

St Swithun Wells Catholic Primary School, Chandlers Ford

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116383
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	312284
Inspection dates	13–14 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Christopher Grove

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	170
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	29
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Alina Sutherland
Headteacher	Miss Ursula Clark
Date of previous school inspection	27 June 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Hillcrest Avenue Chandler's Ford Eastleigh SO53 2JP
Telephone number	02380 266210

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is of smaller than average size and includes a Reception class as part of its Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. A below-average number of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds, and a small proportion are at an early stage of acquiring English. The school has gained the Healthy Schools, Activemark and Eco-Schools (Bronze) awards. The school manages breakfast and after-school clubs.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

St Swithun Wells Catholic Primary is a good school. There are outstanding features in some aspects of pupils' personal development. Many parents attest to the very welcoming and caring ethos; one wrote that the headteacher is, 'Always very willing to listen and address any issues. From such strong leadership emanates a very happy and caring staff and children'. Another parent spoke for others in judging that, 'All the staff are extremely approachable and interested in my child's schooling'. Parents also rightly identify the good team spirit amongst staff. Such comments attest to good leadership and the positive partnership with parents.

Most parents agree that their children are very happy at school. This, together with good teaching and a lively curriculum, leads to pupils' outstanding enjoyment of their education. Pupils eagerly join in lessons and other activities. Their behaviour is outstanding, and along with excellent relationships with teachers, leads to good personal development. They also show an excellent understanding of how to stay safe. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, although pupils have a limited understanding of the different cultures that comprise British society.

Pupils' achievement and progress are good, and standards are above average. Although pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 has not been consistent in recent years, standards rose to above average in 2007. Inspection evidence shows that as a result of good teaching pupils are currently making good progress. Standards at the end of Year 6 were broadly average in 2007, but provisional test results in 2008 show improvements in mathematics, science, and especially in English, where there has been a successful focus on improving pupils' writing.

The good curriculum supports pupils' learning well and nurtures their personal development very well. There are good arrangements to set targets to improve pupils' writing, although marking rarely refers to them. Target-setting in other subjects is less well developed, so that pupils do not always know their present standards well enough. The good arrangements in setting clear writing targets do not extend to reading and mathematics. Consequently not all pupils have a clear idea about how to improve their work in these subjects.

The headteacher offers good leadership, and is well supported by the management team and the governing body. The school uses monitoring information well to evaluate and improve its provision. Staff are committed to promoting equal opportunities, for example by the good support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school's contribution to community cohesion is satisfactory, because there are not enough opportunities to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of the diversity of communities within Britain and beyond. Links with local secondary schools have developed well, for example, to extend the teaching of mathematics and sports. Good links with a range of local authority services support the school's music provision and make positive contributions to pupils' personal development.

The school has taken good and effective steps to introduce improvements since the last inspection. This, together with accurate school self-evaluation, demonstrate that the school has a good capacity to make further improvements.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Thorough assessments show that children enter the EYFS with a range of aptitudes but, overall, their skills are as expected for their age. Consistently good teaching helps ensure that the

children achieve well and enter Year 1 with above the expected levels of knowledge and skills. The EYFS is very well organised to ensure children's welfare, learning and development. High-quality planning and organisation provide a comprehensive learning experience and stimulating opportunities, indoors and out. For example, the story of lost ducklings, introduced one morning, provided a jolly theme that was used throughout the day. Lessons are collaborative, and this promotes good behaviour and attitudes.

Teachers and early years assistants create a positive learning atmosphere. The setting is well equipped, including the large outside area. Children thrive in this safe environment. They express themselves willingly because staff listen to them respectfully. The gentle approach does, on occasions, mean that classroom management is not always firm enough to ensure that children quickly settle down. Early years assistants are involved in daily planning and make a significant contribution to children's progress. Thorough arrangements show the strong commitment of staff to children's welfare. Robust administrative arrangements ensure that children's safety is paramount. Good leadership promotes a common sense of purpose amongst all the adults and the provision runs smoothly. Relationships with parents are friendly, and play a significant part in helping children to settle quickly into school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all pupils have a good understanding of their current standards in reading and mathematics and what they should do to improve.
- Enhance pupils' understanding of the wider world through improving the range of opportunities to promote multi-cultural awareness and by the development of a broader range of contacts beyond the locality.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The changing standards at the end of Key Stage 1 in the past reflect inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. Improved teaching has resulted in better results in 2007 in reading, writing and mathematics. The current above average standards at the end of Year 6 are mainly due to a considerable improvement in pupils' standards in English, and to a lesser extent in mathematics and science. The proportion of pupils who gained the higher Level 5 standard increased in science, and considerably so in English because of the focus on improving writing. Good additional provision, and the productive one-to-one work of the learning support assistants supports well pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those whose first language is not English. Consequently, they make the same good progress as their peers.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils co-operate extremely well with staff and one another, and show pride in their work. They can think of few improvements needed in school. Pupils benefit from the school's ethos that successfully fosters their spiritual, moral and social development. However, pupil's knowledge of other cultures is limited because they have too few opportunities to develop their multi-cultural understanding. Pupils know that bullying is very serious, and is not tolerated. Attendance is above average. Pupils have a good understanding about how to live healthily. They respond positively to the healthy options on the lunchtime menus, and join in the many opportunities for exercise. Strong relationships across the age-range underpin pupils' excellent feeling of personal safety. Pupils know how to avoid the pitfalls of the internet. They make a

good contribution to the community. The school council and learning council each provide good opportunities to air opinions. The school acts on ideas put forward, such as introducing new bins and playground equipment. Good achievement and the development of independence and team-working skills ensure that pupils are well prepared for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers have good skills in classroom management and organisation, leading to a purposeful atmosphere in lessons. Excellent relationships ensure that pupils are very well motivated and responsive. Teachers' secure subject knowledge results in confident teaching. One teacher, for instance, used skilful questioning to build on pupils' already good achievement, enabling them to demonstrate their understanding of the properties of shapes, using correct mathematical terminology. A good lesson pace holds pupils' interest well. Lesson planning is mostly good. Most work is well-matched to pupils' different abilities, providing appropriate challenge. Where teaching is satisfactory, the levels of challenge are lower and progress slows, because of the weaker match of work to ability. Particularly effective teaching helps pupils to make good links between their experiences and their understanding.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Provision for English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) is good. Since the last inspection, the school has successfully re-balanced the curriculum so that subjects other than basic skills and religious education receive greater attention. For example, writing at Key Stage 2 has improved because of better opportunities for the practice in other areas. ICT resources have improved. The skills of investigation and enquiry in science are better emphasised, leading to higher standards in 2008. Issues of safety and health are addressed in personal, social and health education, which also helps pupils to develop positive views of themselves and others. Links to local organisations have strengthened teaching in music and physical education and games. However, the school is not providing enough opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of other communities in the UK and globally. Enrichment through visits and visitors supports learning well, for instance in history and geography. Special events, such as Health Awareness Week and Titanic Day, highlight important topics for pupils. The good extra-curricular programme is well attended and includes cultural activities and sports clubs.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Staff demonstrate a shared commitment to pupils' happiness and well-being. Arrangements for safeguarding are robust. Risk assessments are carefully undertaken. Adults quickly identify those at risk, putting effective arrangements in place to support them. Good relationships and communication with parents lead to awareness of any changes to pupils' personal circumstances and appropriate action, when necessary. All pupils have targets for improvement in writing, which are well adapted to the needs of different age groups. Targets in mathematics are being piloted in Year 6. However, they require refinement, as the school agrees, because they are

written in language which pupils find difficult to understand. Marking is regular and encouraging but does not always offer helpful advice, and does not refer sufficiently to targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school uses monitoring information well to evaluate and improve its provision. This has led to improvements in pupils' personal development and in their achievement and standards. There are good procedures to monitor the curriculum and teaching and learning. This has resulted in better quality teaching and improved standards. Subject managers play an important role alongside the headteacher in these monitoring and evaluation processes. The school sets itself appropriately challenging targets. Most aspects of leadership and management are good, but the school's contribution to community cohesion is not fully developed. Pupils have good contacts with the local community and with the parish. However, opportunities to understand other UK communities, and communities abroad, are limited. The governance of the school is good. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and know how to play the role of 'critical friend'. They provide good support, and are confident to challenge the school to improve.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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 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?	2

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	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

03 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Swithun Wells Catholic Primary School, Chandlers Ford, Eastleigh, SO53 2JP

We would like to thank all of you, and your teachers, for your help during the inspection. We enjoyed seeing you in your classrooms and talking to you at playtimes and lunchtimes. St Swithun Wells Primary is a good school. Your school is a very happy place for children to be, as many of you and your parents say. There are lots of really good things about your school. The list below highlights the most important ones.

- You have excellent relationships with the teachers and other adults. They take good care of you, and everyone is made to feel welcome.
- Children make a really good start to school life in the Reception class.
- Your enjoyment of school is outstanding.
- Your personal development is good, your behaviour in lessons and around school is excellent, and you feel safe in school.
- The teaching in your school is good.
- The school has a good curriculum and a good range of extra-curricular activities, in which you participate well.
- You are making good progress in your learning, and your standards at Year 6 are above average.
- The headteacher and the other school leaders are doing a good job. They do a lot of checking up, so they know what is good about your school and how to improve it.
- Most of your parents are really pleased with the school.
- Your school has good relationships with your parents, and with other schools.

The headteacher and the other leaders have worked very hard to make the school a good place for you. We have asked them to make things even better by:

- ensuring that you understand your standards in reading and mathematics, and how you can improve your work
- giving you a better understanding of the wider world through more contact with other people elsewhere in the country and in the world.

You can help by continuing to work hard and taking advantage of the improvements that your teachers will be making. We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Chris Grove

Lead Inspector