

St Luke's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123558
Local Authority	Telford and Wrekin
Inspection number	340367
Inspection dates	4–5 October 2010
Reporting inspector	Andrew Stafford

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	125
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jamie Roberts
Headteacher	Bernie Cheshire
Date of previous school inspection	21 January 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 10 lessons, observed five teachers and held meetings with representatives of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at documentation relating to school self-evaluation, the tracking of pupils' progress and the safeguarding of pupils. Inspectors looked at pupils' work, the school development plan and the minutes of meetings of the governing body. They analysed the responses of 33 parent and carer questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the effectiveness of the school in dealing with its priority of raising standards in key subjects and its use of new learning and assessment strategies
- the school's evaluation of changes made in the curriculum and what effect these are having on pupils' independence, learning and attainment
- the effectiveness of senior leaders and middle managers in the school and their contribution to school improvement.

Information about the school

The school is smaller than average. The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage, with an increasing proportion from eastern European and Asian backgrounds, who typically join the school at times other than the usual. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, the majority of whom have moderate learning difficulties, is well above average. A very small minority of pupils have a statement of special educational needs. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is lower than average. The percentage of pupils known to be entitled to free school meals is below average. There have been a number of staffing changes in the last two years, including the appointment of the headteacher in September 2008 and the deputy headteacher in September 2010. The staffing situation is now more stable. Among its many achievements, the school has the Activemark award.

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 and improving school. It has a number of strengths and a secure capacity to sustain improvement. Although many pupils have barriers to learning and there is a high proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities, the school is successful in helping all pupils to achieve satisfactorily and make adequate progress. The school's care, guidance and support of pupils is good, and is sustained by a wonderfully warm ethos, enhanced by an exceptional school environment and the good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. Throughout the school, eye-catching pupils' work, especially in art, is displayed and celebrated. The displays help pupils to have very positive attitudes to their learning, respect each other and their surroundings, and behave well. For example, a pupil commented, 'We are all friends, we are one big family.' Pupils have strong involvement with the local community and the school has recently developed links with other parts of the world. The positive views of the pupils are shared by their parents and carers, who have a high regard for the school, its staff and the headteacher. Typically, one commented: 'St Luke's is a school that nurtures as well as educates. Both my children are thriving and the eldest, who arrived as a shy four-year old, now has the confidence to audition for leading roles in drama and singing.'

The school has successfully addressed weaknesses in mathematics. This is due to the subject leader making a careful analysis and finding that pupils were having too few opportunities to use their skills in problem-solving and investigation. Ensuring that pupils have more planned opportunities for these activities has raised standards in mathematics across the whole school and pupils' attainment is now broadly average. Attainment in reading is generally in line with the national average by the time pupils leave Year 6. Attainment in writing and speaking skills, now broadly average, remains a constant challenge to the school because most pupils start school with low-level skills in these areas. The school monitors, evaluates and refines the strategies it uses to help pupils attain better and make more consistent progress and there are clear signs of improvement. Improving assessment procedures are underpinning teachers' greater understanding of how to accelerate pupils' learning. However, the pupils are not always clear about what they must do to improve their work. They are also not encouraged enough through teachers' questioning to develop their speaking skills by using a wider vocabulary and giving whole-sentence answers.

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. There are a number of strengths, the most important of which is the leadership of the headteacher. She is well supported by the deputy headteacher and a staff notable for its strong teamwork, care for pupils, and pride in the school. The senior leaders monitor and evaluate the work of the school effectively and the staff share the ambition of continual improvement. The teaching is satisfactory overall, with examples of enterprising practice that provides stimulating and exciting learning activities, based on a curriculum that is developing to address the specific

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needs of pupils. This is a school where pupils feel safe from bullying or discrimination. The governing body makes a sound contribution to the school, offering both support for and challenge to leaders.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that recent improvements in pupils' attainment in key subjects are consistently and firmly embedded across the whole school by:
 - encouraging pupils to develop their speaking and vocabulary skills further in order to benefit their writing
 - improving the questioning skills of teachers, so that pupils answer at greater length and more often with whole sentences
 - making sure that teachers, through verbal and written feedback, give pupils a clear understanding of what they must do to improve their work.
- About 40% of the school's whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Many children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills levels below those expected for their age. They make sound progress and achieve satisfactorily, so that, by the end of Year 2, standards for most pupils are broadly in line with national averages. In the 2010 teacher assessments, pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 improved and they reached levels broadly in line with national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. Over the last few years, standards had dipped below average and pupils' progress was uneven. Pupils' writing has proved to be a difficult area for the school to improve, in spite of the introduction of several new strategies. Evidence indicates that the school is at last making headway in improving writing standards, although there is still some way to go. The speaking standards of pupils are linked closely to writing and the school is beginning to develop better ways to encourage improvement. Although it is too soon for this to show full improvement, there are positive signs. Work is marked effectively, but pupils are not always sure as to how they can improve their work, especially their writing. The large number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the pupils with English as an additional language make satisfactory, and in some cases good, progress.

The pupils' behaviour is good. They enjoy school and attend regularly and are cheerful, respectful and polite to adults. Relationships throughout the school are strong. Consequently, the pupils feel safe and are adamant that there is little or no bullying and that they always have an adult to turn to. The pupils are developing an understanding of the many important factors associated with health and fitness, and do their best to put this into practice. They take on responsibilities in the school readily, are eager to help improve things and are keen to make their voice heard through the school council and the regular questionnaires they all complete. The school is regarded as being at the hub of the local Catholic community, with the pupils having considerable involvement in the church and charity fund-raising. The Catholic faith underpins the whole school community and helps to create good spiritual, moral, social and cultural learning for all pupils, whatever

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their faith. The pupils are being prepared satisfactorily for their future lives through links with local secondary schools, nearby museums and community services.

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	3
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	3
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?

Teaching and learning are satisfactory and improving because teachers throughout the school have a very good knowledge of the needs of their pupils, which they use effectively in planning. Classroom management is consistently good, so the pupils understand regular routines and what is expected of them. As a result, classrooms are havens where pupils enjoy learning, have good relationships with each other and adults and respond gladly to teachers' high expectations for their behaviour and attitudes to learning. The pupils respond well to a good pace and imaginative teaching in lessons. Year 6 pupils rose to the challenge to analyse and evaluate an example of text from 'The Wreck of the Zanzibar' as part of their planning for their own writing. The pupils responded to the teacher's questions in complete sentences as part of the learning for writing their version of the story.

Improved assessment and better tracking of pupils' progress and the use of such information by teachers are proving effective in providing better personalised learning for all pupils. Although the staff make regular use of questioning, the questions are often too closed and the teachers accept short, often one-word responses, rather than encouraging lengthier replies with a wider vocabulary range. This leads to pupils' writing often

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reflecting the way they speak. The classroom learning assistants work effectively with the teachers and make a positive contribution to pupils' learning.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and gives the pupils a good range of practical learning opportunities. A wide range of extra-curricular activities and clubs give the pupils good enrichment opportunities. These include gardening skills, a wide range of sporting opportunities, many outside visits, performing arts events at a local secondary school and links to Telford Football Club. Good provision for music, art and religious education strongly supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. English and information and communication technology are used extensively across the curriculum, although the school has rightly prioritised both areas for further development.

The school's work with pupils and their families is good and embedded at all levels. Individual programmes to support learning and personal development are enhanced by a very strong team comprising local medical agencies, community services, the headteacher and family liaison support worker. This team sustains the learning development and well-being of many pupils facing challenging circumstances and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Attendance has improved and is now above average because the school has effective procedures to encourage families with low attending pupils.

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 headteacher offers supportive, caring and clear sighted leadership. In spite of a number of staff changes, she has maintained a strong team of leaders and a dedicated staff. The teachers and support assistants share her desire to offer the best education possible for the pupils and, without exception, they express great pride in belonging to the school community. This pride includes a search for continuous improvement, even though some strategies, such as the efforts to raise writing standards, have yet to have full effect. Most leaders and teachers are involved in closely monitoring teaching and learning and the headteacher is continuously involved in the evaluation of teachers' classroom skills. Governance is satisfactory and the governing body shares the aspirations of the school's leadership. Policies and procedures for safeguarding and child protection are robust, monitored regularly by the governing body and meet current regulations.

In a community often needing support, the school's leadership is exemplary in promoting the learning and well-being of all pupils. A key component of this is the school's consistently good engagement with parents and carers, who greatly value the support and guidance they receive in many ways. This valuing is shown by the good attendance at parents'/carers' evenings and occasions to celebrate children's achievements and

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involvement in Mass during the school day. The school also promotes a satisfactory level of equal opportunities for all pupils, with no discrimination. Community cohesion is being developed well through the school's action plan, drawn up after an audit of its provision. There are many good local links with the church and other schools, through local schools partnerships. Pupils have been involved with charities across the world and are presently linking with a school in Spain as a result of their learning Spanish. The school deploys its staff effectively and uses a good range of resources effectively in order to ensure satisfactory value for money.

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	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
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

Children enter the Reception class with skills below the levels expected for their age, especially in language and speaking skills. They make satisfactory progress in all areas of learning, but despite this, a minority enter Year 1 with skills levels a little below those expected for their age. The teaching is satisfactory overall and instances of good practice were observed during the inspection. The adults have a good awareness of the particular needs of each child. The children enjoy learning because it reflects their needs and they have many opportunities for active participation through a balanced and sometimes exciting curriculum. For example, they went through a wide range of emotions when they were role playing in a doctor's surgery. There was curiosity, then amazement and pleasure as they successfully treated ailments and illnesses. Similarly, there was excitement, awe and delight when children spotted a worm wriggling on the tarmac outside the classroom. It was returned to its habitat when a brave child picked it up and put it on the grass. These experiences resulted in a wide range of excited comments, questions and writing from all of them, showing their growing capacity for learning. The children are happy, well behaved and have good relationships with each other and adults. They feel safe and behave safely.

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The provision is satisfactory. Child-chosen activities are organised in a stimulating and colourful environment, both in the classroom and outside. The children are learning to be independent and make choices. Welfare provision is good, with health, hygiene and well-being actively encouraged. Assessment of children's progress is developing well and reflects an accurate knowledge of their attainment, although some recording in children's achievement books does not give sufficient analysis of progress. Leadership and management are satisfactory and safeguarding is rigorous. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader works effectively with the Key Stage 1 class teacher and learning support assistants. There are good relationships with parents and carers, strengthened by strong induction procedures to the school, open access to story time at the end of the day and transition to subsequent classes.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

The proportion of parents and carers replying to the inspectors' questionnaire is broadly average in comparison with other primary schools. The responses show almost unanimous approval of all that the school does. Parents and carers feel that staff are caring, that their children enjoy school, that it is well led, teaching is good, and that their children have a good start to their education. A feature of parent and carer approval is the support that the school gives to families and parents and carers facing difficult circumstances. Parents' and carers' comments are typified by the frequent use of phrases such as, 'excellent care', 'really proud of school', 'very pleased', 'extremely happy'. The inspection findings confirm this good level of support.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Luke's 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 33 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 125 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	24	73	9	27	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	25	76	8	24	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	18	55	15	45	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	20	61	13	39	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	26	79	7	21	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	22	67	11	33	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	18	55	15	45	0	0	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)	21	64	12	36	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	19	58	14	42	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	16	48	16	48	1	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	18	55	14	42	1	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	21	64	12	36	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	27	82	6	18	0	0	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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 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. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

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.



6 October 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Luke's Catholic Primary School, Trench, Telford, TF2 7HG

Thank you so much for making us welcome during our visit. We really enjoyed seeing how much you enjoy your learning and how well you get on with each other. You behave very well, are polite and helpful and look after each other. You told us you like your teachers and their helpers very much and that they make learning fun for you. You feel safe and healthy and enjoy your clubs and visits, especially 'Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs' at Oakengates theatre. Your parents and carers like the school as much as you do and are pleased with the help and support it gives them.

You go to a satisfactory school, have a sound education and are well cared for. You make most progress in reading, mathematics, science, music and art. Although your writing and speaking skills are improving, they could be even better. The staff work very hard to keep you safe and it is good that you feel you can talk to them, or speak to 'buddies', if you have any personal problems. Your headteacher and other leaders of the school are working hard trying to provide you with the best education possible.

To help them improve the school further, we have suggested that your teachers:

- make sure you know what you have to do to improve your work
- help you, through their questions, to give spoken answers with more than one or two words, so that you can get better at writing longer sentences.

You can help by telling your teachers when you are not sure how to improve and by trying to give answers in whole sentences. We wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Stafford

Lead inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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