

St Paul of the Cross Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111367
Local Authority	Warrington
Inspection number	337671
Inspection dates	24–25 February 2010
Reporting inspector	Paul Bamber

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	189
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr W Garner
Headteacher	Mr Andy Cocker
Date of previous school inspection	11 October 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 12 lessons, saw 12 teachers and spent around 50% of time observing learning. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including improvement plans, policies relating to safeguarding issues and reports from the School Improvement Partner. Discussions were held with staff, parents, the Chair of the Governing Body and with groups of pupils. In addition, 158 parental questionnaires were analysed, including seven that were too late to be included in the analysis, and the responses of pupils and staff to the questionnaires they completed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- how well Key Stage 2 pupils progress in English
- the effectiveness of the curriculum in promoting pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills in subjects other than English, mathematics, science and religious education
- how well the Early Years Foundation Stage is led and managed.

Information about the school

This smaller than average size school takes pupils from a wide catchment area. Very few pupils are of any other heritage than White British. The proportion entitled to a free school meal is well below average. An average percentage have a special educational needs and/or disabilities but a lower proportion than average have a statement of special educational needs. The school has undergone considerable building works since the last inspection and quite a number of changes in staffing. It holds the Healthy Schools award and the FMSiS award for financial management.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. As a result of consistently good leadership and management, pupils attain above average standards, make good progress, develop effective personal skills and are cared for very well. Pupils' behaviour, the degree to which they feel safe and the quality of care, guidance and support the school provides, are all outstanding. Parents and carers overwhelmingly support and praise the school's ethos and its work. Many echo the comment: 'it's a loving and caring environment', which aptly describes one of the school's major strengths.

Throughout the school, pupils make good progress academically and develop well as maturing young citizens. The overall good teaching is typified by extremely positive relationships and the creative use of resources, including new technologies. Effective learning is evident in pupils' keenness to absorb information and to engage in discussions and debate. There are some shortcomings in the quality of marking, particularly in not providing pupils with evaluations of their work.

The curriculum is effective, especially in securing pupils' basic literacy and numeracy skills and in promoting their social, moral and spiritual development. The excellent care, guidance and support provided, ensure that pupils are safe, enjoy their work and play, and move through the different stages of their time in the school happily and successfully.

The senior management team, ably led by a very experienced headteacher and well supported by an effective governing body, evaluates the work of the school continuously and realistically. Rigorous checks on the quality of provision and on outcomes for pupils enable leaders to plan pragmatically for improvement and to address any relative weaknesses. Improvement since the last inspection has been good, particularly in considerably enhancing accommodation and resources. While there have been improvements to the outdoor provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage, the school acknowledges that further work is necessary to fully meet the needs of the children in Reception. The school's promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory but requires further development. However, the maintenance of above average attainment, of pupils' good achievement and of their positive personal skills, together with the school's record in consistently meeting challenging targets, indicates a good capacity to continue to secure further improvements.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teachers' marking, by:

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- ensuring that in all classes teachers make it clear to pupils why their work is of good quality and to be specific about the way in which their work can improve.
- Improve the quality of learning outdoors in the Early Years Foundation Stage, by:
 - providing a more stimulating, extended outside area
 - adding to the stock of large toys to help children to fully develop physically.
- Promoting community cohesion more effectively, by:
 - establishing wider links with communities much different to the school's own, both in the United Kingdom and globally
 - the governing body carrying out the required evaluation of the impact of the school's provision.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils enjoy all aspects of school life. In lessons, they are attentive, eager to learn and keen to contribute. They support each other's learning well, respectfully listening to each other's views and answers. For example, on those occasions when the individual pupil finds it difficult to articulate their thoughts, other pupils are patient, do not interrupt and are very supportive. Similarly, when required to discuss their work in small groups, pupils give each other an equal chance to contribute. Pupils take pride in presenting their work well and are familiar with their learning targets. They also talk confidently about how well they are progressing towards meeting these. As a result of these positive attributes, all pupils make good academic progress, including Key Stage 2 pupils in English. For those who are more vulnerable or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, progress is good because they are very well supported by adults and fellow pupils. Standards are currently above average in English, mathematics and science. Over recent years, standards in Year 6 have been consistently high.

Pupils' behaviour, both in and out of the classroom, is excellent. They are courteous, welcoming and confident. They have a good theoretical knowledge of what represents a balanced diet, albeit not always putting theory into practice in their snack and lunch choices. Pupils are aware of the importance of regular exercise. However, only half avail themselves of the opportunity to participate in exercise related after-school clubs. Pupils have a well developed sense of citizenship and willingly take on responsibilities as school councillors, play leaders and as fundraisers. They have a strong moral sense and are socially mature. They have a strong sense of spirituality which permeates all aspects of their life in school. Pupils develop good workplace skills. They have effective literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology skills, their attendance is above average and they are punctual. These attributes prepare them well for their next stage in education and for life.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching ranges in quality between satisfactory and outstanding, but is predominantly good. A consistent feature of good teaching is effective and detailed planning which reflects what different groups of pupils should learn and what they will do to achieve this. Lessons are characterised by a very positive and supportive atmosphere, in which staff and pupils work in harmony. Tasks set invariably match pupils' needs closely. Where teaching is outstanding, the teachers' skills in enthusing, encouraging and in using excellent subject knowledge and deploying exciting resources, hold pupils in rapt attention and ensure excellent learning and rapid progress. In those lessons which are no better than satisfactory, time management and the organisation of pupils' learning are relative weaknesses. Teachers' marking varies in its quality. There is some exemplary practice, but in some classes pupils are given too little information about the ways in which their work is successful or how it could be improved.

The curriculum matches pupils' needs effectively ensuring that they achieve well both academically and personally. Religious education teaching makes a particularly strong contribution to the many very positive aspects of pupils' personal development. Themed weeks, visitors and educational and residential visits, enhance many aspects of pupils' learning. Together with specialist teaching in physical education and in Spanish, these experiences ensure that pupils make good progress in all curriculum subjects. Despite forging links with representatives of different faiths and cultures, the school does not promote pupils' cultural awareness as strongly as their social, moral and spiritual development.

Pupils are superbly looked after and cared for. Ensuring that all pupils are safe, secure

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and happy is at the heart of the school's mission. Parents and carers of more vulnerable pupils are fulsome in their praise for the school's successful efforts to ensure that their children are provided for in the best possible way. Positive and effective partnerships with external agencies ensure that if expertise beyond that available in school is required, it is quickly provided. The school's procedures to ensure good attendance, punctuality and behaviour, are very effective.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher's effective leadership is acknowledged and respected by staff, pupils, and parents and carers. He is ably supported by senior and middle leaders in setting high expectations for pupils' academic and personal development and for the quality of provision. Leaders demonstrate their ambition to continually improve the school by rigorously evaluating the school's performance and by taking effective action where necessary. They have established useful partnerships with other local providers, engage parents and carers very closely in supporting the school's work and involve them very well in their children's learning. They succeed in ensuring that all pupils have the opportunities, resources and support to achieve equally well in their personal and academic development. Minimising discrimination is central to the school's ethos.

The governing body is effective in both supporting and challenging the school's performance. Governors are prudent financial managers and provide a wide range of relevant expertise. However, they are not fully carrying out their duty to oversee and evaluate the school's promotion of community cohesion. Although this is promoted very well within the school and in the local community, there are few, if any, links with diverse communities in the United Kingdom or globally. The governing body ensures that safeguarding requirements are fully met. Good procedures are characterised by rigorous risk assessments and the way in which the school integrates issues about safety and safeguarding into the curriculum. Given pupils' effective outcomes and the good quality provision, the school provides good value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress in the vast majority of their areas of learning because they are well taught and planning is based on effective assessment. Leadership and management are effective and influential in ensuring positive outcomes for children through good provision. Communication between staff is good. Parents and carers welcome the good induction procedures which ensure that children settle quickly and happily into Reception. The excellent rapport between staff and parents and carers greatly enhances children's learning and development. After entering Reception with broadly expected skills, children progress well and in several areas of their learning exceed expectations by the time they enter Year 1. An exception to this is in communication, language and literacy in which their attainment on entry is often below expectations. Despite making good progress, they enter Year 1 with broadly expected skills in early reading and writing. Although considerable improvements have been made in outdoor learning since the last inspection, there are still shortcomings in this provision which limits children's physical development. The area beyond the covered outdoor classroom is quite barren and so lacks any stimulation, and there is a paucity of large play equipment which limits children's experiences in their physical development.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

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Views of parents and carers

There was a very high return of questionnaires that parents and carers were asked to complete for inspectors. The vast majority were fulsome in their praise for the school, especially for how happy their children were, for how well they were looked after and for how well the school was led and managed. A few were concerned about being insufficiently helped to support their child's learning, a very small proportion felt that their child's needs were not met well and a few were concerned about their child's lack of progress. Inspectors found that parents and carers are given guidance about the way in which pupils are taught and informed about the curriculum they will follow over the next half term. The information provided to them is similar in quality and frequency to most schools. Inspectors also found that pupils make good progress overall.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Paul of the Cross Catholic Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 158 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 189 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	109	69	44	28	3	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	128	81	28	18	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	101	64	50	32	7	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	95	60	57	36	5	3	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	106	67	48	30	4	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	89	56	59	37	9	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	93	59	62	39	3	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	69	44	76	48	3	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	91	58	59	37	7	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	86	54	63	40	3	2	2	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	75	47	72	46	3	2	4	3
The school is led and managed effectively	120	76	34	22	1	1	2	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	117	74	35	22	3	2	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



26 February 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Paul of the Cross Catholic Primary School, Warrington WA5 4PN

Thank you on behalf of myself and my colleagues for the very warm and polite welcome you gave us when we inspected your school recently. It is very clear that you enjoy school and that you are happy and confident learners.

Yours is a good school. It helps you to reach standards that are higher than those reached by other pupils in most schools. Because you are looked after and supported in such an excellent way, your behaviour is super, in and out of the classroom and you get on very well with one another. You told us how much you enjoy having visitors in school and going out on visits, especially the Year 6 residential. You have good teachers and the school is run well by your headteacher and his team.

One of my jobs is to point out ways in which the school can be even better. To do this I have asked your headteacher and the governors to do the following:

- to make sure that when your teachers mark your work, all of them explain what it is you have done well and to tell you what you need to do to make your work even better
- to make the outside area for children in Reception more exciting and for them to have more large toys to play with
- establish much closer links with schools or communities that are very different to St Paul's or to Burtonwood, so that you can better appreciate and get along with people whose lives are different to yours. Also, for the governors to find out what effect this is having on your learning and attitudes.

You can play your part by always following the advice your teachers give you and by trying your very best every day.

Yours sincerely

Paul Bamber

Lead inspector

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