

St Wilfrid's Catholic Primary School, Burgess Hill

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126061
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	293453
Inspection dates	10–11 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Selwyn Ward

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	388
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jane Billings
Headteacher	David Purcell
Date of previous school inspection	20 May 2002
School address	School Close Queen Elizabeth Avenue Burgess Hill RH15 9RJ
Telephone number	01444 235254
Fax number	01444 230048

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average school. Children join the school with generally above average ability. The number of pupils with learning difficulties is below average. An above average number of pupils are learning English as an additional language. Information and communication technology (ICT) was separately inspected in this school in April 2006.

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 where pupils of all abilities achieve well across a wide range of subjects. From their start in the Reception Year, pupils make good progress. They attain levels which are above those expected at the end of Foundation Stage and standards in Year 2 assessments and in the Year 6 national tests that are consistently well above average. Parents express very strong satisfaction with the school. One typically commented that she was 'more than pleased with my children's progress'. Parents recognise that it is not just academic achievement that is good; they are also 'delighted with the whole atmosphere and ethos of the school' because 'the school always has a happy feel to it'. This is due to good leadership and management. Under the very effective leadership of the headteacher, this is a school which, though it is doing well, is constantly striving for improvement. Sometimes, this means that school leaders do not fully recognise the school's many strengths. Nonetheless, the improvements since the school was last inspected show that it has good capacity to continue to move forward.

The curriculum is outstanding because it seamlessly links subjects together so that even routine activities are made interesting and exciting. Pupils really enjoy school and are enthusiastic in lessons because, as they say themselves, 'learning is fun'. Teaching and learning are good. Some teaching is exceptional because teachers have very high expectations of what their pupils can do and the children eagerly rise to the challenge. This is not universal across the school, however. In a few classes, expectations are much lower, lessons proceed at a pedestrian pace and pupils do not get through as much work.

Care, guidance and support are good. Pupils are looked after well, so that they are helped to feel secure and grow in confidence. Teachers have a clear picture of how well each child is doing and set challenging targets for their achievement. Although these are translated into practical aims for each pupil on what each needs to do to do better, and these are shared with pupils and parents, they are not fully embedded throughout the school. This means that not all pupils know their targets or routinely refer to them and so they are not contributing as much as they could to further raise standards.

The school mission statement is to 'reach out and improve the lives of others'. It permeates the school's Catholic Christian ethos and everything the school does. As a result, pupils take a very active interest in their own and the wider world community. They are thoughtful and reflective in all their schoolwork and they know and readily explain how their rights bring with them corresponding responsibilities. As a result, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Their personal development and well-being are good rather than outstanding, however, because, sometimes, in their enthusiasm to get on with their work in lessons, pupils do not always listen as well as they should to the contributions of other children in the class.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise expectations of the quality and quantity of work pupils can complete in lessons and ensure that all pupils are encouraged to listen carefully to each other in class.
- Ensure that all pupils know and use their personal targets to help them to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards at the end of the Reception Year are above those expected of children of this age. Achievement is good because pupils are helped to maintain and build on high standards. In the assessments made at the end of Year 2 and in the Year 6 national tests, standards have been consistently significantly above average. Pupils of all abilities, including those with learning difficulties and the pupils for whom English is a new language, are helped to make good progress. The many able pupils in the school do especially well. They achieve appropriately higher levels in English, mathematics and science in the national tests but also take full advantage of the many opportunities to excel through other ways, including national competitions and in other subjects such as art and drama. In the 2006 subject inspection, standards in ICT were judged to be above average.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils say how much they enjoy school. From their start in the Reception Year and throughout the school, behaviour is good in lessons and pupils are polite and mindful of others as they move about the building. Attendance is good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Excellent links with the Church, and the Catholic Christian ethos which underpins the school, enable pupils to develop a strong sense of what is right and wrong and to value their relationships with others. Pupils' awareness and understanding of other cultures is enhanced through parental involvement in the sharing of the range of backgrounds within the school and the sponsoring of children in developing countries. Pupils work very well in pairs and small teams. Collaborative skills have been enhanced by the introduction of drama lessons and participation in 'Working with Others' with the University of Brighton team. However, pupils do not all listen as well as they should to each other's contributions in lessons.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe and the need to follow a healthy lifestyle. They make an excellent contribution to the community by raising money for charities, caring for the environment and being active within the life of the Church. The school council has taken on the responsibility for making presentations to governors. It has been successful in acquiring funding for its own projects by entering local competitions and seeking assistance from the Friends' Association for playground equipment. With the high standards in pupils' key literacy, numeracy and ICT skills, this prepares pupils exceptionally well for the next stage of their education and future working life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The many varied activities motivate and enthuse pupils to do well in most lessons. Opportunities for pupils to work in a group or with a partner allow them to discuss their work and sound out new ideas. The stimulating learning environment and good relationships with staff ensure most pupils work hard throughout lessons, although some talk among themselves or press on with writing when they should be listening. Outstanding teaching in some lessons provides pupils with exceptionally challenging tasks that really capture their imagination. For example, able Year 6 pupils studying the British coastline were expected to act in role as council leaders of

run-down seaside towns to prepare competing bids for government regeneration funding. This very high level of challenge is not seen in all classes. In some lessons, relatively undemanding work and slower pace result in teachers not capitalising enough on pupils' enthusiasm and hard work. Pupils with learning difficulties and those learning English as an additional language are supported well in lessons. Activities are well matched to the stage at which they are working and they are helped to make similarly good progress as other pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum makes a major contribution to pupils' good achievement and enjoyment of school. It is especially well planned and adapted to meet pupils' specific needs and interests. An exceptionally good feature is the way subjects are linked together in topic work to make learning relevant and meaningful to pupils. This offers them a breadth of high quality experiences, extending to subjects such as drama and physical education. This approach also allows pupils to use their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills very effectively in subjects such as history and geography. Enrichment is excellent. Pupils have a wealth of opportunities to engage in exciting activities, including in special focus weeks, for example, in a themed arts week on rainforests.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

This is an inclusive school where all pupils are very well cared for because staff, parents, the Church and outside agencies work together so very effectively to support them. Parents particularly praise the way the school keeps them 'very well informed due to termly progress reports and target setting'. Good tracking systems are in place to check how well pupils are achieving as they progress through the school. These have helped to raise expectations of what the pupils can achieve. Pupils have personal targets but they do not all know what they are and do not routinely refer to them, so these are not making the contribution they could to further raising achievement. Parents of pupils with learning difficulties voice particularly strong praise for the support their children have been given.

The friendly atmosphere and strong sense of community within the school help pupils to feel secure. All necessary child protection and risk assessments are fully in place. Pupils receive very good guidance for their personal development through personal, social and health education lessons and assemblies. There are good arrangements for promoting pupils' understanding of healthy living and keeping safe.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides exceptionally clear direction for the school and has the full commitment of both staff and governors in his drive to provide a high quality education for pupils. It is this that has resulted in such a stimulating and exciting curriculum and an ethos where pupils are keen to learn and do well. Comprehensive, regular and rigorous systems for monitoring the effectiveness of the school's work, introduced over the past year, have increasingly involved senior staff and subject leaders. They have helped the school to pinpoint areas of relative weakness and contributed well to improvement planning, for example, in

identifying where and why the quality of teaching is not as good as the best. However, because systems are quite recent, they have not had time to have full impact in raising the quality of teaching to match the best.

Governors support the school well. They make an important contribution to school development by carefully monitoring its work. The school consults exceptionally well with pupils and their parents. For example, an older pupils' survey of learning styles has made a major contribution to accelerating progress in mathematics.

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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?	1
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
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	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?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
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?	2
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	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	2
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

18 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Wilfrid's Catholic Primary School, Burgess Hill, West Sussex RH15 9RJ

Thank you all for making us so welcome and helping us when we visited your school.

You told us that you thought yours was a good school and we certainly agree with you. Yours is a happy, well run school where the children get on very well with each other and are keen to work hard and do their best. You do well in the Reception Year and build on your high standards to get good results in English, mathematics and science in the Year 2 and Year 6 tests. It is good to see that you do well in other subjects, too.

We were struck by your thoughtful attitude to others and your excellent understanding of how rights give rise to responsibilities. Teaching in the school is good, and we were particularly impressed with the way in which teachers link subjects together to make learning interesting and fun. Some of your teachers have exceptionally high expectations of what you can do and how much you can get through in lessons, but this is not the case in every class. One of the things we have asked the school to do is make sure that there are high expectations of the work you can do in every lesson. We also want staff to look out for those occasions when some of you are not listening as you should when others are speaking in class.

You feel safe in school and are looked after well. We were disappointed to see that, though you all have targets, you do not all know what they are and you do not refer to them much to help you improve your work. This is something else that we have asked the school to look at, because it is a way of helping you to do even better.

You can all help by making sure you know and focus on your personal targets, by listening when you should to what others say in class, and by continuing to work hard and do your best.

Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly when we came to see you.

Yours faithfully Selwyn Ward Lead Inspector