



St Catherine's Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 107112
LEA Sheffield
Inspection number 277709
Inspection dates 12 June 2006 to 13 June 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Roger Gill CfBT Lead Inspector

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

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|------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Type of school | Primary | School address | Firshill Crescent |
| School category | Voluntary aided | | Sheffield |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 11 | | South Yorkshire S4 7BX |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 0114 242 1177 |
| Number on roll | 245 | Fax number | 0114 244 6141 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair of governors | Mrs Yvonne Pine |
| Date of previous inspection | 4 December 2000 | Headteacher | Mrs Fiona Rigby |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school has changed in character since it was last inspected. Attainment on entry has fallen to well below the nationally expected level owing to the increased number of children entering with speech and language difficulties. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds, but the number of children from minority ethnic heritages is growing rapidly and those who are learning English as an additional language has risen sharply. The proportion of pupils who find learning difficult is above average. There has been a significant turnover in staff in recent years. The school is about to be enlarged, in September 2006, with double the entrants in Reception: accommodation for the Foundation Stage will be reorganised radically.

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 with some outstanding features. It has improved rapidly since it was last inspected and is set to go even further. Parents rightly speak well of the school. Some temporary dips in learning, caused by inadequate teaching in the past, have been overcome. There is an atmosphere of harmony and spirituality in the school, which unites children from many backgrounds. Children are progressing well and those in Year 6 are charging ahead. Children achieve well because teaching is successful. The assessment of learning is thorough, particularly for individuals, but the school does not yet evaluate formally the progress made by groups of children. This limits knowledge about what works well and how to improve teaching. Nevertheless, the school knows itself well and is providing good value for money. It is modest in judging children's personal development and the levels of care provided: these are first-rate. These outstanding aspects and the improved academic achievement have been brought about by excellent direction from the top. The headteacher, ably assisted by the leadership team and energetic staff, has inspired everyone to raise their game. This has had a strong influence, among other things, on the curriculum, which is exciting and creative. Despite the school's best efforts, there are limitations for the youngest children. The Foundation Stage provision is satisfactory. Standards are below the expected levels by the end of Reception, but children progress well in literacy and numeracy. Their curriculum lacks breadth owing to marked drawbacks in the accommodation.

What the school should do to improve further

- Check more closely on the progress made by groups to improve the effect of teaching even further.
- Pursue alterations to the accommodation to improve the scope and breadth of children's learning in the Foundation Stage.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The low attainment on entry to Nursery is typified by the children who find socialising hard, struggle to talk about their ideas and find learning difficult. This prevents them making swift progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Children do make good progress in these areas when they are taught directly. The lack of opportunities for independent play to develop their thinking and ideas limit their progress in other areas such as creative and physical development. Thereafter, standards are average and achievement is good by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Children in Year 6 have progressed superbly this year to make up for lost ground created when frequent changes in teaching caused gaps in their learning. Success in writing by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is strong and the school has put extra effort into the progress made by higher attainers in science and mathematics. This is paying off and the proportion of children in Year 6 who are above average in science and mathematics is good. Achievement in

art and physical education, for example, dance, is first-rate because the school makes such effective use of specialist teaching and organises the curriculum to allow learning in depth.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Children enjoy school immensely; many state that they 'miss it in the holidays'. Good attendance results from these positive attitudes. Responses to spiritual, moral, social and cultural education are excellent: behaviour is often mature; ideas and feelings are discussed well and children's understanding about different cultures is deep rooted. This equips them well for later life and the workplace. Children work together extremely well, demonstrating a superb level of consideration for other learners. These outstanding traits are expressed in lessons such as physical education. School councillors show a great enthusiasm to improve school life. They are also instrumental in raising funds for local and international causes. Children understand about how the food they eat affects their health and are very active at playtimes. They are aware of why safety is important and demonstrate this in the efficient way they engage in all kinds of lessons. Excellent social skills are nurtured by after school activities. For example, one club that promotes the joy of talking together is relished by its members. There are good opportunities for children to help each other: the 'job squad' in Year 6 undertakes a variety of valuable tasks such as looking after younger pupils at lunchtime.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The school identified some weaknesses in teaching in the past, which were tackled rigorously, and now the quality of teaching and learning is good. Classrooms are alive with displays that celebrate achievement and stimulate learning. Teachers manage children skilfully; any lapses of concentration are dealt with effectively, so most children behave well. Elements of outstanding teaching, making lessons very imaginative and lively, exist in several classes. The school is justly proud that a teacher won the 2006 regional final of The National Teaching Awards and a teaching assistant gained an honourable mention. Successful teaching ensures that children understand the purpose of their learning and how to assess their progress. Teachers evaluate children's test results well and subsequently set useful targets for them to achieve. Work is marked so that children know whether they have succeeded. Teachers and learning assistants work in close collaboration, ensuring that all children are included well. This applies to those that find learning difficult, are beginning to learn English or who cannot easily control their behaviour. The weakness in accommodation in the Foundation Stage means that children lack the chance to learn outside frequently enough and the staff expertise cannot be shared because the two classes are too far apart.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The range of things for children to do is impressive, but the curriculum for the youngest children cannot be realised fully. Good connections exist between subjects linked by information and communication technology. For example, a project on local architecture linked geography and design and technology well using digital photography. Images were altered with special effects to produce pictures with artistic merit. Provision for literacy and numeracy enables learners to become confident in the basic skills, while the prominence of physical education gives children poise and self-discipline.

After-school clubs are many and various; there is also an excellent programme of residential visits. Themed weeks and visiting speakers further enrich learning. The celebration of different cultures is outstanding: children tell stories, using life-like dolls very well, to help them express their feelings and ideas. The programme for personal development is excellent. Ideas about happiness are considered which have a profound effect on children's self-esteem.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Children always come first in this school. The school provides top quality care which enables children to learn as one family. There are very effective systems in place to assess risk and ensure that health and safety are paramount. Child protection procedures are in place and working well. Parents are positive about the way their children learn, including those with disabilities or who find learning hard. Children feel secure with teachers: they know that someone is on hand to lend them a listening ear. As one pupil said, 'this makes us think about our behaviour and now less people are in trouble for name calling and there is hardly any bullying'. There are great relationships between pupils and staff that help create the high level of personal development throughout the school. Children are guided well academically; they are informed about how to improve in a detailed and exceedingly helpful way.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school possesses strong beliefs about welcoming children from many backgrounds and helping those that find learning difficult. These aspirations are translated into day-to-day organisation that runs like clockwork. As a result, personal development and care for children are outstanding. The headteacher motivates the entire staff superbly to make children's learning worthwhile. A great deal has been accomplished in a relatively short time. The school was described as satisfactory in 2000. It is now good and sometimes outstanding with firm ideas about what to do next. Barriers to learning, caused by recent staffing difficulties, have been demolished by insightful leadership. Clear sighted governors, a talented deputy headteacher and senior teacher, and an energetic staff all play their part well. Governors fulfil their responsibilities and know the school well. The school's judgements about itself are matched exactly by

the inspection except where modesty prevails. The quality of teaching is evaluated well by senior staff and by teachers themselves with the innovative use of camcorders. The lack of evaluation about how well groups of children are progressing, such as those learning English as an additional language, prevents the school from making teaching even better. Nevertheless, good leadership and management make the right things happen, so the school is well placed to improve even further. The way that the school works in partnership with outside agencies to improve its provision is outstanding: no wonder it has been chosen to become an enlarged school to cater for children from an even wider range of backgrounds.

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Inspection judgements

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

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 | 3 | 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? | 1 | NA |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 1 | NA |
| The behaviour of learners | 2 | NA |
| The attendance of learners | 2 | 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? | 1 | 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 | 1 | 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 your help when we inspected your school. We thoroughly enjoyed our visit because everyone was so welcoming and friendly. We would like to share with you what we thought.

These are some of the things that we enjoyed.

- We loved the way that you learn in a creative way and study how to be happy.
- The way that you are cared for and all get along so well together is wonderful.
- You feel safe and know a lot about keeping healthy; this shows in your efforts in gymnastics and dance.
- Your headteacher and staff make sure that you enjoy being at school and develop into thoughtful and considerate young people.
- The residential trips, 'Persona Dolls' and special weeks are great additions to your daily lessons.

We know everyone wants to do even better and we have suggested two things that we think will help.

- We would like to see children in the Nursery and Reception classes have more opportunities to work together and learn through playing outside.
- Your headteacher and teachers should assess how well different groups of children progress, such as those learning English as an additional language, and make plans for any improvements that are needed.