

St Chad's CofE (VC) Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124259
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	363977
Inspection dates	4–5 July 2011
Reporting inspector	David Driscoll

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	207
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Debra Davey
Headteacher	Claire Evans
Date of previous school inspection	7 May 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors, who observed 18 lessons taught by seven teachers. They held meetings with groups of pupils, staff and members of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at records of pupils' attainment and progress, the school's development plan, and records of checks on teaching and documents relating to the safeguarding (systems to protect and keep pupils safe). They also analysed responses to questionnaires completed by staff, pupils and 153 parents and carers.

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

- How well are data from assessments used by teachers to ensure that all groups of pupils make the best possible progress?
- How effective is leadership and management in tackling any variations in the quality of teaching across the school?
- Are pupils learning enough about the lives of people from backgrounds different to their own?
- To what extent do pupils have opportunities to apply their information and communication technology skills in other subjects?

Information about the school

The school is of average size. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. Almost all pupils come from a White British background. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is low. There have been several changes to senior management since the school was last inspected, including five different headteachers. The school currently has no deputy headteacher, although an appointment has been made for September 2011. The current headteacher took up post in April 2010. The governing body runs a daily breakfast club for pupils. The school shares its site with the Beacon Badgers after-school club and Jigsaws pre-school. Both of these facilities are privately managed and subject to a separate inspection.

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

St Chad's provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. The good care they receive ensures that they feel safe in school. This view is strongly supported by parents and carers responding to the questionnaire. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, especially when using the internet and in relation to ice on the nearby ponds. Pupils have an equally good understanding of what they need to do to stay fit and healthy. They put this into practice in their daily lives by, for example, choosing healthy food for the lunchboxes and coaching others in sport. A high proportion of pupils walk or cycle to school. Pupils demonstrate a considerable ability to reflect on spiritual matters, get on well with one another and have a clear understanding of right and wrong. Their knowledge of western culture is good, particularly in terms of art and music. However, pupils' overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is only satisfactory because the school does not provide well enough for community cohesion. A full audit of their needs has not been carried out and pupils have too few opportunities to engage with pupils from backgrounds different from their own, so they have a limited understanding of the lives and cultures of others. The school has high expectations of attendance and punctuality. Attendance is high as a result and pupils are consistently punctual to school.

Academic progress is satisfactory but varies between subjects and classes in response to teaching that is inconsistent in its quality. There are examples of outstanding practice in the school, but these are not being identified and disseminated to raise the quality of teaching to a consistently good level. Teachers do not always use assessment information well enough to set work that accurately meets the needs of all groups of pupils, so their progress is not consistently good. Pupils' attainment is average in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT). The curriculum provides them with plenty of opportunities to apply their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects, but pupils do not have enough opportunities to apply their ICT skills in the same way.

The school is showing signs of improvement after a period of unsettled leadership. The headteacher has ensured that school self-evaluation is accurate. The focus on improving teaching is proving successful and demonstrates the school's satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement. The headteacher had to make changes to the way that the school operated in order to meet safeguarding regulations. Some of these have proved unpopular with some parents and carers as they were introduced without the reasons being explained clearly enough or taking enough account of their views. In other respects, the information sent home is of good quality but there are relatively few methods by which parents and carers can make their opinions known.

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.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Reduce the variations in quality of teaching and ensure pupils make consistently good progress by identifying and disseminating the examples of best practice, particularly the use of assessment information to plan for pupils' differing needs.
- Take greater account of parents' and carers' views when planning significant changes to the school and increase the range of means by which parents and carers can express their opinions.
- Carry out a full audit of pupils' needs with respect to community cohesion and provide them with opportunities to engage with those from other parts of Great Britain and different countries.
- Provide pupils with more opportunities to use their ICT skills in other subjects.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. They join and leave the school with attainment that is broadly in line with the national average. Current attainment in Year 6 is slightly lower than the previous year. Pupils with special educational needs make progress at a similar rate to others. Pupils of differing abilities will forge ahead in mathematics in one year before making slower progress the next. At the same time, the class will be making slower progress in English before making good progress the following year. The match of work to pupils' differing needs also varies from year to year. For example, in some classes the more-able pupils are given challenging work and make good progress while in others work is sometimes too easy and their progress slows. The same applies to pupils in other ability groups. Over time, they make satisfactory progress but it ebbs and flows as they move through the year.

Pupils are polite and considerate of others. Instances of poor behaviour are rare. There have been no exclusions in recent years. Pupils behave well outside of lessons and the school is an orderly community. Behaviour is satisfactory in lessons. When tasks are interesting and challenging pupils concentrate for long periods and work hard. They particularly enjoy problem solving activities and cooperate very well in small groups to reach a successful outcome. For example, pupils worked hard and concentrated completely in a mathematics lesson where they had been given individual problems to solve in order to find equivalent fractions. In less stimulating lessons, there is usually a minority who let their attention wander. Younger pupils start to fidget with their equipment while older ones stop to talk to their friends. In an English lesson, for example, pupils repeated a task when they had already grasped the concept being taught, so they lost interest. Pupils develop good enterprise skills. This was well illustrated when pupils organised a fund raising fete. They chose products to make and sell, and were successful in raising a large amount of money.

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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	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
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	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

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 are no aspects of teaching that are consistently stronger or weaker than others across the school. Teachers now have accurate information regarding pupils' prior attainment, but the extent to which this is used effectively to plan lessons varies across the school. In one English lesson, for example, all pupils were given similar tasks regardless of their ability so their progress slowed when they found the work too easy or too hard. In a mathematics lesson for the same class, different tasks were given to pupils according to the levels they had already reached so the work was closely matched to their needs and promoted better learning. The same variation is seen in other aspects, such as marking, pace and questioning. In some classes, for example, marking clearly identifies what pupils need to do to improve and ensures that pupils follow the guidance provided. In others, the marking is frequent but does not check that pupils have carried out corrections. All pupils are clear about their targets, but some are unsure about how much progress they are making towards them.

All pupils receive specific lessons in ICT which enable them to reach the levels expected for their age. However, some classes make much more use of the computer suite than others so the opportunities that pupils have to practise their skills in other subjects also vary across the school. Provision for personal, social and health education is good, with a strong emphasis on teaching pupils about the environment. The school provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities that are very well supported by pupils.

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As well as successfully promoting high levels of attendance, the school is very effective in helping pupils to make up work missed through unavoidable absence, such as hospitalisation. Pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable are closely monitored. The school can point to telling examples of where support for them has proved successful in overcoming barriers to learning. Arrangements for transfer to secondary school are excellent. For example, Year 6 pupils start work on a project that is continued into Year 7 to aid continuity. The breakfast club provides a good start to the day, with a strong emphasis on promoting health and a wide range of interesting and enjoyable activities.

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 provides a clear vision that is providing the impetus to drive the school forward. This vision is conveyed well to all staff. Staff morale is high as they respond to more stable leadership under the direction of the headteacher. They share a satisfactory drive for improvement and are keen to raise the quality of teaching. Checks on teaching provide an accurate picture of its strengths and weaknesses and the variation in quality is being reduced. The proportion of good lessons is increasing as a result. Strengths are starting to emerge in individuals' teaching, but these are not yet being used consistently by all leaders and managers to promote higher quality across the school. The governing body plays a satisfactory role. Its effectiveness is improving as governors ask more challenging questions about the school's performance. However, the school has only recently started to systematically seek the views of parents and carers and the methods by which they can express their opinions are limited to writing letters, telephoning or visiting the school in person. As a result, more than one in four parents and carers responding to the questionnaire were unhappy with the partnership that they have with the school.

The governing body meets most statutory requirements, including those for safeguarding pupils. However, requirements to promote community cohesion are not met. The school ensures that pupils have a good understanding of their local community, and promotes shared values and an appreciation of diversity. A thorough audit of socio-economic circumstances has been completed, but not one with respect to different faiths. Links are developing with a school in China, but there are no others at present where pupils can engage with those from different backgrounds, either in Great Britain or beyond. The changes to the extra-curricular clubs have led to improved equality. There are no significant differences between the performance of different groups in the school as a whole, although variations exist within individual year groups and subjects.

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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	4
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	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	4
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make satisfactory progress in all areas of learning and start Year 1 with average levels of attainment. Assessments are accurate and based securely on a wide range of observations of children at work and play. Children are provided with a range of activities, but these do not always challenge them to learn at the best possible rate. The environment is welcoming and teachers have good relations with children. Teachers are firm but fair, so children behave well and learn to share and cooperate with one another. Children have a good understanding of safety and hygiene because they are taught to adopt good habits, such as always washing their hands and wearing hats in strong sunlight. Independence is more limited as children have relatively few opportunities to choose whether to work indoors or out because teachers make this choice for them. There is a satisfactory range of resources, except for ICT where opportunities for children to use computers are too limited.

Staff have a sound knowledge of the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and ensure that all welfare and safeguarding requirements are met. Provision is showing clear signs of improvement as areas for development are identified more accurately and appropriate plans for addressing them are implemented. This is reflected in children making faster progress in their number work and developing creativity than was previously the case.

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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 response to the questionnaire was much higher than in most other schools. The majority of parents and carers are satisfied with much that the school provides and hold views that are similar to those of inspectors. Some parents and carers raised concerns about the limited extent to which their views were taken into account and felt that the new leadership and management was to blame. Their concerns related specifically to changes to after-school activities and the erection of fences. Inspectors analysed records of extra-curricular activities, where these were available, and walked the school site. They read the letters sent to parents and carers about the changes and the written responses from parents and carers. They found that the changes were necessary to meet safeguarding requirements, but that communication with parents and carers was not of a sufficiently good quality to reassure them that such changes would benefit their children or to take sufficient account of their views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Chad's CoFE (VC) 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 153 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 207 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	85	56	59	39	7	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	105	69	47	31	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	53	35	90	59	7	5	3	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	55	36	72	47	18	12	4	3
The teaching is good at this school	66	43	65	42	14	9	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	62	41	69	45	20	13	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	58	38	77	50	14	9	1	1
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)	65	42	68	44	12	8	3	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	57	37	68	44	21	14	3	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	57	37	63	41	17	11	8	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	40	26	61	40	34	22	10	7
The school is led and managed effectively	44	29	63	41	30	20	11	7
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	69	45	63	41	16	10	1	1

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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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.



6 July 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Chad's CofE (VC) Primary School, Lichfield, WS13 6SN

Thank you for all the help you gave us when we visited your school. We found you to be polite, welcoming and keen to tell us about life at school. We were impressed by your high attendance and your good knowledge of how to stay healthy and safe. Your teachers take good care of you and ensure that you are safe in school.

You are getting a satisfactory education. You make steady progress in your subjects overall, but this varies from class to class. You make good progress in some years, but then it slows again in others. We have asked your headteacher to make sure you make the best progress at all times by identifying what each of your teachers does really well and then sharing it with the others. You reach the standards expected for your age in each of your subjects, but do not have enough opportunities to practise your computing skills. We have asked your teachers to give you more time to use computers to support your learning. You can help by suggesting when using a computer would be more efficient than doing the work by hand. We have also asked the school to give you more opportunities to communicate with and learn more about those from other areas of Great Britain and around the world, as you do not know as much about their cultures as you do your own.

Your school is now improving again after several changes of headteacher. Some of your parents and carers are not happy with the changes that have been made. These have been necessary to ensure that you are safe, but have not always been explained clearly enough. We have asked the headteacher and governing body to provide parents and carers with more different ways by which they can express their views, and to take greater account of their opinions when making changes.

With all best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

David Driscoll

Lead inspector

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