

St Philip's Catholic Primary School, Arundel

Inspection report - amended

Unique Reference Number	126036
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	328446
Inspection date	13 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Gavin Jones

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)	205
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	Jacqueline Martin
Headteacher	Margaret Fraher
Date of previous school inspection	28 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	London Road Arundel BN18 9BA
Telephone number	01903 882115
Fax number	01903 883038

Age group	4–11
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Amended Report Addendum

Report amended due to factual inaccuracy

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school. They particularly investigated:

- the progress pupils made across the school
- provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- how the school tracks pupils' progress.

Parts of several lessons were observed, although the timetable for the oldest pupils was not their regular one as they were taking the National Curriculum tests on the day of the inspection. Inspectors met with a range of pupils, some staff, parents and the chair of governors. School information, such as evidence of pupils' standards and the school improvement plan, was scrutinised, as were examples of pupils' completed work. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail and inspectors found little evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in the self-evaluation form, were not accurate. These have been included, where appropriate, in the report.

Description of the school

This primary school is of average size, with the majority of pupils being Catholic, although other Christian denominations and faiths are represented in the school. Virtually all pupils are from White British heritage. There are no pupils with statements for their learning difficulties and/or disabilities, although the number of pupils with such difficulties varies between classes from around 8% to 30% across the school. These include pupils who have speech and language problems or emotional and behaviour issues. In the recent past, the school has had a 50% turnover in the teaching staff.

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 some outstanding features, principal among which are the leadership of the headteacher, welfare in the Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils' personal development and well-being and the school's pastoral care. 'What has always been paramount is the care and attention given to the children,' wrote one parent and this sums up the views of the majority.

Parents are very largely supportive of the school, with many saying the school is 'very welcoming with a strong Catholic ethos at its heart'. A small minority of parents expressed the need for more sporting activities to be available to pupils. Inspectors do not find this to be a fair comment. Parents note that their children receive a high level of care and support, resulting in pupils showing excellent personal development. 'The peer mediation, school councillors and various other responsibilities given to the children work well for them,' said a parent in the questionnaire. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school, have good attitudes to their work and behave well in class. They concentrate well on their tasks, as in a Year 2 mathematics lesson on place value, and make good progress in their learning. Strong relationships between pupils and adults bind the school together very closely. Pupils feel safe and secure as there are robust measures in place for safeguarding their welfare. Risk assessments are firmly in place and staff are up to date on child protection training. Effective links with other local schools, including secondary schools, ensure that pupils have a very positive approach to the next stage of their education. Whilst pupils have a very clear picture of their place in the school and local community, their understanding of their place in a wider multi-cultural society is not well enough developed. This is because insufficient attention is given to ensuring that pupils have a good understanding of what life is like in a multi-cultural society.

The school has gone through some turbulence over the recent past, with half of the teaching staff being new. This had a negative effect on pupils and the progress they made, especially the oldest pupils. For example, in 2007, standards in English, mathematics and science were significantly above average. However, the 2008 cohort had a larger proportion of pupils with learning difficulties whilst having a much smaller number of pupils deemed to be potentially higher achievers. It is a credit to the school that English standards remained above average, while results in mathematics and science slipped to broadly average. Strategies have been put in place to rectify these issues. Whilst it is a little too soon to see major improvements in achievement overall, the current Year 6 pupils have made good progress and have achieved well.

The new teaching team has settled well over the year and teaching is good overall, with some recorded instances of outstanding teaching. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are catered for well by teaching assistants. As a result, many of them achieve standards in line with national expectations for pupils of this age group. Pupils enjoy the good curriculum provided for them and appreciate that the school is endeavouring to make learning more interesting and more creative than it has been. The school has trialled ideas for curriculum innovation and later this year will make these changes permanent. This has not gone unnoticed by parents, with one writing, 'The creative curriculum introduced this year seems to have been very stimulating for children.' Initiatives in mathematics have been put into place, but there is inevitably a delay between implementation and full impact of these planned changes. Science has not been a focus for development in the past; however, the newly appointed subject leader has already made a start, very recently, on improving provision in the subject, by purchasing, although not fully implementing, a new assessment programme to plot standards reached by

learners. Similarly, elsewhere in mathematics and English, the school is able to show the standards pupils reach on a year-by-year basis. As yet, it is not in a position to show the progress pupils are making on a more regular basis towards the targets set for them. Tracking is not as helpful to teachers as it might be, for them to make adjustments to their planning, taking into account any over- or under-achievement. The 'big picture', in terms of progress and achievement between Year 2 and Year 6, is not easy to see; this includes those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Over the recent past, the headteacher and governors have worked tirelessly to raise money in order to finance changes in the school building, with pupils at the heart of these changes. As a result, even the cellar area of the listed building, has been transformed to provide good quality accommodation. 'St Philip's is a very special place,' said one parent. The headteacher has led the school with a very clear vision of how improvements could be made. Self-evaluation is accurate and leads to the school setting itself challenging targets for improvement. With the good support of governors, the partnership has been successful in coping with changes to the staff team and restructuring the senior management roles in the school. It has improved the building, overseen improvements in information and communication technology and developments in enabling subject leaders to fulfil their roles more securely. Now that the staff is once again a more settled unit, the capacity to make further improvements is good.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children get off to a good start in the Reception class because of the good induction routines. Children come to school with skills and experience broadly in line with those expected of children of this age. For some children, communication and language skills are less well formed. By the time they enter Year 1 most children have reached the levels expected of them nationally, with many exceeding those levels, showing good progress over their time in Reception. This is due largely to the good teaching and readiness of children to learn. Teaching has sometimes been noted as outstanding in this part of the school. Children's overall personal development is excellent because of the way it is promoted constantly by the teacher and her support staff. These adults spend considerable time effectively promoting the welfare of children, with outstanding success, making children feel safe and cared for. Although the recently appointed leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage has made an excellent start in leading and managing the unit, the balance between those activities chosen by children and those directed by adults does not ensure that children learn sufficiently through play activities. Consequently the overall judgement on leadership and management is good rather than outstanding. Nonetheless, good use is made of the small outside area to promote learning. Parents appreciate the strong links with staff and the good quality information they receive about the progress their children are making.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop tracking systems that more clearly illustrate the progress that pupils make through the school in relation to targets set for them by Year 6, especially important in improving standards in English, mathematics and science.
- Ensure that pupils have a clear understanding of what life is like in a multi-cultural society, contrasting their own school with others nationally and internationally.

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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?	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	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	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
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?	3
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

14 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Philip's Catholic Primary School, Arundel B18 9BA

Thank you for helping us when we visited your school. Although we were only with you for a short time, you helped by sharing your views with us and showing us how much you liked your school. Yours is a good school.

We were particularly impressed by:

- your personal development and the way you thoroughly enjoy school
- the leadership of your headteacher
- the way in which your teachers and helpers take care of you.

The school needs to:

- improve the way staff keep track of the progress you make, in English, mathematics and science, as you move up through the school
- develop your understanding of what life is like for people in other parts of your country and other far-off countries in the world.

You can all help by continuing to attend well and trying your best in all of your work.

Thank you again for such an interesting day.

Yours faithfully

Gavin Jones

Lead Inspector