

St George's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112918
Local Authority	City of Derby
Inspection number	311051
Inspection dates	7–8 July 2008
Reporting inspector	John Francis

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	327
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Father Alan Burbridge
Headteacher	Mrs Patricia Hurd
Date of previous school inspection	21 February 2005
School address	Uplands Avenue Littleover Derby Derbyshire DE23 7GG
Telephone number	01332766815
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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 primary school in the Derby suburb of Littleover. It serves the parishes of St George's in Normanton and Holy Spirit Church in Sinfin. Over half of the pupils come from outside the immediate area and the number moving in or out of the school is higher than normally seen. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above the national average. There are many more pupils from minority ethnic groups than usually found but fewer who have English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average but attainment on entry is below that normally expected for children of this age.

The school has an Achievement Award, Activemark Status and an Eco award.

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 provides a satisfactory standard of education. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, however, is good and reflects the strong Catholic ethos of the school. Through this, pupils make a good contribution to the life of the school and the wider community. Good leadership by the headteacher, well supported by the assistant headteachers, is moving the school forward at an increasingly rapid rate. While there is still much to do to embed the new systems, the progress over the last year shows the school has a good capacity for further improvement.

Pupils make satisfactory progress during their time in school to achieve average standards in English and mathematics by Year 6. Science is weaker and standards are below average, especially pupils' investigative and experimental skills. However, progress is not a steady picture across the school and, whilst pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1, progress through Key Stage 2 is more erratic. Although teaching is satisfactory, there is not the level of consistently good teaching needed to speed up the rate of progress. There is not enough sharing of the good features of teaching across the school to improve the quality of learning for all pupils. Good enrichment programmes and a range of extra-curricular activities enhance a satisfactory curriculum. However, even though developments are taking place, the curriculum lacks creativity and there are not enough links between subjects to reinforce basic skills effectively.

Pupils' personal development is satisfactory and they are prepared adequately for their future. They have a sound understanding of how to keep healthy and stay safe and behaviour is satisfactory. A small number of pupils find it more difficult to manage their own behaviour. However, good work by the Learning Mentor and Lead Behaviour Professional is effective in improving their attitudes and response. This is one of the stronger features of the satisfactory care and support the school provides for its pupils.

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The headteacher has accurately identified where the school needs to improve and, with the senior leadership team, produced a sound action plan to address these. Staff with subject management responsibilities are developing the skills and knowledge they need to drive forward progress. However, they are not yet fully accountable for improvements in their subjects. Governance is a strength. Governors have a good understanding of the work of the school and provide good support and appropriate challenge.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children make a positive start, settling well into school routines. Teaching is satisfactory and from a low starting point on entry, children make satisfactory progress. There is a good balance between the activities provided by the teachers and those chosen by the children. However, the difficult access to outdoor play reduces the opportunities to use this as an extension of classroom activities. Nevertheless, the classroom organisation enables children to mix well with each other and make good progress in their personal development. The opportunities provided also enable them to make good progress in physical development and their knowledge and understanding of the world. All of these are particularly weak areas when children start school. However, their literacy and numeracy skills do not develop as quickly. Even with the good

progress in some areas, by the time they move into Year 1, the majority of children remain below the expected levels in most areas of learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and improve achievement in science, particularly focusing on improving pupils' experimental and investigative skills.
- Share the good practice in teaching more widely to raise the overall quality and enable all pupils to make consistently good progress.
- Improve the skills and knowledge of staff with curriculum management responsibilities and increase the level of their accountability for the subjects that they lead.
- Make the curriculum more creative and improve links between subjects and the skills taught.

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

Children in Reception make satisfactory progress, but even with the good progress they make in some areas of learning, few reach the expected levels by the time they move into Year 1. Pupils in Key Stage 1 achieve well and the most recent national assessments at Year 2 show average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Recent assessments in Year 6 show some improvement, for example, in the proportion of pupils attaining the higher level 5 in English and mathematics. However, standards remain average and progress satisfactory. Science is an area of weakness and standards are below average. The strategies put in place this year have closed the gap between girls' and boys' achievement. Changes to the provision for pupils with weak literacy skills have enabled them to make better progress. This is a similar picture for those who have English as an additional language. Both groups make the same rate of progress as other pupils in the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good, and are well supported by the school's strong Catholic ethos. Pupils are generally friendly and helpful around school. Behaviour is satisfactory, although a few pupils find it more difficult to control their emotions and responses. Pupils know how to stay safe and say they feel free from harassment. The adults in school quickly and sensitively deal with any problems that do arise. Pupils also understand the need to eat healthily and take exercise. There are many opportunities for them to be active during and outside the school day. Pupils contribute confidently to school life, for example, through the school council. They also enjoy their involvement with the wider community and the wider world through their links with the parish and a school in Nigeria. Pupils enjoy school and attendance is broadly average. They are developing the social and academic skills they need for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Within this satisfactory picture, there are examples of good and occasionally outstanding teaching. However, this is uneven across the school and the proportion of good teaching is not high enough to ensure consistently good progress for all pupils. In all classes, relationships are good; pupils enjoy their learning and most respond well to their teachers. This means that no time is now lost through dealing with poor behaviour. Planning for ability sets is generally appropriate but, in some instances, does not take account of the full range of needs and abilities. Pupils usually understand what they are expected to achieve in lessons, although teachers' use of explicit learning intentions is at an early stage and not fully embedded. However, it is already beginning to assist pupils and teachers in assessing their work. There are good examples of teachers marking to their learning intentions for the lesson. However, too few teachers identify clearly for pupils what it is they must focus on next in order to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school is in the process of revising the curriculum to improve links between subjects. Currently the curriculum lacks the creativity needed to inspire the pupils and systematically strengthen basic skills. Where this is done well, for example through themed weeks, visits and visitors, it provides additional depth and interest to pupils' learning. The teaching of English and mathematics in ability sets is having a positive impact on pupils' progress and achievement, particularly for those who need additional support and for the more able. Extra-curricular activities provide good opportunities for pupils to improve their health and well-being through a range of games and sports.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pupils are well cared for and safe, and good links with other agencies provide a range of additional support. The school meets all the requirements for safeguarding and child protection. The inclusion team provides the more vulnerable pupils with good support and this is having a very positive impact on improving attitudes and behaviour. The school has recently improved the systems for assessing, recording and tracking pupils' progress. As a result, staff have a clearer picture of the strengths and weaknesses in provision and the impact of this is now being seen in improvements in pupils' achievement. Whilst progress has also been made in analysing pupils' performance against national norms, it is not yet sufficiently detailed to inform sharp targets for year groups, classes, sets and individual pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

An accurate evaluation has resulted in a well thought out development plan, which targets the right priorities for improvement. Success criteria are identified, although not all of these are sharp enough to enable a thorough evaluation of their impact. With the support of key staff, well-managed initiatives are already in place. For example, the effective use of learning intentions

in lessons provides a greater level of challenge for most pupils. However, middle managers do not yet have all the information, skills and knowledge needed to be fully effective or to be accountable for their subjects, although this is work in progress. Governance is good. Governors are actively involved in setting the strategic direction for the school. Through their monitoring, they are effective in holding leaders to account for what the school achieves.

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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	2

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?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
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 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	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	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

9 July 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of St George's Catholic Primary, Littleover, Derby, DG23 1GG

Many of you will remember when Mrs Rogers, Mr Edwards and I visited your school a little while ago. We appreciated the welcome you gave us, and your politeness. You are a credit to yourselves and the school - well done. Those of you we talked with were very keen to share your work and ideas. This letter is to tell you what we found out about your school.

Your school provides you with a satisfactory education and all of the adults take good care of you. Many of you work hard for your school through the school council and your good work for others beyond the school. You told us how you enjoy school, and how you like to try your best. We could see this in the many interesting displays of your work and in the way the oldest children worked together rehearsing for their musical. You also told us that everyone in school generally gets on with each other. This is clear from the way you listen in lessons and help each other.

To help you do even better we have asked the teachers to give you more opportunities to investigate and experiment in science and in other lessons to plan more topics that let you use the skills you learn in other subjects. We are also asking the teachers to share all of the good things they do in their classes so everyone can benefit from these. Mrs Hurd is also going to work with those teachers who have specific roles in school so they can help the school get better even faster.

You can do your bit by making sure you come to school as regularly as you can and on time, so you can enjoy all of the exciting things going on. We hope the performance of 'Oliver' went well - it certainly deserved to with all of the hard work that was going in to it. We wish you well for the future and hope you continue to work hard, enjoy school and get even better.

John Francis

Lead inspector