

## St Christopher's Catholic Primary School

### Inspection report

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	124374
<b>Local Authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	314907
<b>Inspection dates</b>	25–26 September 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Melvyn Hemmings

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.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	213
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	30
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	M Allen
<b>Headteacher</b>	K Brown
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	20 June 2005
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Wolverhampton Road Codsall Wolverhampton WV8 1PF
<b>Telephone number</b>	01902 434310
<b>Fax number</b>	01902 434310

<b>Age group</b>	4–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This average-sized school, which has Early Years Foundation Stage provision (EYFS), is popular and oversubscribed. It serves an area of low social deprivation. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average, as is the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school. It has some outstanding features. It provides pupils with a wide range of stimulating learning experiences within a warm and caring ethos, firmly based on the Catholic faith. The vast majority of parents are supportive and rightly proud of the school. Two parental comments are typical of many. 'The school combines high standards with a caring ethos you can feel' and 'We are proud of our school and the friendly and approachable staff who go that extra mile to help our children.'

Good leadership and management are at the heart of the school's success. The headteacher is an inspirational leader who has high aspirations for all staff and pupils. All involved with the school share her vision for school improvement and a strong team ethos is evident. Senior leaders check provision carefully and are quick to take action to bring about improvement when required. This is exemplified by the strategies put into place over the last two years to ensure more consistent progress in mathematics. These have proved successful and standards have risen. However, some subject leaders do not play such an active role in checking performance in their subjects so their role in promoting school improvement is limited. Leaders promote equality of opportunity very well and this leads to the school being very inclusive.

Good teaching and learning enables pupils to make good progress and achieve well through the school. As a result, pupils attain standards that are well above average in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. Though standards are high in mathematics, they are relatively lower than in English and science. This results from pupils not having enough opportunities to carry out practical investigations to deepen their knowledge and understanding in the subject. Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning, showing interest in their work and concentrate well. Teachers manage lessons well to ensure pupils have a high work rate and this has a beneficial effect on the progress they make. Relationships are excellent and this leads to classrooms being very friendly and happy places in which to learn.

The pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils behave in an exemplary manner and are very polite and courteous. They are considerate and willing to listen to and appreciate other points of view. They are very friendly and keen to help others when required. An excellent range of enrichment activities very effectively enlivens the good curriculum. These include a wide variety of extra-curricular activities and visits to places of educational interest. The curriculum for children in the EYFS has been extended by improvements to their dedicated outdoor area. This area is not used as well as it could be to support their learning. The pastoral care and support of pupils is outstanding and this aspect of the school's provision is greatly appreciated by parents. All adults are firmly committed to ensuring pupils' well-being and safety and there is very much a family feel to the school.

The school has made good improvement since the last inspection, particularly in providing resources for children in the EYFS. Its recent track record shows the school has good capacity to bring about any necessary changes in the future.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Provision in the EYFS is good. Children enter the Reception class with skill levels expected for their age. They make good progress and achieve well in learning the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Progress is especially good in personal, social and emotional development because

of the emphasis placed on this area of learning. The children are settled and have adapted quickly to their new routines, cooperating well together and sharing resources fairly. The class teacher and her assistants work closely together and have a good understanding of the needs of children of this age. For example, they teach phonics well and because of this many children are already familiar with some letters and sounds. All statutory welfare requirements are met and pastoral care for children is excellent. They are confident, articulate and happy to discuss what they are doing. Thoughtful curriculum planning ensures a good balance between activities children choose for themselves and those that adults lead. This effectively supports children's independent learning skills. Their progress is checked regularly to make sure they are on track to meet the targets set for them. The use of the outdoor area does not fully support children's development across all areas of learning. Good partnerships with parents are formed as a result of home visits and good induction procedures. The EYFS is led well and children are effectively prepared for their move to Year 1.

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

- 
- Provide additional practical investigations in mathematics to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding in the subject.
- Involve subject leaders more effectively in school improvement.
- Develop the use of the outside area for Reception children to better support their learning.

### **Achievement and standards**

#### **Grade: 2**

Children enter Year 1 having made good progress across all areas of learning in Reception and reached above average standards. Good progress is maintained through the rest of the school. As a result, pupils attain standards that are well above average in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 and in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. This represents good achievement from their starting points on entering school. Standards in science are particularly high because of the emphasis placed on pupils learning through carefully structured practical investigations. Such opportunities are limited in mathematics and, consequently, standards are relatively lower than in English and science. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because of the well targeted extra support they receive.

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

#### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They are respectful of others and very friendly towards each other. One pupil commented, 'Because of all the love in this school you've always got someone to talk to.' Pupils are emphatic when they say they enjoy coming to school and cannot think of anything the school could do better. They say lessons are interesting and fun and this is reflected in above average attendance. Pupils are keen to take on responsibilities, such as being a house captain or a playground buddy, and in so doing make a very good contribution to the school community. The school council is rightly proud that its voice is heard and that improved school meals and a shelter canopy have been put in place because of their suggestions. Pupils also make a very good contribution to the life of the local community, such as by raising funds for local charities. They are adopting healthy lifestyles very well and talk knowledgeably about the need to eat a balanced diet and take

regular exercise. They also have a very good understanding of how to stay safe. Pupils are well prepared for their future lives.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teachers plan their lessons well to ensure the needs of pupils of different abilities are met effectively. As a result, all pupils make good progress and achieve the challenging targets set for them. Pupils are given activities that are interesting and motivating and so are able to maintain their concentration for lengthy periods. Teachers encourage pupils to show initiative and take responsibility for their own learning, particularly in science. This was evident in a lesson for pupils in Year 6 in which they were investigating if the weight of an object changes when placed in water. In mathematics, there is an over reliance on textbooks and worksheets as a means of promoting learning. This limits the opportunities for pupils to take part in practical investigations to solve problems and deepen their mathematical knowledge and understanding. Teaching assistants provide effective support for all pupils, especially those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is tailored well to the needs of all pupils and ensures that learning builds well on what has been taught previously. A wide range of extra-curricular activities that include drama, sports, cookery, art and crafts very effectively extends it. The curriculum is also enriched by a variety of visitors, such as poets, speakers, dancers and musicians, who successfully support pupils' learning. There are good links with other providers to widen pupils' experiences. For example, the use of the local Life Education Centre effectively encourages pupils to be healthy and stay safe. There are limited opportunities for pupils to be involved in structured practical investigations in mathematics. The curriculum is successfully developing a global dimension through recently formed links with a school in India. This is making a positive contribution to pupils' cultural development. Further interest is added to the curriculum through focused theme days and the opportunity for pupils to learn French.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 1**

Each pupil is cherished as a unique individual and his or her well-being is given a very high priority. Safeguarding arrangements are very rigorous, with thorough child protection and risk assessments firmly in place. All staff are very aware of the procedures to follow if they have concerns about the well-being of a pupil. Pupils say they feel safe in school and on the playground because they are supervised well. The school has excellent links with outside agencies to provide extra support for individual pupils when required. The procedures for checking the progress that pupils make are comprehensive. The information gained is used effectively to provide pupils with guidance to improve their work. Good guidance is given to pupils as to how they can evaluate for themselves how well they are doing and how they might improve.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

Self-evaluation is accurate and enables leaders to identify and prioritise areas for development. They take decisive action to bring about improvement, as is exemplified in the way progress in mathematics has been made more consistent through the school. There is a good balance struck between meeting the professional development needs of individual staff and the priorities of the whole school. Some subject leaders, particularly those who are relatively new to their role, do not play a full part in school improvement. Leaders promote community cohesion at local, national and global levels in an outstanding manner. This stems from the excellent relationships in the school between staff, pupils, parents and governors and a willingness to be outward looking in their shared ethos of promoting a sense of belonging by all communities. Governors are very supportive of the school and play an effective role in helping it 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?	1
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?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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?	1

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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?	1
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**

29 September 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Christopher's Catholic Primary School, Codsall, WV8 1PF.

Thank you for the really friendly welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you and seeing the things you do. Yours is a good school and it has some outstanding features. It helps you make good progress and reach standards in English, mathematics and science that are well above average by the end of Year 6.

What we found about your school:

- It is a very friendly and happy place in which to work and play.
- You behave in an exemplary manner and are very kind and considerate to others.
- Teachers have high expectations of your performance and behaviour and you have very positive attitudes to learning.
- You show a great deal of enjoyment in coming to school and your attendance rate is above average.
- Adults look after you in an outstanding way and make sure you are safe and secure in and around school and on visits.
- You make a very good contribution to the school and local community.
- The curriculum is made interesting by lots of very exciting activities that you say make learning interesting and fun.
- You are adopting healthy lifestyles in an excellent manner and show a very good awareness of how to stay safe.
- Leaders of your school are working hard to make it even better. What I have asked your school to do now:
  - Provide you with more practical investigations in mathematics to deepen your knowledge and understanding in the subject.
  - Involve those teachers who lead subjects more effectively in helping the school improve further.
  - Develop the use of the outside area for Reception children to better support their learning.

You can all help the school by always trying your hardest in all your work. All of you are a credit to your school.

All my best wishes for the future and I hope you continue being friendly and kind.

Melvyn Hemmings Lead inspector