

St Wulstan's Catholic Primary School

Elmfield Walk, Stagborough Way, Stourport-on-Severn, DY13 8TX

Inspection dates 5–6 December 2013

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.

- The school is well-led. The headteacher provides good and caring leadership and is ably supported by the senior leadership team and a dedicated team of staff and governors.
- The school has a good understanding of its own performance and has identified the right priorities for further improvement.
- Leaders' and governors' actions have successfully focused on improving the quality of teaching and increasing the rate at which pupils make progress.
- Teaching is good throughout the school and teachers are successful in engaging pupils' interest and helping them to make good progress in their work.
- Achievement in reading, writing and mathematics is good throughout the school.
- Attendance is above the national average. Pupils enjoy coming to school and rightly feel safe there.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning, participate well in lessons and behave well around the school. This is a happy school and pupils are treated with respect and as individuals in an atmosphere of care and support.
- The governing body is well informed and provides a good level of challenge for the school's leaders.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There are not always enough opportunities for pupils to practise their basic mathematical skills across different subjects.
- On a few occasions, pupils who show that they can do the work are not moved on quickly enough to more difficult tasks.
- Teachers do not encourage pupils to carry out enquiries and work on their own.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 19 lessons or parts of lessons and saw all classes in operation. Three of these observations were shared with the headteacher.
- The inspectors observed morning playtime, lunchtime activities and attended an assembly.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including: the school's data on pupils' current progress, leaders' reports on lesson observations, the school's improvement plan, planning and monitoring documents, documents relating to safeguarding, and records relating to behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors looked at the work in pupils' books and also scrutinised a range of their work elsewhere.
- Discussions were held with pupils and an inspector listened to them read.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, governors, senior and other managers and staff. In addition, the inspectors talked with a representative from the local authority.
- The views of 44 parents who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View) were taken into account, as well as those gathered through discussions with parents.
- The inspectors also received and considered the views of 17 staff who completed questionnaires.

Inspection team

Sarah Somers, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jennifer Cutler

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average size for a primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (which provides additional funding for pupils in local authority care, those known to be eligible for free school meals and others) is below average.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion of such pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- All classes are single age.
- The school meets current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the amount of outstanding teaching by:
 - ensuring that pupils of all abilities are moved on in their learning once they have demonstrated their understanding of what has been taught
 - providing pupils with more opportunities to carry out enquiries and find out things for themselves
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to apply their basic skills in mathematics to solve problems in a variety of contexts across the curriculum.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children's skills and understanding on entry to Reception are usually slightly below those typical for their age. This is particularly so in language and mathematic skills. Children make good progress from their starting points in all areas of learning because adults provide interesting activities and help children to learn and develop new skills. By the end of the Reception Year in 2013, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development was above the national average.
- Pupils continue to achieve well through Key Stage 1. Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2 is consistently above average. Lesson observations and school records show pupils make good progress from their starting points on entry to Year 1.
- Pupils achieved levels well above the national average in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 in 2013. (Phonics is how the sounds in words relate to the letters used to write them.) Older pupils read with fluency, accuracy and expression. They are confident readers and have good background knowledge of a range of books.
- In 2013, at the end of Year 6, attainment in reading and writing was above average. Pupils' attainment in mathematics in 2013 was broadly average. A few pupils did not make expected progress in mathematics. However, most of the pupils in the year group made good progress and a higher number than nationally exceeded the expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school's information about how well pupils are doing shows that current Year 6 pupils are on course to achieve above average standards in the national tests in all areas.
- In 2013, the proportion attaining the higher Level 5 in national tests for Year 6 was average in reading and mathematics and above the national average in writing. Some pupils were entered for the even more challenging Level 6 tests at the end of Key Stage 2. The proportion of pupils attaining this level was above the national average in writing and mathematics.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is usually good because they receive good teaching and support. The school is effective in ensuring equality of opportunity for all pupils in their learning. Pupils work hard and are keen to do well, have positive attitudes to learning and as a result, they make good progress.
- Additional staff and experiences for pupils supported by the pupil premium help them to make good progress from their starting points. In the 2013 Year 6 national tests, the attainment of eligible pupils was about a term behind in mathematics and two terms behind in reading and writing. This shortfall is less than that found nationally, and the gap is closing substantially throughout the school.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good across the school. Good teaching leads to good progress throughout the school for all groups of pupils. This was reflected in the quality of learning observed in lessons and confirmed by the work in pupils' books. Examples of outstanding teaching were also seen. Effective monitoring has improved teaching and learning.

- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Children receive an effective introduction to school and develop their personal, social and emotional skills well. They are offered a good balance between activities which they choose for themselves, and those which are guided by an adult. Lessons are well resourced, and good use is made of outdoor facilities.
- Teachers plan lessons and subjects with imaginative activities that are exciting and which interest the pupils. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils had read the story of The Tale of Peter Rabbit. They used their learning about similes to write sentences to persuade Peter Rabbit to enter the garden and eat the vegetables. Pupils were enthused by this activity and fully engaged throughout the lesson.
- Teachers use the information that they collect about pupils' learning to plan activities that are usually pitched at the right level for pupils' different abilities in lessons. Occasionally, teachers do not always change tasks quickly enough or move pupils on when pupils find the task to be too easy, or they have already demonstrated their understanding of the work.
- Teachers ask pupils carefully chosen questions to keep them engaged in each lesson to consolidate learning and to challenge their thinking by encouraging them to explain their reasoning.
- There is frequent, thoughtful discussion between pupils and between pupils and adults. In a Year 3 lesson, pupils were writing poems about the wind and worked collaboratively to perform their poems to the class. Pupils were encouraged to discuss their learning and this increased their understanding.
- The teaching of disabled pupils and those identified with special educational needs is good. They are well supported and tasks are matched to their particular needs. Teaching assistants make important contributions to pupils' good progress, sometimes teaching small groups and providing support for individuals. Close liaison with the class teachers gives assistants a clear understanding of what is expected of them.
- Pupils present their work well showing pride in their achievements. Marking across the school is regular and positive. Teachers mark pupils' work accurately and their feedback helps pupils to understand what they need to do to improve. They are given good opportunities to act upon teachers' comments and correct their work.
- Pupils develop their literacy skills effectively across a wide range of subjects. However, they have fewer opportunities to practise their basic numeracy skills in other subjects in the curriculum.
- On occasions, teachers do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to carry out enquiries and acquire new skills through finding things out for themselves.
- The learning environment is of a high quality in classrooms, corridors and main areas. Displays are interactive, colourful and highly informative.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour seen in lessons was good and in some lessons it was outstanding. Occasionally, there is a little inattentiveness when pupils are not moved forward in their learning quickly enough. Pupils behave well in all areas of the school.

- The school's warm, supportive and respectful atmosphere is promoted by staff who know the pupils well. Pupils are keen to learn. They understand the school's behaviour management system and are delighted to receive rewards for their achievements and their behaviour. As a result, their self-esteem, confidence and self-discipline are very well nurtured.
- Pupils take full advantage of the many opportunities provided for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Themed weeks across the school, such as the topic on India, promote pupils' cultural development well and there are links with other schools to learn about a range of faiths. At lunchtimes, older pupils undertake physical activities with younger pupils in their roles as 'Jumping Jaxx' play leaders, and listen to younger pupils read. As a result, many good friendships are formed across the year groups.
- A few parents who replied to the questionnaire suggested that there may be some sort of bullying, but parents who spoke to the inspectors did not feel that this is an issue. Pupils have a good understanding of different kinds of bullying, including cyber-bullying and say it is rare in school. When it does happen, they are very confident that the school will deal with it effectively.
- Pupils are punctual to school. The school has focused on improving attendance with pupils and parents, and it is above average.
- Nearly all parents who responded agreed that their children are happy and feel safe at school.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and senior leaders have led the school well so that the good overall effectiveness reported at the time of the school's previous inspection has been maintained. High expectations of the school's performance are seen in the school's self-evaluation and clear priorities for improvement.
- Leaders constantly check how well the school is doing. Consequently, they have an accurate view of its strengths, and a clear understanding of the priorities for improvement and the actions needed to resolve them.
- Leaders have an accurate view of teaching because they visit lessons frequently and go through pupils' books regularly to check the quality of work. In their meetings with class teachers, they discuss pupils' progress and ask how well different groups of pupils are doing.
- Staff fully support the headteacher's aims for the school. It was evident from the overwhelmingly positive staff responses from returned questionnaires that they are proud to be part of the school. The inspection evidence fully confirms the comment from a member of staff, 'The school is a happy and hard working environment where children enjoy their learning and staff feel proud to be part of the community.'
- Through a range of training opportunities provided by senior leaders, subject leaders are developing their skills to monitor teachers' planning and pupils' progress effectively by checking planning, assessment, lessons and work in pupils' books.
- Staff have clear performance management targets to bring about improvement. There is a suitable link between teachers' pay and the quality of their teaching and the learning by pupils.
- The curriculum is varied and interesting and provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils have access to a wide range of additional activities, events, trips

and residential visits. The school's curriculum places a strong emphasis on developing pupils' skills in English and mathematics. However, teachers do not always make enough use of opportunities in other subjects for pupils to use and apply their basic skills in mathematics.

- School leaders and governors are using the new sports funding provided by the government to improve opportunities for sports development for the pupils. The school is employing specialist physical education teachers and qualified sports coaches to work with the pupils and to provide training opportunities for staff. It is too early to judge the impact that this has had on the pupils.
- , The school makes full and effective use of the money derived from the pupil premium to support frequent small-group and one-to-one work. This work is fully supported and monitored by the governing body and helps to ensure that eligible pupils make good progress.
- The school has a number of effective partnerships. There are strong links with the local church, the Diocese and local community. Membership of the catholic cluster of schools provides training opportunities, shared resources and expertise, and contributes to improvements across the schools.
- The local authority has taken an effective light-touch approach in recent years to its support for the school. This is because it has confidence in leaders to make the right choices about how to move the school forward.

■ **The governance of the school:**

Governors are well informed and have a good range of experience and expertise. They provide an effective level of support and challenge for the school. They have a good understanding of data which indicate how well the school is doing in comparison with other schools. There are clear procedures for holding the staff to account for the quality of education provided and standards achieved. Governors receive regular reports and information about the quality of teaching and ensure that suitable actions are taken to improve it. Governors have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities .They contribute to the school's self-evaluation processes and keep a close check on the progress made in dealing with issues outlined in the school's development plan. They ensure that the school meets its statutory duties, especially those relating to the safeguarding of pupils. They have ensured that spending is effective, including the use of pupil premium funding.

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	116915
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	427088

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	199
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Patrick Kennedy
Headteacher	Barbara Boffey
Date of previous school inspection	6 November 2008
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