

St Hugh of Lincoln Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125226
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	315202
Inspection date	10 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Rob Crompton

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	206
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr M Smallwood
Headteacher	Mrs B Walsh
Date of previous school inspection	8 June 2004
School address	Five Oaks Close St John's Woking GU21 8TU
Telephone number	01483 480441
Fax number	01483 799593

Age group	5-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. He evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated pupils' achievement, and the care, guidance and support they receive. The inspector gathered evidence from lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and parents' questionnaires. Discussions with staff and pupils also contributed to the judgements, as did assessment results and documentation from the school. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but 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

The school is average in size and serves a suburban community. The majority of pupils are White British. About 10% are from minority ethnic groups, most of whom have Asian backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average. The pupils who need extra support have weak speech and communication skills, specific learning difficulties or social/emotional problems.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

St Hugh of Lincoln is a good school where pupils thoroughly enjoy learning and achieve well. They rise to the challenging targets set by teachers and reach above average standards. On starting school, children's skills and understanding are broadly typical of the age group. They make good progress in the Reception class so almost all children reach or exceed the expected levels by the time they go into Year 1. Pupils build well on this secure base and, by the end of Year 2, standards are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Achievement through Years 3 to 6 is good overall, and pupils reach above average standards in English, mathematics and science. Pupils make better progress and reach much higher standards in reading than in writing. Staff are tackling this by building in opportunities for pupils to use writing skills in other subjects. More emphasis is being placed on reinforcing phonics (how letters in words relate to sounds) in the older classes to improve pupils' spelling and confidence in writing independently. These strategies have not been used consistently for long enough to ensure all pupils reach their potential in writing by the end of Year 6. Pupils whose learning is constrained by communication difficulties, such as hearing impairment, make good progress because of the effective support they receive. Similarly, pupils who are falling behind, or find it difficult to conform socially, make good headway due to skilled support.

Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning. They are very clear about learning objectives; 'They tell us what we are to learn.' and success criteria; 'They tell us what makes good work and how to improve'. This level of understanding enables pupils to assess their own work constructively and reflect on their progress. Marking gives pupils a very good idea of what they need to do next. Teachers provide precise guidance with comments such as, 'Make sure your adverbs always fit perfectly with the verb.' and, 'Remember to use phrases like 'some people think' and 'others believe,' when writing a balanced argument.' Pupils say that teachers make learning fun and set up appealing activities. This was evident during an excellent lesson in Year 6. Pupils wrote poems in pairs in the style of Kipling and offered sensitive and constructive criticism as they listened to one another's efforts. The written work was of a good standard, including:

'If you can risk your life for people who would never do anything for you, Respect someone when they don't respect you, Keep your promises when others break theirs, If you can keep your head above the water when others push you to the bottom, Then you'll be a success my friend.'

In some lessons, writing tasks are more mundane and the teaching lacks pace so pupils do not make the progress they might in the time available. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Their behaviour is excellent. The good curriculum offers many opportunities for spiritual and cultural development. Pupils talk confidently and respectfully about the similarities and differences between faiths. A good range of extra activities, including visits and after-school clubs, enriches pupils' experiences. In lessons, pupils are successfully encouraged to make a personal response. Imagining a perfect place, one wrote,

'Where everyone slots together, like a parcel made for ever. Unbreakable beauty.'

Pupils recalled many occasions when they felt moved by events and had learned things outside the classroom. One said, 'On the residential trip, we learned to conquer our fears'. Pupils develop an excellent understanding of how to lead healthy lifestyles and they take part eagerly in

physical activities. They know how to look after themselves in potentially hazardous situations, such as on the beach or by the roadside. Through acting as school councillors, prefects and 'playground buddies' pupils gain excellent insights into their responsibilities towards the wider community. Pupils' good literacy, numeracy and computer skills, and their confidence in working independently and cooperatively, prepare them well for the next school and future lives.

The outstanding level of care and support pupils receive is underpinned by excellent relationships in school. Pupils say bullying is rare and are confident that any incidents are followed up. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are highly efficient. With the support of outside expertise, support for vulnerable pupils is first class. Pupils receive excellent academic guidance and are well aware of what they need to do to improve. Parents are very supportive and much appreciate the Catholic ethos. Typical comments from the parental questionnaires are, '...a lovely school, like a family.' '...a very caring environment...', '...a fantastic feeling of community' and 'Pupils can achieve their full potential.'

Leadership and management are outstanding. Very good progress has been made since the last inspection. Great headway has been made in increasing the proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels in reading, mathematics and science, where the proportion doing so is now well above the national average. Academic guidance has improved significantly and is now exemplary, resulting in much better achievement. Development planning is based securely on systematic self-evaluation. Governors maintain an excellent overview of the school through a programme of focussed monthly visits. They challenge and question in order to ensure that initiatives are well founded and resources deployed effectively. Financial management is excellent. Under the highly effective leadership of the headteacher, all class teachers have extra responsibilities and carry them out extremely well. For example, following a recent dip in standards in mathematics, carefully considered strategies led to improvements in the curriculum and the level of challenge, and standards are back to their former level. The school's track record of improving standards demonstrates that it has an excellent capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. The Reception class is a hive of activity, with sounds of excitement echoing around as children play and learn together. Children's needs are uppermost in everyone's mind and this is evident in a rich, active learning environment. Through good teaching, underpinned by a warm and supportive atmosphere, children achieve well and most reach or exceed the expected standards. The outdoor space provides opportunities for social development and speaking and listening. It is a little limited in scope, however, which means opportunities for physical and creative development are restricted.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the strategies to help pupils make good progress in writing in Years 3 to 6 are used consistently.

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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?	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
How well 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

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?	1

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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
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	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

04 September 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Hugh of Lincoln Catholic Primary School, Woking, GU21 8TU

Thank you for making me so welcome during my visit. I was pleased to see how well you behave and get on with one another. I agree with you that St Hugh of Lincoln is a good school. Because the teaching is good and you work so hard, you progress well and reach above average standards. Some of you find it difficult to improve your written work but the teachers are working hard to support you. It was good to see how well they help you to see what you need to do to improve your work. I have suggested that your teachers continue to help build up your confidence in writing by giving you more opportunities to write in other subjects. Many of you are very good readers, and the trick is to include some of the 'language of books' in your own writing. Trying to write in the style of famous authors is a good idea too, as I saw when Year 6 composed their own versions of 'If' by Rudyard Kipling.

Adults look after you extremely well and I was pleased to find that you have an excellent idea of how to stay safe and avoid problems when an adult is not present. You have a really good idea of the importance of exercise and eating healthily. Through taking turns to be school councillors, prefects and playground buddies, you help the smooth running of the school. You take these responsibilities seriously. I was impressed by how you help people less fortunate than yourselves by organising fund-raising events. By encouraging you to work alongside one another sensibly, and by making sure you have good literacy numeracy and computer skills, teachers make sure you are well prepared for the future. The school is extremely well run and all the adults work well together as a team with your best interests at heart. You can do your bit by continuing to work hard and support one another.

Yours sincerely,

Rob Crompton

Lead Inspector