

# St Catherine Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	102424
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hillingdon
<b>Inspection number</b>	308000
<b>Inspection dates</b>	6–7 March 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Sandra Teacher

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	245
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Martin St John
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Sara Benn
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	30 June 2003
<b>School address</b>	Money Lane West Drayton UB7 7NX
<b>Telephone number</b>	01895 442839
<b>Fax number</b>	01895 442631

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a smaller than average size school. Pupils attend from a diverse range of social backgrounds although only a small proportion are entitled to free school meals. About half come from minority ethnic backgrounds and there are increasing numbers of pupils coming into the school with English as an additional language, although only a few are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. There has been a high turnover of staff in the past two years, and at present there is an acting headteacher and two members of the leadership team and the leader of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) are on maternity leave.

## 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 some good features. Progress in Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory and by Year 6, standards are average overall. In 2007, standards declined slightly on those of previous years and writing and science were areas that were the focus for development. Current standards show improvement and indicate that the school is on track to meet its challenging targets for 2008.

Factors that support the school's satisfactory improvement include a genuine feeling of teamwork amongst staff and the more rigorous use of assessment data to set individual learning targets that are shared with pupils. Whilst the use of assessment is improving, it is not yet fully established throughout the school, so the level of challenge and pace in lessons is not always sufficiently well matched to learning needs, especially for higher attaining pupils. This is why pupils are not always achieving as well as they could be.

Teaching is satisfactory. Some lessons are lively and put learning at the centre of activities. In such lessons, staff are clear about what pupils are expected to learn and plan activities to hold their interest and check their understanding. However, there are inconsistencies. In some lessons there is too much direction by teachers so that pupils do not have to think for themselves. Consequently, opportunities are missed to develop their skills of independent learning. The new and increasingly exciting curriculum is helping pupils to make better progress and to make learning more meaningful. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to use ICT in a range of subjects.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The Catholic ethos pervades the work of the school, so that pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to their work. Underpinning all of this is the friendly atmosphere in the school. One parent writes, 'My daughter really enjoys school. She is almost disappointed at the weekend when she does not attend.' The acting headteacher and the recently reorganised senior and middle management teams have begun implementing agreed new ideas, such as to increase progress in writing and working within an integrated curriculum. However, monitoring of pupils' progress is not yet consistent. They are strongly supported by the governing body, though governors do not offer sufficient challenge to the work of the school because their understanding of performance data is not sufficiently strong. The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection and has a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

Children settle in well into the Nursery and immediately strong links are forged with parents, particularly with those families who need extra support. Children make satisfactory progress and any early problems are quickly picked up. Children with English language needs are identified and a range of focused activities support speaking and listening skills. Teaching, learning and the curriculum have improved and management has been strengthened. Teachers have responded well to recent training and children are now making clear links between letters and sounds. However, planning in all the areas of learning does not always specify what children are expected to learn and the systems of assessment are not yet fully in place so that the data cannot be

readily analysed. The outside area is a stimulating environment and is much enjoyed by all the children.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Ensure that teachers use data effectively to set appropriate work for different abilities, particularly for higher attainers, and that these data are shared with governors.
- Give pupils more opportunities to use their ICT skills in a range of subjects.
- Strengthen the leadership of subjects and ensure that provision and pupils' achievement are monitored and evaluated effectively.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

In 2007, the standards achieved by Year 2 were above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Although there have been some fluctuations since the last inspection, standards have remained around the national average. For the past five years standards at the end of Year 6 have also been average. In 2007, pupils made slower than expected progress by the end of Year 6. This was due to a number of factors including new pupils arriving in school shortly before the tests were taken and a small number of able pupils not doing quite as well as was expected, particularly in science.

Pupils' progress is satisfactory throughout the school. Some groups of pupils achieve better than others. For example, Traveller children, those from Black African heritages and younger pupils with specific learning difficulties make good progress. In contrast, boys, particularly from Key Stage 2, make slower progress than girls with their reading and writing. The newly introduced system for checking that pupils are making the expected gains in their learning each term is starting to improve the rate at which progress is being made across the school.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils are happy and enjoy school, thriving in the school's harmonious community. Their good attitudes to learning have a positive impact on their academic progress. Attendance is good and improving. The youngest children and those new to the school settle in quickly and are well looked after by the older ones. Pupils are happy and well behaved. School council members and the elected health and safety monitors have a mature outlook and undertake their roles very responsibly, helping other children to understand how they can keep themselves safe and healthy. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is particularly good. This is promoted by the strong Catholic ethos that permeates the school. Instances of racist behaviour or bullying are rare. Given the average standards they achieve in basic skills, pupils are satisfactorily prepared for secondary school.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Teachers manage their classes well. They make learning objectives clear so that pupils know what they are expected to learn. All teachers are using interactive whiteboards and the pupils say this adds interest. Recent training on the teaching of writing is leading to improvements in some classes, and the use of specialist teachers in science, music and physical education is helping to raise standards. Teachers are often enthusiastic and teach with good pace. The school's monitoring shows that they use a wide range of teaching styles. However, although the more able pupils have been identified, the work they are often given in lessons does not always provide sufficient challenge. Marking is done conscientiously but does not always show pupils how to improve their work or what they need to learn next.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The highlight of the inspection was the celebration of World Book Day. The range of exciting costumes of the pupils and staff, the involvement of the parents, the charitable work in raising funds for children less fortunate than themselves, all enhance pupils' learning and their social and personal development. Pupils are taught about other cultures and beliefs through lessons, visits and visitors and this helps them prepare for life in a multicultural society. Opportunities for enrichment activities are extensive and varied. They range from parents who help pupils to consider their choices in their future lives to the multi-lingual group who visited Brunel University to celebrate One World Day.

A small yet significant minority of parents are concerned that too much time is spent in Year 6 in preparing for the national tests. The school is aware of this, and has introduced a new integrated curriculum linking art and design, design technology, history and geography. ICT has yet to hold a more prominent place in supporting learning in all subject areas. Activities which promote a healthy lifestyle and teaching pupils about safety are all strong features. Partnerships within the local community and parish contribute well to pupils' learning experiences and their personal development, but there are fewer national or global links.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

Child protection procedures are rigorous. The school quickly identifies potentially vulnerable pupils and ensures that their specific needs are met. As a result, these pupils are effectively integrated and develop positive attitudes to learning. The good support for vulnerable pupils and their families helps to build strong links with parents from all the communities within the school. Adults working in the school are exceptionally good at building pupils' trust and confidence. Parents hold the school in high regard; as one parent wrote, 'This is warm and happy place for the children and parents'.

The thorough assessment system that was introduced last Autumn, is helping teachers to check on progress and gain a good understanding of what pupils need to learn next. There are outstanding examples of highly effective marking and guidance being given to pupils, but this good practice is not embedded in all classes. Generally, pupils understand the targets that are set for them and work hard to achieve them.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

Effective leadership has created a common sense of purpose and shared vision within the school community. Pupils' good personal development owes much to the effective links with their families and the strong emphasis on care. Leadership responsibilities are devolved well although, whilst some senior managers play a major role in supporting their colleagues and checking pupils' progress, the practice is not yet consistent. Leadership and management currently have a satisfactory impact on standards and progress. The new system for checking pupils' progress is helping to identify quickly where progress is slower than expected. Whilst this is starting to have an impact on raising standards, more remains to be done. Governance is satisfactory. Governors have a sound understanding of the issues facing the school, but the impact of their monitoring does not yet hold the school to account for the progress made by different groups of pupils.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

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

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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?	2

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	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

20 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Catherine Catholic Primary School, West Drayton, UB7 7NX

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking with you and were very impressed with your friendliness and confidence. The valuable information you gave us was a great help. We think your school gives you good care and support and a satisfactory education with some really good features. We loved all your costumes for World Book Day and this is just one example of the many exciting things you do in your school. What we most liked about your school:

- your headteacher and new staff are helping the school to improve
- you enjoy school greatly, have very positive attitudes to learning and your behaviour is good
- there are good opportunities for you to explore not only Catholic values and beliefs but also those of others
- there are strong links with your parents or carers
- the school ensures you are very safe and secure.

We have asked your headteacher and others to do these things:

- to plan work for you that will help you to achieve as well as you can
- improve marking so that all of you have a clearer understanding about how to improve, and involve you more in evaluating your own work
- give you more opportunities to include ICT in your work.

With your hard work and help, we think that your school will continue to improve.

Yours sincerely

Sandra Teacher

Lead Inspector