

# St Werburgh's Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	105091
<b>Local Authority</b>	Wirral
<b>Inspection number</b>	355696
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 September 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	David Cox

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	223
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Lynn Ireland
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Monique Stevenson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 December 2007
<b>School address</b>	Park Grove Birkenhead Merseyside CH41 2TD
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 6478404
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<b>Email address</b>	schooloffice@stwerburghs.wirral.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 17 lessons or part lessons, observing eight teachers, and held meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body and another governor, staff and groups of pupils. They talked with parents and carers at the start of the day when parents and carers were bringing their children to school. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documentation including policies on safeguarding, the school development plan, teachers' planning, assessment files and records of pupils' progress, including those for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff and pupils completed questionnaires and 85 questionnaires returned from parents and carers were also read and analysed.

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

- It investigated whether leaders are doing enough to improve pupils' progress given the dip in 2009, particularly in mathematics.
- It looked at the rate of progress children make in the Early Years Foundation Stage, particularly in calculation, communication and language development.
- It judged whether systems for improving pupils' attendance are effective enough.
- It considered the effectiveness of leaders in improving the quality of teaching and learning, particularly at Key Stage 1.

## Information about the school

In this average-sized primary school, most pupils are White British with a small proportion from minority ethnic backgrounds, mainly Bangladeshi. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is high. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average, although the percentage who have a statement of special educational needs is low. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average. The school has achieved national Healthy Schools status. It operates a breakfast club for pupils each day. The attached children's centre is subject to separate inspection arrangements.

**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

The school provides a good education for its pupils. The school takes full account of, and responds well to, the diverse social and cultural backgrounds of its pupils. As a result, pupils enjoy school, achieve well and make good progress in their learning. Parents and carers express a strong appreciation of the quality of education the school provides. The good caring ethos which permeates all aspects of school life ensures that all pupils feel welcome and valued. As a result of this and the strong emphasis the school places on their personal development, pupils make good progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and mature into considerate individuals with an extremely strong sense of social responsibility. Pupils' behaviour is good and makes a significant contribution to their overall good progress and learning. While levels of attendance are affected by social and cultural factors, most pupils attend regularly and arrive punctually. A very small minority of parents and carers continue to take their children out of school for extended holidays and do not always value the importance of education.

Children make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes because of the good provision they receive. Pupils reach broadly average standards of attainment overall by the time they leave Year 6. They make good progress in mathematics and science but perform less well in English, particularly in aspects of writing. This is because the same rigorous approach to improving pupils' attainment in mathematics is not always applied by all staff to the development of pupils' writing skills.

Teaching is good overall. However, there is some variation in the quality of teaching. The differences in effectiveness are mainly found in Key Stage 1, where more lessons tend to be satisfactory rather than good.

While the curriculum is satisfactory, the planning of topics does not always link different subjects, which reduces opportunities for pupils to develop and practise key skills, such as writing, in different contexts.

Senior leaders and managers, supported by a team of enthusiastic staff, have made a number of strategic changes since the previous inspection which have sharpened the school's focus on raising pupils' achievements considerably. As a result, provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is much improved, standards of attainment in mathematics are rising and there has been good improvement in many key areas, including teaching and learning. Performance data is used well by staff and members of the governing body to evaluate effectively the school's performance and to plan the next steps in the school's development. All factors considered, the school's capacity for sustained improvement is good.

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## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in English, particularly in writing, by:
  - extending the good practice and rigorous approach seen in mathematics to have an impact on the attainment of pupils in English
  - reviewing the curriculum and providing opportunities in all subjects for pupils to develop and practise key literacy skills.
- Improve the quality of teaching at Key Stage 1 by:
  - raising teachers' expectations of pupils' achievement
  - ensuring that teachers think more carefully about how and what pupils are learning.
- Improve the attendance of a very small minority of pupils who are persistently absent by:
  - ensuring that all parents and carers are aware that it is important that their children attend school regularly
  - working with parents and carers to reduce the gaps in pupils' learning which occur when extended holidays are taken.

## ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

<b>2</b>
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Pupils show good attitudes to work and high levels of enjoyment are often evident. For example, pupils had great fun when role playing anger management situations and agreeing which emotion was being depicted. Occasionally, a small minority of boys become distracted and disturb the learning of their neighbours. Most pupils feel that they are safe in school and given good advice about the dangers they may encounter in their everyday lives. They develop a good awareness of what constitutes healthy eating, although some say they know what is good for them but do not always follow their own advice when out of school! Many engage readily in physical activities, such as the High Impact scheme, to help them keep fit. Growing links with a school in Zambia add to pupils' understanding of cultural differences. Pupils are mindful of the diverse cultures they experience on a daily basis. Drama performances, such as the school production on the football world cup, raise the school's profile in the wider community very effectively.

From their below average attainment on entry to Year 1, pupils make good progress overall. Pupils make only satisfactory progress with their learning at Key Stage 1 because there is too much emphasis on what the teacher is doing rather than on what pupils will learn. Thereafter, progress accelerates and pupils make good progress during Key Stage 2 as a result of teaching that challenges them to learn well. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a solid foundation for future learning and life.

Examples of pupils' work show that they are making good progress in mathematics because of the structured approach staff use to improve basic numeracy skills such as those of calculation and problem solving. However, teaching is not always as effective in supporting the development of pupils' writing skills and raising attainment in English.

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Spelling is a weakness, particularly for the younger pupils.

Well-structured support enables pupils who speak English as an additional language to make good gains in language acquisition. They gain confidence in their new language rapidly and before very long are communicating happily and effectively with all around them. Learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is managed well and these pupils progress well.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

At its best the teaching is innovative and challenging, giving pupils a thirst for learning. Where practice is good, pupils are encouraged to reflect upon their own and others' work and to offer suggestions about possible improvements. Teachers' use of assessment has improved substantially since the previous inspection and work is often matched well to pupils' differing needs. For example, in a Year 5 lesson on calculation virtually every pupil was working on a different problem. Teaching assistants fulfil a crucial role as part of the teaching team and contribute skilfully to pupils' good learning and progress. When teaching is satisfactory, the challenge for pupils is not consistent

<sup>1</sup> 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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and sometimes not high enough, resulting in slower progress. Occasionally, teaching is too focused on 'getting through the activity' rather than on what the pupils are learning and whether pupils have understood fully the object of the lesson.

Curriculum development is ongoing and the school has still to complete the move to a fully creative and interlinked programme to promote basic skills and learning. Strengths include good provision for the development of pupils' personal and social development, including health education. Pupils have good access to information and communication technology (ICT) resources which are increasing pupils' contribution to and ownership of their own learning. An extended range of extra-curricular activities and clubs, together with visits and visitors, enrich the curriculum. The engagement of good-quality outside providers has enabled the school to enhance areas such as music and ICT.

The school knows pupils and their families very well. The support the school provides for pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable or who are experiencing difficulties in their lives is extensive and effective, enabling them to get the best from their education. There are productive links with pre-school settings and work with local high schools helps to make transitions as smooth as possible. Parents and carers are very happy with the way in which their children are cared for and most are pleased with the information the school gives them about their children's progress and welfare. The appointment of additional support staff to follow up absentee pupils has raised the level of attendance. However, the school rightly recognises there is a very small minority of parents and carers who still need convincing with regard to the importance of good attendance of their children.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher and other senior leaders have been instrumental in inspiring staff to work together to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Staff feel valued and comment on the 'caring and thoughtful community' that leaders and managers promote. A strong commitment to developing staff through focused training has resulted in a greater understanding that all are accountable for their actions and areas of responsibility. As a consequence, improvements are evident in areas such as the provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Middle leaders engage effectively in monitoring and evaluating the school's progress. Members of the governing body support the school's development conscientiously and check carefully how well it is

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meeting the needs of pupils. They are fully aware of its strengths and areas for development. They regularly seek the views of parents and carers through surveys and discussions and are able to advise the headteacher of any concerns that need addressing.

Equality of opportunity is central to the school's ethos and its ambition for all pupils. The needs of those pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable are met well and this demonstrates the effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity. The school works closely with many external organisations, including the local authority and external consultants, and these have a positive effect on pupils' achievement and personal development. Parents and carers are very appreciative of the work of the school. A parent of a Bengali child commented that she was pleased to send her child to a 'faith school' although a different faith to her own. The school provides the opportunity for parents and carers to work alongside pupils, for example to support with reading and some parents and carers complete qualifications in aspects of care. While the school's procedures for safeguarding are satisfactory overall, some administrative and checking procedures are not as well organised as they could be. The vast majority of parents and carers have confidence in the school to keep their children safe and systems for child protection are good. The school understands well the needs of the diverse community it serves and involves itself readily in local and national initiatives. Projects such as 'Respect' help pupils to understand and support various community groups.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

**Early Years Foundation Stage**

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

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The effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. It meets the needs of all children and they achieve well. Improvements to the organisation, curriculum and resources have resulted in a greater focus on improving children's basic skills. There are clear signs that there is an improving trend in their achievements. On entry to the Nursery class most children have skills for their age that are low compared with the expected level. A significant proportion is some way behind in language skills and aspects of numeracy such as recognition of numbers. Although children make good progress towards the early learning goals for their age, by the time they move into Year 1 most have reached levels of attainment that are below average. A strong emphasis on children's personal and social skills ensures that children soon learn to share, to learn and to play together. A wide range of challenging and exciting activities help to stimulate children's imaginations and help them develop curiosity. They make good progress with their understanding of numbers and become familiar with coins. Weaknesses remain in writing and their understanding of sounds and letters.

There is a good balance of activities chosen by the children and those led by adults. Regular and thorough assessments enable staff to identify gaps in children's learning accurately and to plan accordingly. Adults pay careful attention to children's welfare and care for them well. Effective partnerships with pre-school settings and parents and carers ensure good induction arrangements. Parents and carers confirm that their children settle quickly. Leadership and management are effective and promote a good rate of improvement. The need to improve provision in the outside area has been recognised and is being acted upon.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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**

Most parents and carers are very supportive of the school. They say their children are happy at school and make good progress. Inspectors support these positive views. A very small minority of parents and carers thought that unacceptable behaviour was not dealt with effectively. Inspectors found that the school has good systems for improving behaviour and that pupils' behaviour is good.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Werburgh's 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 85 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 223 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	58	68	25	29	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	64	75	18	21	2	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	54	64	27	32	4	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	52	61	27	32	5	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	58	68	25	29	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	53	62	29	34	3	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	52	61	32	38	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)	50	59	32	38	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	53	62	31	36	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	48	56	30	35	4	5	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	51	60	32	38	1	1	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	58	68	26	31	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	61	72	24	28	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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



16 September 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Werburgh's Catholic Primary School, Birkenhead, CH41 2TD

It was a great pleasure to inspect your school. You were all friendly and helpful and we enjoyed talking to you about how you are getting on. Thank you! On behalf of the inspection team I would like to share with you what we found.

Your school is providing you with a good education. The youngest children get off to a good start. Your behaviour in lessons is good and this means you learn well and pay good attention. You take responsibilities around school and look out for one another well. You make good progress in lessons and, by the time you leave at the end of Year 6, most of you reach broadly average standards overall. You do particularly well in mathematics but less so in writing. I have asked your teachers to give you more opportunities to develop and practise new literacy skills in all your subjects. The teaching you receive is good overall and you work hard. You enjoy the activities out of school and visits you make to places of interest. Your headteacher, teachers and other adults take good care of you all and make sure that you all feel safe and secure. Part of my job is to identify how the school can be even better. There are three improvements for staff to make.

- Help you to do better in writing by giving you lots more chances to develop and practise these skills in all your subjects.
- Make sure that all the teaching is at least good or better.
- Work even harder to help some of you improve your attendance.

Please continue to work hard. I send you all my best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mr David Cox

Lead Inspector

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