

St Wulstan's Catholic Primary School, Great Harwood

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119646
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	339491
Inspection dates	23–24 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Shirley Herring

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	150
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Valerie Austin
Headteacher	Mrs Kay Schofield
Date of previous school inspection	11 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They observed six teachers in 10 lessons and held meetings with pupils, governors and staff. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's development plan, reports from the School Improvement Partner, documentation on safeguarding pupils, assessments and tracking of pupils' progress and 45 completed questionnaires from parents and carers.

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

- the achievement of girls and in writing in Key Stage 1
- the progress of boys and the more able in writing in Key Stage 2
- the effectiveness of partnerships with others.

Information about the school

This is a small school, though numbers are rising steadily. The vast majority of pupils are from a White British background and the number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. In 2009, the school joined with a neighbouring school in the same parish in a 'soft federation' under the leadership of one headteacher. The pre-school playgroup on site is inspected separately

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. It is at the heart of the parish and community. Its outstanding features include: the effectiveness of its work with partnerships; with parents and carers; the safeguarding of pupils; in community cohesion; pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and in their personal development. Inspectors agree with the parent who remarked, 'St. Wulstan's is a happy school where children are polite, smart and well behaved!'

The link with the neighbouring school in the parish, under the dynamic leadership of the headteacher, has been very beneficial to this small school through sharing training, expertise and activities. The headteacher and deputy headteacher work closely together in accurately evaluating the performance and needs of the school and share a vision of how to raise standards.

Children enter the school with a range of skills that overall are below what is typical for their age. They make good progress and attain standards that are broadly average by the time they leave Year 6, with mathematics the strongest element through the school. Attainment has been at least average in Key Stage 1 for some time, though writing has been a comparative weakness, with no pupil working beyond the level expected for their age over the past two years. The school has taken concerted action to improve pupils' progress in writing and has introduced strategies, such as the 'Big Write' and more focused marking to address the identified shortcomings. These are now beginning to have an impact, particularly in Key Stage 2, where there has been an increase in the proportion of pupils now working at the higher level for their age. The impact in Key Stage 1 has been slower, particularly for the more able. This is because, whilst the school's policy on marking is consistently used, the teachers' suggestions for improvement are not always followed up. In some instances, suggestions such as using capital letters and full stops are repeated many times, without noticeable effect. Pupils do not always have the breadth of vocabulary to enrich their writing.

There have been good improvements in achievement, teaching and in the systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress and these are now having a positive impact on attainment. The strong leadership of the headteacher and her deputy headteacher and the developing roles of subject leaders indicate that the school has a good capacity to improve

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve attainment in writing in Key Stage 1, particularly for the more able, by:

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- focusing on the consistent use of capital letters and full stops
- providing more opportunities for pupils to develop a wider vocabulary.

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

Pupils say how much they enjoy school, particularly the sporting activities and subjects such as science where they can 'learn about the world!' They listen well in lessons and are eager to put up their hands to answer questions. They enjoy challenges in mathematics, for example, devising ever more complex sums with the same answer. They behave well in lessons and this makes a good contribution to their learning.

Pupils make good progress and attain standards that are broadly average by the time they leave Year 6. In the 2009 national tests, although the proportion of pupils attaining the expected level was similar in mathematics and English, a much higher proportion of pupils attained the higher level in mathematics than in English. Assessments in the current year show that improvements in marking to help pupils to take the next steps have helped to narrow the gap significantly. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well because their needs are identified at an early stage and they receive good support. In 2009, the attainment of girls was higher than boys overall, though assessments over time would suggest that this is related to particular cohorts of pupils in this small school rather than a general pattern.

Pupils say they feel very safe in school and are confident that rare instances of bullying are dealt with swiftly. They are very aware of the need to keep gates locked and that any approved visitors to school would be wearing badges. They have a very good understanding of aspects such as e-safety. They understand how diet and exercise contribute to a healthy lifestyle and are clear about the dangers of smoking. They make an excellent contribution to the school community as members of the school council and had a large contribution in saying how the playground should be developed. They cooperate well with their partner school and in a large range of parish and other community activities. They value the global links they have with a school in Kenya and have helped to raise funds to support the school by creating their own Lenten stalls. Their good attendance and sound basic skills prepare them well for the future. Pupils have a keen sense of the difference between right and wrong and treat each other with great respect. They enjoy learning about the faith of others, for example, when children of the Moslem faith visited school and showed them how they pray.

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	3
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	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
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	1

How effective is the provision?

Lessons are generally interesting and so pupils are motivated and participate well. Clear learning objectives and success criteria are shared with the pupils so they know how to judge how well they have learned in the lesson. Good assessment procedures are used effectively to plan work for different groups so that all can achieve. The good systems for marking pupils' work are consistently applied to help them to improve. However, in some instances, teachers do not always check that pupils are applying the suggestions made in future pieces of work. The skilled teaching assistants are well deployed in lessons and make a good contribution to pupils' learning.

The curriculum is good. A strong aspect is the provision for personal, social and health education which has had a very good impact on pupils' personal development. Pupils are increasingly involved with governors and staff in looking at aspects of school safety. The close links with the partner school has extended opportunities for community links, for example, in joining together for the residential trip, parish activities and in theme days. There is a good emphasis on developing pupils' basic literacy, numeracy and information, communication and technology (ICT) skills in specific lessons and in other subjects. Initiatives to improve writing are beginning to have an impact, especially in Key Stage 2. The impact is slower in Key Stage 1, particularly for the more able. Planned opportunities for pupils to develop their mathematical skills in solving problems and through the weekly mathematics club after school provide suitable challenge for the more able. There is a good range of additional activities to enhance learning and enjoyment. This was seen in the lunchtime choir when pupils sang a moving African song and also prepared for the performance of 'Starlight Express.'

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Parents and carers agree that the school provides good care and support for pupils, including the most vulnerable. Strategies, such as individual support, have been effective in raising achievement for those who are falling behind. A good feature is the close involvement of parents and carers who are fully informed about their child's individual education plan which they sign. They are regularly updated about their progress. The school has well established links with other professionals to access specialist support when needed. The good links with the high school, for example an enjoyable language day for pupils in Year 5 at the high school in the summer term, prepare them well for the next stage.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The strong leadership of the headteacher has expanded the opportunities for joint training and the sharing of expertise, for example, by subject leaders. This has helped to improve teaching and is raising achievement. The school uses its accurate evaluations effectively to bring about improvements. The identified weakness in writing is being successfully addressed through a wider range of opportunities for writing and more focused marking. Governors are a welcome and regular presence in school to provide support and challenge for the management team. They embraced the challenge of linking the two schools of the parish for the benefit of the pupils. Parents and carers say how much they feel welcome in school and are very well informed. They are consulted on many decisions, for example, their opinions were sought and taken into account when planning a new format for the pupils' reports. Very positive partnerships with the partner school, the local authority inclusion service, the Business Partnership and local sporting organisations have greatly enhanced learning opportunities.

The governors and staff have a strong commitment to equality of opportunities and pupils are clear that racism is not to be tolerated. The school tracks the progress of different groups to identify any underachievement quickly. Safeguarding is a high priority for governors, managers and staff. All the recommended systems are in place and rigorously reviewed on their due date and staff are fully trained. The Health and Safety committee are vigilant in their review of the school site and have involved pupils in this. The school has strong links with their partner school and the local community school which has pupils from a different ethnic background. Shared activities, such as Multicultural Week, help to promote understanding of different cultures and religions.

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The school evaluates the impact of its work rigorously and is developing its environmental links through the re-using and recycling initiative. A global perspective is encouraged though links with a school in Africa and pen pals in Australia.

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
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	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enjoy coming to school and thrive in the rich environment. They enter the Reception class with a range of skills that overall are below what is typical for their age, with a comparative weakness in their understanding of letter sounds. They make good progress and the majority achieve the levels appropriate for their age by the time they enter Year 1. The good procedures for assessing children's progress are used well to plan work for different groups. There is a good range of purposeful, practical activities, indoors and outside, that show a good understanding of how young children learn. There is a good balance between those activities led by an adult and those that children choose for themselves. Whether working with an adult or independently, children concentrate well and complete their task. Language, literacy and early problem-solving, reasoning and numeracy skills are taught systematically and well so that children make good progress. Children have a clear understanding of rules and routines, they put up their hands to answer and they behave well. They show a good understanding of how to keep healthy and safe, as they put on a hat before going out in the sun. They delighted in hunting for minibeasts in the school grounds with the teacher, but were sure to wear plastic gloves before touching them. All systems for safeguarding children are fully in place and staff are fully trained. There are good systems for introducing children to school so they settle quickly. The teacher visits the adjoining pre-school playgroup

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weekly to read a story and so the children get to know her well before they start. Leadership and management are good. The teacher guides the work of the other adults well and she respects their expertise and views. Consequently, staff work happily together as an effective team for the benefit of the children. Parents and carers are fully involved in their children's learning. They receive information about the topics, listen to their children read at home and exchange observations of learning with the teacher.

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

Views of parents and carers

Over a third of parents The parents and carers who returned the questionnaires were overwhelmingly positive about the school and what it provides for their children. Inspectors agree that children enjoy school, teaching is good and that children make good progress.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Wulstan's Catholic Primary School, Great Harwood 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 45 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 150 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	31	69	13	29	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	38	84	7	16	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	31	69	14	31	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	26	58	17	38	1	2	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	30	67	15	33	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	30	67	12	27	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	35	78	10	22	0	0	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)	31	69	11	24	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	29	64	14	31	2	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	25	56	17	38	1	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	23	51	19	42	2	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	28	62	14	31	2	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	33	73	12	27	0	0	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.



25 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Wulstan's Catholic Primary School, Great Harwood, Blackburn, BB6 7JQ

Thank you for making us so welcome when we inspected your school. We think that St. Wulstan's is a good school; in fact, some things about it are outstanding. We agree with you and your parents and carers that the school looks after you well and keeps you very safe. You play your part by working hard, coming to school regularly and behaving well. We were very interested to hear about how well you and your teachers work with staff and pupils at St Hubert's. You seem to do a lot to help others through recommendations from the school council and raising money for charity. Well done!

Those of you in reception make a good start to your time in school. You seem to enjoy the many activities indoors and outside. All the teachers plan interesting activities to help you to learn and there is always an adult on hand to give you extra help when you need it. You make good progress and reach the standards that are expected for your age by the time you leave Year 6, in fact some of you do even better, particularly in mathematics. I think this is because you have a lot of challenges to solve problems.

To make your good school even better the adults are going to:

- improve your attainment in writing in Key Stage 1, particularly for those of you who are more able by:-
- making sure that everyone always uses capital letters and full stops
- providing more opportunities for you to develop a wider vocabulary.

We enjoyed visiting your happy school. I hope everyone enjoys the production of Starlight Express.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Shirley Herring

Lead Inspector

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