



St Polycarp's Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 125206
LEA Surrey LEA
Inspection number 281915
Inspection dates 19 October 2005 to 20 October 2005
Reporting inspector Malcolm Johnstone AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Farnham
School category	Voluntary aided		Waverley Lane
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Surrey GU9 8BQ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	001252 716307
Number on roll	408	Fax number	07163071252
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr J Davies
Date of previous inspection	15 January 2001	Headteacher	Mr L Henry

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors

Description of the school

This large Catholic Primary school is situated in the small town of Farnham. The school is popular and oversubscribed and pupils travel in from a large geographical area. The socio-economic circumstances of the pupils' families are mixed but generally favourable. Attainment on entry represents a spread of ability but is above average overall. Almost all of the pupils are of White British heritage with just a few pupils from a variety of minority ethnic groups, including a very small number for whom English is an additional language. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties is below average as is the number of pupils with statements of special need. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below average. There is above average pupil mobility, particularly pupils coming into the school at various times of the year.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with the senior management's view that this is a good school. It has some outstanding features. Leadership, management and governance are effective and the school provides good value for money. The school has made good improvement since the last inspection and the capacity to make further improvements is strong. The headteacher and senior managers evaluate effectively how well the school is doing. However, the subject co-ordinators do not have sufficient opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching in their subjects and so cannot contribute fully to the process. The care, guidance and support for pupils are outstanding. Pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour are exemplary and make a significant contribution to their achievements. Standards are well above average in mathematics and science and above average in English. They are similar to national expectations in information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils' achievements in writing, particularly for boys, and in information and communication technology for all pupils, should be higher. Teaching is good and this enables pupils of all abilities to achieve well. Teaching and provision for children in the Foundation Stage are good and children achieve well both socially and academically. The vast majority of parents are very pleased with what the school does for their children.

What the school should do to improve further

Improve pupils' achievements in writing, particularly for boys and in ICT for all pupils making better use of computers to support work in other subjects. Develop the role of the subject co-ordinators by providing opportunities for them to monitor the quality of teaching in their subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good and the school has done well to maintain high standards since the last inspection. Reliable tracking of pupils' progress throughout the school ensures that realistic and suitably challenging targets are set and very largely achieved. Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress and attain the goals expected for their age. A significant minority of children exceeds these goals. Standards by the end of Year 2 are above average in reading, writing and mathematics and most pupils achieve well. However, the more able boys could do better in writing. In Years 3 to 6, boys and girls and pupils of all abilities achieve well in most subjects. Standards at the end of Year 6 are well above average in mathematics and science and in these subjects achievement is very high. Standards in English are above average and all pupils achieve well in speaking and listening and reading. In writing, however, boys particularly should be doing better. The school recognises this and is taking steps to improve it. Pupils who have learning difficulties make good progress against the targets set in their individual education plans. Good progress is made by the small group of minority ethnic pupils who are at the early stages of English language acquisition. Provision

and standards in ICT have improved since the last inspection. Standards are now average but the pupils are capable of achieving more.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The personal development and well-being of pupils are outstanding. Pupils love being at school and enjoy their learning. When asked what they liked or disliked about their school, pupils could think of very little they would change and were very enthusiastic about all aspects. Attendance is very good and reflects pupils' positive views about school. Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils are lively, confident, friendly, helpful and very courteous to one another and to adults. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. There are good opportunities for pupils to think about ideas, actions and their consequences. They are strongly encouraged to think of others and regularly make collections for charities. Their social development is outstanding: the buddy and House systems and the Eco and School Councils make a very strong contribution to pupils' self esteem. Music and art feature strongly in the life of the school and pupils have very good opportunities to learn about other cultures. Healthy lifestyles are very well promoted through the programme for personal, health, social and citizenship. The Eco council has very recently received a national award for its achievements. Council members are very proud of the fact that their views are taken on board, for example, in their suggestions for lowering the school's electricity consumption and recycling materials. Community links are very strong and parents support the school very well. The school's success in developing very good levels of pupils' basic skills and outstanding personal development prepares them very well for later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good with outstanding features. Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning and want to do well. This is a key factor in their good progress. Teachers recognise that pupils learn in different ways and plan their lessons well to meet individual needs. Classroom assistants support them effectively. Teaching and learning is consistently good in the Foundation Stage. Adults model language effectively and have a very good understanding of the needs of the age range. At other stages, well matched, challenging work brings relevance and enjoyment to learning in the large majority of lessons. On a very few occasions where learning is only satisfactory, work does not challenge the pupils enough and progress slows. Role-play and drama are used successfully to develop speaking and listening skills and as a preliminary activity for writing. Teaching and learning in mathematics and science are good. The teaching of writing is generally successful and current strategies to improve boys' writing are beginning to have a positive impact. Throughout the school, pupils with learning difficulties are supported effectively. The success of a pupil with learning difficulties was celebrated in a class to the obvious elation of

that pupil. There are good assessment procedures. Pupils' progress is tracked well as they move through the school. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and praise good work. However, there are too few written comments to show how work might be improved.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. The Foundation Stage curriculum is exciting and promotes effective learning. At all stages, good links are made between subjects and these make learning exciting and more meaningful for the pupils. Provision for games is supported effectively by professional coaches. The range of extra-curricular activities, including residential and local visits is outstanding and enhances learning very effectively. While provision for ICT has improved since the last inspection, computers are not used enough to support learning across the curriculum and pupils have had very few opportunities to explore the control and modelling aspects of the subject. The pupils learn successfully how to stay safe and healthy through personal, social and health education and in lessons in science and physical education. Procedures for identifying pupils with special educational needs are effective and the specialist support they receive enables them to make good progress.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pupils are cared for exceptionally well. Parents feel confident that their children are safe and well cared for. The school fulfils all requirements for health and safety. Very good provision is made for pupils with specific medical or personal needs. Health and safety routines and risk assessments are effective and conscientiously observed. Child protection procedures are clear and widely understood. As a result, pupils feel safe and secure. On the rare occasions when bullying occurs it is dealt with promptly and effectively. The school surveys pupils' views and has established very good procedures to allow them to participate in decision making. There are good systems for tracking the progress of pupils, including those with learning difficulties.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with the school that leadership, management and governance are good. The headteacher and senior managers lead and manage the school well and provide clear direction. There is an outstanding ethos that embraces the concept of inclusion and celebrates achievement academically and socially. The process of self evaluation is effective and involves governors, staff, pupils and parents. The school improvement plan provides an effective blueprint for further improvement. The headteacher and senior managers monitor teaching on a regular basis. This has brought about improvement, for example, in investigative work and in the development of speaking and listening skills. There is good use of performance data to help bring

about improvement. The subject co-ordinators monitor planning and evaluate the work in pupils' books but do not have opportunity to evaluate the quality of teaching in their subjects. This means that they cannot contribute fully to potential improvements in their subjects. The school governors are very supportive of the school and contribute well to its development. They help successfully in strategic planning linked closely to the budget. They ask the kind of critical questions that keep the senior managers on their toes.

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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	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	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	2	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

All the inspectors would like to thank you all for the warm and friendly welcome we received when visiting your school. We were very impressed with how well you all get on together and how polite you are to adults and visitors. Watching you in lessons it is clear to us that you work hard and take a pride in your work. We particularly enjoyed talking with you during our visit and your views and opinions have provided us with a lot of helpful information that will help your school become even better.

We were very impressed with the work of the Eco Council and the School Council and it was great to see that Mr. Henry takes your views very much into account. Your teachers clearly want you to do well and we know that you like and respect them. There are lots of exciting things for you to do outside lessons and we know how much you enjoy and appreciate these. It was good to see you know about healthy eating and drinking and enjoy fruit at playtime. Mr. Henry and all the teachers look after you well and care about how well you are doing. They work very hard to make things even better for you.

You are very good at mathematics and science and most of you write well. We think the boys in particular could do even better with writing and we have asked your teachers to give you more exciting things to write about. We know that you have lots of new computers. You tell us that you enjoy working on these. We have asked your teachers to make sure you have even more work on the computers to help you in all subjects. All the inspectors join me in wishing you all the very best in the future.