

# St Oswalds Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	111369
<b>Local Authority</b>	Warrington
<b>Inspection number</b>	325362
<b>Inspection date</b>	22 June 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Colin Smith

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<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 on roll</b>	
School (total)	210
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Rev Fr C Canning
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Helen Lennon
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	23 January 2006
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Padgate Lane Padgate Warrington Cheshire WA1 3LB

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection date</b>	22 June 2009
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**Telephone number**  
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

The following issues were investigated: pupils' achievement; the quality of teaching and learning; and the extent to which leaders check the work of the school to raise standards. Evidence was collected from assessment data, observation of lessons, pupils' work, discussions with staff, governors and pupils, and a scrutiny of school documents and questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

The school is average in size and pupil numbers are growing. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well below average, although the school serves a mixed community. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. A very small number are of mixed backgrounds of which an even smaller number speak English as an additional language. Early Years Foundation Stage provision is made for children aged from 4 to 5. There is a pre-school on site, which is run by a private provider and did not form part of this inspection. The school has gained the Healthy Schools award, Sports Activemark, Investors in People, The Basic Skills Quality Mark and the Leading Parent Partnership Award.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

St Oswald's is a good school with outstanding features. Following the previous inspection, when the school was judged outstanding, standards and achievement initially declined. The school took decisive action to reverse the trend. Standards are now rising again, helping to restore the school to its former position. This illustrates that the school has a good capacity for improvement.

Some aspects of the school's work have remained outstanding throughout, such as the excellent care, guidance and pastoral support provided and the high quality curriculum, which generates enthusiasm and enjoyment in learning. Expectations are high. The atmosphere is vibrant. Pupils are highly focused, interested and take pride in their work. They feel special because they are treated as individuals and very secure because all of the required safeguarding procedures are fully in place. Vulnerable pupils are quickly identified and extremely well supported. Excellent relationships with parents and health professionals ensure that any barriers to learning are largely overcome. Pupils' personal development continues to be outstanding. Their spiritual, moral and social development, behaviour, attendance and appreciation of safe and healthy lifestyles are all exemplary, though their awareness of cultural diversity is not as strongly developed. Pupils are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education. Parents are highly satisfied with the education provided. Comments such as, 'My child is thriving, personally and academically', typify parents' views.

Pupils' achievement is good overall. When children enter school their attainment is typical for the age. Assessments and results at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 were above average in English, mathematics and science in 2008. Current Year 6 pupils are working at significantly higher levels because standards are rising. Pupils who experience difficulty in learning have traditionally achieved well because the work provided is sensitively adapted to their needs, and effective teaching assistants break their learning down into manageable steps. The headteacher rightly identified the need to improve the achievement of more able pupils. More challenging targets have been set and pupils' progress is tracked to ensure they achieve them. This has been a significant factor in the increasing number of more able pupils reaching the high levels of which they are capable. Pupils' progress in writing was also identified as a weaker area. Much has been done to make writing more stimulating, interesting and purposeful. Attention focused on the performance of girls in mathematics is also paying dividends. As a result, achievement and standards in these and other subjects are improving.

The quality of teaching is good overall, although stronger in some classes than others. Teaching is outstanding in Reception. It is also exemplary in Year 6, where pupils are inspired, for example, to write highly imaginative science fiction stories. Pupils are well managed, activities are very well prepared and carefully organised, and the aims of the lesson made explicit. These factors enable pupils to work with good application and give of their best. Teachers are now using assessment more effectively to identify pupils' different levels of understanding and provide activities that challenge the more able ones and support the learning of those who find learning more difficult. Teachers' marking of pupils' writing has become more analytical. This is helping pupils to move forward. However, marking in other subjects, though constructive, is not as diagnostic. Individual targets to help pupils to assess their own learning are not used consistently or sufficiently across the school. There are instances where not all of the pupils are fully engaged or are confused when teachers do not explain the task clearly enough. However, pupils' good

quality work in their books indicates that these are isolated occasions rather than common occurrences.

The quality of leadership and management is good. The headteacher's leadership is particularly good in providing the vision, drive and determination to unite staff in a corporate endeavour to recapture the former high achievement and excellence in all aspects of the school's work. To this end, much greater rigour has been injected into checking the work of the school. Lessons are observed, pupils' books are examined and assessments are carefully analysed to ensure that pupils' progress does not falter and teachers implement the changes agreed as a whole staff. The headteacher drives the process. The information collected leads to an accurate self-evaluation of the school, if a little over optimistic in places, and enables sharply focused action plans to be constructed to bring about the intended improvements. Leaders other than the headteacher are increasingly taking responsibility for their subjects but, as yet, are not able to pinpoint the areas requiring improvement with the same precision as the headteacher. Governors provide good support and are particularly well informed of whole school issues through their links with different classes. The school promotes equality successfully, for example by checking the progress made by different groups of pupils and challenging any form of stereotyping. The school's contribution to community cohesion is satisfactory. Excellent relationships have been established with parents, the church and parish community but the school has not investigated diversity sufficiently to reach out further to involve community groups not represented in the school.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 1**

Children achieve particularly well in the Reception class. Although most children enter Reception with knowledge and skills expected for their age, by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage their attainment is clearly above that expected for their age. Excellent leadership is evident in the high quality of care provided for all children and in the way weaker elements of children's learning are identified and remedied, for example improving boys' achievement in writing. Children settle quickly, behave impeccably and make great strides in their personal development, partly because of the excellent relationship between school and home. Teaching is outstanding. The activities provided are very carefully adapted to match children's interests and different stages of development to ensure that they all learn successfully, inside and outdoors. Stimulating themes capture and nurture children's curiosity. For example, investigating an unusually large egg inspired awe, wonder and a fascination for dinosaurs. Children's learning is very carefully assessed and the information is used purposefully to plan the next round of activities. Teachers and assistants know exactly when to stand back and let children explore and when to intervene to extend their spoken language.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Make more effective and consistent use of individual targets to help pupils to know exactly what they need to do to improve.
- Extend the school's contribution to community cohesion by involving the wider diverse community more fully in the life of the school.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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### Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

<sup>1</sup>Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for your friendly welcome and for answering my questions so politely and helpfully. I thoroughly enjoyed my visit.

You are right to be proud of your school. It is a good one and some things are excellent such as the provision made for young children in the Reception class, the whole school curriculum and the way you are cared for. In return, you behave extremely well and give of your best. I fully agree with you that all children join together as one big happy school family.

I also agree with your comments about the teaching being good and having lots of interesting extra activities to take part in. I believe that this is why you enjoy school. Good teaching and your hard work help you to make good progress and achieve higher than average standards in English, mathematics and science.

School leaders run the school well. They check your learning to ensure that you make good progress. They check what happens in lessons to see if there is anything that can be improved. This is why your school is getting better.

My job is to find out what the school does well and help it to improve further. I have two recommendations.

I have asked your teachers to set individual targets for you to help you to assess your own learning so that you know exactly what you need to do to improve. You can help by trying hard to reach those targets.

Your school has very good links with the local community. I have asked your headteacher to try to include people from the wider community with very different cultural backgrounds from yours. This will help you to understand more about other cultures and enable your school to play a greater part in helping communities to work and live together in harmony.

Best wishes for the future.