

St Aloysius' Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123218
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	292614
Inspection dates	27–28 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Daniel Towl HMI

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	249
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr I Johnson
Headteacher	Mr C Crouch
Date of previous school inspection	7 May 2002
School address	143 Woodstock Road Oxford OX2 7PH
Telephone number	01865 515094
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an HMI and an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

St Aloysius' is a Catholic voluntary aided primary school whose pupils mostly live in the North Oxford area. There are 249 on roll. A smaller than average number of pupils is eligible for free school meals. A higher than average proportion is from ethnic minority backgrounds and a high proportion is bi-lingual. About five percent of pupils receive additional support because English is an additional language for them. Five pupils have a statement of special educational need.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The overall effectiveness of the school is good. Standards are above average and pupils achieve well, making good progress from the time they start school. Most teaching is good. Pupils have good attitudes, enjoy their lessons and most work hard although sometimes written work is unnecessarily untidy. The very large majority of parents are very supportive the school. Many parents come into school at the start of day and this creates a very positive atmosphere.

Despite the good achievements of pupils and the standards reached, there is some variability in the quality of teaching and learning and in pupils' year-on-year progress. This is because there are no clear procedures established that enable the headteacher and senior staff to regularly and rigorously check what is happening. Assessment information is not used effectively to monitor the school's performance and set challenging enough targets.

Attendance is satisfactory although some pupils are absent for long periods because of extended home visits abroad. The school is doing what it can to tackle this problem, and there have been recent improvements. The school has been successful in addressing the underperformance of some pupils in English by introducing new strategies to improve pupils' knowledge of phonics. The capacity to improve further is satisfactory.

Pupils' personal development and well being are good. Pupils lead healthy lifestyles. They are given every encouragement to walk and cycle to school. Physical Education (PE) has a high priority both in the curriculum and in after-school clubs, which are well attended. Pupils feel safe in school and are sure that if there was any bullying it would be swiftly dealt with by staff. Pupils contribute to their own community through their school council meetings and to the wider community by raising money for charity, for which they are rightly proud.

The school values its cultural diversity. As one pupil put it, 'There are pupils from many countries here and we learn from each other.'

Pupils make good progress in the Foundation Stage. There is an air of industrious activity especially when children are engaged in tasks that they choose and develop themselves. The curriculum is well planned and meets children's needs. Parents frequently spend the first few minutes of the day with their children as they engage in activities that have been organised for them. It is a pleasant start to the day.

What the school should do to improve further

- Introduce more rigorous procedures to check the quality of teaching and learning and ensure greater consistency in teaching.
- Organise more systematically information from assessment to aid the whole school monitoring of pupils' progress in order to set more specific and challenging targets.
- Improve pupils' presentation of work especially in notebooks.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are above average. Pupils achieve well and most make good progress. Many children start school with above average personal, social and language skills. While they are in the Foundation Stage they make good progress and reach the goals expected of them.

The school's analysis of the most recent 2007 assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 show that standards are above average especially in reading and mathematics. Standards in writing are slightly above average although a smaller proportion of pupils than previously reached the highest levels.

During Key Stage 1 and 2 most pupils continue to make good progress especially in reading and writing. Lower-attaining pupils and those with learning disabilities and difficulties make good progress because of the successful strategies to improve literacy skills in which the teaching assistants play an important role.

Pupils make better progress in English than mathematics, which is more variable between the different year groups. The most recent published results at Key Stage 2 for 2006 show a marked improvement on previous years in English, mathematics and science. A high proportion of Year 6 pupils exceeded the levels normally expected. Teacher assessment shows that pupils have also achieved well this year, maintaining the improvement seen last year.

Although pupils' performance is higher than the national average boys do slightly less well than girls. The school has identified this as an area for improvement and new strategies have proved successful in increasing the progress and achievement of underperforming boys especially in reading. Those pupils who have English as an additional language and are at an early stage of learning English achieve well with the additional support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal development and well being of pupils are good. Pupils are respected and in turn learn to respect and value others. Despite a restricted school site, pupils have many opportunities to take part in physical exercise, including swimming. They talk confidently about what constitutes a healthy diet. Behaviour is good and pupils of all ages cooperate well together. They enjoy school because, as one pupil explained, 'Children who struggle get help, and teachers say well done when you work hard.' Despite the school's best efforts attendance remains satisfactory.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are proud to discuss money raised by their own efforts at the summer fete and for charities. This experience, together with a good level of basic skills, helps them to be successfully prepared for their future economic well being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Most teaching is good though there is some inconsistency across the school. Pupils learn effectively and enjoy their lessons. Consequently most pupils achieve well.

Teachers are confident, know their pupils well and match the work accordingly. Most teachers encourage pupils to reflect and give their responses. There are high expectations of behaviour to which pupils respond very well. Teachers often bring a sense of fun to a lesson which makes learning more enjoyable. Pupils say their teachers are friendly and helpful. When given tasks, pupils settle quickly and often work effectively in pairs. Teachers link subjects together well

and this provides opportunities for pupils to successfully write for a good range of different purposes.

Sometimes introductions to lessons are too long and this reduces the opportunities for pupils to work on their tasks and reduces the pace of learning. Teachers do not always use their time efficiently when pupils are involved in their independent tasks. Some teachers do not pay enough attention to pupils' presentation of work. Pupils' notebooks are sometimes too scruffy.

All teachers mark work regularly, but there is some variability in the type of comment that is written. There is a suitable whole-school policy, but it is not yet consistently applied. Some older pupils say that they would like more comments about next steps rather than a 'well done'. Teachers also keep assessment records for their pupils' achievements in tests. However this information is not used or recorded consistently enough for whole-school monitoring and the setting of challenging targets. There are very detailed termly assessments of pupils' writing which identify key development areas which are useful in determining next steps.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It is broad and balanced and enriched with a wide range of exciting and vibrant activities including interesting visits which the pupils appreciate. One pupil said, 'We get plenty of trips, they're great fun and help us learn.' This helps to engender a positive attitude to learning. There is a wide range of clubs, especially sports, which are well attended. Practical activities in science and art add interest and develop good skills and understanding. Pupils in Year2 were happy to describe an investigation to discover surfaces that snails liked most. The well organised personal, social, health and citizenship programme, which includes visiting speakers, provides good opportunities to learn about healthy living and staying safe. Teachers also take advantage of events in the locality, such as a filming event and literary competitions, to enrich the curriculum.

The school site restricts opportunities for some physical activities. For example, there are no large grass areas for extend running or some ball games. However, the use of local facilities ensures adequate opportunities for a wider range of exercise. There is good provision for information and communication technology (ICT) which suitably enhances pupils' learning. Provision in the Foundation stage is good. All the required areas of learning are provided with an appropriate emphasis on the teaching of basic skills. Pupils have many opportunities to work and play together, creating an industrious atmosphere.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, support and guidance for pupils are good. Procedures to ensure the protection and safety of pupils are securely in place, rigorous, and understood. Teaching assistants give good support to pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. These pupils are identified and supported effectively from an early age. The school develops good relationships with, and is well supported by, external agencies. Advice is implemented effectively. Pupils say 'there isn't much bullying and if there is teachers sort it out quickly'.

There are group and class targets for English and mathematics often displayed on the classroom walls but the use of these and pupils' individual targets is inconsistent and differently understood by pupils. Overall there is not enough challenge and rigour in the target-setting process.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Under the leadership of the headteacher the school provides a caring and friendly atmosphere where pupils are happy and learn effectively. Good relationships exist throughout the school. The school is inclusive and all individuals are valued.

There have been changes in staff, the senior management team, and governors in recent years which have led to changing roles and responsibilities. The management role of senior staff and subject leaders is underdeveloped. Procedures for checking the quality of teaching and learning and the progress of pupils are not robust or rigorous enough in order to ensure greater consistency between all classes.

The school has identified appropriate areas for development and acted upon them. New strategies to improve reading by introducing a specific phonic scheme, which reflects national guidance, has paid dividends both with the youngest pupils and those who were underperforming throughout the school.

The school is well resourced though on a very cramped site. Every inch of space is used. The role of ICT in supporting teaching and learning is developing well. Pupils have access to both a mobile suite of laptop computers and an ICT room. These resources have a positive impact on learning.

Procedures to ensure that the school fully meets the requirements for the appointment of staff and safeguarding pupils are satisfactory.

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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?	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	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?	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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
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?	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.

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	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

11 July 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Aloysius' Catholic Primary School, Oxford, OX2 7PH

Thank you very much for your help during the recent inspection. We very much enjoyed talking with you about your school and the work you do. We feel you develop well as young people. Most of you work hard and enjoy your lessons. You get on well together and you show a good deal of care and respect for each other. You told us that your teachers and teaching assistants work hard to help you succeed and we agree with you. We are pleased that you are learning how to stay healthy through exercise and diet.

You have a really good start in school and most of you make good progress. Your test results are very high. Although most of you make good progress we feel you could do better still. We believe that the headteacher and teachers should set you more challenging targets to help you achieve even more.

In order to help with this we have asked your headteacher to check up more regularly on how well you are learning in lessons and to make sure that your progress is good all the time.

We felt some of your written work could be neater and work books tidier. We want you all to try very hard to improve the neatness of your work.

Thank you again for your help and good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

Daniel Towl HMI