

St Luke's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123558
Local Authority	Telford and Wrekin
Inspection number	314638
Inspection date	21 January 2008
Reporting inspector	John Horwood

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	133
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jamie Roberts
Headteacher	Bernie Cheshire
Date of previous school inspection	9 July 2003
School address	Church Road Trench Telford TF2 7HG
Telephone number	01952 388222
Fax number	01952 270138

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average school. The number in each year group varies and pupils' mobility is high. Many of those who join the school late have learning difficulties and/or disabilities or speak little English. Until 2006, the vast majority of pupils came from White British backgrounds but the number from ethnic minority groups has risen significantly. Currently, 10% have English as an additional language. Almost a third of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The previous headteacher retired in September 2007 and, because of difficulty in recruiting a replacement at that time, the governors decided to appoint two part-time acting headteachers. One is an acting deputy headteacher from within the school and the other an experienced headteacher who had left another local Catholic school. The post is now being advertised with a view to appointing for this September.

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 offers pupils a satisfactory education where the achievement is satisfactory. Governors have been strong in making decisions to secure effective leadership and management in the long term whilst ensuring current pupils continue to get a sound education. The current arrangement for leadership and management is satisfactory with the individual members all making a good contribution to the short and medium-term plans. The improvements already evident in the school show that the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

Children enter the school with standards below expected levels and they make good progress in the Foundation Stage. Within Years 1 to 6, pupils make satisfactory progress and achieve broadly average standards.. Although more able pupils make satisfactory progress, they do not move ahead as quickly as they could. This is because teachers do not all use the assessment data consistently to ensure that the work they are given provides them with sufficient challenge. Pupils who speak English as an additional language receive appropriate support and make similar progress to others. The school systems for tracking the progress of pupils and groups of pupils are not sufficiently embedded and consistently used to enable areas of underachievement to be rapidly identified and action taken.

The quality of teaching has improved as a result of good monitoring and support systems introduced and is satisfactory. The good relationships and attitudes of pupils mean that pupils enjoy the lessons and they all behave well. The interactive whiteboards and the laptop computers are well used by the teachers and pupils. There is good support for less able pupils but the work is not sufficiently matched to the needs of more able pupils. The quality of marking is satisfactory but written advice on how to do better is not consistently given. The curriculum content fully meets requirements and the extra-curricular activities are well supported.

The quality of pastoral care for pupils is good and they receive satisfactory academic support and guidance. There are good links with a variety of external agencies to ensure that there is good support for vulnerable pupils. All pupils develop good personal attributes and feel safe and well cared for. They enjoy taking on responsibilities around the school and help well within the classroom. Through the Catholic community links, they make a good contribution to the wider community. Pupils are developing a satisfactory understanding of what they have to do to lead healthy lifestyles but at present do not always make healthy choices. Their behaviour is good and they have a good understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe. Relationships throughout the school are good.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children's standards when they enter the Reception class are below expected levels but they make good progress so that by the end of the Foundation Stage their skills are in line with age-related expectations. Teaching is good and the enthusiastic teacher has a good subject knowledge and ensures that the curriculum is planned and delivered well. Children's activities are well matched to their learning needs and they are both challenged and supported throughout the day. There is a good balance between teacher-led and child-initiated activities.

Teaching assistants provide good support and contribute to the monitoring of progress records, which are comprehensive and provide an outstanding evidence base. The Foundation Stage is a calm and industrious environment where children are always actively engaged. Children learn

in a safe, happy and healthy environment and enjoy their education. Recently, there have been improvements to the outside environment, increasing the opportunities to explore the outdoor curriculum more fully and further enrich the curriculum.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement by ensuring that assessment systems are used consistently by teachers to match work appropriately to pupils' abilities, particularly for higher attaining pupils.
- Make better use of systems that track pupils' progress to monitor and analyse performance so that priorities can be more easily identified and addressed.

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 enter the Foundation Stage with below expected skills and abilities. As a result of good teaching, they make good progress and achieve the expected levels by the time they transfer to Year 1. From Years 1 to 6, all pupils make at least satisfactory progress and some make good progress. Standards are consistently just below or close to the national averages throughout the school. Last year, the older pupils achieved lower than average standards in English but had nevertheless made satisfactory progress from their starting points. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported and also make satisfactory progress. After an initial slow start, the increasing number of pupils with English as an additional language make similar progress in lessons to other pupils. Higher attaining pupils do not always achieve as much as they could because some of the work they are expected to do is not sufficiently challenging. The overall rate of pupils' progress in the school is affected by the relatively high mobility of pupils, a significant number of whom join or leave the school other than at the usual time.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Good overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a key factor in pupils' good personal development. The increasing cultural diversity in this inclusive school is celebrated well and all the pupils get on well together. Pupils say they enjoy being at school and this is evident throughout the school. One pupil said, 'Once you come to this school you realise that you wouldn't want to go anywhere else.' Positive relationships exist between staff and pupils. Pupils feel supported and cared for during lessons. There is a warmth throughout the school and pupils develop both self-esteem and confidence. Behaviour throughout the school is good. Lunchtime and other 'social' parts of the day are quiet and orderly.

Attendance figures are satisfactory but reflect the high number of holidays taken during term time. The school works well with the educational welfare officer to support families and encourage better attendance. Pupils are aware of the basics of staying healthy but do not always make healthy choices. Literacy, numeracy and communication and information technology skills are satisfactory in preparing pupils for their future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Whilst satisfactory overall, there is an increasing proportion of good or outstanding teaching. Pupils show good attitudes to learning and the management of behaviour is good. The teaching in the Foundation Stage provides children with a good range of well focused and age-related activities. Teachers have good subject knowledge and they make good use of the information and communication technology systems in the classroom to engage and motivate the pupils. The use of assessment data to plan appropriate activities varies but consistently provides well for the pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There is currently a focus on providing matched work for the gifted and talented pupils but this is not yet fully developed. Consequently, some lessons do not provide sufficient pace and challenge for all pupils. Pupils are set targets and their work is generally marked well but there are variations in the quality of both systems.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The satisfactory curriculum is adequately planned but work sheets are used too often. There is only a limited amount of practical work in lessons and, in subjects like science, this limits opportunities for pupils to develop their investigational skills. Citizenship and personal social and health education provision is good. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is especially well thought out as part of the good provision for these pupils within the school. Whilst gifted and talented children are well catered for in the Foundation Stage, similar pupils in the main school do not yet have the same benefits. The provision of modern foreign languages within the school is developing to enhance the curriculum. Pupils take part in and enjoy the wide range of extra-curricular activities, including sport, music and a residential visit for the older pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Parents appreciate the good pastoral care their children receive. The Catholic ethos is embedded in the school and supports the caring environment. The school has a high number of pupils with specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities and they are well supported and cared for. Their needs are quickly identified and they are monitored closely. Within class, they receive a good level of support with the teacher and the teaching assistants working effectively with them. The school works well with other agencies to ensure the necessary support is provided for all pupils. The school is aware of the needs of its vulnerable pupils and strives to support these through the breakfast club, after school clubs and activities during the summer, as well as by its general care and support. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Use of curricular targets throughout the school in English and mathematics supports pupils' learning, and these are clearly shown in workbooks. However, pupils do not all agree with their own targets and, in fact, make suggestions about more suitable ones. Marking of work is satisfactory but the quality of written guidance on how to improve is variable.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Under difficult and uncertain circumstances, the two acting headteachers have successfully taken the school through a period of change into a stable position where staff work as a team with structured responsibilities and from where the school can now move forward. Governors have been instrumental in developing the leadership structure and have a clear understanding of the difficulties the school faces as well as knowledge of its strengths. They are active within the school as well as supporting and challenging the leadership team, as necessary. Both the governors and the leadership team acknowledge that the impact of their hard work on trying to raise standards is not yet visible. They all share the same purpose and vision of raising standards, ensuring that every child achieves as much as possible within the caring Catholic environment. Self-evaluation is satisfactory because, although the areas for development are identified, the planned actions have not yet become sufficiently embedded to raise standards. Although the governors and the leadership team have been successful in creating a strong position from which the school can move forward, much will depend on the development of the long-term management structure. At present, the capacity to improve is satisfactory.

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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	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

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?	2
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	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	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	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	3
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

22 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Luke's Catholic Primary School, Trench, TF2 7HG

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed being at your school, meeting with your teachers and talking with you during the day. Your school is providing you with a satisfactory education. These are our main findings.

- You all enjoy school and behaviour is good.
- The staff take good care of you and ensure you are kept safe.
- Relationships in the school are very good.
- Those of you who find learning difficult are given very good support and many of you make good progress in lessons.
- During your time in the school, you all make satisfactory progress, although you do get a very good start in the Foundation Stage, where you make good progress.
- Teaching is always at least satisfactory and more is becoming good or better.
- The acting headteachers and all the staff are working hard to improve the school.
- In order to help the school improve and become even better, we have asked the staff to:
 - help you make more progress by making sure that all the work you do is at the right level, especially for the more able
 - make better use of 'tracking' systems to check up on your progress throughout the school and help with plans for the future.

We wish each one of you every success and happiness in your future education.

Yours sincerely

John Horwood Lead inspector

22 January 2008

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John Horwood
Lead inspector