



St Clement's Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 111320
LEA Halton
Inspection number 278654
Inspection dates 27 March 2006 to 28 March 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs Lesley Traves CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Oxford Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Runcorn
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Cheshire WA7 4NX
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01928 572129
Number on roll	180	Fax number	01928 590005
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs A Williams
Date of previous inspection	2 October 2000	Headteacher	Mrs M Morgan

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

St Clement's is a smaller than average primary school, which draws its pupils from a wide range of socially and economically diverse areas of Runcorn. The majority of pupils are of the Catholic faith and all but a few are of white British heritage. A very small number speak English as an additional language. An average proportion of pupils has learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with statements. The proportion of pupils having free school meals is low; this does not fully reflect the economic circumstances of a significant number of families.

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. This exactly matches the school's view of itself. Pupils flourish in the warm, family environment created. They enjoy school greatly, their behaviour is exemplary and they work very hard. The outstanding care they receive ensures that they develop as thoughtful, mature individuals. Parents value the school highly and are very supportive of its work.

Pupils achieve well because the quality of teaching, learning and the curriculum is good and those with particular needs are very effectively supported. Pupils get off to a flying start in the Foundation Stage, because they are settled and secure. They start school with skills that are generally below average and by the end of the Reception class, most reach the standards expected, with some exceeding them. By the end of Year 6, standards are above average in English and science. In mathematics, standards are average, but improving, because the school has identified very clearly key areas to work on. Strategies in place are having a good impact, although some fine-tuning is needed to ensure consistency throughout. Leadership and management are good. The head teacher provides outstanding leadership. She is vigorous in her pursuit of high standards and is committed to providing the best possible support for all pupils and their families. The school has rigorous procedures in place for checking on its work and prioritising areas for development. Highly effective teamwork has ensured that the key issues from the last inspection have been fully addressed and rapid improvement has been secured in other key areas. Governors fulfil their responsibilities well. The school provides good value for money and has strong capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- In order to build on the improvements already achieved, establish more consistent practice in the teaching of mathematics.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

All pupils achieve well and generally meet the challenging targets set for them. On entry to school, their skills are below those expected for their age. By the end of Reception, they have made good progress and most meet and some exceed the goals set for this age group. They do particularly well in their personal and social development. This good achievement continues through the following years, building well on this strong start. By the end of Year 6, standards are above average, particularly in English and science. In mathematics, standards are more variable and were average in the 2005 tests for Year 6 pupils. Standards in mathematics are a school priority and improvements are starting to be seen. For example, in the tests taken by Year 2 pupils in 2005, standards rose as a direct result of these strategies. Similarly, as teaching and learning are becoming more consistent across Key Stage 2, progress is accelerating and standards are starting to rise.

The best achievement is in English. Reading standards are consistently high throughout the school. The trend in writing is strongly upwards at both key stages and progress bounds ahead in Years 5 and 6 in response to some outstanding teaching. The attention the school gives to the needs of individual pupils, and the effectiveness of the way in which their needs are met, ensure that all of them achieve well. Many of those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities do very well indeed to reach average levels. Parents of these pupils are delighted with how well their children are doing and the children themselves are proud of their achievements.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school. They have very positive attitudes to learning and work hard at all times. They develop excellent relationships with the staff and each other. They say that they feel secure, valued and fully included in all the school offers. These features underpin their learning very well indeed, as does their excellent attendance. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They behave exceptionally well at all times and are friendly and polite in response to the high standards expected of them.

Opportunities for pupils to undertake the role of 'safety officers' and be involved in designing the school travel plan have had a significant and lasting impact on pupils' awareness of how to stay safe. They also show excellent understanding of living healthy lifestyles through the strong emphasis the school places on regular exercise and healthy eating. This is borne out by the high standards achieved in the 'healthy schools', 'golden tuck' and 'activemark' awards. Pupils make a strong contribution to the school and to the local community. They take their responsibilities very seriously indeed and thoroughly enjoy taking part in a wealth of events locally, such as performing for senior citizens. Pupils show high levels of care for others through their charity work and demonstrate respect and tolerance for those with different beliefs. They are well equipped for the future with good basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers have high expectations of the pupils' involvement in lessons and as a result, they work hard and learning is maximised. Good knowledge of the pupils ensures that teachers assess their work effectively and pinpoint the next learning steps accurately. This is a key factor in ensuring that all are supported and challenged well. Pupils' individual targets are shared with them and they are actively involved in checking that they are achieving them. This is having a good impact on progress, particularly in English and mathematics. Adults and pupils get on extremely well with each other, and the friendly and calm atmosphere in classes

strongly promotes good behaviour and enjoyment of lessons. Learning takes place in calm surroundings, with boys and girls working happily and productively together. Teaching assistants give very good support to pupils who find learning difficult. Examples of outstanding teaching were seen in both key stages. The most inspired teaching, for example, in writing lessons in Years 5 and 6, is hugely enthusiastic, pushes pupils to the limits in their thinking and demands speedy working. The effectiveness of teaching in mathematics still varies between lessons and classes so the best possible progress is not always made. For example, teachers' questions sometimes demand too little response or opportunities are missed for pupils to explain how they have worked out answers. Increasingly, teachers are working together and taking the same approach to teaching particular skills or methods of solving problems. This level of consistency is starting to pay dividends in better achievement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It fulfils requirements and meets the needs of all pupils well, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the very small number who are learning English as an additional language. There are valuable opportunities for pupils to take part in activities outside the school day. These include residential visits for infant and junior pupils and a good range of clubs. Strong partnerships, including those with other schools and the 'creative action zone', enrich learning by providing good opportunities for pupils to take part in events such as music competitions or theatre visits. Older pupils confirm that these opportunities have increased in recent years and they are very appreciative of what is on offer. Pupils and parents value the teaching of important life skills, including encouraging pupils to keep to a healthy lifestyle and to be aware of risks and hazards. The excellent new information and communication technology suite is highly popular with the pupils and enables them to develop their computer skills well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides an outstanding level of care for its pupils, which is reflected in the very positive atmosphere created. Ensuring the well-being of all its pupils is at the heart of the school's work. Staff know the pupils and their families very well indeed and as a result are able to offer the right level of support for them. There is a willingness to go the extra mile in seeking out exactly what pupils with particular difficulties need. Parents value this highly and most are very happy with the care provided for their children. Child protection and health and safety procedures are particularly robust. Arrangements for settling reception children into school are excellent and result in happy, confident learners from the outset. Partnership with parents is strong and impacts positively on pupils' progress, particularly in literacy. The procedures for tracking the pupils' progress are thorough and are effective in ensuring that they receive the right levels of challenge and support.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The leadership of the head teacher is outstanding. Key strengths include her commitment to high standards and her continuous drive to improve the school systematically and provide the very best for all its pupils. She has created a strong team who share her very clear vision and play an effective part in raising standards. There is no complacency. As a result, there is very good capacity for further development.

There are particularly thorough and rigorous procedures in place for school self-evaluation. Consequently, the school has a sharp view of what it does well and what needs to be improved, based on high quality evidence. It draws well on the views of governors, pupils and parents in determining its priorities. The school development plan is well constructed and effectively underpins improvements. Subject and key stage leaders are doing a good job of developing their areas of responsibility. Those who are more established, for example in English, have had a particularly positive impact on standards. Some are new to their roles and are being well supported as they get to grips with what they need to do to improve standards further. Governors effectively fulfil their responsibilities. They are supportive, act as critical friends and understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school well. More recently appointed governors are actively developing their expertise through training and through becoming more closely involved in checking on the work of the school.

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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	1	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	1	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	1	NA
The attendance of learners	1	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	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	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

As you know, two inspectors visited your school recently to find out about your school and how your teachers help you to learn. Thank you for being so polite and friendly. We really enjoyed talking to you and listening to what you had to say about your school and what you like best about it.

The things that we think are really good about your school are:

- the way in which teachers enable you to do well in your lessons
- your excellent behaviour and the way in which you all get on so well with each other
- your attitudes to lessons and the way you really enjoy them and work so hard
- the way in which all the people in school care for you and help you in all you do.

We have asked your teachers to improve one thing to make the school even better:

- we would like them to help you do even better in mathematics, by giving you plenty of opportunities to explain how you work out your answers and making sure you have to think hard all the time!

Thank you very much for helping us with the inspection. We hope that you will carry on enjoying school and doing well. Most of all, we hope that you will carry on helping the staff to make your school even better.