



St Dominic Savio Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 110041
LEA Wokingham District Council
Inspection number 278356
Inspection dates 19 October 2005 to 20 October 2005
Reporting inspector Roy Blatchford HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Western Avenue
School category	Voluntary aided		Woodley
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Reading, Berkshire RG5 3BH
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0118 9693893
Number on roll	355	Fax number	0118 9693765
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Katherine Wilson
Date of previous inspection	7 February 2000	Headteacher	Ms Teresa Jones

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three inspectors over two days.

Description of the school

St Dominic Savio Catholic Primary, with 355 pupils on roll, is larger than average. The majority of the pupils are drawn from the local Catholic community, on the eastern fringes of Reading. The proportion of the children eligible for free meals is well below average, as is the number of pupils identified as having special educational needs. About 5% of the pupils have a first language other than English. Children enter the school in September or January of the year in which they will be 5.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The headteacher and governors are justified in their view that St Dominic Savio Catholic Primary is a good school, with a number of outstanding features. The pupils' personal development and well-being, and way the children are cared for, are judged outstanding by inspectors. The school offers good value for money because it deploys resources skilfully and maximises learning opportunities for all pupils. Effective and enabling leadership at all levels characterises the school. Teaching is good, with elements of outstanding practice, and therefore the pupils make generally good progress from the time they enter the school. The quality and standards in Foundation Stage are good. The school has successfully addressed those issues for improvement identified at the time of the last inspection. On taking up her post two years ago, the headteacher's searching analysis of what needed to be done to improve overall provision has led to beneficial change and development. Staff and pupils thrive on the Catholic ethos which underpins all aspects of the school's values and day-to-day life. The school has a strong capacity to sustain, and improve further, the quality of education that it provides.

What the school should do to improve further

* strengthen the established systems for sharing best practice in teaching and learning*
extend opportunities for pupils to tackle work independently* enhance external play facilities, including for the Foundation Stage

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils are achieving well and reaching good standards. In recent years, the school's performance in national tests (SATs), although generally above average, declined and did not keep pace with national trends. The school addressed this issue successfully and Year 6 pupils achieved good standards in 2005. Provisional results indicate that their attainment in English and science was well above average and more able pupils did particularly well across the board. Children make good progress in all areas of learning in the reception class which gets them off to a good start in Year 1. Again, the standards achieved by the end of Year 2 fell over recent years but picked up in 2005. Standards in the current Year 2 are good in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils of all abilities make good progress because teachers assess their work carefully and set challenging targets matched to individuals. For example, many pupils with special educational needs achieve the standards that all pupils are expected to reach by Year 6.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The school's outstanding support for pupils' personal development is reflected in the delightful attitudes they have to all aspects of school life. They attend well and thrive

in the positive atmosphere. Through assemblies, art, music and drama pupils have very good opportunities to reflect on human achievement and make a personal response. Their very good behaviour reflects the school's excellent provision for social and moral development and the role models that all adults provide. The school council is an effective conduit for children's views. Pupils know that their views are valued and reward the school's trust in them by making a very strong contribution to school and community life. It is rare to see pupils taking assemblies with such confidence and maturity as those for infant children led by Year 6. Cultural development is supported very well through art workshops, theatre visits and musical performances. Pupils gain a good understanding of cultural diversity in Britain and beyond through work in religious education and geography, and by special focus weeks. They were eager to talk, for example, about how much they had learned during the recent Africa Week. Pupils develop an excellent understanding of health issues because the school approaches this in a wide variety of ways. They learn about nutrition and such issues as drug abuse in science lessons, healthy eating is promoted at break and lunchtimes, and there are many openings for exercise. The children are well aware of the need to keep themselves safe and are mutually supportive in the playground, ready to lend a hand if there is a minor accident. Their economic well-being is assured through strong curriculum opportunities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Effective and enthusiastic teaching and learning are a strong feature of the school. In particularly productive lessons, including a number which included outstanding practice, pupils made very good progress. The teachers possess strong subject knowledge and motivate children to achieve the best they are capable of. Teachers plan assiduously, share learning objectives with the class, check that pupils understand their learning, and manage pupils' behaviour with skill and great care. In literacy, mathematics, music, and in different classes across the primary age range, inspectors saw children engaged in their learning, collaborating well with their friends in groups, and enjoying the acquisition of new skills and knowledge. Occasionally, a small minority of pupils wandered off task, and the school has already begun to introduce a number of ways in which it can promote pupils' independent learning habits. One pupil commented affectionately on the warm-up activities in physical education: 'He tires us out before we're even started'. Other comments from pupils which reflect the strong quality of the teaching included: 'I always seem to understand because they explain it well', and 'It's not really serious all the time, it's fun'. The teachers' secure knowledge of the pupils' prior attainment and achievement means that teaching is well aimed at individual needs, although some very able children in Year 6 observed that they would like more challenging work in mathematics and literacy. One parent commented incisively: 'Our Year 6 child wants more difficult homework, but not more homework'.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum meets the needs and the interests of the learners well because teachers plan interesting coverage of all subjects. Planning for literacy, numeracy and science is appropriate and meets the individual learning needs of pupils. The exciting and stimulating provision in the Foundation Stage covers the six areas of learning well, although the outdoor play area should offer greater variety of opportunity for children to work beyond the classroom. The good variety of visitors and theme weeks, such as Book Week and Africa Week, add to the pupils' enjoyment and are designed to provide opportunities for all pupils to achieve. They effectively link many areas of the curriculum and engender much excitement and enjoyment. The school has rightly identified the need to develop planned curriculum links which enable pupils to use their newly acquired skills across a broad range of subjects. The newly introduced planning and preparation time for teachers has broadened the curriculum offer for pupils, with opportunities extended in art, physical education, drama, and information and communication technology. There is an excellent emphasis on helping pupils to stay fit and enjoy competitive sport. There are opportunities to learn French, which also promotes awareness of other countries. The school makes outstanding efforts to give all children the chance to benefit from all it offers, such as the Year 6 annual residential trip to the Isle of Wight. Other trips have pupils bubbling with excitement, such as the Victorian schoolroom at Katesgrove, or the Egyptian display in the British Museum. The school has begun to extend opportunities for Year 1 and 2 pupils to make visits outside the school environment.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The outstanding care, guidance and support which children receive are evident in the school's daily life. They are warmly greeted and very well supervised throughout the day. Pupils' academic progress and personal development are carefully monitored. Staff know the pupils well and children are secure in the knowledge that there is always an adult they can turn to. Support for vulnerable children is excellent, as is the lead given by the coordinator for special educational needs. The school works in close partnership with other agencies in the interests of individual pupils, for example is supporting children of travellers' families. The close partnership developed with parents enables any individual concerns to be addressed. In the words of one parent of a child in Year 6: 'We have continued to be impressed by the excellent pastoral care she has received and the high standards of teaching and learning'.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school judges rightly that leadership and management overall are good. Since September 2003, the headteacher has introduced a broader curriculum and a range of other worthwhile initiatives, at the same time improving pupils' standards in their

learning. The headteacher's visible leadership style enables those around her to flourish. The senior management team works harmoniously and to good effect. It is focused thoughtfully and rigorously on school improvement at all levels, and has a keen recognition of the many strengths and potential of the school. Through a well designed programme of in-service training, the school is sharing its best practice among all staff. Teachers readily respond to their responsibilities and accountabilities. Leadership in learning comes also from the school's skilful and well deployed team of classroom support staff. There is an unswerving commitment from all staff working in the school to provide the quality of education the children deserve. The school rightly enjoys the confidence of the parents. During the inspection, inspectors received a number of unsolicited comments from parents and visitors, all of which were complimentary about St Dominic Savio School's work. The governing body is strongly committed to the well-being and achievement of the school; its procedures for effective governance and financial management are secure. The chair of governors takes a lead with the headteacher in monitoring pupils' standards in national tests, and ensures that the school's leadership team is held to account with rigour. The Portsmouth Diocese has given the school valued support in a number of pastoral and academic matters. The school enjoys generous accommodation and uses every inch of space with imagination and pragmatism. The outstanding quality of display throughout the school, in classrooms, halls, common spaces, locker areas and corridors, enhances the climate for learning, and is a reflection of the staff's meticulous attention to detail in creating an environment within which children can flourish. The school is very well placed to build upon its many strengths to continue to provide a strong quality of education for its children, and to realise its vision: 'A community moving forward together'.

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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	2	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	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	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

You may remember that we visited your school just before half-term to inspect the quality of education which you receive. We spoke to a number of you and observed you in lessons and around the school.

We would like to thank you for the way you made us feel welcome and shared your thoughts and values with the inspection team. A full report is available for you to read, but this letter gives you some highlights to talk about, perhaps through your school council. During our two days in the school, we were especially impressed by: * The quality of the teaching and care you receive from all the adults who work with you * Much of the work we looked at in your books * Your positive attitudes towards all aspects of school life * The way in which Year 6 pupils led assemblies for the younger children * The quality and variety of display around the school, especially the displays linked to Africa Week * The caring work - and lovely sashes! - of the playground pals.

To make the school an even better place to learn, we have recommended that your teachers share with each other their good ideas, resources and teaching styles. We also think that some of you could be better at learning to work more carefully on your own in the classroom. We have also asked the headteacher and governors to see how they can improve further your outdoor play areas. You all know that you are part of a good school, and we wish you well in your studies and the other activities which you so clearly enjoy at St Dominic Savio.