

St Chad's RC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103844
Local Authority	Dudley
Inspection number	308437
Inspection date	21 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Jacqueline Wordsworth HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	203
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mary Ward
Headteacher	Sharon Mason
Date of previous school inspection	23 February 2004
School address	Catholic Lane Sedgley Dudley DY3 3UE
Telephone number	01384 818720
Fax number	01384 818 717

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. The overall effectiveness of the school and the following issues were investigated: pupils' academic achievement, teaching and learning, the quality of care, guidance and support and the effectiveness of leadership and management. Evidence was gathered from: scrutiny of assessment data, checking the school's records and documents, analysis of parents' responses to the inspection questionnaire, observation of the school at work and discussions with staff and pupils. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail. The inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

St Chad's Catholic Primary School is an average sized school. Almost all pupils are of White British background. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average. The percentage of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is well below that found nationally. Overall, children's attainment when they begin school is in line with that expected for their age. A new headteacher has been in post since October 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

St Chad's is a good school, where every child matters and all pupils fully included in every aspect of its day-to-day life. Standards are typically well above national averages and pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Boys and girls achieve well from their different starting points because of good teaching overall. Pupils' attitudes to school and to their lessons are good. They are interested in learning and they enjoy coming to school. Pupils rise to the challenge when teaching is demanding and enjoy practical tasks. Teachers share learning objectives with pupils at the beginning of lessons, which is good because pupils know what is expected of them as a result. Pupils are provided with good opportunities to use and apply their knowledge and understanding and there is clear purpose to their learning from a very early age. Teachers plan effectively for most pupils and ensure that lower attaining pupils are catered for well in lessons. In some mathematics lessons, even when pupils are grouped by ability, their differing needs are not always met. Work is not as challenging for higher attaining pupils in some lessons. Teachers' marking is often good, particularly in English but less so in mathematics; pupils' work is corrected with care and they are provided with ideas for making their work even better. Effective provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities enables them to make good progress. This positive picture is testament to the good leadership of the headteacher. Effective management of the school focuses on raising standards. Pupils enjoy a varied and stimulating curriculum that supports them well in becoming responsible future citizens. The headteacher enables managers to focus on things that matter, and as result the staff team is moving development forward at a good pace. Governors are supportive of the school but do not always call it to account. In particular, their monitoring of policies and procedures is at an early stage of development and is not yet effective enough.

The school has responded well to issues raised in its previous inspection. It has developed good facilities for information and communication technology, enabling pupils to use computers regularly to enhance their learning. Education for health is good, as are opportunities for enrichment, such as the wide range of clubs on offer. Pupils say they really enjoy the planned visits. They talk with enthusiasm about 'Faith City' as this really helps them deepen their understanding of what it is like to live in a multicultural society. A well conceived programme for personal and social education supports pupils' social and moral development effectively. The school actively promotes healthy living and holds both Healthy Schools and Active Mark awards. Consequently, pupils make good choices in terms of taking regular exercise and eating healthily. A number of them report that the health education programme has transformed their eating habits at home.

Relationships throughout the school are good and pupils behave well. Adults are understanding and sensitive to the needs of pupils. As a result, pupils are confident that any worries or troubles will be dealt with and feel safe. Pupils relish responsibility and those who are 'playground buddies' or members of the school council regard it as a great privilege. They say that they could cope with even more responsibility by giving the pupils in Key Stage 1 a more active role in the school council. The school's motto is viewed very positively by parents as assisting their children in developing very good principles by which to live. The inspection took note of a very small number of parental concerns, and balanced these against what the pupils thought and what the inspector observed. Attendance is satisfactory with the school working hard to reduce absence rates. However, this work is hampered because of families taking holidays in term-time.

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory because there is an imbalance between the good pastoral care that pupils receive and their academic guidance. Additionally, although policies and systems are in place to secure the health and safety of pupils, the monitoring of these procedures is too informal and irregular. Satisfactory systems for assessing pupils and tracking their progress enable teachers to intervene and provide targeted pupil support. However, information gained from assessments is not routinely used to ensure that teachers plan work that is more challenging for higher attaining pupils. Recent changes have been made to the process of setting challenging targets, but there is room for further improvement as targets are not demanding enough for the higher attaining pupils. In English, target setting and pupil self-review are extra features that enable pupils to make good gains in their learning. This is at an early stage in other subjects, particularly in mathematics, where it is too soon to have any discernable impact.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

While children's attainment is broadly as expected on entry, they have good social skills. Children's attitudes are good and they show a growing willingness and enthusiasm to work hard and do their best. They quickly learn to treat each other with care and kindness, through a range of activities. Pupils writing skills also develop well. When writing shopping lists or, for example, labelling computer drawings of clowns, children make recognisable attempts at unfamiliar words and develop a good awareness of letter sounds. They make good progress in all other areas of learning, reaching above average skills by the time they enter Year 1. Children make good progress because relationships are good, and routines are firmly established. Staff have clear expectations of behaviour, courtesy and collaboration. The curriculum is satisfactory and covers all the elements of the Foundation Stage. However, pupils have little choice between times when they can choose what they want to do and when they sit together with an adult to learn as a group.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that governors fulfil their monitoring and evaluation roles, especially in relation to policies and procedures.
- Sharpen the use of assessment to plan challenging work for higher attaining pupils, especially in mathematics, and to give guidance to pupils about how to improve their performance.

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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?	2
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	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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 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	3
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	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?	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?	2
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	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	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

21 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Chad's RC Primary School, Sedgley DY3 1SS

Thank you very much for being so welcoming and friendly towards me during my recent visit to your school. I very much enjoyed the opportunity to talk with you and your teachers about how well you are doing. I am sure you would like to know what I found out and why I think your school is good.

You behave well and you are kind and considerate to each other. In lessons, you listen carefully to what your teachers have to tell you and you try hard. You enjoy coming to school. You told me you feel safe and secure. You know the importance of staying healthy and taking regular exercise. I really enjoyed hearing about how some of you have stopped eating crisps at home because of what you have learned in school about healthy eating. Your teachers look after you well and listen to what you have to say. They work hard to help you learn.

I have made some suggestions to help the school get even better. I have asked all your teachers to look at the results you get in your assessments and use this information to make sure that some of you are set even harder work to do, especially in mathematics. I have suggested that the teachers use the assessment information to give you clearer guidance on how to improve your work as well. I have also asked that when the governors check on how well the school is doing, they do it more often and very carefully.

Many things are good about your school and you, together with your teachers, can make it even better. Please keep working hard and doing the best you can. We wish you well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Jacqueline Wordsworth Her Majesty's Inspector

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Yours sincerely

Jacqueline Wordsworth
Her Majesty's Inspector