

St Chad's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101802
Local Authority	Croydon
Inspection number	323530
Inspection dates	24–25 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Wendy Simmons

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	433
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Charlotte Leung
Headteacher	Mrs Cathy Ruiz
Date of previous school inspection	15 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Alverston Gardens South Norwood London SE25 6LR
Telephone number	020 8771 3470
Fax number	020 8771 9528

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	24–25 June 2009
Inspection number	323530

© Crown copyright 2009

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is much larger than average. Since the last inspection, the range of pupils' needs and backgrounds has become far more diverse. Pupils come from many different backgrounds. The largest groups are from Black African heritages. A quarter of all pupils are from White British heritages and an increasing number of pupils come from Polish backgrounds. A few pupils are from mixed or Asian heritages. A high proportion speak English as an additional language and on entry it is not unusual from them to be at an early stage of learning to speak English. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities has increased since the last inspection and is above average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

St Chad's is a good school. It provides a warm welcome to pupils from many different cultural backgrounds and goes out of its way to be inclusive. Pupils benefit from a well-rounded and enjoyable education. They are well cared for. In particular, vulnerable pupils receive outstanding pastoral care.

Pupils' achievement is good. There is a strong emphasis on developing the pupils both academically and personally. Pupils do well from starting points that are often lower than average and by the end of Year 6, standards are securely average. Within this, standards are often above average in science and reading.

Pupils' good progress links directly to the effective teaching and good leadership. Teachers place a very good emphasis on helping pupils to improve their speaking skills; this sets them up well for their good learning in other subjects. Teachers ensure that pupils read regularly and parents also help with this and other homework. Pupils do plenty of investigative science work. The school has correctly identified that there is still work to be done on writing, as sometimes pupils' progress is variable amongst different groups of learners. Although writing standards are rising, too few pupils reach the very highest levels in their work. This is largely because the most able pupils are not given challenging enough work to do in some lessons. Added to this, pupils have insufficient time to go back and look at their work and to edit, improve and develop their skills towards a higher level.

A particular strength of the school is pupils' outstanding spiritual and cultural development, which contributes to the good racial harmony and strong community cohesion. Pupils learn new hobbies and take up healthy lifestyles extremely well. They work enthusiastically to do things for others in the local community and wider world. They enjoy school, as is evident in their good attendance and positive attitudes. Pupils commented that they would recommend the school to others. Teachers help them to develop their self-esteem and aspirations. As one pupil commented, 'I want to be someone like a lawyer or paediatrician and the school helps me'.

Teachers organise their lessons effectively and mostly make activities interesting to pupils. Staff have friendly relationships with the pupils and this helps to create a purposeful working atmosphere. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well and overall it is good. Nevertheless, the school does have a few pupils who show more challenging behaviour and often this is because they have complex emotional difficulties. Several parents noted concerns about behaviour.

Leadership is good. The headteacher and senior staff are guiding developments well and they are sharing responsibilities with other managers effectively; this has developed in the last year. They have a secure understanding of the school and clear plans are in place to develop it. Their work is resulting in improving standards. There is a good capacity to develop further as leaders are developing their evaluation skills well. Nonetheless, there is still more to do on this as some leaders are especially skilled while others need to develop their skills more.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

In the last year, standards have been rising and this is a direct result of good leadership. Children join the Nursery with a wide range of skill levels and abilities, but these for the most part are below those normally expected for their age. A number of children are learning English as an

additional language and some others have learning difficulties. Children make good progress in all areas of learning because of the good teaching that they receive. Children enjoy learning indoors and outside. Their behaviour is impeccable. There is a good balance of activities led by teachers and those chosen independently by the children and staff make good use of opportunities to extend children's speaking skills. There are good relationships with adults. These many positive features help children to quickly become confident and skilled in their ability to work and socialise with others, as when they discussed customers' needs in their 'Travel Agent's Shop'. The good teaching of letters and sounds (phonics) is helping to improve reading and writing. Teaching assistants are well used to support children's learning.

By the time they enter Year 1, their attainment is at the expected level in most areas. In particular, children reach higher levels in their mathematical and personal, social and emotional development. Nevertheless, their attainment remains below the expected levels in writing. This is because children are not given sufficient opportunities to write as often as possible when they work on various activities. Children are well looked after. The practice of home visiting before children start school helps to build strong links with parents and supports children to settle into the school quickly. Staff organise workshops for parents to provide information on how school teaches literacy skills. This, along with home reading books and diaries, effectively involves parents in their child's development.

What the school should do to improve further

- Help more pupils to reach higher levels in their writing, especially by ensuring that they regularly edit, extend and improve their writing.
- Strengthen leaders' abilities to evaluate the work of the school, so that leaders at all levels are equally confident and skilled.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. From starting points that are often lower than average, pupils make good progress. Considering the high proportion of pupils who have complex learning difficulties and the growing numbers of pupils who join the school speaking little or no English, pupils are doing well, as standards are securely at the level expected by the end of Year 6 and increasing numbers are getting to the higher levels. Prior to 2008, boys had not performed well enough in mathematics and English. The additional group work is helping them to understand basic mathematical skills, and they also note that they like reading and writing more.

Standards are average. The school is working to get more pupils to levels that exceed the average. Standards are rising by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage and Years 2 and 6. Pupils read with confidence and enthusiasm, as was evident when they analysed the text of 'Goodnight Mr Tom' so thoughtfully. Pupils write for many different purposes but the most able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged. Nonetheless, standards are well on track to be higher in English than they were in 2008 and this is because of the steps already being taken to improve pupils' interest and skills in writing. More pupils are also expected to gain higher levels in the national tests for mathematics than was the case in the last few years. Pupils do well in gaining scientific understanding as a result of strong leadership, good links with a local secondary school and effective teaching and learning in class lessons. Standards in science are unlikely to be as high in 2009 as they were in 2008. This is because a higher number of pupils in the current Year 6 have joined the school from countries where they had little or no previous experience of science.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils grow into confident individuals who work hard and who are keen to share their views. Their cultural and spiritual development are both excellent. Pupils show a very good appreciation of different faiths and cultures and they value their Catholic faith. Pupils say prayers and their written work often shows sensitive emotion, as seen in their impressive work about 'The Lady of Shallot' and 'Macbeth'. Pupils' personal development is well on the way to being outstanding overall in the future but they are not quite there yet. This is because, at the moment, although pupils' behaviour and their enjoyment of school are generally good, there is still room for these aspects to be even better in some lessons. Also, there are some missed opportunities for independent investigation and research using information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles in an impressive way; the outstanding range of sports contributes greatly to this. For example, pupils enjoy gymnastics, golf, basketball and dance, just to name a few. They know about the importance of eating well. One pupil explained that, 'It is better to eat fruit at break than sugary snacks'. Another noted that, 'Using toothpaste is a good idea because it was like soap for your teeth'. Pupils use their talents for the benefit of the community. They described a recent skipathon as being, 'An active way of helping to do something for others'. Pupils work enthusiastically and this was very evident in a robotics technology project when pupils said, 'It's good to work with people from another class; it helps us to build bridges and be friends'.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers place a particular emphasis on speaking and reading skills. This helps pupils to be well informed about different books and enables them to talk about literature. Pupils agree and said that, 'Teachers are good at helping us to know things'. Science activities are well organised to ensure that pupils build up skills and knowledge as they move through the school. In Year 6, teaching is often outstanding and this makes a significant contribution to pupils' good overall achievement. Pupils mostly enjoy their lessons, are well managed and helped to learn in different ways. Tasks are usually imaginatively planned and matched to pupils' learning abilities, although sometimes the most able pupils could be further challenged when doing writing. Classroom control is almost always good, as most teachers do this very well, but very occasionally this is not as effective as it could be. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and they make sure that pupils understand what they are learning about. In almost all lessons there is a purposeful and focused working atmosphere.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is well planned so that pupils build up their understanding of new things in a clear way. There is a strong focus on developing the basics and a good range of additional activities. Visiting speakers to the school, as well as exciting day and residential trips, contribute to pupils' enjoyment, good learning and wider achievements. Following the recent visit to the Science Museum, Year 5 pupils spoke enthusiastically about their discoveries connected to outer space. The arts are well promoted and, currently, pupils are excited about the much-anticipated annual Year 6 production. One pupil explained that she had been waiting to

take part in it for six years and another said that it was their opportunity to give something back to the school to say 'thank you' to the teachers. The curriculum helps pupils to understand about how to be healthy and safe. There is a wide range of opportunities for pupils to take part in after school activities, particularly in sport. The school is successful in many local competitions. For example, they came third out of 98 schools in a recent cricket event.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

This is a caring and inclusive school. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, together with those who find it a challenge to settle into school life, are identified early and given targeted support; this ensures that their learning is good. As a result, there are few exclusions. Vulnerable pupils are very well looked after and this is aided by the close links with outside agencies. There are robust arrangements for safeguarding pupils. Those pupils who are at the early stages of acquiring English make good progress because of the effective provision and support.

The extra catch-up group support contributes much to pupils' improving achievement. When marking work, teachers often note useful suggestions about how pupils might improve their work. Nevertheless, not enough time is given to pupils to follow up on these. As a result, opportunities for pupils to edit, improve and extend their work are missed. Some pupils know their targets better than others.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher leads her staff and shares responsibilities well. She is effectively supported by senior staff, middle managers and governors; they work closely as a team. Leaders ensure that pupils receive high-quality care and good teaching, so that they achieve well. The school has a detailed development plan, which accurately identifies the most important areas for improvement. This plan has come about as a result of secure self-evaluation about the work of the school. For example, leaders know that there is more to do to ensure that everyone is equally skilled at evaluating data and the learning of different groups of pupils. Governors work hard and give freely of their time. They ask perceptive questions about how well pupils are doing but are not yet provided with sufficiently detailed information about the standards reached by different groups of pupils. Community cohesion is given a high profile and leaders are beginning to evaluate the success of this. Relationships between different races and cultures are positive, although a few parents feel that this could be better still. Religious festivals and inter-cultural events are embedded into the life of the school. Pupils and parents are encouraged to contribute to activities in the local area. Links with their local church are very strong. The recent project on Europe has helped pupils to develop their awareness of the world beyond Britain. There is a close partnership with an African school and international issues are explored with pupils.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

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	3
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	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
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	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	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
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**

08 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Chad's Catholic Primary School, London, SE25 6LR

You may remember that three school inspectors came to your school recently. Thank you for being so friendly. I am writing to tell you what we found out.

You go to a good school, this is great news.

These are the things that are especially good.

- You like school, work hard and are well cared for. Most lessons are interesting and help you to learn the things that you need to know.
- You make good progress.
- We especially like the way that you are reading so confidently. It was great to hear Year 6 explaining all about the story of 'Goodnight Mr Tom'. The younger ones are learning their letters and sounds well, so keep up the hard work!
- You are very friendly and almost all of you behave well, although a few of you find this harder.
- You know a lot about different people's lives, religions and cultures; this helps you to understand the world in which you live.
- Congratulations for eating healthy foods and doing sports to keep you fit.
- Well done for working hard on science, your investigations are good.

The adults are all working hard to keep improving things for you. I have asked them all to do the following things to make your school even better.

- Help you to do even better in your writing. Making sure that you have time to look at your work again and follow the suggestions that teachers give you on how to improve.
- Help some of the adults to carefully evaluate how well you are learning in lessons and how well all of you make progress.

Enjoy the rest of the summer and I hope that the Year 6 production goes well, as I know that you are really looking forward to taking part in this.

Yours faithfully

Wendy Simmons

Lead Inspector