

Saint Clare's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120220
Local Authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	291671
Inspection dates	21–22 February 2007
Reporting inspector	Alison Cartlidge

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	197
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sheila Stacey
Headteacher	Jane Monaghan
Date of previous school inspection	19 November 2001
School address	Convent Drive off Forest Road Coalville LE67 3SF
Telephone number	01530 837747
Fax number	01530 815746

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Most pupils are of White British heritage and come from the town and nearby villages. A few pupils take free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average. Attainment on entry to the four plus unit is broadly in line with expectations. A new headteacher was appointed in September 2005.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school with many good features. Members of staff and governors provide good care, guidance and support, enabling pupils to understand how to lead healthy lifestyles and to feel safe. Caring Catholic values ensure that pupils contribute well to the community and are made to feel special. Close links with parents and outstanding links with outside agencies contribute well to the breadth of the curriculum and to the pupils' good personal development and well-being. The headteacher is leading the school in the right direction because she has a clear understanding of what needs to be improved.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Children make a sound start to their education in the four plus unit. The teacher and nursery nurse provide friendly support that helps children to make good progress in personal, social and emotional development. They make satisfactory progress in other areas of learning although there are occasions when their learning could be extended further. Most children are working within the levels expected for their age when they start in Year 1. Good teaching in Years 1 and 2 helps pupils to learn quickly and standards by the end of Year 2 are above average. Provision in these year groups is well organised ensuring that time is used well and that tasks are matched well to differing needs. In Years 3 to 6, progress is satisfactory and by the end of Year 6, standards remain above average. There is a relative weakness in writing which the school is taking appropriate action to overcome. Taken as a whole, the impact of teaching is satisfactory, although it varies from satisfactory to outstanding. Good relationships and the frequent use of praise are successful in helping pupils to behave well and gain confidence. Teachers make good use of information and communication technology (ICT) to explain tasks and make learning interesting. They do not consistently ensure that pupils' differing needs are met in Years 3 to 6. This affects the more able pupils most, and their progress slows when they are not challenged to do hard enough work.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher's quiet determination to improve pupils' progress is greatly valued by other members of staff and governors who see her as being very supportive. There are thorough systems for checking how well pupils do within each year. The school is aware that the tracking of pupils' progress and target setting is not yet monitored sufficiently rigorously to ensure that all pupils make enough progress in the long term. A wealth of exciting additional activities enriches the good curriculum, including French, various sports and educational visits. These are successful in boosting the pupils' enthusiasm for school and prepare them well for the next stage of their education. Most parents are pleased that their children come to this school and typically say that children become 'confident individuals' and 'recall only good memories of their time at Saint Clare's'.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the proportion of good teaching so that pupils of all abilities, especially the more able, are consistently challenged to make good progress.
- Improve the rigour of the monitoring of pupils' progress to ensure that pupils are set consistently challenging targets in relation to their prior attainment.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Children make satisfactory progress in the four plus unit. They make good progress in personal, social and emotional development because members of

staff work together particularly well to reinforce these skills. Most children are working within the levels expected for their age by the end of the Reception Year. Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2 and by the end of Year 2, standards are above average. Above average standards in English, mathematics and science are maintained by the end of Year 6. In Years 3 to 6, progress is satisfactory. Not all pupils make enough progress because more able pupils in particular are not always challenged to complete hard enough work. Standards in writing lag behind those for reading, although the school is focusing well on increasing the opportunities for pupils to write purposefully. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are included well in lessons. Support from well trained teaching assistants enables them to make similar progress to other pupils. The school has recently improved systems for tracking pupils' progress. However, progress is not sufficiently monitored to ensure that targets set are appropriately challenging.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children in the four plus unit are confident and co-operative and keen to follow their 'Ginger' class rules. Throughout the school, pupils show their very good awareness of foods that contribute to a healthy diet. Their good enjoyment of school is evident in their good attendance and enthusiastic participation in the wide range of activities provided. Pupils say they feel safe in school and the school council led in the development of the school's anti-bullying policy. Relationships are good and pupils report very few instances of bullying. Pupils of different ages mix together well. The school council reported that 'little ones get on with older ones'.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The awareness of self and of others is a very strong feature of pupils' development, fostered by the school's very strong spiritual dimension. One pupil's view was typical, in saying, 'As a school we do this well'. Good moral understanding is evident in the pupils' good behaviour. Pupils' knowledge of other cultures, whilst satisfactory, is a weaker feature of development. Pupils have a very strong sense of belonging to the school and local community. Their attainment at the end of Year 6 equips them well for the necessary skills required in the future. They display good self-confidence and work very well with each other.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, although there is a wide range including some outstanding teaching. In the four plus unit, the teacher and nursery nurse work together particularly well to promote the children's personal development. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are taught in an open plan classroom. Good teaching in these year groups includes good organisation to ensure that pupils retain their concentration and are not distracted. In most lessons whole class discussions are effective in engaging pupils' interest. Occasionally there is an over-reliance on the involvement of volunteers and then not all pupils are sufficiently involved. Teaching assistants are used well in most lessons to support pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. In some lessons, especially in Years 3 to 6, the progress of individuals is not monitored promptly to ensure that all pupils are working quickly and some pupils, especially the more able, are not challenged enough, slowing the pace of learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum and has been successful in adapting literacy and numeracy planning to take into account weaknesses identified in pupils' performance in tests. This is starting to have a positive impact on pupils' progress. The curriculum promotes personal development well by further reinforcing values and personal qualities that are part of the school's Catholic beliefs. Excellent links with other schools enhance the curriculum and add significantly to its breadth. Pupils greatly enjoy taking part in the additional activities provided in sport, French, creative arts and ICT. Recent developments in the curriculum for children in the four plus unit have extended opportunities for children to work outside and to take part in more practical activities. These have contributed particularly well to increasing the children's interest and confidence. All members of staff have recently helped to identify pupils who are more able or specifically gifted and talented. They recognise the need to develop provision to further challenge those identified.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Systems to ensure pupils' safety are robust and well established. From the time children join the school in the four plus unit, members of staff gain a good understanding of the pupils' pastoral needs and work effectively and proactively with parents and external agencies to support individuals. The school's caring ethos is a very strong feature of the provision. One pupil summarised the views of many by saying, 'Children are looked after, cared for and get rewards'. Pupils' personal development including health and safety awareness and social development are promoted and monitored well by all members of staff. Procedures for supporting academic guidance have been recently developed and pupils are provided with regular feedback on how to improve their work. The advice given is not yet consistent in ensuring that enough progress is expected of all pupils, particularly the most able.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has made a good start to improving provision and has enabled governors and subject leaders to develop their roles. Members of staff are dedicated towards improving pupils' achievement and are clearly focused on this aim. Several strategies to increase the rate of pupils' progress in Years 3 to 6 are beginning to have a positive impact, although it is too soon for there to be evidence to show sustained improvement. For example, a teacher with particular expertise in teaching mathematics is working with some older pupils and this has increased the challenge provided. Improved systems for checking how well pupils are doing are being used well to collect information to support the development of the curriculum and to set the right whole school priorities. The school is aware that this information is not yet used sufficiently to ensure that all pupils make enough progress and to set challenging targets. The school's self-evaluation is satisfactory, although views on achievement and leadership and management are slightly more generous than those of the inspection team. There is a steady track record of improvement and a satisfactory capacity to improve further. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is led and managed soundly, enabling these pupils to make similar progress to their peers. Governance is satisfactory. The chair and vice chair of governors are

well informed and have been working hard to expand the role of governors by becoming more proactive.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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 and for sharing your work with us. We are pleased that you enjoy coming to this school, which provides you with a satisfactory education.

Here are some good things about you and your school.

- You learn particularly quickly in Years 1 and 2.
- You are very polite and friendly and are good at helping others.
- Teachers help you to behave well and use the interactive whiteboards to make lessons interesting.
- You have plenty of interesting things to do including sport, French and visits.
- All adults in school are kind, caring and look after you well.
- Your headteacher, other teachers and governors are working together well and know how to make your school even better.
- Your parents and carers are pleased that you come to this school.

What we have asked your school to do now:

- help you all to make good progress by always giving you hard enough work
- set you challenging targets and check that you all make enough progress towards them.

We thoroughly enjoyed talking with you about your work and watching you learn. We wish you all well for the future. We hope you continue to help your teachers by listening carefully and trying your best.