

St Werburgh's and St Columba's Catholic Primary School

Lightfoot Street, Hoole, Chester, Cheshire, CH2 3AD

Inspection dates 3–4 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Teaching is good. As a result, pupils make good progress in lessons and achieve well over time.
- By the end of Year 6, attainment in both mathematics and English is above average. Pupils' progress from their various starting points is good in both English and mathematics.
- Children make good progress in the early years as a result of good teaching.
- Carefully-tailored support for pupils with special educational needs and those deemed to be disadvantaged enables them to make good progress and to participate fully in activities.
- Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils have excellent attitudes towards their learning, enjoy coming to school and have very good relationships with each other and with adults. They feel safe in school.
- Leadership and management are good. The headteacher, strongly supported by the assistant headteacher and governors, provides clear direction. Senior leaders, including governors have a good understanding of what needs to be done to improve the school further.
- The good promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development enables pupils to thrive in a very supportive and inclusive learning community. Pupils have frequent opportunities to pursue a variety of interests through the taught curriculum and a wide variety of opportunities to extend their learning beyond the classroom.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not outstanding. Work is not always set at the right level so that some pupils, particularly those of middle ability, do not always achieve their full potential.
- Pupils are not always given good guidance about how to improve their work, particularly the accuracy of their spelling.
- Pupils do not always have enough opportunity to practise and develop their mathematical and literacy skills across the wider curriculum.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning and made short visits to other activities led by teachers and trained assistants. The majority of these observations were carried out jointly with either the headteacher or the assistant headteacher.
- Two groups of pupils met with inspectors and inspectors also talked to a number of pupils in lessons and around the school. Discussions were also held with staff, including senior leaders and the learning mentor. Meetings were conducted with the vice-chair and members of the governing body and with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 62 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). They also took account of the 17 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work with senior leaders and read a range of documents. These included documents about the school's strategies to enable leaders to gain an accurate view of its performance, school improvement plans, data on pupils' current progress, policies and records on safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Judith Tolley, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Diane Pye	Additional Inspector
Terry Bond	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those supported by the pupil premium, is well below average. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is below average.
- The great majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds, with small proportions coming from minority ethnic backgrounds or who speak English as an additional language.
- The school meets 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.
- The school has several awards, including the National Sing-Up platinum award, Arts Mark and the ECO silver award in recognition of its work in protecting the environment.
- Children attend the early years provision on a full-time basis.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and so raise standards further by:
 - ensuring that work is always set at the right level so that all pupils, including those of middle ability, are challenged effectively
 - making sure that pupils are always given good guidance about how to improve their work, especially the accuracy of their spelling
 - ensuring all pupils have frequent opportunities to practise and develop their basic skills of writing and mathematics across the wider curriculum, in subjects in addition to English and mathematics
 - making sure that the reading skills of middle and higher-ability pupils are developed to the full in Key Stage 2.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, strongly supported by the assistant headteacher, provides very clear direction and has acted swiftly and decisively to improve the quality of teaching and learning, in response to the dip in achievement in 2014. As a result, there has been an improvement in the standards pupils reach and the progress they make in writing and mathematics. The school has good capacity to improve further.
- The senior leaders have regular and rigorous monitoring procedures to check on pupils' progress, identify any underachievement and trigger appropriate interventions. They are also effective in holding teachers to account and identifying training needs.
- The senior leadership team has an accurate view of the school's performance and what can be improved further. Clear plans are in place to achieve this. The emphasis upon training for teachers and frequent opportunities for them to plan together and share best practice have been important factors in securing recent improvements in teaching and learning.
- Pupil premium funding is used to good effect to support disadvantaged pupils. As a result, gaps in the performance of disadvantaged pupils have closed in reading and writing and are closing rapidly in mathematics. Similarly, sports funding is used to good effect both to provide specialist coaching for pupils and to improve the quality of teaching in physical education across the school. This has also led to increased participation rates in extra-curricular and sports activities across the school.
- Subject leaders are involved in the school's self-evaluation and school improvement planning procedures. However, a few have not fully developed their roles, for instance, in monitoring teaching and learning in their subjects.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced, meets pupils' needs and aspirations well and prepares them well for citizenship in modern Britain through themed days and the projects they study in geography and history. For instance, pupils in Years 3 and 4 were discussing the main reasons tourists visit Chester and in doing so weighed up the good transport links and the historical heritage of the city.
- Pupils benefit from specialist teaching in mathematics, physical education, music and French. They also take part in regular trips and visits, which extend their learning outside the classroom. Pupils additionally benefit from specialist teaching in mathematics and science through links with the high school.
- The school provides excellent support for pupils who may be vulnerable, or have disabilities or special educational needs, through its nurture facility and through the work of the learning mentor. Significant successes in improving the progress these pupils make are evident. The school is committed to equality of opportunity for all and actively tackles discrimination of any kind. The work of the learning mentor and special educational needs staff in removing barriers to learning through the nurture programme and is valued by parents. It has proved to be very successful in helping individuals to achieve their potential. Pupils themselves have excellent relationships and realise the value of this.
- Safeguarding procedures are robust and meet government requirements. The school is diligent in ensuring pupils are safe. Staff and notably the learning mentor, work very effectively with outside agencies to ensure that this is the case.
- The school is working closely with parents and actively encourages them to be involved in the school's work and their children's learning through, for instance, open afternoons across the school.
- The school works closely with families whose children do not attend regularly enough. As a result, persistent absence has decreased and attendance and punctuality have improved.
- The local authority provides light touch support for this good school. The school buys in support to review its performance. This has had a positive impact upon the quality of teaching and learning.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is effective and has a very good understanding of the school's strengths and areas which need to be improved. Governors regularly check the school's performance, including data that show pupils' attainment and progress. They have recruited members with a good range of experience and expertise.
 - Governors talk confidently about how the school is narrowing gaps in the performance of different groups of pupils through successful interventions. They have a clear understanding of the quality of teaching and the performance of staff, including how good performance is rewarded and any underperformance is tackled. The efficiency of spending is scrutinised, including the effectiveness of the use of the primary sports and pupil premium funding.
 - Governors are actively involved in the life of the school and have strong, positive relationships with

senior leaders built on mutual respect and trust. As a result, through open and honest challenge and support, the governing body holds leaders very effectively to account.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. They arrive at lessons promptly and get on with their work willingly and demonstrate a thirst for learning.
- Expectations of pupils' behaviour are high. Pupils show consistently excellent attitudes to learning which create in them a very strong desire to do outstandingly well and produce their best.
- Low-level disruption is extremely rare. Pupils behave extremely sensibly during the changeover of lessons and during lunch and break times. They are very considerate of each other and adults and establish highly-positive relationships. They are very polite and respectful and clearly enjoy their time in school.
- Pupils play a full part in decision making in the school and take their responsibilities, for instance, as school councillors, very seriously.
- Staff, pupils and parents have a very high opinion of behaviour and how positively this contributes to pupils' learning and enjoyment. Bullying or any form of discrimination is very rare and vigorously discouraged. On the rare occasions when it does happen, pupils are confident that it is dealt with swiftly and effectively. Pupils themselves say that poor behaviour is very rare and is usually because pupils occasionally get 'over-excited'.
- Pupils with special educational needs or who are vulnerable receive excellent care and support from staff within the school to make good or better progress.
- Attendance is average. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils has improved over the last year, as a result of the school's working closely with parents and through the support of the learning mentor.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- The school is meticulous in its efforts to keep pupils safe, identifies any risks and, as a result, prevents any harm. The school has highly successful systems in place to ensure that all aspects of safety are rigorously maintained. All leaders are diligent about safeguarding procedures and keeping pupils safe.
- The school works closely with other agencies to ensure that pupils are safe and supported very well.
- The pupils have a very good understanding of how to stay safe and of potential risks. They know how to protect themselves against these, including when using the internet.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching over time is typically good across the school and leads to good progress. There are examples of outstanding teaching, but this is not consistent across the school.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work well together and ask pupils searching questions, to see how much they have understood and to extend their learning.
- Teachers use effective strategies to engage pupils' interest and pupils usually respond with enthusiasm. For example, Years 5 and 6 were very keen to write a speech prophesying a year-long drought and its consequences and to write diary entries to explain how they might feel. They wrote with enthusiasm and imagination, as a result of the imaginative use of drama which enabled them to empathise with people from the Mayan culture being faced with this predicament.
- Year 1 pupils were rapidly able to apply alternative sounds for themselves to decode words with similar spellings, as a result of clear demonstrations and a series of well-sequenced activities. Similarly, Year 4 pupils made rapid progress in calculating area, as a result of very effective questioning and the opportunity to work together to find solutions to challenging problems.
- However, the progress of pupils of middle ability sometimes slows because, on occasions, they find the tasks they are set too easy and do not always have the opportunity to attempt more challenging work.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly and there are examples of outstanding practice. Where this is the case information about pupils' progress determines the next steps for individual pupils and this is taken into account in lesson planning. Pupils maintain a dialogue with teachers about what they need to do next and are given extra challenges to complete. However, marking and advice are not always to this high standard. Pupils do not always receive the specific guidance they need to help them improve their work,

particularly the accuracy of their spelling. This is particularly evident in subjects other than English.

- The teaching of reading is effective and children enjoy their reading. Most read fluently and with understanding and are able to explain in detail what they have read and make inferences. However, opportunities are missed to develop their reading skills to the full in guided reading lessons in Key Stage 2.
- The impact of teaching on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have frequent opportunities to reflect, to empathise with others and to increase their understanding of cultures and faiths other than their own.

The achievement of pupils is good

- The proportion of pupils making and exceeding the progress expected of them from their starting points compares favourably with national figures. Most children enter Year 1 with skills and knowledge above those typical for their age and are confident learners, well prepared for the Key Stage 1 curriculum.
- Overall, pupils make good progress from their individual starting points. By the end of Year 6, standards over time in mathematics, reading and writing have been above average. After a slight dip in 2014, standards in mathematics and writing have improved rapidly and are now, once again, above average.
- Work seen during the inspection indicates that standards in reading, writing and mathematics have risen over the last year and the rate of pupils' progress has also increased, so that the proportion of pupils making more than the progress expected of them has also increased. A higher proportion of pupils are now on track to make good progress in relation to their starting points than was the case in 2014.
- The most able pupils usually make good progress from their starting points in mathematics, reading and writing, with some reaching the highest levels by the end of Year 6. However, pupils of middle ability are not always sufficiently challenged. Too often they do not have the opportunity to attempt the higher level of challenge provided for the most able.
- Pupils write effectively for a variety of purposes and audiences and use a good range of vocabulary and structures. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 for instance, write with flair and panache and clearly enjoy using the wide range of vocabulary they possess. However, inaccuracies in spelling sometimes mar their work.
- Progress in reading is good. Pupils are taught phonics (letters and the sounds they make) effectively and apply their knowledge in reading and writing. Guided reading sessions in Key Stage 2, led by teachers and teaching assistants, are effective in developing pupils' reading skills but the progress of middle and higher-ability pupils, when working independently of the teacher, is slowed because tasks set for them are sometimes not clear enough.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make the same good progress as their peers, as a result of the extra help they are given, according to need, both in class and in groups. Teaching assistants usually provide sensitive and effective support, enabling these pupils to participate successfully in whole-class activities.
- The extra support the school provides, such as extra help in the classroom, support from teaching assistants and from the learning mentor enables disadvantaged pupils to reach their targets and to make the same good progress as their peers. Gaps between the attainment of these pupils in English and their classmates have closed and in mathematics, they are closing rapidly. They reach the same standards as other pupils in the school and higher standards by approximately two terms than non-disadvantaged pupils nationally. Disadvantaged pupils make at least as good progress as non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

The early years provision is good

- Children make good progress and achieve well in the Reception classes as a result of consistently good teaching. Most children start in the early years with skills and knowledge broadly typical for their age, but some begin with skills that are low, especially in their communication and language. Most achieve good levels of development in all areas of learning during their time in the early years. They begin Year 1 as confident learners, well prepared for the Key Stage 1 curriculum.
- As a result of very well established routines, children settle in quickly and behave exceptionally well. They clearly enjoy the activities planned for them, take turns and learn and play well together. They know how to stay safe and listen carefully and help one another. When playing together they display high levels of interest and concentration and talk to each other about their activities.
- Children make particularly good progress in developing their speaking, reading, writing, mathematical skills as well as their personal and social skills. They are keen to talk about their learning. Children are confident using numbers and simple reading and writing skills in their play, for example, in sorting objects

into sets according to colour and size and working out simple addition and subtraction. They write notes and labels and short sentences and take pride in their writing.

- The provision is very well led and managed. Good teaching and learning and a high level of consistency, together with good safety procedures, are all promoted successfully. Adults work together very effectively to ensure all children are able to make good progress. They monitor individual progress on a daily basis and use this information effectively to plan next steps for children's learning.
- Activities led by teachers and teaching assistants are well planned and designed to excite and interest children. Adults take every opportunity to engage children in conversation to extend their learning and to consolidate their mathematical, reading and writing skills and children respond enthusiastically. As a result, they make rapid progress in developing their language and communication skills. The outside area is used effectively with well-planned activities, which ignite children's interest and enable them to make the next steps in their learning. However, because there is no covered area, outside activities are restricted during poor weather.

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	111384
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	461919

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	317
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Russell Cooke
Headteacher	Kathryn Oates
Date of previous school inspection	24 April 2012
Telephone number	01244 981228
Fax number	No longer in use
Email address	admin@stwerburghscolumba.cheshire.sch.uk

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