

St Catherine's RC School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101333
Local Authority	Barnet
Inspection number	276501
Inspection dates	27–28 June 2006
Reporting inspector	Graham Lee

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Sheila Isaac Mrs Eileen Quigley
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Vale Drive Barnet EN5 2ED
Telephone number	02084404946
Fax number	02084413436

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger-than-average primary school, which draws its pupils from quite a wide area of Barnet. The school serves a mixed community but very few pupils are entitled to free school meals. The vast majority of pupils are White and most of these are of British origin. An increasing minority of pupils come from a variety of ethnic backgrounds. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is broadly average. Attainment on entry is broadly average. A new headteacher was appointed in September 2005.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade:

What the school should do to improve further

* Ensure that teachers consistently use a range of teaching strategies, including ICT and assessment for learning to meet the needs of all their pupils

Achievement and standards

Grade:

Personal development and well-being

Grade:

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade:

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. It has improved significantly over the current school year and is outstanding in some lessons. Teachers have good relationships with pupils and manage their classes well. They are beginning to use the new interactive technology effectively to engage and motivate pupils. As a result, most pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to learning. Where teaching is particularly effective, the teachers approach is enthusiastic and they present challenging activities to pupils of all abilities. This was evident in a Year 3/4 mathematics lesson, where pupils deepened their understanding because of the teacher's challenging questions and opportunities to discuss and continually refine their ideas. Most teachers set pupils challenging targets and give them a clear idea of how to improve their work. Some inconsistencies remain, however. In a few lessons, teachers do not use a sufficient variety of strategies and do not give all pupils enough opportunities to contribute and discuss their ideas in order to consolidate their learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade:

The curriculum is good and ensures that pupils of all abilities achieve well. Provision for basic skills is particularly successful and those with learning difficulties and disabilities are supported well by special needs teachers and the skilled team of teaching assistants. An increasingly effective range of strategies is being used to support those in danger of underachieving. This year, links between different subjects are developing and there are interesting plans in place to make the curriculum more exciting and creative for next year. ICT is used very effectively to support pupils' learning in other subjects. All aspects of pupils' personal and social development are prominent features of the curriculum. A good range of enrichment is provided through visits and visitors to the school and through a variety of sporting, musical and other additional activities. French adds richness and challenge to the curriculum for older pupils. Events such as the recent project on the history of the school brought the curriculum alive and involved the whole school community.

Care, guidance and support

Grade:

The school provides good care, guidance and support for pupils, within a strong Christian framework. Provision is exemplary in several respects and this enables pupils to feel secure and cared for within a community where they are fully included and valued. Health and safety procedures are regularly reviewed and potential risks are carefully assessed. Arrangements for the safeguarding of children are good and understood by all staff. Adults give learners confidence and enable them to enjoy all aspects of school life. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, is well organised and meets their needs. The school is developing good systems for monitoring academic progress although the marking of pupils' work is inconsistent. Pupils are taught how to take care of themselves and to make healthy and safe choices. The school has a productive partnership with parents who feel that their children are safe and well cared for at school and that their views are taken into account. The many positive comments included 'my son has learnt how to be sociable, helpful, and friendly and is very good at his literacy and mathematics.'

Leadership and management

Grade:

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Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Pupils

I am writing to thank you all for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. You were very friendly and helpful and we really enjoyed meeting you and talking with you. I thought you would like to know what we found out.

You are right to be proud of St Catherine's because it is a good school, which is quickly getting even better. You all feel safe and secure because the adults look after you very well. At the same time you all know that you have to support one another. We were impressed with how enthusiastic you were about all the exciting things going on in school. Most of you work hard and behave well. By the time you leave you are doing very well and are well prepared for life in secondary school. This is because the teaching is good and teachers help you to improve your work. Many of you said that you find the work challenging and yet fun as well. There are lots of exciting things for you to do in lessons and in the many clubs that are run for you.

Your new headteacher has done a great job in making the school even better and she gets plenty of help from all the staff. We have asked them to do just a couple of things which we think will help to improve the school even more. We want them to make sure that you get a chance to take a full part in your lessons and to talk about your ideas. We think this will help you to understand even more. We also want all the staff to work together to look at ways in which they can make their teaching even better for you.

Yours truly

Graham Lee

Lead Inspector