

St Hubert's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103999
Local Authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	323940
Inspection date	24 March 2009
Reporting inspector	John Eadie

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	214
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	Peter Blundell
Headteacher	Clare McNally
Date of previous school inspection	9 February 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Wolverhampton Road Oldbury B68 0LP
Telephone number	01214 222629
Fax number	01214 226531

Age group	4–11
Inspection date	24 March 2009
Inspection number	323940

© 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 two additional inspectors, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- whether the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' progress is as good in Years 3 and 4 as it is in the rest of the school
- the reasons for the variability in standards in English from year to year, when standards in mathematics and science are consistent
- whether pupils are involved sufficiently in self-assessment and if the learning targets set for them help them to improve their work.

Evidence was gathered from discussions with leaders, the chair of governors, pupils, parents and staff, visits to all classes, scrutiny of pupils' work, observation of other aspects of the school day such as assembly, break and lunchtime, and analysis of parents' questionnaires and school documentation, in particular data on pupils' progress. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors 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

St Hubert's Catholic is an average-sized primary school which serves the local area and wider Catholic community. A large majority of the pupils are of White British heritage, although more than a quarter represent a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. Almost one in ten pupils does not speak English at home, although very few of these are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below average, as is the proportion identified with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Early Years Foundation Stage provision is made in one Reception class. There is a privately managed nursery, which operates in a specially designed room attached to the school. The school runs a breakfast and after-school club, which is attended by pupils in Reception to Year 6.

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 gone a considerable way down the road to becoming better than good and there are already several outstanding features. For instance, pupils behave extremely well and are exceptionally polite. They develop outstandingly well into caring, responsible young citizens, keenly aware of their place in society and their responsibilities towards it. This is demonstrated by the winning of a UNICEF Rights Respecting School award. Parents are extremely positive about the school, saying such things as, 'A great mix of good teaching and lots of fun for the children. Children are very caring of others.'

Pupils enjoy school enormously as they find the range of activities, both in lessons and out, extremely engaging and interesting. This is exemplified by the outstanding curriculum, where a very wide range of visits to places of interest and visitors into school give pupils' learning added relevance and interest. Pupils are also enthusiastic about the range of information and communication technology (ICT) resources available, for instance they thoroughly enjoy the class sets of personal digital assistants (PDAs) that they use regularly to aid their learning. They say that this saves them going to the ICT suite to access the internet. Links with schools, both locally and around the world, for example in India, and detailed studies of a Spanish village, add further interest and considerably aid pupils' understanding of cultures other than their own. A particular strength of the curriculum is that teachers identify in their weekly planning opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects.

Pupils are well aware of how to stay safe, both in school and in their daily lives. For instance, they talk knowledgeably about the potential dangers when using the internet. They are also extremely health conscious, taking full advantage of the wide range of sporting activities that take place after school. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the school and wider community, willingly taking on a range of responsibilities to help in the smooth running of the school and demonstrating their wider care by being 'eco-buddies' for instance. These pupils help in the Big Spring Clean in the local area as well as organising events such as Baggy Jumper Day, when everyone is expected to come to school in thick jumpers and the school heating is turned off for the day to conserve energy and cut down carbon dioxide emissions. Pupils are prepared well for their future lives, although their relatively weaker skills of independent learning and basic skills in writing are holding this back from being outstanding.

A further outstanding area of practice is the care, guidance and support provided. Safeguarding and health and safety procedures were securely in place at the time of the inspection. All pupils are extremely well known by adults and their individual needs are very well catered for. An excellent example of this is the outstanding provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, which enables them to make outstanding progress relative to their abilities. There is also very good provision for those who are gifted and talented. For example, those gifted in ICT act as 'techno-buddies' who, as well as setting up computers, are often called upon to help staff sort out problems with computers.

Academic support and guidance are also outstanding. The school tracks the progress of all pupils rigorously and very effective interventions are provided for pupils who are in danger of falling behind. Clear targets are set for pupils' future learning in a number of subjects. However, pupils have quite a number of targets in each subject and are not always exactly sure of which they should be addressing at a particular time. Pupils are involved extremely well in assessing their own progress. For instance, in the pupil-led conferences at parents' evenings, pupils have

very clear guidelines and take their parents through their successes and what they need to do to improve.

Children enter the school with levels of skill and knowledge broadly in line with those expected for their age. They make good progress in the Reception class because of the good provision made for them. This good progress continues through the rest of the school, including in Years 3 and 4. By the time they leave, pupils have reached standards that are significantly above average overall. This shows good achievement. These standards are often exceptionally high in reading, mathematics and science, but standards in writing are some way behind those in reading. These lower standards in writing are much of the reason for the variability in standards in English in recent years. The school has recognised this and very good plans are in place to raise standards. In particular, pupils' grammar and punctuation are not as good as one would expect, bearing in mind the standards they reach in other subjects.

Pupils' good progress is down to good teaching. It is outstanding in Years 2 and 6. Teaching assistants are key members of the teaching team; they are skilled and promote pupils' progress well. Teachers generally make good use of ICT such as their interactive whiteboards and voting pods, which engage and inspire pupils. They are skilled at questioning to get pupils to explain their thinking. Good use is made of paired discussions so that pupils have further opportunities to talk about what they are learning. An area for development is that pupils are not given sufficient opportunities for independent learning.

The success of the school is down to outstanding leadership and management. The path towards becoming outstanding is well recognised by the headteacher, who gives extremely clear direction. This is communicated very well and there is a tangible air of common purpose to provide the best for all children. Rigorous monitoring of effectiveness has provided a very clear picture of strengths and areas for development. For instance, the success of intervention strategies is measured by assessing the extra progress that pupils have made to ensure that they are providing value for money. Community cohesion is promoted extremely well. The school has an acute awareness of the local community and has given pupils an excellent awareness of the wide range of faiths and cultures, not only in this country but in many parts of the world.

The school has progressed well since the last inspection, particularly in the maintaining of high standards in reading, mathematics and science, and the considerably improved curriculum. Bearing this in mind, alongside the shared desire to continue the momentum, the school is extremely well placed to make that final push to the summit.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The good provision helps children to make good progress and develop good attitudes to their learning. Adults work well together so that the children know exactly what is expected of them. Children learn well because they have access to a good range of well-planned activities across the six areas of learning, both indoors and outdoors. However, the school has rightly recognised that development of the outdoor area and children's wider use of areas within the classroom will enhance learning and opportunities for independent choice further.

A significant number of children reach standards that are well above average by the time they enter Year 1. The use of a specific phonics programme has had a positive impact on children's language development, seen through their wide range of vocabulary and their ability to articulate their understanding. One child eruditely explained the need for a hard hat when constructing a tall building! The children behave very well and play collaboratively, displaying good confidence

as well as personal and social skills. Good quality care and secure understanding of welfare and safeguarding requirements ensure the children are safe. There are good induction procedures in place for both children and their parents and carers. The school has developed good links with the nursery, now located in the school building, and this helps children make a smooth transition into the Reception class and for consistent planning between the two settings. Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. Areas for improvement, as well as strengths, have been identified and plans demonstrate a clear vision for further development of the provision.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing so that they are closer to those in reading, particularly by improving pupils' use of grammar and punctuation.
- Provide more opportunities for independent learning throughout the school, including in Reception so that pupils, particularly the more able, can take responsibility for planning their own learning.

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?	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?	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/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	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?	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	2
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	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**

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Hubert's Catholic Primary School, Oldbury, B68 0LP

Thank you so much for your welcome when we visited your school recently. We were hugely impressed with how polite and friendly you all were and we really enjoyed speaking with you and hearing how proud you are of your school. You are right to be proud as it is a good school and has many outstanding features.

These are the best things we found about your school.

- You make good progress and reach high standards in reading, maths and science.
- You are developing extremely well into caring and responsible young people and do lots of useful jobs around the school, such as being buddies, eco-buddies or techno-buddies.
- The school provides an extremely interesting range of activities to help you learn and you told us you particularly like the PDAs that you often use in class.
- You make good progress because you are being taught well.
- All adults look after you extremely well and also help you to know how to improve your work.
- Your headteacher and teachers have very good plans to make your school even better.

There are just two things we have asked your school to concentrate on improving.

- The standards you reach in writing are not nearly as high as they could be and, in particular, your grammar and punctuation need improving.
- You are not given enough opportunities, right from the start in Reception, to plan your own learning and organise it yourselves.

I am sure you will help with these things, for instance by trying really hard to improve your punctuation.

With best wishes for your future success

Yours sincerely

John D Eadie

Lead inspector