

St Oswald's Catholic Primary School

Council Avenue, Ashton-in-Makerfield, Wigan, Lancashire, , WN4 9AZ

Inspection dates 12–13 June 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Children get off to a very good start with their learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Teaching is consistently good and some is outstanding. As a result, almost all pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics, albeit better in Key Stage 1 than in Key Stage 2.
- Over recent years, attainment in English and mathematics has been well above the national average.
- This is a very inclusive school where every pupil is equally valued and cared for well. Pupils say they feel very safe in school and parents overwhelmingly support this view.
- The behaviour of pupils and their attitudes to learning are often exemplary.
- Pupils are very polite and well mannered.
- Attendance is above the national average and has continued to improve over recent years.
- The curriculum provides pupils with an interesting range of subjects and topics that ensures that they enjoy school. This contributes very effectively to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and prepares them well for the next stage of their education.
- The quality of leadership and management from senior leaders and the governing body is good. They demonstrate a successful commitment and determination to raise standards and improve the quality of teaching.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although teaching is consistently good not enough is outstanding.
- Teachers' marking of pupils' work does not always help them to improve. Teachers do not always ensure that pupils respond to their written comments.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop and apply their own ideas more fully.
- The school does not provide enough opportunities for staff to share and benefit from all the practice that characterises the best teaching.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 21 lessons taught by 13 teachers. Four observations were conducted jointly with members of the senior leadership team.
- The inspectors looked closely at the school's work, including the school's analysis of its performance, the improvement plan, documents relating to behaviour and safeguarding, minutes of governing body meetings, the school's data on pupils' progress and work in pupils' books.
- The inspectors met with seven members of the governing body, school staff and had telephone conversations with representatives of the local authority.
- Inspectors held meetings with three groups of pupils and listened to some Key Stage 1 pupils reading.
- The inspectors took account of the 36 responses from parents recorded in the online questionnaire (Parent View), together with the 341 responses to a parental survey carried out by the school in the Spring 2013. Questionnaires completed by 24 members of staff were also taken into account.

Inspection team

Alan Parkinson, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Elisabeth Fenwick	Additional Inspector
Sheila O'Keeffe	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Oswald's is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is well below the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children of service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language are well below national averages.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is broadly in line with the national average. The proportion of those supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school is a member of a Wigan schools' consortia.
- In 2011, the school achieved the Personal Finance Education Group standard and in 2013 achieved the Eco-Schools Green Flag award.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching in order to raise pupils' achievement in English and mathematics further, especially in Key Stage 2, and to increase the proportion of pupils making more than expected progress by:
 - ensuring that the marking of pupils' work by teachers is consistently used to provide clear guidance on what pupils need to do to improve and that teachers' written comments are followed up by pupils
 - providing more opportunities for teachers to learn from the best practice in teaching and so enable all pupils to make rapid progress across all subject areas
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to contribute to their own learning to enable them to develop their independent learning skills.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Although good overall, pupils' achievement is stronger in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1 than in Key Stage 2.
- Over recent years, an increasing proportion of children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and abilities that are below those typically expected for their age, especially in their personal and social development, and communication, language and literacy. However, effective planning ensures that activities and tasks are set that meet the developing needs of the children well. This excellent provision in all areas of learning enables them to make very good progress. By the end of the Reception Year, the vast majority of children have developed skills that are typically expected for their age across all areas of learning, with a few achieving above that level.
- In Key Stage 1, pupils make good progress and their attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is generally significantly above average.
- In Key Stage 2, attainment in both English and mathematics is also significantly above average. Although progress made by pupils in mathematics was not as rapid as in English, the proportion of pupils making expected progress in English and in mathematics was above the national average. The proportion of pupils making more than expected progress in English and mathematics from their varying starting points was not as strong. Current school data shows a similar picture.
- The whole-school reading programme is very effective and is helping to develop pupils' literacy skills well. Pupils say they enjoy reading and read regularly at home and school. This is helping to support pupils' learning across a range of subjects and topics.
- In 2012, the attainment of Year 6 pupils known to be eligible for free school meals was above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Although their attainment was slightly lower than other pupils in the school in reading and mathematics, it was particularly strong in writing. The pupil premium funding is used effectively to provide additional support, such as one-to-one or small-group work to support the development of literacy and numeracy skills, ensuring this group's good overall progress.
- The very few pupils who speak English as an additional language, those from minority ethnic backgrounds, disabled pupils, and those who have special educational needs receive effective additional support to improve their speaking, reading, writing and numeracy skills. This has enabled them to achieve well and sometimes make better progress than their classmates.
- The support given to different groups of pupils shows the school's commitment to offering equality of opportunity to all its pupils and ensures that they achieve well.
- Lesson observations, listening to pupils read and inspectors' checks on pupils' work confirm that currently pupils are making good progress. Parents are accurate in their positive views that their children are receiving a good education.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Pupils say they are well taught and enjoy their lessons. The good relationships between pupils and teachers and between pupils themselves promote positive attitudes to learning. This enables pupils to work well together or to get on sensibly with their work by themselves.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the very good teaching ensures that pupils are actively engaged in their learning and make very good progress. The pupils enjoy what they are doing and are keen to 'have a go'.
- In the best lessons, where sometimes teaching is outstanding, teaching is very well organised and planned. Teachers have high expectations and the pace of learning is good. Teachers' good subject knowledge enables them to explain well and extend pupils' understanding.

- The promotion of pupils reading, writing and mathematical skills across a wide range of subjects is good. For example, in a Year 5 science lesson, some pupils were researching different food types and using their mathematical skills to find the weekly cost of a healthy and varied diet.
- Pupils' work is regularly marked with the majority of written comments using praise to encourage. However, teachers do not always provide pupils with clear and specific written comments on what they need to do to improve. When teachers' comments do tell pupils what they need to do to improve, they do not always ensure that these are followed up by pupils. This means opportunities to take learning even further are missed. This affects pupils' progress in mathematics more than in other subjects.
- Teaching contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through activities, such as school assemblies, links with the local community, school trips and by encouraging cooperation and very effective group working.
- In a small minority of lessons, teachers do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to contribute fully to their own learning by enabling them to develop and apply their own ideas and enabling them to develop their independent learning skills.
- Teaching assistants are used well in lessons, particularly to support lower-ability pupils, disabled students and those who have special educational needs. They help pupils to learn, develop skills and achieve well.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils are very proud of their school. They are extremely polite and well mannered and are very welcoming towards visitors. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is impeccable.
- Pupils display extremely positive attitudes towards school. They are keen to be actively involved in their lessons. Instances of them becoming distracted or distracting others are rare.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the very good range of activities helps pupils to play and learn together extremely well. As a result, their personal, social and emotional development improves rapidly.
- Pupils show exceptionally caring attitudes towards each other. They are fully aware of the different forms of bullying and report that bullying is rare.
- Pupils say they feel very safe in school because the adults look after them well. They also learn about keeping themselves safe. For example, they learn how to swim, how to use the internet safely and about road safety.
- The responses to the Parent View and to the parental survey carried out by the school indicate that the vast majority of parents agree their children are very safe at school, looked after exceptionally well, behave sensibly and are not subject to bullying.
- The school provides many opportunities for pupils to develop as responsible young citizens. For example, the Eco-council has raised pupils' awareness about re-cycling and the school council has suggested improvements to the outdoor play equipment. Pupils also work hard to help others by raising money for charities, such as Children in Need, Red Nose Day, and Wigan and Leigh hospice.
- Effective partnerships with parents and external agencies are a strong feature of the school. Pupils who display any cause for concern are identified early and this ensures that appropriate support is provided. The school's support for pupils whose circumstances make them more vulnerable is very effective.
- Attendance is consistently above the national average and has risen over recent years. Punctuality is excellent.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, senior leaders and the governing body know the school well. They have accurately identified the school's strengths and areas for further development. There is rightly a strong focus on raising standards further, by improving the quality of teaching. Progress towards the goals set to improve the school further is regularly checked by senior leaders and the governing body.
- Regular observations of lessons and systems to check and improve the quality of teaching and learning are good and provide teachers with accurate feedback on their performance. The headteacher uses information about the quality of teaching well when developing the training programme for staff, and when advising the governing body about teachers' promotion and movement up the salary scale. For example, the teaching of phonics has improved, as a result of effective training. However, the school does not provide enough opportunities for teachers to share outstanding practice in teaching to help to enhance their own performance, especially in Key Stage 2.
- The curriculum is well planned and meets pupils' interests. It provides opportunities for pupils to develop a wide range of skills and prepares them well for the next stage of their education.
- The school provides a variety of activities to enrich pupils' experiences, such as the Year 5 visit to Southport to help them with their seaside topic work and the trip to the Imperial War Museum North to help with their Second World War topic. Pupils also learn about life in other countries. For example, the visit from Chinese musicians and the trip to the Chinese Arts Centre.
- The school also offers pupils a wide range of extra-curricular activities. These include activities such as drama, gymnastics, cookery and science. These activities also help them to extend their range of academic and social skills and contribute significantly to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school has benefited from very effective and valuable support from the local authority providing training for governors, and from external consultants to improve the quality of teaching and learning in English and mathematics.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body knows the school well because of the information they receive and from regular visits to the school. Governors regularly check the school's performance, including the quality of teaching. This enables them to effectively challenge and support school leaders at all levels. They understand the connection between the quality of work that staff do and the arrangements for salary increases. The governing body has a good understanding of the school's finances. This includes allocating the pupil premium funding to provide one-to-one support and additional resources to improve the literacy and mathematical skills of those pupils who are eligible for such funding. Safeguarding procedures and policies meet statutory requirements.

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	106488
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	412459

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	349
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ken Stout
Headteacher	Patricia Carter
Date of previous school inspection	24 June 2008
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