

St Giles Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124352
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	359643
Inspection dates	27–28 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Michael Miller

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	190
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Pennington
Headteacher	Anne Green
Date of previous school inspection	7 May 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They visited 18 lessons and eight teachers were seen. Inspectors held meetings with representatives of both the old and new federated governing bodies, teaching and non-teaching staff, and the school council. They attended assemblies, daily registration sessions, looked at pupils' work, and talked with many pupils informally during the inspection. School documents were scrutinised including policies, development planning, self-evaluation reports, monitoring files, curriculum and safeguarding documents. Minutes of governing body meetings were examined, as well as the headteacher's reports to governors, local authority reports on the school and information provided for parents and carers. Inspectors received and analysed questionnaires from 81 parents and carers, 18 members of staff and 96 Key Stage 2 pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- What has been the impact of the school's continued work to improve the attainment and progress of average attaining pupils?
- To what extent have the school's strategies to improve the quality of assessment since the last inspection improved the quality of pupils' learning?
- To what extent have leaders, at all levels, been effective in the implementation of the Improving Schools Programme to raise standards and accelerate pupils' progress throughout the school?
- To what extent is the personal development of the pupils an emerging strength in the way it prepares them for their future lives and well-being?

Information about the school

This is an average sized school. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average, as is the proportion speaking English as an additional language; none is at an early stage of English language acquisition. A below average proportion of pupils is known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is above average; most have either specific learning difficulties, or speech, language and communication needs. A breakfast club is provided for its pupils each school day, during term time. The school has gained a Healthy Schools award. From January 2011, the school has become part of a federation of seven local schools, with a single governing body.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. From their starting points in the Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils make satisfactory progress. Attainment is average by Years 2 and 6. Satisfactory school self-evaluation has recognised that the progress pupils make has not been fast enough, and the proportion of pupils gaining higher levels in national tests has been too low. It has therefore chosen to become involved in the national Improving Schools Programme (ISP). This has proved a positive move which is beginning to raise standards and accelerate pupils' progress. In 2010, the gap between the school and national levels closed. However, the school has yet to establish a consistent track record of success. Nevertheless, improvements are building well from the Reception Year, where good success has been achieved in enabling children to attain beyond the goals expected of them. While this is starting to feed through into Key Stage 1, the full impact has still to be seen in securing above average attainment by the end of Year 2. Consequently, the school's capacity for further improvement is satisfactory. The school has rightly identified the need to improve assessment and the curriculum to sharpen the accuracy of judgements about pupils' attainment and progress and make learning more relevant to their individual needs and interests.

Key to the school's continued improvement is a greater focus on the quality of pupils' learning. Through the ISP, senior leaders are now focused more effectively on learning through their regular observations of lessons. Systems to track and record pupils' progress are now established satisfactorily, with regular reviews six times a year. However, while there is good practice, this assessment information is not used consistently by all teachers to ensure lessons are planned to meet fully the needs of individual pupils. Teachers appreciate that the use of well-targeted questions, to involve pupils more fully and to check and assess their understanding, is not yet established practice in all lessons. Similarly, oral feedback to pupils is usually helpful, but marking does not always give sufficient guidance to remind pupils what they need to do to improve. The school has established the national strategy for assessing pupils' progress in mathematics; this is successful in gradually raising standards. A positive start for English has been made by introducing the strategy for writing, but this remains to be implemented fully for reading. A new science coordinator is now working on launching the strategy for science so that all three areas will be in place for the start of the next academic year. This is an important target which is also reflected in school's own improvement planning.

The school has started a thorough review of its curriculum. It has piloted work which has proved successful in helping pupils make links between subjects; here, effective use of the skills gained in one subject is supporting pupils' learning in others. This is now being extended across all year groups. Where this new curriculum approach was in evidence in lessons seen during the inspection, pupils' learning tended to be more successful because they became involved more actively.

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Pupils have good attitudes to learning. They want to come to school, and this is reflected in the above average attendance rates. Good care and guidance, including pastoral support, underpin well the pupils' personal development. Their positive approaches to learning, and contributions to the school as a community, are set to stand them in good stead for their future lives and education. While pupils' academic attainment is average by Year 6, the strengths in their wider personal qualities show they are developing well as future, young citizens. This is reflected in one of the school's documents about community cohesion where the pupils themselves state, 'We are the pupils of St Giles Catholic Primary School. Our aim is to use our gifts and talents to make our world a better place.'

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and the use of assessment in order to accelerate pupils' progress and raise attainment by:
 - establishing a more consistent approach to the planning for and use of assessment in the classroom, particularly through the use of questioning
 - enhancing the implementation of national assessment strategies already adopted for numeracy by extending these fully to literacy and science for the start of the next academic year
 - ensuring a more consistent approach to the use of written feedback to aid pupils' understanding of what they need to do to improve
 - extend into Key Stage 1 the good practice established in the Reception class in order to continue building on the good progress made there.
- Complete, during the next academic year, the school's programme to remodel its curriculum in order to ensure that:
 - creative, skills based learning becomes increasingly motivating and inspiring for the pupils, and tailored to meet their individual needs.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

The attainment of children on transfer to Year 1 is now rising, but in most years it has been average. In 2010, attainment in national tests and assessments was average for Year 2 and 6 pupils. In lessons observed, most pupils were making satisfactory progress. Where good progress took place, such as in Year 1 and 4 English lessons on creative writing, this resulted from the pupils' more active participation in work to prepare for this writing and the development of ideas through pair and group discussion. Pupils' interest in work was enhanced in Year 2 and 6 mathematics lessons where work and tasks were linked with past and future learning. However, although pupils know they have targets, they are not always clear as to what they are. Pupils have good attitudes to learning, and the very large majority behave well in and out of class. However, when teachers spend too long talking in lessons pupils become more passive and the attention of a few can wane. Staff understand well the needs of those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and pupils who find learning difficult, including those with specific learning difficulties, or speech, language and communication needs. Such groups of pupils make

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satisfactory progress. Planning to meet the needs of these pupils is improving, and their attainment remains comparable with these groups nationally.

Through their questionnaires, and in informal discussions, most pupils confirm they enjoy school and feel safe. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and supported well by the ethos of the school. Pupils stand up for their beliefs, but have an open approach which enables them to make informed choices about their lives and the ways they interact with others. This helps prepare them well for their future lives as they develop their understanding of a multicultural community.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

There is good practice within the school, but there is not yet sufficient consistency in the quality of teaching and assessment. A very small amount of inadequate teaching was seen where weaknesses in planning and pace affected pupils' progress. Pupils are engaged more fully when challenged with questions during lessons and teachers provide written comments on pupils' work which helps them to explain their thinking. However, approaches to questioning and assessing pupils' understanding are not yet established consistently across the school. Where the school's creative approach to the curriculum is established, pupils are enabled to place what they learn in relevant contexts. In a Year 5 art lesson, for example, pupils made good links between the coil pots they were making and their Greek history project; myths and legends learnt in literacy informed their

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designs. The teacher also made important links with future science lessons on materials and their properties. However, such approaches are not yet consistent across the school. This is recognised by staff, who are still involved in a curriculum review to improve ways through which their planning can enrich and enhance pupils' currently satisfactory learning. The experience of other schools in the new federation is aiding the school in exploring its new approach to the curriculum development. In addition, extra-curricular opportunities are good for both arts and sport, and attendance at school clubs is good.

Good care and guidance are underpinned well by pastoral support and good working relationships with the pupils and their families. Good use is made of a range of agencies to support the pupils, particularly those whose circumstances may make them more vulnerable. The breakfast club provides a much appreciated service, meets regulations and makes good use of the school's resources. Arrangements for transition between different schools and phases of education are good. Personal, social and health education promotes well the pupils' personal development.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The school's senior and middle leaders fulfil their roles satisfactorily. They appreciate that pupils' attainment has to be raised beyond the average by the end of Year 6 in order to improve progress and the school's overall effectiveness. The involvement in the ISP programme is ensuring a positive start to achieving this aim and is helping leadership to secure satisfactory ambition and improvement. An example of this is the change in the school's monitoring focus, from teaching to pupils' learning. This is providing the school with a clearer view as to what it needs to do to improve. There remain some gaps in performance between different groups of pupils and their peers nationally. The school's adoption of sharper assessment systems is helping resolve this, and reflects the school's sound approach to ensuring equality of opportunity for all pupils. The safeguarding of children is satisfactory; this was seen first-hand when the school was evacuated very efficiently due to a minor gas leak.

Good governance is reflected in the way the school's previous governing body has worked together with those from other schools in order to amalgamate into a single, federated body. This new body has explored effectively how existing good practice can be shared and implemented. The experience of the pool of governors across the seven schools is being harnessed well. This approach also demonstrates the good partnerships established with other local schools to support the pupils' learning. Records show the previous governing body were involved in producing monitoring reports on the school and such

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activities contributed well to school self-evaluation. The cooperative ways in which the school works with others is also reflected in its positive and successful approach to community cohesion. There is a clear action plan, which is monitored and reviewed to ensure ongoing development; stakeholders, including pupils, are consulted and involved in the school's approach.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

There has been good improvement in the effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage since the last inspection. The determination to improve and reshape provision has resulted in gradually improving outcomes. Children continue to enter the Reception class with attainment broadly meeting national expectations. They make good progress and attainment is currently above average by the time the children transfer to Year 1. While this success is still feeding through into Key Stage 1, good transition arrangements have been established. Close cooperation between Reception and Year 1 and 2 teachers is ensuring a common approach to continued support for those children who may find learning more difficult. Reception staff analyse and assess well the individual needs of the children across all the expected areas of learning. Where assessment highlights potential weaknesses, as with aspects of literacy, these are targeted effectively. In one lesson, writing was developing well. The children had painted their names in bright colours, using large and legible brushstrokes, and were able to point to identify the letters and spell their names phonetically. In other lessons there is a good focus on speaking and listening in response not only to adults but also to each other. This helps underpin their social development. A good approach to the encouragement of children's independence enables them to make helpful choices about their activities.

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Good leadership and management of the Reception Year are ensuring effective planning and assessment. Resources to support learning are varied and used effectively, both indoors and outdoors. The focus on ensuring good provision is reflected not only in children's improving progress and attainment but also in the good attention to their welfare. Although few Reception children use the breakfast club on any regular basis, the good care provided extends to this facility. The very positive views of families with children in Reception is reflected in the comments of one parent who wrote, 'The teachers and staff are highly dedicated and give 100% effort in making sure the children enjoy learning.'

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The responses to the questionnaire reflect the high levels of satisfaction expressed by parents and carers in discussions with inspectors. Through the questionnaires, a few parents and carers indicated some concern about the way the school deals with unacceptable behaviour; others comment about good and improving behaviour. The inspection finds pupils' behaviour and its management to be good, but there are a very few pupils who find it difficult to control their own behaviour consistently throughout the school day. Where appropriate, the school makes good use of the Home-School Record Books to keep parents and carers informed about any issues. The school's own monitoring survey (November 2010) shows most parents and carers find these record books to be an effective and helpful means of communication. A few indicate the school takes insufficient account of their suggestions and concerns; discussions held and records seen during the inspection show the school does take these very seriously, and acts upon them.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Giles Catholic Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 81 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 190 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	40	49	38	47	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	41	51	33	41	4	5	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	37	46	39	48	5	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	40	49	36	44	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	45	56	31	38	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	39	48	37	46	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	30	37	46	57	3	4	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	27	33	47	58	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	39	48	39	48	2	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	25	31	35	43	13	16	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	29	36	39	48	8	10	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	29	36	46	57	3	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	44	54	32	40	3	4	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



31 January 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Giles Catholic Primary School, Stoke-on-Trent, ST10 1ED

We would like to thank you for the open and friendly welcome you gave to us when we visited you recently. We enjoyed talking with you and appreciated the way you talked with us about your work and life at school. Yours is a satisfactory school.

These are the things we found are best about your school.

You receive a good start to your school life in the Reception class.

You enjoy school and your attendance is above average.

You behave well and know how to keep each other safe at school.

The adults at your school take good care of you and look after you well.

You make a good contribution to the school and its wider community.

Your school works well with your parents and carers to help you learn.

We have asked your headteacher and the other teachers to do two main things to help all of you make better progress. First, they will be completing the work they have already started on the ways they assess your work. This is also to help you gain higher standards by the end of Year 6. You will find they ask you even more questions during lessons to check your understanding of your work. When marking your work, they will also give you more regular guidance as to how you can improve. Secondly, you will know that some of your lessons help you to make important links between subjects and use the skills learnt in one subject to support your work in others. We have asked your teachers to plan more experiences like this as we know you enjoy such lessons.

Some of you may remember writing about your aims while at school. These included using your learning to help you as you grow up, being able to make the right choices in life, and doing your best in all the experiences you have. You can help your teachers by ensuring you are successful in those aims. We feel sure you will then achieve another of the targets you set, which is to have happy memories of school.

Yours sincerely

Michael Miller

Lead inspector

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