

St William's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

| | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 106497 |
| Local Authority | Wigan |
| Inspection number | 309148 |
| Inspection dates | 19–20 November 2008 |
| Reporting inspector | Judith Tolley |

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

| | |
|--|--|
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School (total) | 223 |
| Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS | 0 |
| Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years | 0 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mrs A Foster |
| Headteacher | Mr C Burke |
| Date of previous school inspection | 2 February 2004 |
| Date of previous funded early education inspection | Not previously inspected |
| Date of previous childcare inspection | Not previously inspected |
| School address | Ince Green Lane Ince-in-Makerfield Ince Wigan Lancashire |

| | |
|--------------------------|---------------------|
| Age group | 3–11 |
| Inspection dates | 19–20 November 2008 |
| Inspection number | 309148 |

Telephone number
Fax number

WN2 2DG
01942 235782
0

| | |
|--------------------------|---------------------|
| Age group | 3-11 |
| Inspection dates | 19-20 November 2008 |
| Inspection number | 309148 |

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This Roman Catholic Primary School is average sized and has its own Nursery. Pupils are of predominantly White British heritage. The school serves an area of severe socio-economic disadvantage; the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also above average. Very few pupils require support for English as an additional language .

The school has gained Healthy School and Investors in People status, the Bronze Award for Eco schools and Activemark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education for its pupils, with some good features. Parents are confident that it provides their children with a secure foundation for the future. Standards on entry to the Nursery are well below what is typical of children this age. By the end of Year 6, standards are broadly in line with the national average, but achievement is only satisfactory because pupils do not make good enough progress in reading or science. In Nursery and Reception classes provision is good. Children make good progress in developing their personal, social and communication skills and basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics. They learn how to learn and how to listen and communicate with each other. As a result, children begin Year 1 with good attitudes towards their learning and a firm foundation upon which to build, although standards in communication, language and literacy are below average.

By the end of Year 2, the standards pupils reach in writing and mathematics are broadly in line with the national average but in reading they are below average. By the end of Year 6, standards in English are broadly average but weaknesses remain in reading, which is a factor that prevents pupils from attaining the higher levels in mathematics and science tests. Standards in mathematics are slightly above average but in science they are well below average.

Pupils say learning is fun and they have good relationships with each other and with their teachers. However, despite the best efforts of the school to improve attendance, this remains below average. Pupils play an important role in decision making in the school through, for instance, the school council and the Eco team. Older pupils also help to promote extremely good behaviour and relationships through their work as 'Playground Leaders' and 'Buddies'. Pupils are given good pastoral guidance and they become confident young people who are able to make the right choices about healthy living. They participate in a wide variety of enrichment activities, including sports and residential visits. Pupils make satisfactory progress developing skills that will equip them for the next stage in learning and contribute to their future economic well-being.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. There are pockets of good practice but these are not effectively shared and spread across the whole school, which leads to some variability in teaching and learning between classes. Assessment information is used effectively to monitor pupils' progress, set targets and to inform pupils about how to improve their work. However, it is not always used as effectively as it might be in lesson planning to ensure that work matches the needs of all pupils. Consequently, there are times when more able pupils are insufficiently challenged and less able pupils are given work that is too difficult. Pupils' progress is tracked on a regular basis and appropriate support is provided where necessary. Pupils are fully involved in the assessment process and have a very clear understanding of how they can improve their work.

The curriculum is satisfactory and children value opportunities to participate in sports, theme days and to learn a modern foreign language. However, although there are instances of good practice, opportunities are missed to develop pupils' skills of numeracy and literacy through other subjects.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Over the last year the headteacher and senior leadership team have worked successfully with the local authority and this has led to the school having a good understanding of its effectiveness and a clear vision of the way forward. School improvement planning is effective and springs directly from the analysis of the school's

performance and the priorities identified by the school's self-evaluation. Subject leaders play a significant role in monitoring pupils' progress and curriculum planning. There has been good improvement in relation to the recommendations made by the last inspection, and standards in English and mathematics have risen over the last three years. Consequently, the school's capacity to improve is good. The school follows government guidelines to ensure children's safety and the safe recruitment of staff. Governors are well informed and are developing their capacity to act as critical friends. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Pupils get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). As a result of effective induction procedures and good teaching, children settle very quickly and make good progress. By the end of the Reception year the majority reach the levels expected for their age in all areas of learning except communication, language and literacy where they are working below expected levels. Children's good progress is enhanced by the attractive and stimulating classrooms and the positive way staff work together. Progress in children's personal development is particularly good and their behaviour is excellent. Children are confident and keen to learn, as a result of the high priority given to promoting their welfare and ensuring they feel safe and happy. Teachers are beginning to develop good links with parents and involve them in their children's learning through a variety of recently introduced initiatives.

The EYFS is well led and managed. Children quickly develop positive learning habits and enjoy all they do. Their progress is closely tracked on a day-to-day basis, with the next steps in learning identified and planned for. There is a good balance between adult-directed activities and allowing children to choose. However, occasionally, opportunities are missed during activities children choose for themselves to consolidate literacy and numeracy skills. Staff take every opportunity to engage children in conversation, effectively widening their knowledge and understanding of the world and developing their speaking and listening skills. Much of the curriculum is good, but opportunities for children in the Reception class to learn outdoors are restricted.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and improve pupils' achievement in science and reading.
- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching and learning so that the majority is at least good.
- Improve the use of assessment to better inform lesson planning so that the needs of pupils of all abilities are met.
- Increase opportunities for children in Reception to learn outdoors.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

After a dip in Year 6 national test results in 2005, standards have improved in mathematics and English over the last three years.

Most children enter Year 1 with attainment that is below expectations for their age in reading and writing. Pupils make satisfactory progress and by the end of Year 2, standards in writing and mathematics are close to the national average but remain below average in reading. The national teacher assessments for the last two years confirm this. By the end of Year 6, the achievement of the vast majority of pupils is satisfactory. However, more able pupils do not do as well as they could in English, mathematics, and science. Standards in English are close to national averages and in mathematics they are slightly above average. In science, however, standards are well below average and the school fell short of its targets for the proportion of pupils expected to reach the higher levels in this subject. Steps to improve writing are beginning to have a positive impact upon standards but below average standards in reading across both key stages inhibit pupils' achievement across the curriculum and, particularly in attaining the higher levels in mathematics and science tests. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress. Pupils who have English as an additional language also make satisfactory progress as a result of the specialist support they receive. All pupils make satisfactory progress in developing information and communication technology (ICT) skills and say they enjoy using computers for research and to extend their learning.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. They participate in assemblies and there are also opportunities for reflection in circle time. Pupils' awareness of different cultures and faiths are promoted effectively in religious education, personal, social and health education (PSHE), and across the curriculum. In lessons, behaviour is of a very high standard and pupils are friendly and supportive of each other. They listen attentively and display good levels of concentration. Pupils enjoy school and feel safe. They know who to approach if they have any worries or concerns and say that the rare instances of bullying are dealt with promptly. Attendance has not improved over the last three years despite a wide range of strategies to reward good attendance and a harder line being taken on poor attendance. Pupils eagerly take on responsibility for younger pupils and the school council has been involved in the gathering of evidence for the drawing up of the school travel plan. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of how to live healthily and take advantage of the sporting activities on offer; an increasing proportion of pupils cycle or walk to school. Pupils make a positive contribution to the local community in activities that include religious celebrations in the parish, planting hanging baskets and bulbs, working with the local Archaeology Society and organising fund-raising events.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, but varies across the school. Learning objectives are clear and shared with pupils. However, teachers' expectations of what pupils of different abilities can achieve are sometimes inappropriate; for example, they may be too low for more able pupils. The emphasis on good behaviour creates a positive climate for learning. Staff know their pupils well and relationships are good. The support given to vulnerable pupils, those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who are learning English as an additional language enables them to make the same satisfactory progress as their classmates. The versatility of teaching assistants and effective questioning by teachers ensure all pupils

participate fully in class activities. Teachers present ideas clearly and sequence activities so that most pupils build satisfactorily on previous learning. Where teaching is good or better, it is well planned to meet the needs of all pupils and questioning is used well to support and challenge all. When they are given the opportunity to explore ideas themselves or with a partner, pupils' confidence and understanding increases and they make good progress. Where teaching is less successful, teacher-led activities are too lengthy so that pupils find it difficult to maintain concentration. Assessment information is not always used effectively to plan work for groups of differing ability. Pupils do not, therefore, always achieve as well as they could in tasks set for them in lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory overall. The focus on developing pupils' writing skills across the curriculum is beginning to have a positive impact, but links between different subjects to further pupils' learning in literacy and numeracy are not embedded fully across the school. The curriculum meets the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and ensures that every pupil can take an active part in all learning activities. Improvements in ICT resources and teachers' confidence to use them are motivating pupils to learn, as are the video conferencing links with other schools and adults. Specialist teaching in physical education and drama enhances the opportunities and challenge offered to pupils, as does the introduction of French in Key Stage 2. There is a good variety of extra-curricular activities, including gardening and computer clubs; the wide variety of additional sporting activities are well attended. Educational visits and visitors such as environmental workers, the archaeological society and the Halle orchestra enrich pupils' experience, as do special events such as subject weeks in art and geography.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, who are learning English as an additional language and those new to the school are well supported by a committed team of skilled teaching assistants, specialist teachers and external agencies. Parents endorse this by statements such as, 'My child thrives at school and has grown in confidence.' There are effective programmes in place for the induction of children and their parents into the EYFS and Year 1. Good transition arrangements exist with the partner high school to ensure the transfer to Year 7 is smooth. Teachers give good academic guidance but this does not always translate effectively into action in lesson planning. Targets are set and reviewed regularly enabling early identification of those pupils who are underachieving. A wide range of intervention strategies meet specific individual needs satisfactorily. Pupils know their targets and what they need to do to improve. They know that their writing targets are also relevant to work done in other subjects. Safeguarding requirements are met.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher and senior management team have a clear understanding of the effectiveness of the school's work and what needs to be done to improve standards further. The actions taken by the school since the last inspection to improve the use of assessment information in

tracking pupils' progress and to devolve responsibility to middle leaders have been successful. Since the last inspection the school has also successfully extended the use of ICT to support and extend pupils' learning and secured improvements to standards in English and mathematics. Recently introduced procedures for more rigorous monitoring of pupils' progress and identifying underachievement are also proving successful in raising standards in mathematics and English. However, standards in science remain too low. School improvement planning is appropriate and based upon the analysis of performance data and priorities for development identified in the schools' self-evaluation. Subject leaders now play an important role in monitoring performance, setting targets and curriculum planning. Nevertheless, although the monitoring of teaching and learning is regular and identifies areas for development, information gained from this process is not used effectively enough to spread good practice and eliminate variability across the school. The school works closely with the wider community both through the arts and other local networks and through its links with a partner school in Africa. Governors discharge their responsibilities satisfactorily.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

Overall effectiveness

| | |
|---|-----|
| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 3 |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | Yes |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being? | 2 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 2 |

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

| | |
|---|---|
| How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS? | 2 |
| How well do children in the EYFS achieve? | 2 |
| How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS? | 2 |
| How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop? | 2 |
| How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted? | 2 |
| How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed? | 2 |

Achievement and standards

| | |
|--|---|
| How well do learners achieve? | 3 |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 3 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 3 |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress | 3 |

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

| | |
|---|---|
| How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 2 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 3 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 3 |
| The extent to which learners enjoy their education | 2 |
| The attendance of learners | 3 |
| The behaviour of learners | 1 |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community | 2 |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 3 |

The quality of provision

| | |
|--|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs? | 3 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 3 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 3 |

Leadership and management

| | |
|--|-----|
| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 3 |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 3 |
| How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 2 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated | 3 |
| How well does the school contribute to community cohesion? | 3 |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money | 3 |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 3 |
| 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 my colleague and I so welcome when we inspected your school. You really enjoy your school because you get on so well with your teachers and there are many exciting things to do and learn. Your behaviour is excellent. We were particularly impressed by the way you look after each other in the playground and the work you do in the school council and Eco club.

You attain standards that are broadly average and you make satisfactory progress. We noticed that some of you found some tasks too difficult or too easy in your lessons. We have asked the teachers to make sure they think carefully when they are planning their lessons to make sure you can all succeed and do your best. You can help by telling teachers when you find tasks too easy or too difficult.

Teachers have a lot of good ideas but in some lessons you learn better than in others. We have asked the teachers to get together to swap their ideas so that all your lessons are as good as the best. They have been working hard to help you do better in your mathematics and English and this has been successful. However, we think you can do better in science and reading as well, so we have asked your teachers to help you do this. You can help by making sure you come to school regularly.

The younger children in the Nursery and Reception class make good progress. We noticed how well they learn through play, but in the Reception class they do not always get enough opportunity to do this outside so we have asked the school to ensure they have more opportunities to do this.

You play an important role in helping to run your school. You take pride in your work and your achievements. We hope you carry on enjoying your learning. We wish you every success in the future.