

St Wilfrid's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124378
Local Authority	Stoke-On-Trent
Inspection number	292978
Inspection dates	6-7 February 2007
Reporting inspector	John Eadie

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	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	329
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	C A Jordan
Headteacher	Diane Mason
Date of previous school inspection	18 March 2002
School address	Queen's Avenue Tunstall Stoke-on-Trent ST6 6EE
Telephone number	01782 235676
Fax number	01782 235677

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is in an urban setting and serves the local parish and community. Most of the pupils are White British. The remainder represents a wide range of other ethnic backgrounds. Very few pupils do not speak English at home. The school is popular with parents and, as a result, the number of pupils on roll has risen significantly since the previous inspection. When children start in the Nursery, their attainment is broadly at the level expected for their age.

The school has been unable to appoint a permanent headteacher since the retirement of the previous post holder in August 2004. There have been four acting headteachers since then; the most recent started in January 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school has suffered from instability in leadership and standards have fallen from their previously high levels as a consequence. However, changes introduced within the last year, such as tracking pupils' progress more regularly to ensure that none are falling behind, have halted the decline and started the school on an upward path. The school is now providing its pupils with a satisfactory education. Some new governors have been appointed recently and the governing body has a good strategy in place to seek to ensure stability of leadership. Leadership and management are satisfactory.

The acting headteacher has accurately assessed the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Good plans have been made to improve the school and action has already started. Parents have recognised these improvements and comment that, for example, 'Communication has improved and there are early signs of consultation with parents.' During the period of the school's unsettled leadership there was insufficient monitoring of teaching and learning. Monitoring and evaluation are recognised by the school as an area for development. Presently, not all managers are involved in monitoring teaching and using the findings to identify how to raise standards.

Pupils' progress has improved, and almost all pupils are making satisfactory progress. Pupils' are reaching standards which are broadly average by the time they leave the school. Teaching is satisfactory, which is resulting in pupils' satisfactory learning. There are very good relationships between adults and pupils, resulting in a good working atmosphere in the classrooms. However, teachers do not always provide a range of work for the breadth of abilities in their classes, and some pupils, particularly the more able, do not make the progress they should.

The curriculum is satisfactory. Some good links have been made between subjects. For example, a history visit to a museum provided stimuli for pupils' writing in English. Pupils respond well to these interesting links between subjects and work enthusiastically. However, insufficient thought has been put into planning for the mixed age classes. There are good partnerships with others, which give an added dimension to pupils' learning. For example, the local secondary school, a performing arts academy, provides teachers for dance, drama and music, giving the pupils additional experiences that they thoroughly enjoy. Provision for children in the Nursery and Reception classes is satisfactory.

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall. All adults provide high levels of pastoral care and this results in pupils' good personal development and well-being. In particular, pupils are extremely well behaved and sensitive to the needs of others. This is demonstrated in the caring way that older pupils look after younger ones. However, academic guidance and support are weak. The systems for checking on pupils' progress are not used effectively to set clear targets for pupils' next steps in learning. Teachers' marking is also inconsistent in the way it shows pupils how they can improve their work.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teachers always match work to the full range of abilities in their classes, particularly making sure that there is plenty of challenge for the more able.
- Improve the quality of the setting of targets and marking, so that pupils know what is expected of them to improve their work.

- Increase the involvement of managers at all levels in monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and in using the information gained to raise standards.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Generally, children start in the Nursery with levels of skills and knowledge as expected for their age and make sound progress. About a third of children attend full time and, as would be expected, these children move on more quickly than the majority, who are part time. Progress is more substantial and steady in Reception because all the children are in school full time. By the time they transfer to Year 1, most children are working within the standards expected for their age.

Throughout the school, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. They now make satisfactory progress during Years 1 to 6 and reach standards that are broadly average. The pupils who left from Year 6 in 2006 did not make satisfactory progress during their time in Years 5 and 6. The main reason for this was disruption to their learning caused by having a large number of temporary teachers, a situation that has since been rectified. Pupils with learning difficulties progress at the same rate as their classmates as their needs are identified early and good plans are made for their learning. Those who do not speak English at home also have clear plans to support their learning and make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. For example, they have a strong sense of right and wrong. Pupils successfully gain a range of personal skills such as confidence and independence. Their attitudes to their work are good, and their behaviour is outstanding. Pupils are courteous and polite. They really enjoy school, as shown by their good attendance. Pupils make a good contribution to the community. The school council takes its duties very seriously. Pupils appreciate the wide variety of responsibilities they can take on, which they carry out very maturely. Pupils are also involved in the wider community through, for instance, very close links established with the local parish.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to live healthy lives. They take full advantage of the good opportunities provided by the school for exercise, though unhealthy snacks find their way into some packed lunches. Pupils feel very safe in school, saying things such as, 'The teachers look after us.' Pupils' progress in learning basic skills and their development of teamworking and other personal skills provide satisfactory preparation for their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

There are some good features of teaching. A good variety of teaching approaches is used. For example, in the Nursery and Reception, children tackle tasks led by an adult and are also provided with opportunities to choose their own work. They enjoy selecting activities themselves and taking responsibility for their own learning.

Assessment is often used effectively to plan work for pupils with learning difficulties. Teaching assistants and other adults support pupils' learning well. However, assessment is used less

successfully when planning for more able pupils. For example, the same work is sometimes set for the whole class and, as a result, the more able pupils do not always make the progress they should.

Pupils are provided with much help and advice in lessons. However, the quality of support given through marking is weak. Although teachers make some helpful remarks, their written comments do not often help pupils understand how to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory in the Nursery and Reception. A wide range of interesting activities cover all areas of learning. Children enjoy the opportunities for them to explore and discover.

Throughout the rest of the school, all required subjects are taught. Teachers plan to meet the needs of both age groups in their classes, but this is not always successful. The learning of some pupils slows as a result of activities not being closely matched to their needs. Links between the different subjects are being developed and there is some good practice. Literacy and numeracy skills are used well in other subjects, for instance, which helps pupils see the relevance of their learning. Although there is no specific scheme for pupils' personal development, the use of time to discuss social and moral issues has a positive effect on pupils' personal development. A good variety of visits and visitors makes the curriculum more interesting. Year 6 pupils talked very enthusiastically, for example, about a visit to The Manchester Museum to learn more about the Egyptians. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 enjoy residential visits which develop teambuilding and social skills. The school has a lively musical tradition and pupils enjoy these opportunities, particularly performing. Many pupils take advantage of the good variety of extra-curricular activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school is a happy, friendly place where children show respect and care for each other. Staff know their pupils well and are dedicated to their well-being. Parents appreciate this and say things such as, 'The committed and approachable staff show high levels of care for our children.' The school provides a secure, attractive and welcoming environment where pupils say they feel very safe and are confident they can approach any adult if they have a problem.

Academic guidance and support are a weakness. The school has started checking on pupils' progress each term, but these assessments are not used to set clear targets so that pupils know what they need to learn next.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The acting headteacher, with the support of the deputy headteacher, has already been effective in creating a positive and productive atmosphere. Recently, self-evaluation has been carried out conscientiously and the school has a realistic view of its effectiveness. Increasing attention is being given to the data relating to pupils' progress. There is a determination to improve pupils' progress and standards, and effective action has started to be taken. Although the school still has some work to do in this respect, the right priorities for action have been

identified. The school is moving forward as a result and has a satisfactory capacity to continue to improve.

Although the systems for checking the effectiveness of provision are satisfactory, the school recognises the need to develop the involvement of more staff in monitoring teaching and learning. The school is working to increase the responsibilities of managers at all levels in improving provision and raising standards. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities and are also starting to be more involved in checking on the quality of the school's provision.

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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?	2
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	3
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	1
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	3

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?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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 so much for welcoming us when we visited your school this week. We enjoyed meeting and talking with many of you. Thank you for telling us so much about your school, which is providing a satisfactory education for you. You make satisfactory progress, because teaching is satisfactory, and reach the standards expected for your age.

These are some of the good things we found:

- Your behaviour is outstanding and you are developing well into responsible young citizens.
- You enjoy school and have good attendance.
- You know a lot about the importance of healthy eating and regular exercise.
- All adults look after you well. They make sure that the school is a happy and friendly place.
- You have a lot of interesting activities additional to lessons, such as visits.

In order to help you make better progress, we have asked the headteacher and other staff to:

- Make sure that you are always given work that challenges you, particularly those of you who find your work easy.
- Make sure that marking and targets set for you help you to know clearly how to improve your work.
- Involve the teachers in checking more thoroughly on how well you are learning.

Your acting headteacher and staff are working to make the school better. You can help by continuing to work hard.