



St James Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 106239
LEA Thameside
Inspection number 277515
Inspection dates 5 July 2006 to 6 July 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Robert Robinson CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Cheriton Close
School category	Voluntary aided		off Underwood Road
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Hattersley, Hyde SK14 3DQ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0161 3683455
Number on roll	108	Fax number	0161 3683177
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Fr Paul Hughes
Date of previous inspection	30 October 2000	Headteacher	Miss B Robinson

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average sized primary school. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. The socio-economic circumstances of the area are well below average as is attainment on entry to the Nursery. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. An average proportion of children have statements to provide for their special educational needs.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school providing good value for money; the inspection confirmed the school's view of itself. The headteacher, staff and governors lead and manage the school well. Because of the strengths in leadership and management as well as the good quality of teaching, pupils achieve well and reach nationally expected standards by the end of Year 6. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. The curriculum throughout the school is effective but accommodation difficulties limit the opportunities for children in the Nursery and Reception to extend their learning outdoors. Pupils' personal development is good. Their attitudes to work and behaviour are outstanding. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, overall. However, opportunities are missed to foster pupils' understanding of the cultural diversity of British society. Pupils enjoy coming to school and they respond very well to the good, supportive care they receive. The school has improved since its last inspection. It has a good understanding of its strengths and areas for development. The senior managers have identified, rightly, the need to improve the recording of pupils' progress and the use of the data throughout the school to raise standards even further. The commitment of the staff and strengths in the leadership and management indicate that the school has the capacity to continue to improve. Parents are pleased with the education provided. Pupils are proud of the school and representatives of older pupils stated that 'St James is a friendly, active, enjoyable school where pupils learn well and get a good education'.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the tracking of pupils' progress to assist target setting and the monitoring of achievement of individuals and groups of pupils.
- Improve the outdoor facilities and access to this area for children in the Nursery and Reception.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of the multicultural diversity of Britain.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities because of good leadership and management, good teaching and pupils' attitudes to learning. Standards by the end of Year 6 vary from year to year because of differences between groups of pupils within a small school.

Children make good progress, from well below average attainment on entry to the nursery, to reach nationally expected standards in most areas of learning by the end of Reception. In communication, language and literacy, children make good gains from a low starting point but still remain marginally below expected levels by the end of Reception.

Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 1 to 6 and reach average standards by the end of Year 6. In the 2005 national tests standards were above the national average in English though standards in mathematics and science dipped compared to previous years. The increased focus on mathematics and science this year has resulted in significant improvement in these subjects. Standards in English and mathematics are now similar. The demanding targets set for pupils for the end of Year 6 in 2006 have been met in English and exceeded in mathematics. Good achievement in literacy and numeracy prepares pupils well for the next stage of education.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The pupils enjoy school very well and attend regularly. They are enthusiastic learners and their behaviour and attitudes to work are outstanding. Older pupils are confident and their mature attitudes stand them in good stead for the next phase of education. They are polite and courteous. Younger pupils make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development which assists their future learning. Throughout the school pupils care for one another and are confident to talk to staff about any matters. Pupils support one another in a very harmonious community. Bullying rarely occurs. The pupils feel safe and happy and appreciate all the school has to offer.

Pupils have a very clear understanding of right and wrong. They show compassion towards others and are involved in a number of fundraising activities. However, they do not have sufficient opportunities to find out about the cultural diversity of this country. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles by eating healthy foods and participating in a good variety of sports. They make a good contribution to the school, for example, taking the initiative to tidy up resources at the end of lessons.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teaching assistants and teachers provide good help for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Good and often outstanding relationships between staff and pupils enable them to flourish and gain confidence resulting in them working hard and behaving extremely well. 'Talking partners' encourage pupils to share their learning with others and benefit from their friends constructive comments. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used effectively to speed up learning, such as using interactive whiteboards to introduce and consolidate learning. In most lessons questioning is used well to check pupils' understanding, although occasionally too much emphasis is given to those with their hands up who know the answers rather than those who are reluctant to contribute. In the best lessons there is a strong emphasis on practical investigations to enable pupils to find out for themselves. In contrast, in a few lessons too much time is spent instructing which limits pupils' opportunities to practise the new learning.

Throughout the school there is a strong emphasis on the good presentation of work. Attractive displays celebrate pupils' achievements. Comments in books generally applaud good effort though ways for them to improve are not focused consistently upon their individual targets.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

A broad range of activities meets the interest and needs of all pupils. The curriculum is planned well to develop pupils' skills in ICT, literacy and numeracy. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. Education outdoors is arranged carefully but because of the limitations of the accommodation including access, opportunities are limited for the pupils to extend their learning outdoors. Personal, social and emotional development and citizenship education is good. Visitors and educational visits, including a residential, as well as a good range of extra-curricular activities, enrich the curriculum further. A particular strength is the use of the expertise of local authority and secondary school staff. For example, a reading recovery specialist provides Year 1 pupils having difficulties with reading with specialist guidance and staff from the local Catholic secondary school teach French to pupils in Reception to Year 6 each week.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Child protection procedures are in place. Thorough risk assessments ensure that health and safety matters are well organised. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported by carefully thought out individual education plans which are shared with the pupils and parents.

The staff know the pupils very well and monitor their progress through regular assessments. However, the tracking of their progress and setting targets for them is at an early stage of development. Data about pupils' attainments has recently begun to be entered into an electronic system so that individuals and groups of pupils' progress can be monitored efficiently. The setting of targets linked to the levels of attainment of the National Curriculum is still to be incorporated into the tracking system.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides good leadership and management of the school. Her long-term commitment to the education of pupils at St James is commendable as she has been a member of staff since almost the opening of the school many years ago. This has enabled her to have a deep insight into the needs of its community. She is highly regarded by pupils, parents, staff and governors. The headteacher provides detailed information to staff and governors to ensure they have a good understanding of the strengths of the school and ways that it can improve. For example, she identified a downward drift in standards recently in mathematics and science. Together with

governors and staff, the headteacher set about planning to address the issue. Detailed plans were prepared and implemented successfully resulting in much improved standards in the 2006 national tests.

The other senior managers, including the deputy headteacher and the leader of the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2, ably assist the headteacher. Subject leaders and the senior manager responsible for the care of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities provide effective support to senior management. A strong sense of teamwork drives this successful school forward. The senior leadership team is currently working towards improving procedures to track pupils' progress electronically to gain a better insight into the performance of individual and groups of pupils.

Governance is good. The governors are knowledgeable and hard working. They work well with the staff to ensure the strengths of the school and its strong Catholic ethos are maintained.

Parents are very satisfied with what the school provides. Their views are sought and acted upon. As stated by a parent, 'the headteacher, teachers and chair of governors add a personal touch that makes this school special'.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for welcoming me to your school. I enjoyed my visit and I want to share with you what I think about your school.

What I liked most about your school

- You are taught well so that you make good progress in your learning.
- You are so polite and friendly and enjoy school.
- You behave extremely well and work hard in lessons and all get on so well together.
- The headteacher, staff and governors look after you well and know how to make your school better.

What I have asked your school to do now

- Improve the way that teachers record your progress so they can set challenging targets for you and monitor your progress towards them.
- Provide more learning opportunities for children in the Nursery and Reception by providing a better outdoor area and access to it.
- Plan more opportunities for you to increase your understanding of the different cultures in Britain.

I appreciated talking to you about your work and watching you learn, I wish you well for the future.