



Worcester, St George's Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 116924
LEA Worcestershire
Inspection number 279950
Inspection dates 21 February 2006 to 22 February 2006
Reporting inspector Paul (Alex) Baxter AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Thorneloe Walk
School category	Voluntary aided		Worcester
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Worcestershire WR1 3JX
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01905 25841
Number on roll	204	Fax number	01905 27621
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Father Paul Fitzpatrick
Date of previous inspection	9 October 2000	Headteacher	Mr Joseph Baker

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 21 February 2006 - 22 February 2006	Inspection number 279950
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St. George's Catholic Primary School is average in size. It serves a relatively advantaged area, with some pupils coming from other parishes. Most pupils are of White British origin. About 13% of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, with half of these speaking English as a second language. Very few pupils are eligible for free school meals and the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is also low. Most children start school with levels of attainment that are generally above the levels expected for their age.

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 significant strengths. It has improved well since its last inspection. Standards have risen in science, provision for the children in the Reception class is better and planning for work in different subjects throughout the school has improved. The school evaluates its effectiveness accurately. It has a good capacity to improve further. Everyone is committed to the Catholic ethos of the school. The headteacher leads a strong team. He enables staff to use their strengths to improve the allround provision for the pupils. Pupils achieve well in all classes because teaching is consistently good and by the time pupils leave in Year 6, standards are high in English, mathematics and science. Good teaching, good curriculum planning and effective care and guidance also help pupils to develop their personal qualities successfully. However, pupils do not have enough opportunity to use their skills in independent research. Most teachers use assessments of the pupils' work effectively to meet their needs but at times pupils are not always kept fully informed about what is expected of them to improve further. Leadership and management, including governance, are good, with strengths in promoting improvement through accurate strategic planning. Overall the school provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- In Years 1 to 6, provide more opportunities for pupils to follow their own lines of enquiry, such as independent research, to match the good practice in science and information and communication technology (ICT).
- Ensure that teachers are more consistent and precise in the way they use marking to inform pupils about what it is they need to do to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well. Children enter the Reception class with above average standards in most areas of learning, especially in communication, language and literacy. Children make good progress in this class and exceed the goals expected of them by the end of their Reception Year. Many of these children do very well in reading and in their personal, social and emotional development. Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 1 and 2, because of consistently good teaching that is sharply focused on meeting pupils' differing needs. By the end of Year 2, standards are well above average in reading and are above average in writing and mathematics. Teachers' high expectations in Years 3 to 6 underpin the good progress that pupils make. Most pupils, including those with learning difficulties or disabilities and those learning English as an additional language, reach the challenging targets set for them. Standards are significantly above average in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6 and reflect pupils' good achievement. With more opportunity to work independently, some pupils could achieve even more. Year 6 national tests in 2005 showed that boys

and girls achieved equally well and reached higher standards than those found at the time of the last inspection.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils are very proud of their school and are exceptionally happy. Consequently, they attend very well, have an outstanding desire to learn and work extremely hard. Parents comment about the 'strong sense of identity' and 'family ethos' in the school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good. Pupils' outstanding behaviour was demonstrated in school Mass, where very high levels of spiritual awareness were apparent. Prayer and reflection are important parts of everyday life. Pupils relate very well to one another, are very caring and have a keenly developed sense of right and wrong. They are confident and enthusiastic. They take their responsibilities very seriously. Members of the school council, for example, are thoughtful, concerned about others and have successfully introduced 'Buddy benches' in the playground to help pupils who need friends. Pupils contribute very well to the local and wider community by supporting charities. They have developed an 'Eco Code' to improve the school environment. The highly successful 'Pupil Press' (school newspaper) encourages pupils to think for themselves and is solely organised by the school council. Around school and in lessons pupils keep themselves and each other safe. Pupils are very knowledgeable about healthy lifestyles and are well prepared for life in the future and say, 'We are all treated fairly and help one another'.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good, interesting teaching challenges pupils and promotes good achievement throughout the school. Frequently, teaching is inspirational, as in Year 4 where pupils responded with audible sighs of enthusiasm to the teacher's challenge to calculate the area of shapes. Pupils with learning difficulties and those with English as an additional language have their needs addressed effectively. Key elements in the successful teaching and learning include high expectations that are presented in a warm supportive manner and challenging work. Another strength lies in the consistency of good practice across the school, with one pupil remarking, 'I like lessons because I am kept busy'. Occasionally teachers take too strong a lead in lessons, and although effective in imparting knowledge, this does not make best use of pupils' independent learning skills. In contrast, teachers have promoted improved standards in science by a consistent emphasis on learning through investigation. Teachers know the pupils well and are skilful in questioning pupils to develop their ideas. Teachers give clear oral guidance to pupils but are not always as effective in the quality of written feedback they give through the marking of pupils' work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and pupils have a wide range of learning opportunities. The Foundation Stage (Reception Year) is planned well, including increasing opportunities for children to organise work for themselves. In Years 1 to 6, there are good links between subjects that make lessons more interesting. Design and technology, and art and design are closely connected. Writing and speaking and listening skills are developed well across the curriculum and science is also often related to other subjects. Pupils make good use of ICT in work in different subject areas. Personal, social and health education is taught extremely well through science and physical education, ensuring that pupils learn about keeping healthy. Pupils learn independently outside lessons, for example undertaking responsibilities during play and lunch times or attending school council meetings. These help them to develop the skills needed for their future economic well-being, but there are not yet enough opportunities for them to follow their own ideas within lessons to extend learning. There is a good variety of trips, including a trip to Kingswood residential centre, and visitors such as local firemen. A good range of extra-curricular activities, including sports and gardening, also enriches the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. The school is very caring, one parent commenting, 'My child continues to be guided and nurtured in the best possible way'. Very good procedures, including child protection and risk assessments of health and safety, ensure that pupils are well looked after. The school's good local links with the church community and secondary schools ensure pupils' well-being. Parents are confident that if there is a problem, 'the school responds very promptly'. Pupils know there is always an adult available if they need help. They say, 'Teachers always listen'. Pupils are well supported when transferring to secondary school. Plans to improve the transition from a range of pre-school providers are being implemented. Assessment data is used well to track groups of pupils and very effectively to target additional specialist help where needed. However, there is some inconsistency in helping pupils themselves to understand what they need to do to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Effective leadership and management result in significant strengths in key areas of provision. Pupils' academic and personal skills are developed successfully. The good curriculum and higher standards represent major improvements in these areas since the last inspection. The school has a good capacity to improve and as one parent commented in the questionnaire, 'continues to drive to do the best for the children in its care'. Self-evaluation is good. The school consults others very fully and has an accurate view of its strengths, areas for development and overall effectiveness.

Initiatives such as raising standards in science are formulated in a well-considered three-year school development plan and developed through focused monitoring of lessons. Progress towards challenging targets is evaluated effectively to check that planned improvement is reached. This is shown in pupils' improved investigative skills in science. There is scope to build even more on the school's strengths in its strategic plan for improvement, for example by transferring the success in science to plans for independent work in other subjects. The quality of teaching and learning, the planned curriculum and the quality of the day-to-day care, support and guidance given to the pupils are all monitored, evaluated and developed well. An effective team approach to leadership and management is promoted diligently by the headteacher and is strengthened by a shared commitment to the school's Catholic ethos. Governors have a good understanding of the effectiveness of the provision, are fully informed and contribute well to the success 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?	1	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	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	1	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	1	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

Dear Pupils, Thank you for your extremely warm and friendly welcome and for talking to us about your work. You are very fortunate to attend such a good school and we thought that you were all extremely polite and helpful. We were pleased to find a number of strengths in the school:

- You enjoy school, behave really well, get on very well with each other and show outstanding attitudes to your work.
- You make good progress in all classes and develop very good skills in English, mathematics and science by the time you leave.
- Everyone cares for each other and you are looked after well.
- Your teachers are good and plan interesting activities.
- Mr Baker and his team lead and manage the school well. We think you could learn even better if you had more opportunities to develop and follow up your own ideas and knew more about what you need to do to improve next.

Thank you again, Yours sincerely, Alexander Paul Baxter
Lead Inspector