



Our Lady and St Oswald's Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 123553
LEA Shropshire
Inspection number 281504
Inspection dates 23 May 2006 to 23 May 2006
Reporting inspector David Cox AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Upper Brook Street
School category	Voluntary aided		Oswestry
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Shropshire SY11 2TG
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01691 652849
Number on roll	141	Fax number	01691 681055
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Reverend Stephen McKenna
Date of previous inspection	13 June 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Veronica McLardie

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 23 May 2006 - 23 May 2006	Inspection number 281504
-----------------------------	---	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Our Lady and St Oswald's is a smaller than average primary Catholic school. Most of the pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The percentage of pupils who have learning difficulties is average. When children start school in Reception, they generally have the skills and knowledge typical of four-year-olds but this does vary from year to year and some pupils display weak social skills.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school provides a good education with some outstanding features. This judgement matches the school's own analysis. Pupils achieve well and by Year 6, standards are exceptionally high. Even though pupils' overall progress through the school is good, some pupils in Years 1 to 6 have a relative weakness with mental arithmetic in comparison with other subjects. Good teaching and learning meets the vast majority of pupils' needs well. Provision in Reception is good and, as a result of good teaching, the vast majority of children reach the nationally expected level by the time they enter Year 1.

Pupils feel safe and are exceedingly well cared for. The school goes to considerable lengths to ensure that all pupils are treated equally. Together with a good curriculum, these factors ensure that pupils thoroughly enjoy their time at school and develop exceptional personal skills. Leadership and management are good overall and leaders have shown that they can move the school forward and also maintain its strengths. Subject leaders have made a successful start to monitoring their subjects but this is a recent initiative and has not yet had time to impact on the quality of teaching or pupils' achievement. The school provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

Raise standards in mathematics by providing pupils with more opportunities to practise mental arithmetic across the curriculum. Ensure that subject leaders develop fully their role in improving the effectiveness of teaching and thus raising pupils' achievement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress as they move up through the school and achieve well in relation to their starting points. When children start school in Reception, they generally have the skills and knowledge typical of four-year-olds but this does vary from year to year and some display weak social skills. However, they make good progress and by the end of the Reception Year, many achieve the level expected nationally at this age. Improvement in their personal development is particularly good.

Pupils also make good progress in Years 1 and 2, and by Year 2 standards are above average. In 2005, although pupils still achieved well, standards fell compared to previous years because the year group contained a particularly high proportion of pupils who had learning difficulties. Good progress is continued throughout Years 3 to 6 and standards are exceptionally high in Year 6 because of the good teaching throughout the school. Results in the national tests in 2005 for Year 6 pupils were exceptionally high overall and this has been the case since the last inspection. By the time pupils reach Year 6, listening skills are very good, and pupils are confident and competent speakers. They read with fluency. Skilful support from teaching assistants ensures

pupils with learning difficulties are taught well and make good progress. The school is meeting the challenging targets set for improving learning even further.

The school has correctly identified that the pupils' skills with mental arithmetic needed sharpening. A range of strategies is now being used to help pupils improve. These measures have not been in place long enough to have had a full impact.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are outstanding. The school has a well established reputation for its caring, Catholic ethos and for promoting very high standards of behaviour. The pupils get great pleasure from coming to school, achieve well and have good attendance. This ensures that they are extremely well prepared for their secondary education and their life beyond school. A successful buddy system results in pupils always having a friend in school to play with and confide in. Pupils say that it is a school where 'you make friends, we are all unique and not mean to people different from us'. They feel safe in school and are confident adults will always listen to them if they need help.

Pupils have a good knowledge of the types of food which are good for them and those which are not. For instance, eating healthy snacks and fruit at play- times is beginning to change their eating habits. Programmes of regular exercise and a wide range of out of school sporting activities enable pupils to adopt a healthy lifestyle. Pupils make a good contribution to the school and to the wider community through activities such as charitable collections for a number of good causes, and as a result, are on course to become responsible citizens. Pupils' views reflect the difference the recently established school council is having. As one pupil suggests, 'we now have the power to get things noticed such as making the playground a safer place.'

In Reception, children's personal development is good. It is supported by strong home-school relationships and very good induction procedures.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall. As a result, the majority of pupils thrive and make good progress. In Reception, teaching is good. Learning is enjoyable because the children state that 'they are not left to struggle if they need extra help.' Teachers share targets with the pupils and so they know what to improve and how to do it.

In Years 1 to 6, teachers know their pupils well. When teaching is at its best, teachers use their good subject knowledge to engage and motivate pupils. Activities are well matched to the needs of pupils because teachers take good account of the assessment data available on each pupil. For example, in a class that contained both Year 3 and

Year 4 pupils, the teacher planned tasks that effectively engaged pupils of all abilities. Pupils were highly motivated by how grids and compass directions are used to produce a map to 'hidden treasure'. Teachers are very positive in the way they use praise to manage behaviour. In consequence, pupils respond well and gain in confidence.

Teachers have recently introduced strategies to make learning about mathematics more fun in an attempt to improve pupils' mental arithmetic skills. However, these strategies are not yet used fully across all subjects and this results in some pupils not making the progress they are capable of.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. The school provides a broadly balanced curriculum which encourages and supports learning. The wide range of out of school clubs, sports activities and visitors promotes enjoyment and enhances achievement. The pupils talk enthusiastically about visits to Wales and places of historical interest. The school has introduced strategies to improve pupils' writing skills and this is reflected in the high standards observed during the inspection. The use of computers to develop competency and skills in information and communication technology has improved. However, the chance to use this knowledge and understanding to benefit learning across the curriculum is inconsistent.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The outstanding quality of care, guidance and support contributes very well to pupils' enjoyment of school and their good achievement. The school has good procedures in place for safeguarding children. Parents appreciate the school's family atmosphere, and know that their children are cared for very well. Staff are fully aware of child protection arrangements. They make full use of support services to meet the needs of pupils with learning difficulties, thereby ensuring they make good progress. When they first start at school, the children are helped to settle in happily and quickly make new friends. The school has improved the procedures for tracking pupils' progress and this is resulting in a good match of work to pupils' needs.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management of the school, including governance, are good. There is a shared vision, focused on raising standards and encouraging all pupils to do their best. The headteacher states that 'there is a lot of praise in our school and we look for the positive.' This ensures that all pupils are treated equally well.

The leadership of the headteacher, who took up post at the start of this academic year, is good. She has a good grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and is keen to ensure that all pupils achieve as well as they possibly can. School

self-evaluation is accurate in most respects, although it undervalues itself with respect to pupils' personal development.

The senior leadership team has recently been restructured. As a result, there is now a sharper focus on raising standards and achievement and the school is well placed to move forward. Subject leaders are beginning to lead their subjects more effectively and are being given more autonomy to do so. The school has recognised that this delegation is at an early stage and that staff need to develop their skills in monitoring and evaluating so that they can support the development of teaching in all subject areas.

Parents are very keen for their children to come to school, partly because of good results but also because of the school's very positive ethos. A small minority of parents express concern that the school does not always consult with them, for example, over changes to the school day. Inspectors agree that this issue could have been handled more effectively.

Governors are supportive of the school and are well informed. They have a good working relationship with the school and know its strengths and weaknesses. Governors link with each of the subject areas and monitor the work of the school effectively.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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
--	-----------------------	--------------

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	1	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	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	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?	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	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

As you know, we visited your school recently to find out how well it is doing. We would like to thank you for looking after us so well. We enjoyed talking to so many of you during playtime and lunchtime about your school. You told us so much about the work you have done and how much you enjoy coming to school.

What we found that is really good about your school

You behave extremely well and you enjoy being at school a great deal. You do well at school because of the good teaching. Your school is a healthy and very safe place to be and you help each other when there are problems. Teachers and other staff in the school look after you very well. Your teachers and other adults ensure that you do lots of exciting activities.

What we have asked your school to do now

Give you more opportunities to improve your mental arithmetic. Continue to involve teachers who are in charge of subjects in having more say in what the school does well and what needs to be improved.

Thank you once again for your help.