

# St Catherine's CofE (VC) Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	135051
<b>Local Authority</b>	Worcestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	381790
<b>Inspection dates</b>	17–18 November 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Graham Sims

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	359
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Margaret Tindall
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sarah Power
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 June 2009
<b>School address</b>	Marlpool Lane Kidderminster DY11 5HP
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited every class to gain an overview of the quality of teaching and learning, and observed 17 lessons. Fourteen different teachers were observed teaching. Meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior leaders, members of the governing body, members of staff and groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work, including the systems for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress, pupils' work, teachers' planning and marking, the school's policies and procedures, school improvement planning and risk assessments. Inspectors took account of questionnaires completed by 105 parents and carers, 34 staff and 101 pupils.

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

- How well do pupils apply their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills across the curriculum?
- To what extent do teachers challenge and probe pupils' knowledge and understanding in lessons?
- To what extent do pupils display independence, initiative and enterprise?
- How effective is the teachers' marking in helping pupils to understand how well they have done and what they need to improve?

## Information about the school

St Catherine's Primary School is larger than average. The very large majority of pupils are White British. Around 5% of the pupils come from minority ethnic groups. The proportions of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals are average. The number of pupils on roll has grown significantly since the school opened in 2007; all year groups contain pupils who have joined the school part way through their primary education. There are two classes per year group except in Year 5, where there is only one class; a few pupils from Year 5 are taught with the Year 6 classes. A privately run nursery, separately inspected, operates in the school's main building.

At the time of the inspection, the school's playground and sports facilities were severely limited as a new school building was under construction within the grounds. The new building is due to open in June 2012, when the current building will be demolished and the play areas re-established.

**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?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

St Catherine's Primary School has seen major improvements in almost all aspects of its work since it opened just over four years ago and is now a good school. These improvements are reflected in the school's national test results, which have risen each year. Pupils join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills, knowledge and abilities which, on average, are below those expected for their age. They leave at the end of Key Stage 2 with broadly average attainment. This represents good achievement. At the heart of the school's success are the drive and ambition of the headteacher and staff, who provide a learning environment where pupils are well motivated and keen to learn. The senior leadership team and the governing body have a good understanding of the school's strengths and identify pertinent areas for improvement.

The school has a good ethos and the feeling of a strong, cohesive community in which all pupils are valued and cared for well. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils listen well in class and respect one another's contributions. Pupils work cooperatively to achieve solutions to problems and support each other in lessons from the very start of their schooling. The proud comment of a member of the governing body reflects the findings of the inspection team: 'A typical St Catherine's child is courteous, kind and caring and these characteristics are carried into their secondary education.'

Senior leaders have worked strenuously to ensure that teaching is consistently good or better and have eradicated inadequate teaching. Almost all of the teaching seen during the inspection was good, but some lessons provide a greater level of challenge than others. In the best lessons, rigorous questioning encourages pupils to justify their opinions and explain their answers. This leads to a deep understanding and develops important skills in speaking and listening for all. Pupils' work is marked regularly, though teachers' comments do not always adequately explain what needs to be done in order to improve their work.

The curriculum is exciting and the school's stimulating environment reflects the broad range of activities undertaken during the year. Attractive displays within the school show pupils, for example, developing their personal skills at a local sailing centre and visiting Westminster Abbey. Such activities demonstrate the school's commitment to a wide-ranging learning experience for its pupils. Pupils work well in groups or on their own, but they are not given enough opportunities to develop their initiative and enterprise within lessons. Literacy skills are being developed well across the

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curriculum but opportunities are sometimes missed to sharpen pupils' numeracy and information and communication technology skills in a similar way.

The school has established an excellent partnership with parents and carers, who are delighted with the way the school has improved: 'The school has got better and better,' said one, reflecting the school's good capacity for further improvement. They particularly value the caring ethos and speak highly of how happy their children are to attend St Catherine's. This is reflected in the improved attendance figures, which are above average. Many spoke of the ease with which their children had settled into the school when moving into the area and how well they had been welcomed by staff and children alike.

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

- Ensure pupils are clear about how to improve their work by providing:
  - challenging oral feedback and questioning in lessons
  - written feedback that shows pupils where they have made mistakes and highlights the next steps in pupils' learning
  - opportunities for pupils to read and respond to the marking comments and practise their skills.
  
- Provide pupils with more opportunities to use their initiative, to develop their enterprise skills and to become truly independent learners.
  
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to fine-tune their numeracy and information and communication technology skills across the curriculum.

### **Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

**2**

Pupils learn well in the classroom. They listen attentively and are keen and eager to participate. They concentrate well when given work to complete on their own and collaborate well when asked to work with a partner or in groups. Their good behaviour and excellent relationships with the staff contribute significantly to their learning.

Standards are rising in every year group. At the time of the last inspection, attainment at the end of Year 2 was significantly lower than the national average. It is now average in reading and mathematics and just above average in writing. The upward trend is even more marked at the end of Year 6, where attainment has improved from low to just above the national average in English and average in mathematics. This represents good achievement, particularly as so many pupils were identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities in 2011. Work sampled and lessons seen by inspectors showed pupils' good progress. Pupils of all abilities make good progress because work is tailored to their individual learning needs, and highly effective support is provided for any pupil who has particular

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learning difficulties. Additional adults in lessons support pupils well but also help them to become less dependent on their support and more confident to work on their own.

Pupils also make good progress in their personal development. They enjoy coming to school and feel part of the warm and caring community. Behaviour within lessons, around the school building and outdoors is consistently good. Pupils speak of feeling safe and cared for, and they know how to keep safe when using the internet. They state that adults deal effectively with rare instances of poor behaviour. Pupils are encouraged to help one another. Older pupils are given the responsibility of listening to readers at lunchtime and helping younger children to play happily on the playground. They take these responsibilities seriously. Members of the school council feel that their views are listened to and that they have made a difference. Pupils know how to eat healthily but this is not always reflected in the food provided for them from home. Pupils' improving academic skills and their good attitudes, behaviour, attendance and punctuality prepare them well for the next stage of their education.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

**How effective is the provision?**

The quality of the teaching has improved markedly and is now consistently good or better in almost all classes. Lessons are well planned. The teaching interests and motivates the pupils. Good attention is paid to the needs of individuals, particularly those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

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

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There is some outstanding practice which demonstrates an even higher level of challenge and expectation than is seen in other classes. Thorough, systematic, fast-paced, varied consolidation activities reinforce pupils' prior learning and help pupils to develop a really good understanding of what has been taught previously. Rigorous, probing questioning ensures that pupils learn quickly and develop good thinking, speaking and listening skills. The teacher's input is short, sharp and to the point and backed up with a wide variety of individual, paired and group tasks which help pupils to think about what they are learning and to make excellent progress. Such teaching provides an excellent model to show others how to make good teaching even better, particularly with regard to the precision of questioning and the insistence on clear and precise answers. In some classes, teachers too readily accept weak answers from pupils and do not always provide enough challenge.

In all classes, pupils have targets and know what the teacher is looking for in their work which is marked thoroughly. Pupils are shown clearly where they have met their targets or success criteria. Teachers are not as thorough in pointing out where pupils have made mistakes or in letting them know how they can improve. Pupils are not always given the time in lessons to read and respond to the marking comments. This means there are missed opportunities for pupils to think about their errors, practise their skills and improve their understanding.

The curriculum provides a thorough grounding in basic skills, but does not always capitalise on this by providing planned opportunities for pupils to sharpen their numeracy and information and communication technology skills in different contexts. Extra-curricular provision is good. There is a rich and varied range of additional opportunities and learning experiences through visits, visitors and residential trips.

The school's good care, guidance and support are reflected in the comment of one parent, who said, 'When speaking to staff, nothing is too much trouble, and they have a real grasp of my children's individuality.' All pupils are valued and helped to become part of the community. The school prides itself on its ability to support each and every pupil, and has successfully reintegrated pupils with behavioural difficulties who have experienced problems in previous schools.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

**How effective are leadership and management?**

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The headteacher, school leaders and governing body work together as a unified team with a common ambition to continually improve the school. Leaders monitor lessons and ensure that practice is consistent, and the focus is on progress made by pupils. Feedback is readily accepted by the teachers, who view it as an opportunity to develop their professional skills. Teachers meet in their different year-group phases to discuss the needs of pupils as individuals. As a result, plans are drawn up and additional support or challenge is provided for pupils as required. This has led to improved teaching and learning. For example, pupils at Key Stage 1 who were falling behind in their mathematics were identified and provided with one-to-one tuition. This led to a noticeable improvement in their understanding and confidence on their return to the classroom.

The members of the governing body are supportive and are a visible presence at all school events. They regularly attend school and are known to pupils, parents and carers, and teachers alike. They have received training to understand data and are able and willing to challenge leaders in order to raise standards. They have fully supported the headteacher in ensuring teaching is good or better across the school. The governing body ensures that safeguarding arrangements meet the latest government requirements and that child protection procedures are robust. The school is particularly good at looking after the needs of those pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable.

Good attention is given to the needs of individuals to ensure there is equality of opportunity for all. Support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is managed well. The progress of all pupils is monitored carefully. The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion, reflected in the overwhelmingly favourable response of parents and carers who feel that the school has done much to unite a previously divided community. Pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities to visit places and meet visitors to broaden their horizons. The school's success in tackling discrimination is seen in the way pupils respect other faiths and pupils of all backgrounds get on well together. Pupils are keen to support more vulnerable members of society. On the final day of the inspection, for example, all pupils wore spotted clothing and raised money in aid of the national Children in Need initiative. The school's policies and procedures are regularly reviewed by the governing body, and they ensure that the school provides good value for money.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>



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<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have stimulating indoor and outdoor learning environments that support their learning. They are provided with a broad range of activities that develop personal and academic skills well. There is a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities throughout the day, and children play well on their own and with others. The adults’ excellent relationships and good interaction with the children enable good learning to take place. Staff make good use of additional learning opportunities, such as the construction of the new school building. For example, a child playing in an area of the classroom, which was set up as a construction site, was encouraged to count the bricks he had used to build his tower. He was able to talk about why hard hats and high-visibility vests are worn and had linked the real construction work he had seen in the school grounds to his role play. Children make good progress against the early learning goals and begin to develop the personal qualities needed to succeed in later life.

Behaviour is managed well at all times. A physical development lesson in the hall allowed children to move freely in a variety of ways. They chose fairy tale characters, such as the ugly duckling and Goldilocks, and explored how they could waddle and skip as they moved round the room. Although the children were obviously excited by this lively activity, their enthusiasm did not adversely affect their behaviour, which was exemplary. The children were asked to notice how their hearts beat faster when they took exercise and how hot they felt. In this way, the learning opportunity was extended beyond the purely physical.

The Early Years Foundation Stage leader ensures there is a common sense of purpose between adults to ensure that all groups of children are given the opportunity to achieve as well as they can. Children are observed as they play and notes are recorded. These, however, tend to be descriptive rather than evaluative and so staff sometimes miss opportunities when planning the next steps in individuals’ learning. Intervention strategies are used well to support children who are falling behind in their learning.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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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 of parents and carers to the questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive in all respects. Many wrote appreciative comments about how much the school had improved and how caring and supportive the staff are. Responses and comments show that parents and carers have every confidence in the school’s leadership, and they particularly appreciate the fact that the headteacher is available to talk to on the playground before school every day. One expressed concern about so many children playing in a small area now that there is no proper playground because of the construction work. The inspection team felt that the school is dealing well with the inevitable disruption caused by this work and that staff have taken every precaution to safeguard pupils without curtailing the normal activities of the school.

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Catherine’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 105 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 359 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	83	79	20	19	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	85	81	20	19	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	68	65	36	34	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	70	67	32	30	2	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	80	76	25	24	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	71	68	34	32	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	67	64	37	35	1	1	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)	67	64	32	30	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	70	67	34	32	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	59	56	41	39	1	1	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	65	62	38	36	1	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	82	78	23	22	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	87	83	18	17	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 8 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.**



21 November 2011

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of St Catherine's Primary School, Kidderminster, DY11 5HP**

My colleagues and I really enjoyed visiting your school and seeing how much it has improved. We should like to thank all of you for making us feel welcome. Our conversations with you show that you enjoy school and like the way the staff help you to learn. We think St Catherine's is a good school. These are the things that particularly impressed us.

- You are making good progress in English and mathematics and standards are rising.
- You behave well in class and around the school, you are polite and courteous and you are cooperative when working with a partner or in groups.
- The teaching is improving; it is good throughout the school and some of the teaching is outstanding.
- The school provides plenty of interesting activities and special events for you to enjoy and staff have created an attractive and interesting learning environment.
- The staff look after you well and help you to feel safe in school; they are particularly helpful to those of you who need extra support or help.
- Your headteacher leads the school well and has been responsible for many improvements; she is supported well by all of the staff and the governing body.

To help you to make even better progress in your work, we have asked the school's leaders to provide you with more opportunities to use your initiative and become really independent learners, and to practise your numeracy and ICT skills in different subjects. Your teachers are good at pointing out what you do well, but we would like them to challenge you even more when asking you questions and when marking your work. Sometimes, they need to show you where you have gone wrong and to help you learn from your mistakes. You can all help by thinking carefully about your teachers' comments and trying to improve your work once it has been marked.

We hope that you all continue to enjoy your time at St Catherine's and wish you the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Graham Sims  
Lead inspector

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