

St Elizabeth's Catholic Primary School, Foleshill

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103710
Local Authority	Coventry
Inspection number	323885
Inspection dates	28–29 January 2009
Reporting inspector	David Carrington

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)	234
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	Ann Harkin
Headteacher	Elizabeth Travers
Date of previous school inspection	6 December 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	St Elizabeth's Road Foleshill Coventry CV6 5BX
Telephone number	02476 687527

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	28–29 January 2009
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Fax number

02476 683628

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors

Description of the school

St Elizabeth's is an average-sized primary school. It has Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision in one Nursery and one Reception class. The entitlement to free school meals is almost twice the national rate. An above average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, mostly for speech, language and communication needs.

The pupils come from 13 different ethnic backgrounds. About a third are from White British families, and there are significant proportions from Pakistani, Indian and Black African backgrounds. There are a small number of pupils from refugee or asylum seeking families. Around a half of the pupils speak English as an additional language, most of whom are at an early stage of English language acquisition.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

St Elizabeth's Catholic Primary is an outstanding school. It provides a first class education and has improved much over the past three years. Provision for children in the EYFS is good and is improving quickly. Pupils make rapid progress in Years 1 to 6 and standards are above average when they leave. Pupils' personal development is excellent and their behaviour is impeccable. The school has achieved these strengths because the headteacher has worked tirelessly to ensure everyone has high expectations and does their best to make learning successful for the pupils.

When children start in Nursery, many have very little English and few are used to working and playing with other children. From this low base, they make good progress through EYFS, although most have not reached the expected level of skills and knowledge when they leave Reception. This good start is accelerated because the quality of teaching and learning from Years 1 to 6 is outstanding, and standards at the end of Year 2 are average. At the end of Year 6, standards are noteworthy for the above average proportion of pupils who reach the expected level in both English and mathematics. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make particularly good progress and nearly all of them achieve the expected level in their Year 6 tests. Like the other pupils, many reach the higher levels at this time. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also progress rapidly. Pupils are prepared extremely thoroughly for life outside school and for their secondary education.

Racial harmony is exemplary. Pupils value each other and work and play together very happily. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The Catholic ethos of the school is held in high esteem by the parents, virtually all of whom are pleased they chose the school for their children. The response to the parent questionnaire was very favourable. Parents clearly think the school is doing a very good job to educate their children and to build very worthwhile partnerships with them. The pupils enjoy their time in school immensely and they attend well because of this.

The staff take great care of the pupils. Safeguarding procedures meet current government requirements. Outstanding support is given to pupils who speak English as an additional language, which enables them to achieve particularly well. Vulnerable pupils are nurtured extremely successfully and soon take a full role in learning and other aspects of school life. Challenging targets are set for the pupils and they are guided well to reach them. The marking of pupils' work is not consistently of the same good quality, which senior leaders recognise. The key priority to improve how assessment is used to bring even greater achievement is well chosen.

Leadership and management are first rate. All staff work effectively to raise standards and improve the quality of provision. This is shown in the development of the outstanding curriculum, which offers pupils exciting, enjoyable and fruitful learning across all subjects, and the wide range of out-of-school activities. Governors play their part most capably and work very successfully to ensure standards and pupils' progress are of best quality. School self-evaluation is realistic and reliable. School priorities, targets and budget planning are very well thought through. Leaders ensure all pupils have the same opportunities to do well. They promote community cohesion fully because the pupils have many opportunities to learn about communities in different parts of the world, and the school values highly all the ethnicities found in school and in the neighbourhood. The capacity for future improvement is outstanding.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children in Nursery and Reception are provided with good opportunities to learn and develop and their welfare is looked after well. There has been a good degree of improvement in the provision in EYFS. The differing quality of education in the Nursery and Reception classes which was identified a year ago has largely been corrected. Now, the quality of teaching, learning and the curriculum is good in the two classes. This is due to effective leadership and management, which is focused firmly on essential areas that require improvement. Whilst provision in EYFS is not yet at the outstanding level found in the rest of the school, the capacity to close the gap is good.

The children work and play very happily and they know they are being looked after well. There are very many smiles of enjoyment as they play in the Nursery Chinese Restaurant or use the metal detector in the Reception outdoor area. The exciting things to do encourage the children to speak and listen, and their knowledge and fluency in English improves well during their time in EYFS. Whilst standards are below average when children leave Reception, skills and knowledge improve well from children's low starting level.

Children make good progress in the development of personal and social skills and in their emotional well-being. They have ample opportunities to choose their next activity and when they work with an adult, they are guided well in their learning. Access to the outdoor area is not as straightforward in Reception as it is in Nursery. The children have plenty of chances to work outside in both classes, although in Reception it is more often at planned times rather than when the children choose for themselves. The EYFS leader is working capably to overcome the differences in access to outside, although more time is required to see this completed.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve assessment so that pupils always know how well they are learning, what they need to do next to reach their targets, and have consistent opportunities to assess their own and their partner's work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

The 2008 test results were a significant improvement on those of 2007. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected level in English, mathematics and science were average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels also rose, and in Year 6 was significantly higher than the rate found nationally. The Year 6 pupils made brisk progress and their results rose considerably compared to those they reached when in Year 2. Pupils from different ethnic backgrounds are equally successful in their progress and the standards they reach. Pupils who join the school part way through their primary education settle quickly and soon achieve as well as pupils who have been in school longer. Because their interests, needs and experiences are carefully judged and their support is targeted very effectively, pupils from asylum-seeking or refugee families also do well. Pupils with speech and language difficulties make outstanding progress, as do other pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Learning is calm, purposeful and productive because the pupils want to do well. They really enjoy their time in school, arriving punctually each day and attending whenever possible. Behaviour is exceptionally good, each pupil has a wide circle of friends from different backgrounds and they enjoy each other's company. They all feel part of the school community and work successfully to help and support one another. Pupils have many bright ideas for the further improvement of their school, which the teachers and other staff take seriously and act upon whenever possible.

The pupils know they are extremely well looked after and that risks are spotted and overcome quickly. They feel safe in school, which enables them to concentrate on learning and not worry. Bullying is exceptionally rare. If it occurs, pupils and their parents know it will be dealt with swiftly and effectively. This means pupils do not feel at all threatened. Healthy lifestyles are very well understood by the pupils who recognise that a good diet and lots of exercise are key things that affect their fitness and health. Children in EYFS soon learn that fruit is tasty, healthy and a good idea.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Pupils agree that lessons are great fun. They consider that they learn a lot about old and new things and that they are given plenty of practice to improve and extend their knowledge and skills. These perceptions are accurate. Lessons are productive and purposeful, they are focused on things that are important and are made enjoyable by the staff. This helps pupils to concentrate for quite long periods, work independently when necessary and to develop as mature and sensible learners.

The high expectations of staff are at the root of the outstanding learning. Planning takes very good account of the different experiences and levels of ability of the pupils. Many activities in lessons are different for each ability group, although they are based on the same topic. The pupils enjoy the challenges this approach brings and they are keen to get things right. More able pupils thrive on the tasks set for them. Those who speak English as an additional language work hard to grasp the basics of their new language. Teaching assistants provide valuable support to ensure they make great strides in their learning. This also applies to the staff who support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is planned for excellence, relevance and richness. It lives up to this ideal. At any one time, the school is packed with activity focused on different branches of learning. Information and communication technology (ICT) is a cornerstone of learning and pupils progress well in the development of skills and knowledge. ICT is also used wisely to support learning in other subjects, especially English and mathematics. There is very close focus on basic skills, which enables the pupils to prepare particularly well for secondary schooling. There is also very careful development of pupils' creativity in learning and in their art, music and drama work.

The range of out-of-school activities is wide and gives good opportunities to younger as well as older pupils to learn new skills, experience different activities and develop well as children who work and play together as friends and companions.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school's Catholic heritage is the foundation of its sterling work to make sure pupils are kept safe, secure and happy. Assemblies are just one time when the whole school pulls together and shares respect, tolerance and appreciation of the differences that make the school a place of hard work and excellent outcomes.

Staff nurture pupils who experience barriers to learning most effectively. Once through the school door, the pupils enter a place of settled learning, high expectations and great emphasis on their welfare. Achievement is so good because all pupils are counselled carefully so that they can benefit from all the things in the school day that will assist their speedy progress. The marking of pupils' work is not always of the same good quality found in their English books. In mathematics, work is marked regularly but there are not as many informative suggestions about how to do even better as there are in the English books. Whilst Year 6 pupils have ample opportunities to assess their own progress and that of their partners, in other years this is not consistent.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The school is led and managed by a team of staff and governors who share the same aspirations and expectations for pupils' progress and well-being. The headteacher leads from the front and ensures everyone signs up to her vision for the school. The very focused educational direction and supportive approach develops individual talents and expertise. Very fruitful partnerships have been developed with outside groups and with parents to ensure pupils maximise their successes. Staff and governors recognise their responsibilities for good standards and exceptional achievement and devote much energy and time in and out of lessons to meet these obligations head on. The school has a bright future because parents, staff, governors and the pupils all work to make it a great place to be.

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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?	1
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	1

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?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

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?	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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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 eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

30 January 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Elizabeth's Catholic Primary School, Coventry CV6 5BX

When we came to your school recently, we found it to be outstanding in what it does to help you learn well and reach above average standards. Lots of you talked to us about your time in school and helped us find out just why it is so good. Thank you for being so friendly and helpful.

We have written our report to show the best things in school. There are lots of them, but the ones that stand out are:

- you make fast progress in all classes because you are taught so well
- children in Nursery and Reception soon settle to good work and their skills and knowledge improve well
- you all work well together, you enjoy each other's company and your behaviour is excellent
- your work is very well planned and covers all the subjects it should
- There are lots of very enjoyable things to do in school. This applies to out-of-school activities as well as your lessons
- all staff look after you carefully and make sure you can concentrate on your work without worrying about other things
- your school is led and managed very successfully by your headteacher, the staff and governors
- your parents are pleased you attend such a good school.

We found one or two things that could be improved. Many of these are already being worked upon successfully. One is more important than the others, though.

- You could be given more chances to think, talk and write about how well you are doing and also say how well your work partner is coping.

We know you will want to share your thoughts about your learning with your teachers. As a start, tell them what you find easy and what is hard.

Good luck with your learning.

Yours faithfully

David Carrington

Lead inspector