



Bromsgrove, St Peter's Catholic First School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 116872
Local Authority Worcestershire
Inspection number 290663
Inspection dates 18–19 October 2006
Reporting inspector Andrew Watters HMI

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

Type of school	First	School address	Rock Hill
School category	Voluntary aided		Bromsgrove
Age range of pupils	4–9		B61 7LH
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01527 831872
Number on roll (school)	288	Fax number	01527 874629
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Vacant Position
		Headteacher	D E M Rollason
Date of previous school inspection	26 February 2001		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
4–9	18–19 October 2006	290663

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Introduction

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

Description of the school

The school is situated on the western edge of Bromsgrove, which is in north Worcestershire. It serves an area where social deprivation affects about a third of the pupils, with the other two thirds living in more favourable social circumstances. The majority live locally, with the remainder living outside the immediate area. Most of the pupils are of White British origin, with a small proportion coming from White and Black Caribbean, White and Black African or other mixed background families. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. The number of pupils who are registered by the school as having learning difficulties or disabilities is below the national average.

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 successfully meets its central aims to provide pupils with a broad and balanced education in a Catholic environment and encourage them to develop a loving, caring attitude within the school, with parents and with the wider community. The headteacher says: 'Each child should feel special and valued and be able to go forward with confidence, knowing that they have the care, guidance and support to help them achieve and make a success of their lives.....we aim to make a difference'. This high aspiration reflects the school's Catholic ethos and contributes positively to its success.

By the end of Year 2 and Year 4, standards are usually above average. Most pupils achieve well and make good progress. By the end of Year 4, their achievement in reading is exceptional. Senior staff are aware that some Year 4 pupils do not achieve well enough in mathematics and that there is underachievement in Year 3, where rates of progress in writing and mathematics are too slow. The pupils in the Foundation Stage receive a very good start to their school life and make good progress. Most pupils meet challenging targets and receive a good level of academic guidance.

The pupils are well cared for in a safe, secure and welcoming school community. They are kind, tolerant and forgiving, showing respect for each other and the adults who work with them. One pupil said: 'Everyone is really kind and helpful. Because there are lots of adults around we always feel safe and secure'. Older pupils are very attentive to the needs and feelings of the youngest pupils and look after them well. The pupils' personal, social and emotional development and well-being are given a high priority and are outstanding. The pupils behave very well and have positive attitudes. They are courteous, polite, confident and very eager to talk about their work. They clearly enjoy coming to school, which is shown in their good attendance. They try hard to do their best and are proud of the school and its achievements.

Almost 50% of the parents returned inspection questionnaires and nearly all of the responses were overwhelmingly positive. One parent said: 'The school is a fantastic place for learning.....as a non-Catholic family, we are fully included and our views and opinions are respected....the school provides an ideal learning environment in which my child is thriving'.

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Some of the teaching is outstanding, although there are a few occasions when the pupils are not challenged well enough in their work. Expectations are generally high and relationships are always very positive. Assessment information is used effectively to identify areas for improvement, although this is not yet a consistent feature in all year groups and subjects. The pupils who are on the school's register of special educational needs make good progress. They receive well targeted support, both in lessons and when working in small groups.

Collective leadership and management are good. The headteacher's passionate commitment to improving the children's life chances is shown clearly in her clarity of vision for the school's future improvement and her high expectations for all staff and

pupils. She receives good support from the senior leadership team who are good role models for other teachers. A good team spirit and common sense of purpose are evident in all aspects of the school's day-to-day life. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good.

The Catholic ethos and Christian values so important to all members of the school community are clearly reflected in its day-to-day work. These are essential to the school's success in raising achievement and developing well-rounded young people. They lay the foundations on which the school's good capacity to improve are built. The challenge which the school embraces and is aiming for is to improve further and become an outstanding school community. It is well placed to do so.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make more effective use of assessment information to raise achievement and increase the rate of progress for some pupils in mathematics in Year 4 and in mathematics and writing in Year 3
- Strengthen the quality of teaching and learning further to ensure that all teaching is consistently good and that more is outstanding.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

When pupils enter the school, their attainment is broadly average. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 and achieve consistently well in the national tests, where results in 2005 were significantly above the national average. Nearly all pupils attained the level expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics and a significant proportion did even better than this. In Key Stage 2, overall achievement is good but rates of progress are inconsistent. In Year 3, pupils' progress is good in reading but slow in writing and mathematics, where too many pupils underachieve. By the end of Year 4, progress accelerates and many pupils achieve exceptionally well in reading, reaching high standards. Progress in writing is very good and is satisfactory in mathematics. The more able pupils' achievement is excellent.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

'I can't keep my child away', said one of the parents, which typifies how much children enjoy coming to school. The pupils feel safe and know the importance of keeping healthy. They have a good understanding of which foods they should eat regularly and which to avoid. An excellent moral code is reflected in the school's ethos and the pupils' exemplary behaviour. There are some excellent opportunities for the pupils to care for each other and take responsibility, for example the Year 4 play leader scheme. The pupils play and learn together well in an atmosphere of mutual co-operation and respect. They enjoy raising money for charities and there are excellent links with an

orphanage in Thailand, which help the pupils understand the needs of children in another country.

The recently-formed school and class councils provide opportunities for the pupils to have a voice in the running of the school. Their views are listened to and acted on, for example the introduction of picnic tables and a Fun Dance Club, greatly appreciated by all, particularly the boys. Year 4 residential visits develop the pupils' independence and teamwork and this is shown by their high levels of co-operation around the school. In recent years there have been no exclusions and any instances of bullying are dealt with quickly and effectively. The pupils' moral and social development is excellent and their spiritual and cultural development is good. Some of the Reception pupils gained a very good insight into the traditions of another culture when they took part in an Indian dance lesson.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. 'The teachers and other adults treat us with kindness and help us when we are stuck', said one of the pupils. This typifies the very good relationships which exist between the adults and the pupils and helps pupils learn well. In one lesson in the Foundation Stage, the quality of teaching was outstanding. Here the pupils clearly enjoyed singing songs, playing games and learning rhymes which helped them make excellent progress. In a few lessons, the pupils' progress was just satisfactory because the pace of learning was too slow and their work was not challenging enough. Teaching assistants support the pupils well by assessing their progress carefully, teaching small groups and helping individuals when they are having difficulties with their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is carefully planned with a strong and successful emphasis on teaching basic skills. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties is good. They receive a good level of support which is based on a thorough knowledge of their individual needs. Visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities, such as French and Irish dancing and the Forest School initiative, enrich the curriculum further. Good quality displays of pupils' work create a stimulating environment and celebrate the pupils' achievements. After-school and lunchtime clubs are well attended and appreciated by the pupils. A 'Multicultural Arts Week', which took place during the inspection, provided opportunities for pupils to learn about cultures and faiths different from their own. The Foundation Stage curriculum effectively meets the needs of the youngest pupils, developing their independence and skills in all areas of learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The pupils receive a good level of care, guidance and support. Their health and safety is promoted effectively and most achieve their challenging targets. However, the slow progress made by pupils in Year 3 shows that their academic guidance is not as strong as in other year groups. There are effective links with external agencies, for example to support pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities. When children first come into school, they are given good support to help them settle well into a new environment. The arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet recent national requirements. Risk assessments are carefully attended to and child protection arrangements are secure. There are good links with parents, who are very pleased with the provision for their children and in particular the school's curriculum workshops. A parent said: '.....the workshops gave me a greater understanding about how mathematics is taught and will be very useful when helping my son with his homework'.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school is well led and managed by a dedicated and effective headteacher who receives good support from the senior leadership team. The headteacher is highly supportive of her staff yet recognises the need for challenge when appropriate. She encourages senior teachers to take responsibility and a strong lead in the school's continuing improvement. As a result, both the headteacher and the senior leadership team know the school well. The performance of the school is monitored carefully and there is a good emphasis on securing improvement through support and encouragement, for example senior staff working alongside other teachers to help them improve their work. There is a strong sense of common purpose and teamwork. The governing body is very supportive. The chair of governors is aware that to improve its effectiveness further, the governing body needs to extend its role in keeping a watchful eye on the school's performance.

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. We really enjoyed our time with you and talking to you about your work. It's been great to see how much you enjoy coming to school and how well you get on with your teachers. You are all very friendly, cheerful and polite and helped us feel at home in your school. Thank you for sharing your work with us. When we visited your lessons, we were pleased to see you all getting on well with each other and working hard. Well done!

I am pleased to tell you that you go to a good school where you are looked after well. All the adults who work with you want you to do your very best and you told us that you appreciate all the help you are given. Many of you are doing really well with your reading. You all play and share together very sensibly on the playground and feel very safe in school, which is really important.

I have asked Mrs Rollason and the teachers to make sure that all of you do the best you can in your writing and number work and that all your lessons are exciting and interesting, making you think hard and learn lots of new things.

We will take away many good memories about your school and have really enjoyed the time we have spent with you. Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly.