

St William of York Catholic Primary School

St William Road, Crosby, Liverpool, L23 9XH

Inspection dates 7–8 May 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- This is a happy and caring school where pupils thrive and achieve well. It fulfils its vision that ‘together everyone achieves more’.
- Children generally start school with skills and knowledge that are well below those typical for their age. Progress across the school is good because they get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and maintain that same good progress between Years 1 and 6.
- By the end of Year 6 pupils generally reach standards that are above average in reading and average in writing and mathematics.
- All groups of pupils achieve well because teaching is good and sometimes outstanding. Excellent relationships between pupils and adults are a key factor in this successful teaching.
- Pupils’ behaviour is consistently good in lessons and around the school. They have positive attitudes to learning and take a great pride in their school.
- Parents and pupils agree, and the inspection confirms, that the school’s work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- The curriculum is well planned and promotes pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well.
- The headteacher and governors are very ambitious for the school and have a clear understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. Their decisive actions have tackled past dips in performance and have been instrumental in maintaining at least good teaching and further improving pupils’ achievement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of teaching is usually good, rather than outstanding. Tasks are not always adjusted as pupils do their work, in order to increase their progress.
- Middle leaders are not fully involved in driving forward school improvement.
- The impact of teaching assistants’ work on pupils’ learning is too variable.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 16 lessons or part-lessons taught by 11 teachers. Two lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors talked with pupils and listened to some Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 pupils reading. Pupils' current work and assessments were scrutinised. Inspectors also observed pupils at lunchtime and during their break times.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, staff, members of the governing body, and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked closely at the school's work, including minutes of meetings of the governing body meetings, the school's analysis of how well it is doing and its improvement plan, documents relating to behaviour and safeguarding and the school's data on pupils' progress.
- The inspectors took account of the 27 responses from parents recorded in the online questionnaire (Parent View). Inspectors also had informal conversations with groups of parents at the start of the school day.
- The inspectors took account of the 12 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Michael Hewlett, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Kirsty Haw

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Almost all pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well-below average.
- Pupil mobility is above the national average and more children leave or join the school midway through their primary education than is typical.
- The proportion of pupils known to be supported by the pupil premium funding is well-above average. (The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children looked after by the local authority).
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- In 2013, the school met the government's current floor standards which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- There have been significant changes to the school since the last inspection, including a high turnover of staff. A new headteacher and deputy headteacher have been appointed and in 2010 50 pupils joined the school from a neighbouring school that closed.
- A breakfast- and after-school club are provided by a private company. These settings are subject to separate inspection arrangements.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching in order to raise achievement further by ensuring that:
 - checks on pupils' understanding are carried out while they are learning and tasks are adjusted to ensure that all pupils make the best possible progress and do as well as they can
 - the work of teaching assistants has a greater impact on pupils' learning.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that middle leaders have a wider knowledge of, and impact on, whole-school priorities.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage; they quickly learn new skills as a result of good teaching and an exciting curriculum. For example, they enjoy taking part in role play and acting out nursery rhymes. This improves their language skills and their ability to cooperate and take turns. By the time they enter Year 1, they have made good progress, although their attainment is still below average.
- Good rates of progress continue in Years 1 and 2 with inspection evidence confirming that standards in both year groups are currently at least average and improving. This represents good progress from pupils' individual starting points.
- In 2013, higher than average levels of pupil mobility across the school in general, and in Year 6 in particular, affected the results of national assessments, with pupils joining classes from other schools. Standards in reading were above average, in mathematics they were average, and in writing, standards were below average. Nevertheless, scrutiny of the results confirmed that all groups of pupils, including the most able, made at least the progress expected of them and, other than in writing, the proportion making better than expected progress was similar to the national picture.
- Current school records of pupils' progress and the work in their books in all year groups show that, as the quality of teaching has improved, the proportion of pupils securely on course to meet and exceed the rates expected of them, has increased.
- Progress in reading is strong across the school because pupils are well taught. The number of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 check of phonics (the linking of letters to sounds) is above average. Older pupils are avid readers and they are happy to share their views on 'best authors' and why they like a certain style of writing.
- The school's emphasis on improving pupils' writing skills is paying dividends. The curriculum now links many of the subjects such as history and geography into themes and pupils are provided with good opportunities to practise their writing skills in these areas. For example, pupils write checklists of equipment they might need on an expedition or a 'persuasive text' which encourages tourists to visit a country.
- Standards reached by pupils supported by pupil premium funding and who were eligible for free school meals in Year in 2013 were below those of their classmates by approximately five terms. School information shows that this gap is closing rapidly and in the current Year 6 class the gap has been reduced to one term in writing and mathematics. In reading, pupils supported by pupil premium funding are outperforming their classmates by approximately one term. Extra support, where needed, has enabled the pupils currently supported by the fund to progress at the same rate, and in many cases, faster than their classmates.
- Pupils who are disabled, those with special educational needs and those who are at an early stage of learning to speak English as an additional language are fully included in all learning activities. This demonstrates the school's commitment to providing equal opportunities for all pupils. As a result, these groups of pupils make good progress and achieve well.

The quality of teaching is good

- Pupils enjoy their lessons and talk in glowing terms about the interesting and exciting activities that the teachers provide for them. 'They make our lessons enjoyable and if we need any help we get it straight away', is typical of the comments made by pupils.
- Work seen in pupils' books and checks on teaching confirm that teaching is good and sometimes outstanding.
- Parents are as pleased with the quality of the teaching their children receive as the pupils themselves. Almost all said teaching was good and a similar proportion of parents said they

would recommend the school to others.

- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, an extensive range of activities ensures that children enjoy, and remain interested in, learning. For example, through re-creating the story of Jack and the Beanstalk, children's speaking skills improved as they repeated words and phrases that they knew from the story. Most were able to use them in the right context.
- When learning is at its best across the school, pupils of all abilities think carefully about the answers they are about to give and they are provided with the chance to reflect on what they have learned previously. For example, in a Year 6 English class, pupils were discussing how they could introduce subordinate clauses into their writing to make it more exciting and informative for the reader. The quality of their discussions and their work improved when they were able to 'upgrade', as they described it, previously written sentences with the help and support of their classmates. 'I learn a lot when we work in this way because we get the chance to share ideas and think again about what we have done before. That's how writers work', was a perceptive comment made by one of the pupils.
- Pupils are given good opportunities to extend their numeracy skills by using and applying these skills in other subjects. As a result, pupils' mathematical understanding increases as does their ability to solve problems.
- When teaching is not so strong, pupils' work and levels of understanding are not always checked well enough to adjust tasks while pupils are working. Consequently, some continue working on tasks which might be too hard or too easy for them; for example, in a Key Stage 1 literacy activity, the most able pupils finished their written work quickly because what they were asked to do was not challenging enough.
- Pupils' work is marked consistently well and regularly by teachers. It is clear from pupils' books that they are told how they can improve their work and homework is used successfully to consolidate what pupils have learned.
- In the main, pupils' learning is well supported by teaching assistants. Occasionally, there are missed opportunities for them to have a direct impact on pupils' learning. This happens when their time is not used well or they are deployed without sufficient thought to the pupils' needs.

The behaviour and safety of pupils is good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Their attitudes to learning are consistently positive and they enjoy their lessons. They are quick to tell visitors that they are proud of their school and how they help to keep it tidy and litter free. As a member of the school council pointed out, 'we are lucky to come to this school because everyone is so friendly'.
- Behaviour observed by inspectors in classrooms and as pupils moved around the school was good. School records show that this is typical of the behaviour found in the school.
- Parents and pupils say that bullying of all types, including when using the Internet, is rare and that any concerns are sorted out quickly. School records also confirm that this is the case.
- Pupils are keen to take on the many responsibilities that are offered. For example, the 'eco team', with the help of the site manager, has constructed a greenhouse made out of re-cycled plastic bottles. This is now used successfully to grow plants that are used in science experiments. Energy use around the school has been reduced due to the regular checks carried out by the pupil 'energy savers' who switch off lights and equipment when they are not needed. Pupils were delighted to announce that their success as an 'eco team' had been recognised by a local newspaper.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Parents agree with their children who say that they feel safe and well supported at school. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and recognise everyday hazards such as the roads they have to cross as they walk to school.
- Pupils enjoy school and this is reflected in the improving levels of attendance which are now average. They benefit from a wide range of after-school clubs, including sports and music. These contribute well to pupils' physical development and general well-being.

The leadership and management is good

- School leaders have correctly identified the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have an accurate picture of how well the school is doing, with the right priorities identified for improvement.
- Well led by the headteacher, there is a school-wide commitment to providing the best opportunities for all pupils and a determination to strive for the highest possible standards. For example, the care and support for groups of pupils at risk of not making as much progress as others is very well managed. This illustrates how well everyone is respected and how discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.
- School leaders and governors have shown a determination to tackle any past underperformance or weaker teaching. They have acted decisively and made changes in staffing where necessary. Performance management systems are rigorous and teachers are held to account for the progress made by pupils in their class. All staff are set high targets and strong performance is rewarded appropriately.
- Middle leaders have a good knowledge of their areas of responsibility, but do not have a detailed enough grasp of whole-school priorities or trends in the school's performance. Consequently, they have limited impact and influence on these wider initiatives, such as those aimed at improving pupils' achievements across the school.
- The curriculum covers a wide range of subjects with strong links between many of them arranged into themes or topics. For example, in some year groups, the half-termly topic is based on a novel enabling pupils to practise their literacy skills in a wide range of subjects. Pupils say how much they enjoy working in this way. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also promoted strongly across all of the subjects.
- Arrangements for safeguarding meet all requirements. Records are carefully maintained and first-aid and child protection arrangements are regularly updated.
- The primary school sport funding has been used creatively to provide high-quality provision for pupils in physical education. In addition it has been well used to support training for teachers in how to teach lessons effectively in this subject. An external consultant teaches a physical education lesson each week in all the classes, working alongside the class teacher and teaching assistants. This has helped increase pupils' participation in a range of sports and a pupil commented that, 'I really enjoy these lessons, I've learned a lot but I'm always exhausted when we finish'. The school's use of the funding is contributing successfully to developing better physical well-being for pupils.
- The local authority provides the school with good support for the teaching of writing. Pupils' standards in writing are showing good improvement since the start of this school year.
- Staff and parent questionnaire responses show clearly that parents and staff think highly of the leadership and management of the school. In particular, they value the hard work, commitment and approachability of the headteacher.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The school has a very good governing body which is well led and highly committed to the school. It provided the school with the necessary stability during the recent staff and leadership changes. Governors regularly check teachers' performance and pupils' achievement, paying particular attention to the progress made by pupils eligible for pupil premium funding. They are able to point to the improving performance of pupils who fall within this category and the decisive action taken by leaders when there are dips in performance, for example, the way in which they strengthened the staffing in Key Stage 2 to address concerns over standards in writing. Governors ensure that there is a strong link between teachers' performance and pay progression. They are fully aware of the school's priorities and check for themselves how well the school is doing. They recruit people to the governing body who can contribute key skills and encourage them to seek further training. Governors have helped to identify the correct priorities for improvement and work well with school leaders to ensure that these are delivered in practice. School finances are managed efficiently and all legal requirements are met.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	104934
Local authority	Sefton
Inspection number	444018

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	238
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Joyce Kavanagh
Headteacher	Martin Murphy
Date of previous school inspection	13 October 2009
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