

Immaculate Conception Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112899
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	325715
Inspection dates	4–5 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Roger Fry

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	220
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Father P D McGuire
Headteacher	Mrs M Emmott
Date of previous school inspection	21 March 2006
School address	College Road Spinkhill Sheffield S21 3YB
Telephone number	01246 432916
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. They visited 12 lessons and made several short visits to classrooms during the celebration of World Book Day to observe pupils at work. They held meetings with governors, senior and middle leadership and with pupils from most year groups. Inspectors observed many other aspects of the school's work and looked at the school's improvement plans, self-evaluation documents, pupil assessment information and key policies, including those for safeguarding pupils' welfare. Inspectors also took account of parents' responses in 64 questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the performance of pupils in Year 6 this year and in 2008
- the performances of lower attaining girls and more able pupils generally, to determine whether their needs are met fully
- the use of individual pupil and group targets to ensure pupils have the feedback they need to improve
- the school's priorities for improving standards and how the leadership improves the school's performance.

Information about the school

Immaculate Conception Catholic Primary School is similar in size to many primary schools and educates pupils from a wide area. Virtually all pupils are from White British backgrounds and all speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is below average. Within this group, many have moderate learning difficulties. A well below average proportion of pupils is known to qualify for free school meals. The proportion of pupils who leave or join the school at other than the usual times is similar to schools nationally. There is Early Years Foundation Stage provision. Many children's knowledge and skills on entry to school are a little below those typical of children nationally. The school has the Activemark and the Basic Skills Quality Mark.

The school is situated on a split site; the main building is separated from the hall by a road. The school expects to move into its new building in October 2009, which is being built on the hall side of the site.

Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Immaculate Conception Catholic Primary School provides a good education for its pupils. There are outstanding aspects, such as pupils' behaviour and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Staff and governors lead the school well and there is a strong emphasis on positive achievement for all, in every aspect of school life. Pupils happily take on duties, for example as playground buddies and contribute much to the school through the school council. Pupils feel entirely safe and secure and follow school rules scrupulously about which parts of the site they can use. They enjoy school life very much, which is reflected in improved above average attendance. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of diet and fitness to their health. They make a good contribution to the life of the school and locally, but do not have the opportunity to work alongside others from different backgrounds.

Pupils make good progress in all subjects because the teaching is consistently good. Standards in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6 have been above average in two of the last three years, and pupils this year are on course to reach similar standards. Leaders have identified that teachers do not always set more able pupils work that is difficult enough from the outset of lessons. This limits their progress in some lessons. Accurate tracking of pupils' progress towards their targets is used increasingly well by staff to guide teaching, but there is still work to do to make the level of challenge for more able pupils consistently good. Pupils know very clearly how well they are progressing in writing, but in mathematics and science individual targets are less well organised. Staff have identified this area as a priority to help pupils better understand their next steps in learning in these subjects, to speed their progress further.

The capacity for sustaining improvement is good because staff know the strengths and weaknesses in provision well. The drive for improvement comes from all staff, under the strong and effective leadership of the headteacher. Checks on teaching made by the headteacher are thorough, accurate and focus on pupils' learning. Trends in standards are upward. The school's improvement plan has the right priorities and staff do not attempt to do too much at once, hence changes are well embedded.

There are proper arrangements for the supervision of pupils at different times of the day. The complex split site is used efficiently and means that classes regularly cross the road to the hall. This activity is carried out safely. The new school is being built

next to the hall and there is extra traffic as a result. Whilst considerable preparation has gone into getting ready for the move the school does not have a transition plan to help manage the effects of the building programme.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards further by ensuring that:
 - the match of work for more able pupils routinely meets their capabilities.
- Improve pupils' capacity for understanding how to improve their work by:
 - setting individual targets for pupils in mathematics and science, similar in style to those for writing, that show how they can progress from one National Curriculum level to the next.
- Improve the school's provision for community cohesion by:
 - developing closer links with other schools so that pupils can work alongside others from different backgrounds.
- Improve the transition arrangements to the new building, ensuring that all factors are considered during the period while the new school is being built.

How good is the overall outcome for individuals and groups of pupils?

2

Pupils' progress was good in virtually all lessons observed and in a quarter of lessons was outstanding. Pupils enjoy their learning very much, behave exceptionally well and are always attentive in lessons. The few pupils from minority ethnic groups progress as well as their peers. Boys perform particularly well in some years when compared with boys nationally. The progress of different groups of pupils is more even, and lower attaining girls now achieve as well as their peers.

Pupils routinely enjoy the challenge of class work and look forward to school very much. They enjoy visits and celebrations, such as World Book Day and preparing for a Brazilian Carnival, seen during the inspection. Practical tasks appeal to very many and they cannot wait to have a go, such as in science or mathematics lessons. Pupils' progress in both key stages is consequently good in these subjects and they reach above average standards. In English, pupils' listening, speaking and reading skills are above average and are a little ahead of their writing standards. However, there is an upward trend in writing standards and this area is a success story. The overall outcomes for pupils are good and this is the case in Key Stage 1, where pupils make consistently good progress and reach above average standards.

The school is working to improve the proportion of pupils reaching the higher than expected level 5 in English, mathematics and science. Although the progress pupils make is good, the extent to which more able pupils are challenged within classes and subjects varies. In some lessons, the work is not difficult enough from the outset, which restricts the progress of more able pupils. Pupils with the greatest needs and

those with learning difficulties do well and make good progress. Most reach the standards expected nationally by the end of Year 6.

In discussion, the oldest pupils showed that they are tolerant, well mannered and polite. They have an excellent understanding of moral and social issues and know why they should behave as they do. Pupils' cultural understanding is good, they know a lot about other cultures and of religious ways of life for their ages. Pupils have a growing understanding of fair-trade and know that this initiative is important because there are worldwide inequalities in wealth. Pupils eagerly take on responsibilities and contribute to the school and wider community well, such as through much charitable fund raising. The school council is active and pupils are proud of what they have achieved. They have good basic skills by the time they leave in Year 6 and have worked on appropriate enterprise activities. They are well prepared for their next schools.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	2
How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	2
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	1
How well do pupils behave?	1
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	2
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	2
Pupils' attendance	2
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	1

The quality of the school's work

Teaching and learning are consistently good, which is an improvement since the last inspection. In the very few satisfactory lessons, too little attention was given to the range of pupils' abilities when setting tasks. Key characteristics of the good teaching are:

- the high-quality of assessments made of pupils' work in writing
- teachers' management of pupils' behaviour and attitudes to work, which are often exemplary
- their subject knowledge, such as in science in Year 6 and when teaching

¹ Grades for attainment are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; 4 is low

digital and analogue time in Year 2, and good questioning to check learning

- the use of interactive whiteboards to show complex ideas to pupils clearly.

The school has developed the pupil progress tracking system well since the last inspection. The system provides teachers with accurate information about which pupils are learning well and those that need extra help. The care and support for pupils is excellent. All pupils are known individually and they have absolute confidence in the school. There are notable examples of how staff help the most needy pupils.

The good curriculum has been maintained since the last inspection. Better use of information and communication technology brings many exciting images into classrooms, from which pupils learn much. There is outstanding provision for French and music. Pupils respond exceptionally well to the curriculum offered in these subjects and their standards of work, consequently, are much higher than expected. The curriculum meets pupils' needs well. For example, for pupils who need it, extra practice in the skills they need to improve their reading and writing are provided. Well attended additional activities, clubs and visits add interest and help to promote pupils' enjoyment of learning. There are very effective arrangements for ensuring excellent behaviour and improved attendance. The staff work well with outside agencies, families and carers to help pupils achieve well. Displays that celebrate pupils' achievements and provide valuable information for pupils to learn contribute to a good learning environment in limited accommodation.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

High quality teaching and purposeful learning	2
Effective assessment	2
An appropriate curriculum which meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, provision through partnership with other organisations	2
Support, guidance and care	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and staff work closely and effectively together, which has led to important improvements since the last inspection. Equal opportunities are good; all pupils have opportunities to take part in all the school provides. The headteacher, with key staff, has driven the improvement in writing standards well. Pupils now achieve better, and the systems in place for setting pupils targets to improve their writing are very well thought out. This collaborative approach by all staff has driven improvements in other areas, such as pupils' understanding of how to investigate ideas in science. This has meant that standards at Key Stage 2 have risen to above average. An important reason why the school has been successful in making changes is that they are embedded before further areas are considered.

Arrangements for crossing the road to reach the school hall from the main school are well organised. Leaders have given thought to changes in organisation whilst the new school is being built and safeguarding arrangements are satisfactory. The

transition plan has not fully considered all aspects during this period, such as a comprehensive response to the additional delivery traffic on the road outside school and the increased numbers of people using the site.

Governors understand the school's main strengths and weaknesses in detail and fulfil their statutory duties well. With the staff, they have planned to meet the right priorities to improve the consistency of provision throughout the school, such as in teaching. Governors are adept at challenging how well the school is tackling priorities and evaluating the impact of changes. However, the school improvement plan does not make enough use of specific and easily measurable targets for checking progress. Partnerships with parents and organisations are good. The governing body makes well considered changes to the school's organisation based on parents' thoughts and suggestions.

The school's understanding of its broad community context is reflected in the wide range of links it has through fund raising for national and international causes and its work in the village. Its work to promote community cohesion is satisfactory. The school does not provide opportunities for pupils to work alongside those from different backgrounds, so that individual pupils gain a real insight into what life is like for others in different places.

These are the grades for leadership and management

Communicating ambition and driving improvement	2
Promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination	2
Ensuring that safeguarding procedures are effective	3
Ensuring that the governing body provides effective challenge and support so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities are met	2
Promoting the school's relationship with parents and carers, including their involvement in decision-making about matters relating to learning and well-being	2
Developing partnerships with other providers, organisations and services	2
Ensuring the school contributes to community cohesion	3
Deploying resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make a good start to school life because the Early Years Foundation Stage is led extremely well. The teacher in charge takes every opportunity to make the most of a limiting site for outdoor activities. She is an excellent role model for children, their confidence grows quickly and she encourages children to be enthusiastic about their learning exceptionally well. There are good partnerships with parents, which support children's first weeks in school.

When they move into Year 1, children have made good progress and the work they do matches national expectations for children of their age in most areas of learning, and are strongest in communication skills. The focus on developing children's personal skills and the use of language enables children to work and play together

harmoniously. Support for individual children who find learning difficult is particularly good, enabling them to enjoy success.

Healthy lifestyles are promoted well through eating healthy snacks and pupils are taught what is good for them. Teaching and learning are good and staff work together very effectively as a team. They organise an exciting range of activities, such as a mini school building site in the classroom, that children thoroughly enjoy. They plan a well balanced range of adult-led and child-initiated activities that meet children's needs. Tasks are challenging. The leader has very well conceived plans about how to use the new accommodation, particularly outdoor activities.

How good are the outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
What is the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
How effectively is the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	1
Overall effectiveness: how well does the setting/school meet the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents are highly supportive of the school. The overwhelming majority have only praise for the school. They have great confidence in the staff, the headteacher and in lessons taught. The inspection questionnaire was returned by nearly a third of parents and shows that their children enjoy school very much. Parents value the learning environment that the school provides and the many additional activities at lunchtimes. Parents commented that staff are approachable and that the encouragement they give boosts their children's confidence and desire to do well. Inspectors agree with these positive comments. Several parents commented about the size of classes in Key Stage 2. Inspectors found that pupils were exceptionally well behaved and that the learning in these classes was good.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. In 2007-8, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2007-8, 49% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007-8, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2007-8, 5% of schools were judged inadequate.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Achievement:	an overall measure of the pupils' success in their academic learning. The term combines attainment and progress. Pupils might make good progress, for example, but if their attainment remains low, inspectors may judge that their achievement is only satisfactory.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.

6 March 2009



Dear Children

Inspection of Immaculate Conception Catholic Primary School, Spinkhill

It was good to meet many of you, see you at work and to listen to your views. Special thanks go to the Council members, Years 4 and 6 children we met for discussions and to those of you we joined in the dining room. This letter is to give you a clear idea of what is in our full report. Here are some of the best features of your school.

- You make a good start in Reception. You enjoy working on your mini building site.
- You make good progress with your work between Years 1 to 6 and reach above average standards by the time you leave.
- Your headteacher, teachers and all the staff organise the school well for your benefit. Everyone has a chance to do well.
- You enjoy school very much because teachers make lessons interesting, such as by celebrating World Book Day.
- You are growing up as responsible young citizens, and older pupils help the younger ones in many ways.
- You know a lot about keeping safe and follow school rules to the letter.
- You work hard in lessons and behave extremely well around the site.

I agree with your teachers that the school needs to:

- make sure that the more able of you have harder work in some lessons
- set you individual targets in mathematics and science, similar to those you have for writing, that show how you can progress from one National Curriculum level to the next
- develop closer links with other schools so you can work alongside other children who have different experiences to share
- make sure that all the necessary arrangements are completed during the period that the new school is being built.

You can help by continuing to behave so well, following school rules, working hard and showing interest in your work. We wish you all the very best in the future.

Roger Fry

Lead inspector

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