

Stourport-upon-Severn, St Wulstan's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116915
Local Authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	326487
Inspection date	6 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Marion Thompson

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)	206
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	Chris Marshall
Headteacher	Chris Wilkins
Date of previous school inspection	8 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Elmfield Walk Stagborough Way Stourport-on-Severn DY13 8TX
Telephone number	01299 877808

Age group	4–11
Inspection date	6 November 2008
Inspection number	326487

Fax number

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Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues.

The level of children's skills on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and the progress they make in the Reception class, especially in relation to the development of their communication skills.

How well the school has dealt with apparent underachievement by the most able pupils in mathematics, writing and science.

The level of challenge presented by teaching and the curriculum, particularly for the most able pupils.

Evidence was gathered from data on current standards and achievement, examination of pupils' work and school documents, observation of lessons, joint lesson observations with the headteacher, and discussions with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, chair of governors, staff and pupils.

Description of the school

This school is of average size and has EYFS provision for the children who are in the Reception class. The great majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. There is a privately run nursery, before and after school club and holiday club provider based on the school site. The school has been awarded Investors in People and Healthy Schools status. It has gained Sportsmark and Geography Mark Awards.

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. Provision in the Reception class is good. The school is well led and managed. The headteacher provides a clear sense of direction for improvement and is supported well by staff and governors. Parents hold all aspects of the school's work in high regard. Self-evaluation is occasionally over-modest, but is based on a rigorous analysis of the work of the school and planning for improvement is good. As a result, provision is improving and pupils achieve well. Leadership at all levels is effective, although there is some variation in expertise. There have been recent changes in subject leadership, and staff are getting to grips with their new roles. Governors provide good support and challenge for the school. Individual targets for pupils are challenging and are used well to raise staff's and pupils' expectations. The school makes a good contribution to the local community and, in this largely mono-cultural school, pupils have a good awareness of their own cultural heritage and of the range of faiths and cultures within the UK.

Standards are above average by the end of Key Stage 2 and achievement is good. Pupils of all abilities make good progress from their broadly average starting points. Progress is particularly good in English. Listening and speaking skills are well above average and pupils make confident contributions in lessons. Progress in reading is consistently good and most pupils read fluently and with expression by the time they leave. Progress in writing is slower, but it is still good. It has improved because the school has correctly identified narrative writing as a weakness and has addressed it well. Achievement in science is good, especially at the higher level, because of the strategies the school has put in place. Pupils make slower progress in mathematics, especially in using and applying mathematical skills to solve problems, but this is beginning to improve because of the strategies the school is implementing. However, a small number of pupils still do not achieve as much as they should. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because they are supported well. Older pupils make the most rapid progress, because teaching in these years is particularly effective.

One of the major reasons for pupils' success is their excellent personal development, promoted by the very good level of pastoral care the school provides. Pupils have extremely positive attitudes to learning. In lessons, they are brimming with enthusiasm, confidence and enjoyment. Excellent behaviour is the norm, because pupils are treated with respect by the staff and feel extremely safe. Attendance is above average. Pupils have a very good awareness of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. This is shown by the high numbers who take part in out of school sports, energetic activities in the playground, and the high uptake of healthy hot meals, introduced recently at the request of parents. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and many parents comment on how effectively it is promoted by the school. Pupils make a good contribution to the school and local community. They take their duties, such as looking after younger pupils at swimming, or hearing them read, very seriously.

Good teaching and a wide, interesting and balanced curriculum also support pupils' good achievement. Teaching, while varied in quality, is improving, because increasingly good use is made of assessment information to match pupils' learning needs. Most lessons present pupils with a good level of challenge. Lessons for older pupils are particularly demanding and pupils work hard. In a Year 6 lesson for example, pupils eagerly analysed a poem, with enjoyment, insight and confidence. This served as an excellent basis for their own writing, which they approached with gusto. The teaching of English, where teachers have very secure subject

knowledge, is a real strength of the school. Subject knowledge is not as secure in mathematics and occasionally work is not sufficiently demanding.

Most aspects of academic guidance are good. Closer tracking of pupils' achievement is enabling the school to match the curriculum more closely to pupils' needs. However, in some lessons in mathematics, work is still not sufficiently differentiated. Pupils are very clear about their individual targets in English and mathematics, and try hard to achieve them. Marking in English often provides clear and helpful guidance on how to improve work. However, this is not the case in mathematics, where too often it is cursory.

Systems to ensure pupils safety and well-being operate effectively and are enhanced by good partnerships with other agencies. The school has made good progress since the previous inspection and is well placed to continue to improve. Pupils' good academic progress and outstanding personal development prepare them well for the next stage of their education and their future lives.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the EYFS is good and improving. Over the past two years, there have been frequent staffing changes and children have made satisfactory progress. Staffing is now stable and provision is good. Children come into the Reception class with levels of skills that are around those expected for their age. They are beginning to make good progress and achieve well. Children settle quickly, because of the very good care shown by staff. Leadership and management are good. For example, parents expressed appreciation for the efforts the school has made to build effective relationships with them, keep them informed and provide information on how to support their children's learning at home. Children's personal development is good. They relate well to each other, enjoying their time in school. They share equipment safely and well with other children and are happy to take turns. Already, because their confidence has been built well, they confidently sing to the rest of the school in assembly. However, the lack of a covered area somewhat constrains children's opportunities to choose and initiate activities outside. They make good progress in speaking and listening, asking and answering questions during group activities. Most are making good progress in learning numbers and are becoming aware of their environment. The staff regularly assess how well children are working, enabling them to plan interesting activities. For example, boys were keen to write about rockets, because the subject excited them. Well-planned records are kept of children's progress. There is a good balance between activities the children choose for themselves and those that are teacher-led. The children benefit from the good teaching by both teachers and assistants. The Reception area is attractive and well resourced.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement in mathematics throughout the school, by making sure that: teaching and the curriculum consistently present pupils with a good level of challenge marking provides pupils with clear guidance on how to improve their work.

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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?	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	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	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	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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	2
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**

7 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Stourport-upon-Severn, St Wulstan's Catholic Primary School, Worcestershire, DY13 8TX

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. A large number of your parents replied to our questionnaire, so please thank them. You will be pleased to know that you go to a good school. Children in the Reception class get a good start because teaching and the programme of activities are well planned. The children settle in quickly because they are cared for very well.

In Years 1 to 6 you achieve well, reaching above average standards. Teaching is good. You do really well in your reading throughout the school. You make good progress in writing and science as well. Progress is slower in mathematics and a few of you do not achieve as much as you should. However, this is improving, because you are enjoying the more practical approach the school is taking. You know what your targets are in English and mathematics and try really hard to reach them.

Another reason you do well is your excellent personal development. Because school staff provide very good care for you, you love school, attend regularly and pay very close attention to safety. In lessons, you are eager to learn and especially enjoy the challenging work in Years 5 and 6. You have an excellent understanding of how to live a healthy life. You behave very well, and take very good care of each other. You take your responsibilities seriously. The headteacher and staff are working hard and successfully to make things even better.

In order to make sure things continue to improve, we have asked the school to:

- raise your achievement in mathematics, by making sure that you are always given hard enough work marking tells you clearly how to improve your work.

Best wishes

Marion Thompson Lead Inspector