

St Osmund's Catholic Primary School, Salisbury

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126425
Local Authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	315542
Inspection dates	23–24 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Michael Burghart

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	209
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	S Thorpe
Headteacher	Mark Fowler
Date of previous school inspection	1 December 2003
School address	Exeter Street Salisbury SP1 2SG
Telephone number	01722 322632
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average size primary school. It draws pupils from a wide area and a diverse range of social backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, but there is an above average proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs. Attainment when children first join Reception has declined in recent years to slightly below average. About a fifth of pupils speak English as an additional language. Many of these, whose parents work at the local hospital, are from the Philippines.

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. Pupils are happy, enjoy their work and behave extremely well. It is not surprising that attendance is good. Pupils make good academic and personal progress. Pupils' achievement is good, particularly in Year 2 through to the end of Year 6, building on the satisfactory start made in Reception and Year 1.

Standards, which dipped in English, mathematics and science in 2006, are once again above average by the time pupils leave. Standards in mathematics are on target to be well above average this year. Improvements are the result of successful developments in monitoring and self-evaluation, and much better management by subject coordinators. Science is a particular success story where pupils are no longer underachieving. Raised expectations and effective target setting are positive features of teaching. Although judged satisfactory overall, because of some inconsistencies, teaching has notable strengths, especially in mathematics and how staff make effective use of questioning. Good provision for those with learning difficulties results in good progress. Notwithstanding problems with access to the outdoor learning environment and too few opportunities for young children to learn through play activities, overall provision for the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Children make satisfactory progress to achieve most of what is expected nationally by the end of Reception, with strengths in developing basic literacy and numeracy skills.

The school takes good care of all its pupils and makes sure that they are safe. Staff give pupils clear guidance to show how they can improve their work. This is based on excellent relationships and much improved, and now good, assessment procedures. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school, particularly noting the caring, calm, friendly atmosphere, how well it is led by the headteacher, and the warm welcome that they and their children receive. 'Our child is proud of his school, as we are as parents,' wrote one parent and this is a typical sentiment. The school is true to its Catholic ideals. It successfully encourages pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and is effective in helping pupils to grow into sensible, considerate and self-confident young people. Personal development is good. Pupils have a clear understanding of what makes for a healthy lifestyle. They make a good contribution to the local community. The way pupils from different backgrounds and those with disabilities are supported and fully included in school life is outstanding. Pupils are well prepared for future study and life in general, with good basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT).

Developing links between subjects to make learning more enjoyable is one of the school's priorities. Nevertheless, the curriculum on offer is satisfactory. Strengths include the teaching of French and the opportunity for all pupils to learn a musical instrument. The desire to continue to make improvements is characteristic of the strong commitment of the headteacher and an example of the school's good overall leadership and management. Parents and staff alike are extremely confident that the school is in good hands. The school is well aware of its strengths and areas for further development. Successful staff teamwork and the growing involvement of the governors underpin the school's good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children are sensitively introduced to the routines of the school and are well cared for in Reception. Satisfactory overall provision leads to satisfactory progress in knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. Children, including those whose first language is not English, make good progress in emerging as readers and writers, learning to count and solving simple problems. Overall, the majority of children achieve most of what is expected nationally by the time they join Year 1. However, physical development is restricted by there being no easy access to dedicated, appropriately resourced outdoor space. Some important features of personal and social development are underdeveloped because children have insufficient opportunities to learn through play, make choices, and be spontaneous. Nevertheless, children get on well with each other and with adults, and behave well.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of provision for Reception with better access to, and use of, outdoor facilities and more opportunities to learn through play.
- Overcome inconsistencies in teaching, bringing the quality of all lessons up to that of the best already on offer in the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make satisfactory progress in Year 1 following their sound start in Reception. They make good progress in Year 2 because of good teaching and reach standards that are at least average for this age group. Predictions for performance in national tests in 2008 are for slightly above average standards in reading and mathematics and for even better than this in writing. Good progress by pupils of all abilities and backgrounds continues in Years 3 to 6, with pupils this year on course to be above average in English and science, and well above in mathematics. In writing and science in particular, improvements are the direct response to the school's own evaluation and intensive efforts to make work enjoyable and raise standards. This continues the marked improvement in pupils' achievement in 2007, which followed a decline in 2006.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school. It shows in their good attendance and outstanding behaviour. They are responding very well to the school's renewed intentions to make work interesting. 'I really like narrative writing!' one boy exclaimed, summing up pupils' enthusiasm and this was echoed by a Year 5 girl's comment, 'I like to see whether we got our predictions right in science.' Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, with notable strengths in moral and social aspects. Pupils have a good awareness of multicultural issues and are very considerate of people from different faiths and backgrounds. Community involvement is strong with pupils keen to raise money for charity, for example to support education in Tanzania. Pupils readily take on responsibility in and around the school, for example as playground friends and lunchtime helpers. However, younger children do not have enough opportunity to develop their ability to make choices and show independence and this restricts some aspects of their personal development. Pupils obviously feel safe in school and demonstrate they know how to act sensibly with equipment and apparatus. They have a good understanding of how to stay fit

and healthy, very much enjoying daily 'Wake Up and Shake Up'. Good basic literacy, numeracy and ICT skills, as well as a willingness to work with other people, mean pupils are well prepared for future study and life in general. Many parents commented to inspectors how happy their children are at St Osmund's.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. In a variety of lessons teaching is good. There are outstanding features in some lessons in Years 2, 3, 5 and 6, and these make a strong contribution to pupils' progress. Strengths of the teaching are in mathematics, relationships between adults and pupils, questioning which effectively probes pupils' understanding, and how work is planned and assessed. However, teaching is not consistent across the school. There are relative weaknesses in how younger pupils are encouraged to become independent in their learning, in the pace of some lessons, and how well some class activities are managed. School self-evaluation shows that senior managers are fully aware of areas for development, with plans already in hand to make improvements. Teaching assistants make a significant contribution to the quality of teaching. The way pupils for whom English is not their first language and those with disabilities are included in all activities is outstanding. Teaching for those who have learning difficulties is good.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory in that it covers all required subjects. There are good features in how it is enriched. French is taught across the school, all pupils learn to play a musical instrument at a good range and there are a number of extra-curricular activities. Personal, social and health education is well provided for. Pupils' comments and an analysis of time spent on each subject indicate that in some classes too little time is devoted to physical education. The use of homework, a strength in Year 3, is inconsistent. The school is currently reviewing its homework policy and evaluating the curriculum in general with a view to making it more relevant, interesting and enjoyable for pupils. There are early signs that this is proving successful, most notably in science where intentions to encourage a more hands on approach have significantly improved standards in terms of investigating and experimenting. A Year 4 lesson on liquids and solids showed just how much fun learning in this way can be!

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral care is a strength of the school. It very effectively supports pupils' personal development and is very much appreciated by parents and pupils. All required checks for health and safety and child protection are rigorously carried out. There is excellent attention to how pupils new to the school (in lots of cases new to the country) are introduced to St Osmund's and there is very caring support for pupils with disabilities. Provision for those with learning difficulties is good and ensures that such pupils make good progress. Academic guidance is good. New initiatives are making sure that pupils' work is being accurately assessed and used to show pupils how they can do better. Involving pupils in evaluating their own performance is a really positive feature. A combination of individual, class and whole school targets is being developed

to raise expectations. This works better in some classes than others and fully embedding this system is one of the school's priorities.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher manages the school well. Parents, governors, staff and pupils are all appreciative of his strong, but sensitive, leadership. He is well supported by staff (especially the senior leadership team) who have clearly defined roles. Significant improvements to the way responsibilities are delegated and monitored have had positive effects on how the curriculum is planned and taught, and how work is assessed. Pupils' progress has been much improved over the last two years as a result of higher expectations and the setting of challenging whole school targets. Day-to-day management is very effective and ensures that the school presents a calm and happy learning environment. The way in which provision for pupils from other countries is orchestrated is outstanding and a credit to the school. Good self-evaluation means that the school is well aware of its strengths and areas for improvement. This is followed up with good planning and structures that are effective in making improvements, for example to the quality of teaching. Governance is satisfactory. Governors, many of whom are new, are very supportive and are actively finding out more about the school in order to be able to play a full part in how it is managed. With the systems and procedures already in place and a strong commitment to making changes for the better, the school has a good capacity 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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
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?	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	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
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 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?	2

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?	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 tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	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	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

25 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Osmund's Catholic Primary School, Salisbury SP1 2SG

Thank you for your warm welcome! We really enjoyed visiting St Osmund's. It is a good school. This is not just because it is a happy, friendly place! The school makes sure that you do your best and that you reach what adults call above average standards. This means you are doing better than pupils in most other schools! We found out lots of things during our two days with you.

- Here are some of the highlights.
- Your behaviour is excellent. You obviously enjoy nearly everything you have to do.
- You are being very successfully helped to grow up as sensible young people who are considerate towards others and you care about the world we live in.
- The school is extremely good at helping children who have come from other countries to settle in.
- Staff take good care of you and do their best to show you how you can make your work even better.
- Teachers are trying hard to find ways to give you interesting things to do. You showed us how well this is working, especially in science and maths.
- The school is well run. The staff make a good team which is well led by your headteacher. He has a very clear idea of what the school does well and what could still be improved.
- To be even better the school should:
 - make it easier for reception children to play and learn, particularly outdoors
 - make sure that all the teaching is as good as the best.

You can help by continuing to work hard.

Yours sincerely

Mike Burghart Lead inspector

25 January 2008

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Mike Burghart
Lead inspector