



St Chad's CofE (C) Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 124265
LEA Staffordshire
Inspection number 281676
Inspection dates 13 June 2006 to 14 June 2006
Reporting inspector Mary Hamby HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	The Gateway
School category	Community		Redstreet
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Newcastle, Staffordshire ST5 7AB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01782 562507
Number on roll	336	Fax number	01782 565094
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	
Date of previous inspection	30 October 2000	Headteacher	Mr Gareth Davies

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and very few of them have English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is lower than average, as is the percentage who have learning difficulties or disabilities. There has been a significant turnover in staffing within the last two years, including the appointment of a new headteacher and deputy. The school buildings are not easy to work in as there are numerous mobile classrooms to cope with the expanding school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

'St. Chad's is special because of the teachers and how everyone gets on'. The pupil who said this was absolutely right because relationships are excellent, based in the school's Christian values. The pupils enjoy school, behave well and attendance is good. They develop confidence and benefit from the many opportunities they get to make a contribution to their community, and to work together in teams collaboratively and competitively. This helps them to understand important life skills like cooperation and taking ownership for their own actions. The pupils achieve well in the arts and sport and these talents are celebrated regularly. Achievement in other respects is satisfactory. Standards are broadly average, but in the past have been affected by the turnover of staff in Key Stage 2. Staffing is now more settled and progress for most pupils is satisfactory. However, some of the more able pupils are not making enough progress because the work is not hard enough for them. The school has not identified these high fliers early enough because its system for tracking pupils' progress is relatively recent and not effective enough. Leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The headteacher has been successful in bringing about improvements despite the significant staff changes. The high focus on English, for example, has resulted in some dramatic progress, particularly in reading. He has also made the best of what is undoubtedly a challenging set of buildings. He is keenly aware that the school needs to develop further if he is to fulfil his personal ambition to make it one of the best schools in the county. He has worked very hard towards this goal and recognised that the time is now right to develop the leadership skills of others and encourage governors to play a bigger part in school development. This is a school that has embraced the national guidance that Every Child Matters and has a good action plan setting out what it needs to do. The leadership team agrees that one of the main priorities is to bring about more consistently good teaching by sharing the successful practice in the school. Currently, the inconsistency of the teaching means that in some classes the pupils get a better deal than in others. This particularly affects the more able pupils in those classes where there is a wide ability spread. There are some consistent strengths in the teaching, such as how the pupils are taught to keep themselves safe and healthy and how topics are effective in reinforcing key messages, such as the dangers of smoking. However, assessment is a weaker area. The pupils do not have enough opportunity to contribute to their own learning, and are unsure of their targets and how to achieve them. Marking, despite recent improvements, is not helpful enough in identifying the next steps for the pupils. The school listens to the views of the parents and is swift to respond to their queries. Parents are very satisfied with what the school provides, for example by commenting, 'I have nothing but praise for the school'. They are pleased with the level of care given to their children. Systems for safeguarding the pupils are appropriately in place and there are good arrangements to look after more vulnerable pupils. However, pupils who move into the school do not always have their records sent on, and the school is too slow to assess their attainment. Overall, the school has a balance of strengths and weaknesses and offers a sound quality of education. Its own judgement that it is a good school is entirely understandable because it has made progress since the last inspection, offers a rich

curriculum for most of its pupils and makes effective provision for the pupils' personal development. However, it is not as good as it could be in ensuring that the teaching is consistently effective and that the more able pupils are served well enough. Assessment and tracking procedures are insufficiently effective and the talents and strengths of the governors and senior teachers are not used well enough.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop leadership by broadening the skills of the senior teachers, refining systems to track pupils' progress and further developing the contribution of the governing body.
- Enhance the quality of teaching by placing more emphasis on assessment, including opportunities for the pupils to contribute.
- Improve achievement by ensuring that more able pupils are identified early in the school and are given hard enough work as they move up through the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory. Last year, standards in Year 6 were not good enough because the pupils' learning had been interrupted by numerous changes of staff. This year, there is clear improvement in the pupils' work and standards are within expected levels. Achievement in reading is good because it is taught systematically. The guided reading groups are having a really beneficial impact on progress but could be even better if the pupils themselves were clearer about what they need to learn next. In other subjects, the pupils make satisfactory progress, but some of the more able pupils are not doing as well as they should because the work is too easy. Children in the Foundation Stage make sound progress in almost all aspects, with good progress evident in personal development.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

This is a key strength of the school. Good behaviour is the order of the day and helps lessons to run smoothly. The pupils know how to keep themselves safe and report that bullying is rare. The lunchtime staff are friendly; they encourage the pupils to make healthy choices and play sociably. Pupils are developing well as young citizens through opportunities to make real decisions, such as helping to design the new toilets. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good and improves the pupils' self-esteem and understanding of the needs of others. The school is aware that in order to make personal development even better, the pupils could contribute to the assessment of their own work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

This is satisfactory. Typically, the staff enjoy excellent relationships with their pupils which encourage them to contribute to lessons. Lesson planning is improving but does not yet take sufficient account of the range of abilities in some of the classes. Consequently, the lessons do not hold high enough expectations of the more capable pupils. In lessons which are very successful, the pace is brisk and questions are varied, interesting and challenging. Teaching and assessment in reading are good, but could be even better if the pupils were clearer about their targets. Other assessments are insufficiently precise, and marking in particular does not clearly identify the next steps for the pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory and for the rest of the pupils is good. Throughout Years 1 to 6, the curriculum includes numerous opportunities which help the pupils to develop as well-rounded individuals through links with artists, sports people, and visitors from a range of cultural backgrounds. The wide variety of clubs helps some of the pupils to excel in areas outside the usual range of subjects. A good programme of personal development enables the pupils to be healthy, stay safe and begin to understand relationships. The curriculum for personal development in the Foundation Stage is also good and so the children gain confidence and develop good attitudes to learning. However, there is not enough attention given to creative development and so their imaginative play is not developing as well as it should.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school takes satisfactory care of its pupils. Systems to protect children are appropriate and vulnerable pupils are well supported by the school and their good contacts with other professionals. There are good links with secondary schools and so the pupils transfer from one school to the next with relative ease. The tracking of pupils' academic progress is a weaker element of the provision because it does not identify more able pupils early enough and new arrivals into school are not always adequately assessed.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

'Over the last 12 months the school has made some very good changes and improvements.' This remark from a parent reflects the dedication shown by the headteacher, who has brought about numerous improvements through inspiring the

staff to try new ways of working. He has recently encouraged senior staff to take on more responsibilities and together they have good capacity to take the school forward. Evidence of capacity for improvement is shown in the senior staff's evaluations of lessons which accurately identify the strengths and weaknesses of the teaching. Other forms of evaluation, such as examining progress data, have begun, but these are not as rigorous. The governors are keen to play a role in self-evaluation and other aspects of leadership, but as yet their role as 'critical friends' is underdeveloped.

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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?	3	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?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	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	2	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	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	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	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?	3	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?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	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	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	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

15 June 2006 Dear Children I am writing to tell you about the things we found when Mrs O'Hare, Mr Horwood and I came to visit your school. The first thing we noticed was how friendly and kind you were. You helped us to learn about your school and made us very welcome. We enjoyed visiting your lessons, talking to you and your teachers and looking at your work. We know that you like school, and no wonder, when the staff are so friendly and helpful. You have good opportunities to learn from visitors too and take part in a range of competitions. The school makes sure that you are cared for, happy and that you learn to lead a healthy lifestyle. In most lessons, you make reasonable progress but we have identified some improvements to make learning even better for you all. One of the things we noticed is that you don't always know what to do improve your work. This is because teachers do not always specify what you should learn next. They are starting to decide what levels you are achieving, but this information is not being used well enough to make sure that you are all making the progress you should. We think you should be given more opportunities to talk about your work and you can help with this by telling your teachers when it is too easy or too hard for you. Some of you are capable of much harder work, so you might need to put your thinking caps on soon! Mr Davies has worked very hard since he became your headteacher and has made many improvements. Now is the time for him to start sharing this work with some of the other teachers and with the governors. Good luck with everything you do at school and remember to always try your best. Best wishes from Mrs Hamby, Mrs O'Hare and Mr Horwood