

St Catherine's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107112
Local Authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	324529
Inspection dates	3–4 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Joe Peacock

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)	356
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	Mrs Yvonne Pine
Headteacher	Mrs Fiona Rigby
Date of previous school inspection	12 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Firshill Crescent Sheffield South Yorkshire S4 7BX

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	3–4 March 2009
Inspection number	324529

Telephone number
Fax number

0114 242 1177
0114 244 6461

Age group	3-11
Inspection dates	3-4 March 2009
Inspection number	324529

© 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

This inner city school is expanding rapidly as pupils new to Britain are being welcomed to the area. It is now larger than average. Just over half the pupils are from minority ethnic families, 20% of whom need support to learn English. There is provision for Early Years Foundation Stage with children taught in a Nursery and two Reception classes. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is average. The number with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average. A major building programme to extend the school is underway and 120 pupils learn in temporary mobile classrooms. The school has gained a number of awards including the International School award.

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 which is improving rapidly despite the challenges it faces from a major building programme. It has many outstanding features and parents' very positive responses to the inspection questionnaire confirm its excellent reputation in the area and why it is popular and oversubscribed. The exceptional headteacher clearly has high aspirations and communicates these very effectively. Staff and governors strive to ensure that standards and the high level of care are not compromised as the school moves from a one to a two form entry school. Staff work as one to ensure all pupils have the best possible education. Consequently, parents appreciate the outstanding level of care, support and guidance for their children and the outstanding curriculum ensures pupils thoroughly enjoy school and what it has to offer. Comments such as 'My child adores school', reflect this.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Attendance is just below average as some pupils accompany parents on extended holidays but for most, their good attendance reflects the strong community spirit and pride in their school. Relationships with staff and between pupils are excellent and behaviour is outstanding. Safeguarding requirements are met. Pupils say they feel safe and know who to turn to if they have any concerns. The school's excellent links with outside agencies ensure that pupils' individual needs, for example, those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are met. Pupils have an excellent understanding of a healthy lifestyle and the walking buses to and from school are well supported. All pupils are well prepared for their next stage of education, gaining valuable skills from the outstanding curriculum on offer and wide range of cultural experiences and after school activities.

Overall, standards are average, but achievement for all pupils, taking into account their starting points, is good throughout the school. The Early Years Foundation Stage provision is being totally rebuilt and during the inspection, Reception children were in temporary classes and both the Nursery and Reception outdoor areas were relocated away from the building site. Although activities planned for these outdoor areas are challenging and interesting, teachers' planning does not give the same emphasis to learning outdoors as it does for indoors. As a result, the time children spend outdoors is far less than it should be. Children make good progress, but overall standards on transfer to Year 1 remain below those normally expected for their age.

The high expectations of staff and pupils' excellent attitudes towards their learning ensure all continue to achieve well in Years 1 and 2. Standards vary considerably in Year 2 each year, especially in reading and writing. Currently, they are broadly average. By Year 6, overall standards are average in English, mathematics and science. Writing has correctly been identified as an area for improvement as pupils' performance is below average in this aspect of English. Robust monitoring shows that by Year 6, pupils make good progress from their starting points in Year 2.

The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good. Teachers are supported well in lessons by skilled and well trained teaching assistants. All have high expectations of pupils and they respond well, working conscientiously on challenging and interesting tasks planned for them. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also make good progress because staff plan effectively to meet their individual needs. Pupils new to learning English are effectively supported by all staff, enabling them to be fully included in lessons and to make good progress. Teachers assess pupils' progress in depth and pupils accurately assess their own work.

Leadership and management are good. All staff have clear roles and responsibilities and set challenging targets to raise standards. Community cohesion and equality of opportunity for all pupils are both outstanding features of this school. Key priorities for improvement have been identified and governors are just as involved as staff in monitoring and evaluating progress on these priorities, although their monitoring visits are not formally recorded. Governance is good. The inspirational leadership of the headteacher, highly motivated staff and pupils ensure that the school has a good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter school with a broad range of experience but overall, their skills are well below those typical for their age. Good quality teaching and learning ensures that all make good progress. However, overall standards remain below average when children transfer to Year 1. Any children with particular needs such as those at early stages of learning English are quickly identified and supported, enabling them to make good progress.

Personal social and emotional development is outstanding. Children from many different backgrounds and cultures play well together and respect each other. All are kind and polite. Behaviour is excellent with lots of positive strategies used to promote this. Children are given a 'whoosh' when they achieve or have a good idea and are always praised for their efforts. Children are inquisitive learners and thrive in the stimulating learning environment, often independently selecting activities. They confidently develop skills for the future, including making good use of computers. Fresh fruit and milk eaten at meal times promote healthy eating habits. The learning environment is carefully planned to promote effective learning. However, insufficient emphasis is given in teachers' planning to provide the same range of learning experiences outdoors as in the classrooms. As a result, the time spent outdoors is limited.

Adults are deployed constructively and their interaction with children is good indoors, promoting excellent progress in children's social skills. The school works well with parents and carers to ensure children's welfare is of the highest quality. The major building work means that adults currently have to spend more time supervising rather than interacting with children when they are outdoors. Children are extremely happy and feel safe and secure. The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good, with all staff working effectively as a team to support one another.

What the school should do to improve further

- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, ensure that outdoor learning has the same emphasis as indoor learning in teachers' planning and provision.
- Raise standards in reading and writing by Year 2 and in writing by Year 6.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

All pupils invariably make good progress from their starting point due to the consistently good quality of teaching. Overall standards in Year 2 vary considerably from year-to-year depending upon the starting points of children, but are currently broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics with most pupils achieving well. Standards in reading and writing vary the most from year-to-year. Pupils' good progress continues in Years 3 to 6 with those who speak English as an additional language doing particularly well as their English improves. By Year 6, standards

are average in English, mathematics and science. In English, pupils' reading skills have been improved, but overall standards in writing are below average. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress by Year 6 largely due to the wide range of effective intervention strategies which are designed to support their learning and boost their confidence and self-esteem. Standards in information and communication technology are generally above average because computers are used extensively to support and enhance learning.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The school provides a warm, supportive and stimulating environment and consequently, the personal development of pupils is outstanding. Pupils are proud of their school. They show high levels of self-motivation and a determination to do well. Attendance was above average in the previous report, but the changing nature and size of the school population have resulted in less good attendance from a minority of children. The level of attendance is now just below average.

A significant strength of the school is the excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils thoroughly enjoy learning as teachers often make it fun. All show a genuine concern and care for others. They strive to be valued members of the school, willingly taking responsibility such as leading games with younger pupils and running a very active school council. Assemblies are very special times with staff valuing and providing sensitively for pupils from many different faiths.

Pupils' awareness of how to be healthy and keep safe is outstanding. They are very conscious of what it means to live healthily and many use the two walking buses to school each day. The school has the Healthy School and Activemark awards. Pupils' participation in the many activities that are offered outside the classroom and in the local community is very high. Pupils leave school with solid academic skills and the ability to work cooperatively with others. This prepares them well for the next stage of their learning and equips them with valuable social skills for life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good. All teachers have high expectations for their own performance and for all their pupils. On the one occasion where teaching was outstanding, it was because of the excellent ideas the teacher had for sparking the imagination of pupils and clever strategies to involve them fully in activities that made learning fun. They enjoyed 'the apprentice challenge' and copying 'Price Drop TV' to try and sell various items given to them. Getting the balance slightly wrong between teacher input and pupil participation resulted in the quality of learning in some lessons being good rather than outstanding. The skilled support provided by the teaching assistants, especially for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and pupils' own keenness to learn are ensuring that standards continue to rise. Staff plan meticulously for a range of learners, explain learning objectives clearly and make very effective use of computers and modern technology such as the interactive whiteboards and 'Talking Tins.' Relationships between teachers and pupils are a key strength and help those learning English to grow in confidence, be positive and make good progress. The assessment

of pupils' attainment and progress is undertaken with the utmost care three times each year, quickly identifying any pupil who might need additional support.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is rich, creative and varied and a major strength of the school. There is a strong emphasis on developing pupils' numeracy and literacy skills. The 'Read, Write Inc' scheme is a successful new initiative which is beginning to raise standards in Years 1 and 2. Special focus weeks, including 'Healthy Living Week', 'Celebrating our Roots' and 'Black History Week,' effectively link skills from different subject areas. The curriculum is carefully adapted to make it relevant to pupils from many different backgrounds. Regular trips into the local community, including visits to church, mosques, temples and synagogues are successfully raising pupils' awareness of British and world cultures. The school currently holds the International School Award, which recognises the commitment to celebrating cultural diversity. Strong links have been forged with schools in other parts of the world, including Zambia and New Zealand, giving pupils an insight into and understanding of other ways of life. The school has an impressive range of extra-curricular activities on offer. The 'It's good to talk' club and 'lets get cooking' club provide opportunities to develop pupils' self- esteem and team work. The Eco-club has recently adopted four chickens, which have provided a stimulating new dimension to pupils' learning. A wide range of visitors, residential experiences for all junior pupils and learning to speak Spanish, French and to play a brass instrument further enhance a curriculum which is full of interest and excitement for pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The time and effort devoted to providing outstanding care and support is highly valued and appreciated by all parents. A typical comment is that 'Teachers treat children as if they are their own'.

Rigorous procedures are in place to ensure the safeguarding of pupils and promote their safety, well-being and attendance. The school is doing all it possibly can to reduce absence. Pupils say that instances of bullying are rare, and promptly dealt with. They feel safe and know who to turn to if they have a problem. The school effectively encourages good behaviour and attitudes through praise and the effective reward systems. The comprehensive family learning programmes enable the school to support parents and this in turn enables them to help their children at home. The Extended School Worker, Family Advocacy Worker and Behaviour Improvement Worker have all contributed to the excellent provision for parents, vulnerable pupils, and those new to this country. There are strong systems in place to identify and support those with learning difficulties or disabilities. A teaching assistant with special training provides valuable help to pupils who have little understanding of English, enabling them to access the curriculum. Provision is made for gifted and talented pupils through a wide range of extra activities accessed through the schools links with other schools, local sports clubs and universities.

Pupils are guided in what they need to do next to improve their work by clear learning objectives and success criteria, which are set for them in each lesson. Older pupils have an opportunity to assess their own and their partner's work, and guidance is given in teachers' marking on how they can improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher is an inspirational leader who successfully shares with all staff a clear vision for the school's future development. She is ably supported by her deputy headteacher and senior leadership team. The school is currently going through a period of massive change with increasing numbers of pupils from a wide variety of backgrounds and an extensive rebuilding programme to accommodate them. The headteacher, staff and governors have risen to the challenge with enthusiasm and a strong determination to ensure that during this period, the welfare and equality of opportunity for all pupils is fully maintained. The school is an exceptionally strong, cohesive community because of the shared commitment to pupils by a deeply caring staff. There are excellent links with the local community and with countries across the world adding significantly to pupils' knowledge of the global community.

Staff know the school's strengths and areas for development and have put into place an ambitious action plan to bring about the improvements required. The areas for improvement identified in the previous report have been tackled with vigour. Subject leaders are increasingly being empowered to monitor their subjects and make a significant contribution to development of the school. Senior managers recognise the need to involve other stakeholders in this process and have set about a comprehensive programme for extending the involvement of parents in the life of the school. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of all the school is doing for their children and themselves. A typical comment is, 'The school is full of happy and relaxed children'. Governors know the school well, give good support, and provide challenge appropriately. The school has good capacity to improve further.

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?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
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?	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	3
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?	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 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**

Thank you for being so friendly and polite to my colleagues and myself when we were with you. During the inspection of your school, you helped us to find out all we needed to know about how well you work and learn. Please thank all your mums, dads and carers for completing the questionnaire. We had a really good response and it was good to see how pleased they all are with your school.

You go to a good school with many excellent things happening there. There is so much for you to do and to enjoy like the interesting after-school clubs and taking care of the chickens.

In the Nursery and Reception, it was good to see how busy all of you were in class. I expect you are looking forward to moving into your brand new classrooms soon. I have asked staff to plan even more for you to do outside when the builders have gone and you get your new outdoor areas. Your parents told me how well you get on with your teachers in Years 1 to 6 and how much you adore school. All my colleagues were very impressed with how well you concentrate on your work and how friendly you are with one another. It was good to see the older ones taking such good care of younger pupils and all of you behaving so brilliantly. In class, you really concentrated and worked hard to finish all the interesting and challenging work. All of you are making good progress in most subjects. I especially enjoyed watching Year 6 act as Apprentices and trying to sell a wooden spoon like they do on Drop Price TV. Well done! I have asked your teachers to concentrate more on helping you to improve your reading and writing, as sometimes standards are not as good as they should be. I hope you keep the 'whooshes' and marshmallow claps coming as it means you are doing well.

It was a pleasure to meet your hard working headteacher and all the staff who take such excellent care of you. They are doing a good job, making school an exciting, fun place for you all.