



St George and St Martin's Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 124318
Local Authority Stoke-On-Trent
Inspection number 292957
Inspection dates 8–9 March 2007
Reporting inspector Clive Lewis

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Boulton Street
School category	Voluntary aided		Birches Head
Age range of pupils	3–11		Stoke-on-Trent ST1 2NQ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01782 234384
Number on roll (school)	238	Fax number	01782 234386
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Phillip Wood
		Headteacher	Paul McCann
Date of previous school inspection	17 April 2002		

Age group 3–11	Inspection dates 8–9 March 2007	Inspection number 292957
--------------------------	---	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St George and St Martin's Catholic School is an urban primary school. Most of its pupils are of White British heritage and come from a wide spectrum of socio-economic backgrounds. A very small proportion of pupils have English as an additional language. When children enter the Foundation Stage, attainment is well below that typically found. There have been significant staff changes since the previous inspection.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school which gives pupils a very high quality, all-round education. Parents wholeheartedly endorse this, making comments such as, 'This is an excellent school where children of all levels and abilities are encouraged and aided to reach their full potential' and, 'It is an absolute pleasure to tell people that our daughter attends this wonderful hard-working and caring school'. At the heart of the school's continuing and sustained success are the first-class leadership and management of the headteacher and dedicated, enthusiastic staff. Every adult in the school is committed to providing each child with the best possible education.

Pupils' academic achievement is outstanding. Children quickly settle into the Foundation Stage Unit and all make very good progress from a low level of attainment on entry so that a significant proportion meets the expected levels by the start of Year 1. This very good progress is built on successfully in Years 1 and 2 and accelerates further in Years 3 to 6 so that pupils reach overall standards that are significantly above those achieved by pupils elsewhere in the country. Nevertheless, although pupils make excellent progress in their literacy skills older pupils sometimes struggle to express themselves clearly.

A key factor in pupils' excellent all-round development is the outstanding teaching and the good quality curriculum which engages pupils' interest in everything they do. As a result, this is a school where pupils really want to learn and relish the challenges given to them to do as well as they possibly can. Attendance levels are above average, pupils arrive each morning promptly and ready for the new day and they behave extremely well in and around the school. Pupils' personal development is outstanding and is testimony to the exceptional care and guidance they are given, both personally and academically. As a result, pupils are prepared very well, socially, emotionally and academically, for their future roles in society. They are very aware of the importance of eating healthy food, keeping fit and staying safe. Through the school council and open, honest relationships with everyone, pupils feel free to express their views. The school has very good systems for tracking pupils' progress in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science but tracking systems are less rigorous in other subjects. The school's continuing high standards demonstrate that it has outstanding capacity to develop even further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop pupils' expressive vocabulary to enable them to articulate themselves more clearly.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils' achievement is outstanding. Standards by Year 6 have been very well maintained since the last inspection at significantly above the national average. This reflects

teachers' high expectations and the excellent response from the pupils. From well below average attainment on entry, especially in language and social skills, children make very good progress through the Foundation Stage. As a result, the majority reach the expected goals for learning by the start of Year 1 and this progress is consolidated throughout Years 1 and 2. Progress in Key Stage 2 is again very good so that by the end of Year 6, overall standards are significantly above the national average. Boys and girls achieve equally well and there is no difference in the progress and standards between pupils of different cultural heritage. Pupils who are gifted and talented make very good progress. Those with learning difficulties and disabilities also make very good progress because of the exceptional provision that is made for them. The school, however, recognises that standards can be improved still further and is implementing a number of initiatives designed to ensure pupils make even better progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The skills pupils learn here equip them very well for their future lives as citizens and in the world of work. Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in consistently above average attendance figures. Pupils' attitudes towards learning are excellent; they listen intently, participate fully in discussions and work at speed, yet they take great care with how they present their work. They have an excellent understanding of how to keep safe and lead a healthy life, although a minority do not eat as healthily as they could at lunch and break times. They know the benefits of physical exercise and many are very keen to attend extra sporting activities, even if it means a very early start in the morning. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Although pupils often start school with low levels of confidence and personal skills, they make excellent gains and by Year 6 are confident, polite and mature young people. Nevertheless, they sometimes struggle to articulate themselves clearly because they lack the vocabulary to do so. Pupils contribute extremely well to the school and wider community and the way they show kindness and consideration to one another is remarkable and a pleasure to see.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The very high proportion of good and better teaching results in pupils making outstanding progress over their time in the school. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is very good and the teachers and support assistants work together very well to provide an interesting and appropriate curriculum both indoors and out. Lessons are very well planned and progress is monitored very carefully and regularly so that pupils are helped to build on what they have learnt before. Learning expectations are made clear at the beginning of every lesson so that pupils know precisely what it is that they are expected to learn and work is very well matched to pupils' abilities. Almost all lessons are

conducted at a very lively pace, with varied activities that hold pupils' interest and ensure that they get a lot done. The excellent relationships contribute significantly to the outstanding progress pupils make. Effective use is made of the generous number of well-qualified teaching assistants.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and improving. It offers a wide range of subjects including two foreign languages and is enriched with a good number and choice of extra clubs, visits and visitors. It has been further enhanced by the recent move to an emphasis on creativity and topic-based learning. Although it is too early to see any impact on overall achievement and standards, the indications are that pupils are inspired by the cross-curricular approach and are enjoying their learning very much. As a result, they are producing high quality work such as the writing and computer-generated artwork resulting from their topic on The Great Fire of London. The curriculum also contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, the Year 6 topic on 'Living Things' has prompted mature moral debate about animal experimentation at the same time as developing their skills in writing and research. The curriculum does not always offer sufficient opportunities to consolidate speaking skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The excellent care, guidance and support contribute very strongly to pupils' academic and personal progress. Safeguarding arrangements including child protection and risk assessments are excellent. Staff, with their consistently high expectations and kind approach, represent extremely good role models for pupils. Marking of pupils' work is nearly always excellent with clear developmental comments. The school's assessment and tracking system is excellent for English, mathematics and science but is yet to include other subjects, particularly information and communication technology, as fully. Relationships are such that pupils are very comfortable in making full and uninhibited contributions in lessons. Evidence of this can be seen in pupils' thoughtful and powerful written prayers, for example a young pupil writes, 'Dear Jesus, I am sorry for not tidying my room – please help me to be kind to my Mum'. Similarly, the 'Working Wall' in one class encourages pupils to develop enquiring minds by devising questions such as 'How long is your tongue?' and 'Why do Venus fly traps eat flies?'

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The sustained high quality of leadership and management has ensured St George and St Martin's distinctive ethos and the consistently excellent progress made by different groups of pupils during a period of very significant changes in senior staff. The great strengths of the school are the deep understanding of its community and the excellent

teamwork to ensure that all pupils succeed. The headteacher's enthusiastic leadership and direction ensure that no stone is left unturned in giving the pupils the very best provision. He is very well supported by the senior management team and subject coordinators; responsibility is delegated wisely, and the senior management team fulfils its role very well. All staff share the very clear vision and feel fully involved in the leadership and management of the school. The monitoring of teaching and learning and other areas of the school's work is regular, rigorous and shared, ensuring that all pupils have equal opportunities. Links with parents and outside institutions are a very distinctive feature and add significantly to the pupils' opportunities. Governance is a significant strength. The governors are very capable and committed, using a wide range of approaches to inform their decision-making. They and the headteacher have a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and work steadfastly to improve pupils' opportunities through the very comprehensive improvement plan. Resources are used exceptionally well.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	-----------------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

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	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
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	1
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?	1
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?	1

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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

I would like to thank you for your help during the recent inspection of your school. My colleague and I very much enjoyed our visit.

St George and St Martin's is an outstanding school. Your headteacher and staff enable you to learn really well and enjoy your lessons. They make sure you understand how to look after yourselves and keep safe and you do this very well. You told us that you like school and there are lots of things to do and enjoy. We agree with you. Your behaviour is excellent and you work hard and try to succeed in all that you do.

We have asked your school to do something to make it even better, and that is to help you to develop as more confident speakers.

We are confident that, with your help, the school will improve still further.

I wish you well in your future education.