new ideas as a result of good planning, clear presentations and effective questioning. Lessons are sequenced so that children build effectively on what has gone before. They respond enthusiastically to problem-solving activities but they are not always given the opportunity to investigate and test new ideas for themselves or share their conclusions with others. Whole-class sessions during lessons are generally used well to check and reinforce learning. Teachers' marking is thorough and usually informs children how they can improve their work. However, assessment information is not always used effectively in lesson planning so that sometimes children lose concentration because they are not challenged sufficiently, especially in whole class activities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school provides a very rich curriculum which enables all children to achieve well, to pursue their interests and to develop their skills. The school works very effectively with the pre-school child care unit, sharing facilities to ensure a smooth transition into Reception. Opportunities for linking work across a range of subjects are very effectively exploited especially as a result of visits and theme days. The opportunity to learn Spanish is now being extended to year groups other than Year 6. The very wide range of out-of-school activities such as clubs, sports, music, dance, drama and trips and residential visits further enrich children's experience and are spoken about with enthusiasm by the children.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Children acknowledge that bullying is rare and, like all their concerns, is always dealt with swiftly and effectively. There are procedures in place to ensure that children are safe and the school follows national guidelines to ensure the safe recruitment of staff. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities benefit from excellent support, enabling them to make the same good progress as their peers. Academic progress is tracked rigorously but this information is not always used effectively in the classroom. Children are not as fully involved as they should be in tracking and planning their own progress towards their individual targets. They do not always have a very clear understanding of how to improve their work. Parents are kept well informed of their children's progress. Children have a very good understanding of healthy lifestyles and how to stay safe as a result of the guidance they are given.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

A detailed evaluation of the school's work is the basis for planning for improvement. All staff are involved in this process. Some subject coordinators, however, are still at the early stages of developing their role in the evaluation process. The school works very effectively with partner institutions, parents and the wider community to promote children's well-being and to ensure their smooth transition into the school and to the next stage of their education. Governors provide strong support and are fully involved in planning and evaluation processes.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for making me feel so welcome when I visited your school recently. I thoroughly enjoyed talking to you and hearing your views. I was particularly impressed by how well you get on with each other and with your teachers. I very much enjoyed having lunch with you and hearing how much you enjoy all the activities the school provides, especially residential trips, sport, music and drama.

I am sure you will be delighted, but not surprised, to hear that your school is a good one. You all work very hard and make good progress. In the Reception class you make excellent progress learning to read and write. By the time you leave the school you reach much higher standards in mathematics and science than children in most schools. This is because the staff are good at helping you to learn and because you are enthusiastic about learning new things. You take your work very seriously. I was particularly impressed by how much you enjoy investigating ideas for yourselves and solving problems. I have asked the school to give you more opportunities to do this.

You are looked after very well and your behaviour is excellent. You told me how much you appreciate the way the teachers help you do your best and how much you enjoy taking on responsibilities. You play an important role in making your school as good as it is, for example through the school council and the house system. You are good at explaining your ideas and are right to be proud of your achievements.

Your teachers have been working hard to improve your writing and this has been successful. Your lessons are interesting but sometimes children find activities too hard or too easy. I have asked your teachers to make sure they match the work more carefully to what you can do so that everyone can do their best. They will also help you to decide how well you are getting on for yourselves and what to do to improve your work. You can help them by continuing to work hard.

I hope you carry on enjoying your learning and doing such good work. I wish you every success in the future.