

# Much Woolton Catholic Primary School

Watergate Lane, Woolton, Liverpool, Merseyside L25 8QH

<b>Inspection dates</b>	9–10 March 2016
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Leadership at all levels is outstanding. The school is rapidly improving because leaders and governors have tackled previous weaknesses.
- The quality of teaching is consistently good or better. Teachers know their pupils well. They assess pupils work regularly and keep a careful check on the progress they make.
- Outcomes are good and improving. Pupils' achievement in mathematics is outstanding. Progress is good in reading, writing and science and attainment at the end of Year 6 is above average.
- The teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) is excellent and has resulted in a rapid rise in the number of pupils reaching the expected level so that this is now well above average.
- Pupils work hard, listen to their teachers and take pride in their achievements. They enjoy school and their behaviour is excellent. Pupils feel safe and valued. They have a deep understanding of tolerance and equality and look after each other.
- The outstanding curriculum supports pupils' academic, social, emotional and physical development very effectively.
- Children make a very good start to their education in the early years. Children make rapid progress in all areas of development in this safe, stimulating and creative environment.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Overall the progress that pupils make in writing is not yet as strong as the progress they make in reading and mathematics. Boys are making much slower progress than girls in writing.
- Although teaching is good, it is not yet consistently strong enough to ensure that pupils make sustained and significant progress in all subject areas and all year groups.

## Full report

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

- Ensure that an increased proportion of pupils work at, and above, age-related expectations by:
  - improving the quality of teaching in school by sharing the excellent practice that already exists
  - further accelerating pupils' progress in writing, and particularly that of boys.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding

- The headteacher transmits high expectations to staff and pupils alike. His aspirations permeate the school and under his leadership the school has improved rapidly since the previous inspection. He is committed to the process of building the leadership skills of all staff and pupils. He is ably supported by the deputy and assistant headteachers.
- Senior leaders have systematically tackled all previous weaknesses. The teaching of mathematics and the progress of pupils in mathematics is now outstanding. There is good progress in the drive to improve writing and particularly that of boys. For example, there are boys' writing clubs at lunchtimes and booster classes. Boy-friendly topics and working alongside visiting authors have helped to raise the profile and importance of writing, thus increasing progress.
- Middle leaders, appointed since the previous inspection, have played a crucial role in accelerating progress and improving teaching and learning. They are ambitious, have a clear vision for what they want to achieve and are given the time to carefully check on their strategies and measure their impact. They have ensured that there are now regular learning conversations among staff which are transforming teaching and learning. Middle leaders regularly report on the impact of their work to governors. They rigorously evaluate their own actions and can identify which strategies have been the most successful in bringing about improvement, for example practical work in science and mathematics, meeting professional authors in writing, and bringing in grandparents to give living history talks about their experiences of World War II.
- The special needs coordinator has done much to raise the profile of teaching assistants and to develop their professional skills. They have their own performance reviews and increasingly play a crucial role in supporting the learning of specific groups of children.
- The leadership and management of pastoral development and welfare is highly effective. The coordinator for health and well-being supports the physical, mental and emotional well-being of all the children. Pastoral care is central to all aspects of the school's provision. The recent appointment of a learning mentor has further enhanced this aspect of the school's work. The coordinator provides training for other schools across the authority.
- Pupil premium funding is spent on extra hours for teaching staff, booster classes, additional staff training, extra resources and subsidies so that pupils can take part in all extra activities including residential visits. The impact of this is seen in improved attendance for these pupils and improved outcomes. There is no gap in achievement for younger pupils and the gap is narrowing at the end of Year 6.
- The curriculum is highly effective, stimulating and wide-ranging. Displays show the quality of work of pupils in all subject areas. A tour of the school revealed: wonderful poems, photographs of science investigations, studies of ancient Orkney, Spanish vocabulary, impressionist paintings and a Greek murder mystery week display. The curriculum and the ethos of the school support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very effectively. They are well prepared to become active citizens in modern Britain.
- School leaders are passionate about supporting the health and well-being of pupils and use the sports funding very effectively. All pupils have at least two hours' sporting activity every week, all pupils can swim at least 25 metres, and all have the opportunity to take part in outdoor adventure activities and regular exercise. Themed weeks such as 'Olympics', 'walk to school' and 'Healthy week' encourage ever-increasing participation. Pupils have taster sessions in more unusual sports such as fencing, and the opportunity to take part in an annual skiing trip abroad. Staff act as role models and staff sporting success is celebrated alongside that of pupils. As a result over 33% of all pupils exceed age-related expectations in physical education, and most pupils attend several fitness clubs. The school's excellent work in this area was celebrated in 2015 by the award of sports mark gold.
- The school has a strong partnership with parents and works hard to keep them informed about their children's progress. School leaders help parents to understand the new assessment systems, new curriculum developments and the strategies used to support reading and writing as well as keeping them informed about how to keep their children safe online.
- The local authority holds the school in high regard and uses the expertise of leaders here to support other schools. For example, the headteacher mentors newly appointed headteachers.
- The duty of safeguarding is taken very seriously. Adults are well trained in all aspects of child protection, including the duty to guard against any form of extremism. Staff are aware of any pupils with specific medical issues and are vigilant in ensuring that pupils are safe.

## ■ The governance of the school

- Governors are highly competent and clear about their role. They are ambitious for the school to become the best it can. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and what aspects can be further improved, gained from reports, meetings and their own first-hand experience. Governors regularly visit and select random books to check. Pupils are pleased when they see a sticker indicating 'governor checked' on their books. All middle leaders prepare reports on the progress of their areas and future plans for development.
  - Governors provide support and challenge to the school and are rigorous in their examination of pupils' progress, the quality of teaching, the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements and whether the school is spending additional funds effectively. They keep a secure hand on the budget, reward good teaching and effectively tackle any underperformance. The governors have a deep understanding of their local community and have many systems for gaining the views of parents.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teaching has improved rapidly since the previous inspection so that it is now consistently good over time with some outstanding features. Pupils make excellent progress in mathematics, previously a weakness, and there is improved progress in reading and writing. The teaching of science, history and geography is strong.
- On occasions teaching enthralled pupils and is innovative and exciting. For example, mathematics work is often set in the context of storytelling, such as finding a way to the witch's secret potion by cracking the code. Younger pupils enjoy learning about mathematical shapes using food samples. Cakes represent circles, triangles are seen in sandwiches and samosas, and squares in cream crackers.
- The teaching of mathematics is highly effective across the school; 'Every day is a maths day at Much Woolton.' Pupils are taught to see that mathematics is critical to everyday life and to science, technology, finance and employment. The staff aim to inspire a real love of mathematics. The focus is on deepening understanding, not rapid completion of tasks. There is also a strong focus on problem solving and practical mathematics activities. For example, pupils learned about perimeter by measuring the playground and working out relationships from clues on a family tree.
- The teaching of writing is now a focus because the school is aware of the need to accelerate progress in this area, particularly for boys. A wealth of initiatives is already making a difference and improving progress. A visiting author spent time with different classes, helping them to create their own book. Themed weeks are designed to inspire the pupils such as Cluedo murder mystery, creative writing week and The Lonely Robot.
- Teachers put great emphasis on ensuring that pupils edit their work so that it continually improves in accuracy, imagination and effectiveness. They use technology and stimulating resources to bring learning alive and increase pupils' participation and enjoyment. Pupils are well trained to use their word banks and dictionaries as a matter of course.
- Teaching assistants and student teachers very effectively support the learning of less-able and more-able pupils so that groups of pupils receive more specific individual attention to accelerate their progress.
- Teachers' marking is helpful to pupils in guiding their next steps and setting new challenges.
- Teaching is not yet outstanding because some of the excellent practice seen in many lessons is not consistently evident across all year groups and classes. Just occasionally the pace of learning is slow and pupils are less interested.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare is outstanding

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupil's personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are proud of their school and their own contribution to their good progress and learning. The older pupils are in no doubt that the school has improved significantly since the last inspection. They say that lessons are really interesting, teachers listen to them more, and there is more challenge in their work so that they feel a great sense of achievement when they are successful.

- Pupils are well aware of different forms of bullying, including cyber bullying and the hazards associated with inappropriate use of social media. They learn a lot from talks in assembly, including from the NSPCC, and know that prejudice against others because of race, religion or gender is totally unacceptable. Through the personal, social and health curriculum they are well informed about the dangers of drugs, gangs, alcohol and peer pressure.
- Pupils feel entirely safe in school and trust the adults who look after them.
- Older pupils have a strong sense of responsibility and enjoy taking on leadership roles as reading buddies, playground leaders and serving on the school council; 'We always want to be the best, we want to set the standard for the younger ones'.
- Pupils participate in numerous after-school clubs, know how to keep themselves healthy and fit and understand the value of personal relationships.

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Nearly all pupils say they love coming to school and attendance is consistently above average.
- Behaviour in lessons is excellent and at breaks and lunchtimes pupils play well together. The playgrounds are well supervised and play leaders make sure that there is plenty going on to entertain.
- Incidents of poor behaviour are very rare because most pupils enjoy school, respect their teachers and enjoy learning. Most parents agree that behaviour is very well managed in school.
- Pupils are proud of their school environment which is beautifully maintained. There is no litter or graffiti and walls are attractive with some wonderful displays of art work.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

### **are good**

- Attainment at the end of Year 6 is above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils make excellent progress in mathematics and good progress in reading and writing. Girls make faster progress than boys in writing but there is a trend of rapid improvement amongst boys.
- Pupils at the end of Year 2 are reaching above average standards overall and in reading.
- The proportion of pupils who reach the expected standard in the phonics check has increased each year for the last three years and is above average.
- Overall, the progress made by pupils from entry to the school in Reception to exit from the school at the end of Year 6 is good and in some cases outstanding. This is seen in school tracking data and in the work in pupils' books.
- Following the previous inspection the school has changed the way in which mathematics and writing are taught so that there is stimulating, challenging and exciting work in most year groups. Pupils present their written work well and take pride in their books.
- The small proportion of disadvantaged pupils entitled to pupil premium support make faster progress than others in school. The gap in their achievement when compared to that of other pupils in school is small and narrowing. The gap is even smaller between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and others across the country.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability make good progress from their starting points because of carefully targeted intervention and support. Their progress is carefully checked by the special needs coordinator and any issues are discussed with parents and the pupils themselves.
- The very small number of pupils for whom English is an additional language make excellent progress.
- The most-able pupils are being challenged and stretched by much stronger teaching. In the past some did not make the progress of which they were capable in reading and writing but this is rapidly improving.
- Younger pupils read accurately and carefully and older pupils read with enthusiasm and fluency. Pupils support each other's development by a whole range of reading buddy partnerships, Year 2 work with Year 6, Year 4 with Year 1 and Year 5 with Reception children.
- There are many examples of pupils' work across a range of subjects which show good and effective learning, for example an investigation in science on why the moon appears to change shape, and in geography pupils are studying the causes and effects of recent flooding in the city of York.
- In 2015 Year 6 pupils achieved significantly above-average outcomes in the spelling, punctuation and grammar test. These good outcomes and above-average standards, combined with pupils' motivation and commitment, mean that they are very well prepared for the next stage of education.

## Early years provision

is good

- Children enter Reception with skills and abilities that are typical for their age. Over the last three years they have made increasingly improving progress so that in 2015 a slightly above average number reached a good level of development. The school is confident that this upward trend will continue for the current children. This is borne out by inspection evidence.
- Teaching is usually lively and interesting and when this is the case children are motivated and keen learners. Relationships with adults and between children are good. Activities are often based on children's own suggestions and interests, for example, Star Wars films and Egyptian pyramids.
- Phonics teaching is a strength of the school. The proportion of children reaching the expected standard at the end of Year 1 has rapidly increased to above average, partly as a result of the good start children make in Reception.
- Pupils who are identified with learning difficulties are supported effectively with the involvement of outside agencies where necessary.
- Adults regularly check children's learning and progress, although some of the learning journey books do not have many examples of children's work.
- Children behave well. They develop social skills quickly and get along well with each other. They usually share resources and take turns. Most children respond well to adults and show resilience in completing tasks.
- Children are safe. Adults are well trained and vigilant. Transition arrangements for moving up to Year 1 are effective.
- The school works very hard to ensure that parents are well informed through the learning log and there is a wealth of information on the school website. Parents are encouraged to support their children's learning and development and the parents spoken to during the inspection were very positive in their praise of the early year's classes.
- The early years leader has rapidly improved the setting. She has led her team with enthusiasm and energy. She has improved the environment, the quality of teaching and assessment and the outcomes for children. She has good plans to improve the outdoor learning environment and further enhance staff development.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	104636
<b>Local authority</b>	Liverpool
<b>Inspection number</b>	10002224

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	399
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Carol Chapman
<b>Headteacher</b>	Matthew White
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 4286114
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.muchwoolton.co.uk">www.muchwoolton.co.uk</a>
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<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	10–11 December 2013

## Information about this school

- Much Woolton is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The large majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds, with few pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is well below average. The pupil premium supports pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Many new teachers have been appointed since the previous inspection.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes, including two jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors held meetings with a group of Year 6 pupils and spoke to many other pupils informally at break and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors sampled work in pupils' books in all classes and across a range of subjects including English, mathematics, science and topic work in history, geography and design technology.
- The inspectors listened to pupils reading in Year 2 and Year 6.
- Meetings were held with representatives from the governing body, including the chair, senior and middle leaders and the school improvement partner from the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a range of school documents. These included information relating to safeguarding and child protection, attendance and behaviour, development planning, subject planning, tracking information on pupils' progress, performance management systems and procedures for checking on the quality of teaching and learning.
- The views of staff were gained from their responses to the Ofsted questionnaire and from conversations during the inspection.
- Inspectors gained the views of parents from 124 responses to Parent View, the Ofsted online questionnaire, and from meeting parents bringing their children to school and visiting assembly.

## Inspection team

Judith Straw, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Ann-Marie Dimeck	Ofsted Inspector
John Shutt	Ofsted Inspector

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