



St George's Catholic School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 123851
LEA Somerset
Inspection number 281577
Inspection dates 22 June 2006 to 23 June 2006
Reporting inspector Paul Sadler AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	The Mount
School category	Voluntary aided		Taunton
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Somerset TA1 3NR
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01823 284130
Number on roll	190	Fax number	01823 325946
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Sean Holland
Date of previous inspection	4 December 2000	Headteacher	Mr P Hanratty

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

As the only Roman Catholic primary school locally, the school draws its pupils from a wide area. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is about average. About ten per cent of pupils speak languages other than English at home, mainly Polish. Some of these pupils are at an early stage of learning English.

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 which provides good value for money. It is a welcoming place; as a parent said, 'I have been very pleasantly surprised with the very warm and welcoming atmosphere.' The school's assessment of its own performance broadly agrees with the findings of the inspection. Pupils make good progress and reach above-average standards by the time they leave at the end of Year 6. Their personal development is good; spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. There is a strong Catholic ethos that pervades the school. Both behaviour and attendance are good. The school is very effective at promoting a healthy lifestyle, partly because of its excellent sports facilities. Pupils are confident young people when they leave.

Teaching is good. Pupils' progress is carefully monitored and work is planned to meet their needs. Pupils with learning difficulties and those learning English as an additional language are supported very well. The occasional lesson is less than stimulating. This leads to pupils becoming a little bored and results in minor incidents of misbehaviour. The curriculum is good, especially the opportunities for sport, drama and outdoor activities, but opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology (ICT) are limited. Pupils receive good care.

The school is led and managed well. The governors and senior staff give a clear sense of direction. However, the monitoring of teaching is a relative weakness, as is the level of communication with parents who are dissatisfied with some aspect of the provision. The Reception class, where pupils achieve average standards, gives pupils a sound start to their education. These pupils receive satisfactory teaching. There has been good improvement since the last inspection and the potential exists for this to continue.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the consistency of teaching quality through more rigorous monitoring and feedback to teachers.
- Improve the quality of communication with parents, especially those dissatisfied with some aspect of the school's provision.
- Improve pupils' opportunities to use ICT on a regular basis.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

All pupils, including those with learning difficulties, make good progress and reach above-average standards. In the national tests taken by Year 6 in 2005, standards attained were above average in English, mathematics and science. There was a particularly good proportion of pupils who attained the above-average levels. Appropriate targets that the school set itself were exceeded and equally challenging targets for 2006 should be achieved.

Children enter the school with broadly average levels of skills and understanding. In the Reception class they make satisfactory progress and by the start of Year 1 most

reach the expected standards. They make good progress in Years 1 and 2, by the end of which most speak and write confidently and accurately. Many have mastered a good handwriting style and can spell common words correctly.

In Years 3 to 6 pupils continue to make good progress and by the end of Year 6 almost all reach or exceed the national standards in English, mathematics and science. They also achieve well in most other subjects, most notably in physical education, especially swimming and dance. Lower standards are attained in ICT. Year 5 gave a moving and sophisticated performance to the whole school, based on the theme of 'The Rain Forest.' Those new to learning English make very good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The school's strong Catholic ethos very successfully develops a good understanding of spiritual and moral issues. Pupils have very good opportunities to develop socially, for instance, on residential visits and through drama. The school places great emphasis on cultural development and celebrates the range of cultures represented in the school.

Pupils behave well, except when the teaching is less than good. They report that bullying is dealt with effectively, although some parents are less convinced. This is due to sometimes weak communication between school and home. Attendance is good and pupils generally enjoy school. They especially enjoy the sporting opportunities and are enthusiastic about other aspects of developing a healthy lifestyle, such as eating fruit. Pupils are taught to behave safely, for instance, they accept and understand the reasons for rules about ball games in the playground. They make a good contribution to the community, both locally through links with the church and more widely through charity collections. The high standards attained in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy show they are well prepared for later life, although the limited access to computers limits the development of their skills in ICT.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Overall, the quality of teaching is good. In most lessons, teachers have clear objectives for each lesson which are communicated to and understood by the pupils. Teachers use interactive whiteboards well to enhance learning, and techniques such as the use of drama and role-play are also used to good effect. Occasionally teaching lacks enthusiasm and pace, resulting in low pupil motivation. Good progress is made by the majority of pupils, but in some lessons opportunities for extending learning are missed. Very good progress is made by pupils with learning difficulties because of effective intervention work by the special needs coordinator and her team of teaching assistants. Progress of all pupils is tracked on a regular basis. As a result, work is planned to meet

the needs of individual pupils. Pupils who are at an early stage of learning English also benefit from this good level of support. Pupils are involved in setting personal targets but these are not updated with sufficient frequency, so pupils' understanding of the progress they are making is somewhat limited. Most of the marking is very good, with appropriate comments and guidance to support pupils in improving their work or reflecting on their attitudes and beliefs.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good, although pupils' direct access to ICT is too limited. There are excellent facilities for swimming and PE, including a modern sports hall and indoor heated pool. These are exploited fully. There are opportunities for gifted and talented pupils, particularly in sport competitions and mathematics workshops. A good range of extra-curricular activities is available for pupils, particularly in Key Stage 2. The school offers enrichment activities through visits, such as a recent trip to Cricket St Thomas, and visitors, including a theatre company. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 enjoy residential trips, giving them first-hand experiences to enhance their education.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides good care, guidance and support. Risk assessments are carried out for all school outings and secure child protection procedures are in place. Health and safety checks are carried out and provision is made for first aid. Pupils with learning difficulties and English as an additional language are well supported both in their learning and care. The progress of all pupils is monitored well to ensure that any concerns are picked up quickly. Pupils have good relationships with the staff and feel able to talk to them if they have any concerns or worries. They feel confident that these will be dealt with effectively. Most pupils know what they are capable of achieving but this understanding is not updated with sufficient frequency.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. Leaders have created a strong Catholic ethos in the school which the whole community supports. This is a school where the direction is clear. Subject leadership is good and some very effective work has been carried out to monitor individual pupils' progress. The school has a sound knowledge of its strengths and weaknesses and has identified significant shortcomings, such as the quality of outdoor play facilities for the youngest pupils, and has put them right. Monitoring of teaching and learning takes place and has been used to some extent to improve teaching. Parents and pupils are consulted, and often their suggestions are acted upon, but some parents rightly feel that the reasons for decisions are not always explained fully, leaving them feeling dissatisfied. Governors support the school well and monitor pupils' standards. They have achieved success in attracting funding for

high quality sporting facilities but investment in ICT has been less effective. There has been good improvement since the last inspection and the school is well placed to carry out further improvements.

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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	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	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?	2	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	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	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?	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	3	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

We very much enjoyed talking and listening to you and seeing your work when we visited your school recently. We want to thank you for spending the time to do this. This letter is to tell you what we thought of your school and how it can be even better.

We think your school is a good one. These are some of the best things we found about the school.

- You make good progress and reach high standards in your work. We particularly enjoyed the dance performance by Year 5 in assembly.
- Most of the teaching is good.
- You are given very good opportunities to develop your thoughts, feelings and ideas, through assemblies and subjects like drama and religious education.
- You confidently talk to each other and to adults in a mature way.
- Your behaviour is good and you usually work well together.
- You do a lot of things to help other people, both in the parish and across the world, for instance, through raising money for charity.
- The school has very good facilities for sport and fitness.

To improve the school further, we have asked the school to make sure that all lessons are good ones and to give you more opportunities to use computers in your work. We have also asked the school to improve the way it deals with parents' concerns.