

# St Catherine of Siena Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	103433
<b>Local Authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	336081
<b>Inspection dates</b>	21–22 June 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Kath Campbell

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	224
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Gerard Crowley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Liam Fadden
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 February 2007
<b>School address</b>	Great Colmore Street Lee Bank Birmingham
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They visited 13 lessons and observed ten teachers. One lesson was jointly observed with the headteacher. The inspectors also held meetings with the headteacher, staff, pupils and governors and talked informally to parents. They looked at the school's work and scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including information on pupils' progress, child protection and safeguarding procedures and an analysis of test results. They sampled pupils' past and present work and scrutinised 99 parental and 103 pupil questionnaires.

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

- the strengths in pupils' attainment, progress and achievement
- why standards in reading in Key Stage 1, particularly those of boys, have not improved as much as those in writing and mathematics and how effectively the school is addressing the issue
- the effectiveness of strategies to improve the consistency of teaching, to ensure that all groups of pupils make at least good progress
- how well the school supports pupils with behavioural needs
- whether managers at all levels and governors monitor the impact of initiatives with sufficient rigour.

## Information about the school

St Catherine's is a smaller-than-average school that serves an urban community in the city centre. Almost half of the pupils are known to be entitled to free school meals, which is above average. Most pupils come from minority ethnic groups, with few who do not speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with special needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is above average. In recent years, the school has achieved National Healthy Schools status in recognition of its work.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?****1****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****2**

## Main findings

St Catherine's serves the pupils in its care exceptionally well and has many strengths. Most notably, pupils make outstanding progress through the excellence of teaching and support staff. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and makes a major contribution towards their good personal development. The headteacher and senior leaders work together very well as a team and provide an excellent climate for learning. Together they are the major driving force behind improvement. There is a strong sense of community and pupils enjoy school a great deal. Parents and carers rightly hold the school in high regard. One parent expressed the views of many commenting, 'St Catherine's has a very good reputation and it has very much lived up to it'.

By the time pupils leave, they typically reach above average standards and well above average standards in science. For the past two years standards have been significantly above the national average. This is a real success story. The rate of progress accelerates as pupils move through the school, following a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those with English as an additional language make as much progress as other pupils because they receive support of the highest quality. In recent years, the school has focused very successfully on raising standards in writing. It is now turning its attention to the progress of some younger pupils, particularly boys in reading, where standards are not as high. Teachers use assessment information very effectively to target pupils in most need. Pupils' involvement in assessing their own levels of understanding is becoming an increasingly important part of learning but is not yet used with total consistency in every classroom. The outstanding quality of teaching and learning is key to the school's success. Due to effective monitoring, the quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection. Although further fine tuning is needed to ensure practice is entirely consistent, expectations of work and behaviour are very high. Teaching and support staff successfully create a happy learning environment, where pupils enjoy success because school is rewarding. The good curriculum meets pupils' needs well. Uptake on a wide range of extra curricular sporting clubs ensures pupils have a good understanding of keeping healthy and fit. The school is in the process of developing a more creative curriculum and is very aware of the need to identify topics specifically designed to capture the interest of boys. It provides a good level of care, guidance and support and works particularly well with pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. The learning mentor and special educational needs co-ordinator make a significant contribution to the development of these pupils and the whole school community benefits from the impact of their work.

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Self-evaluation is accurate because senior leaders know their school well. Monitoring is focused and effective. Managers at all levels and governors have an overview of attainment and the priorities for improvement. The governing body is well-led and highly supportive of the school. The school is never complacent in striving for the best. High expectations, improved teaching quality, more effective assessment and a strong shared commitment towards providing the best for pupils ensure there is good capacity to sustain improvement.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in Key Stage 1, particularly of boys in reading, by:
  - tracking the progress of different groups with greater rigour in order to identify potential achievement early
  - extending the range of opportunities within a more creative curriculum that are specifically designed to engage boys' interest, as well as girls
  - involving pupils more in assessing their own levels of understanding of their work.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Despite making good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils typically enter Year 1 with a range of skills below national expectations for their age. In Key Stage 1 standards rose steadily between 2005 and 2007 but were then followed by a dip in 2008. The inspection team focused its attention on whether the dip had been reversed and found that current standards show pupils back on track, with all pupils making good progress. The attainment of boys, many of whom have special educational needs and/or disabilities, is not as high, chiefly because a large proportion starts from a lower base. The picture in Key Stage 2 is impressive with all groups of pupils making outstanding progress. Progress is strong in this key stage and this is reflected in the quality of work produced, the opportunities for independent learning and pupils' enjoyment of success. Effective intervention strategies have had a strong positive impact, particularly on attainment in writing.

Learning at its most effective was observed in a Year 1 lesson, where pupils were exploring the properties of shapes. They were thoroughly absorbed in their work, behaviour was excellent and many showed high levels of independence. Pupils of all abilities made very rapid progress because work was matched perfectly to their needs and the input from teaching and support staff was pitched at exactly the right level to move pupils on.

Attendance is above average because pupils want to come to school. A strong Catholic ethos underpins pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school capitalises exceptionally well on the richness and diversity of culture that exists in the local area and pupils are well prepared for life in a multi-cultural society. Pupils of all ages are very proud of their school and are highly motivated by the challenges with

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which they are presented. The behaviour of the majority of pupils in lessons and around the school is good, although a few present challenging behaviour on occasions. In discussion, pupils say they feel safe and show a good awareness of healthy lifestyles. They take responsibility very seriously through, for example, their voice on the school council. By the time pupils leave, most are mature, articulate individuals who are well-equipped for the next stage of their education.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective is the provision?**

There is much to celebrate within teaching and learning. Teachers and teaching assistants work together impressively as a team and provide very effectively for pupils of all abilities. Relationships are strong because adults and pupils get along together very well. Several teachers within the school provide teaching of the highest quality. As a result, pupils make excellent gains in their knowledge. Where teaching is at its best, pupils relish the high levels of challenge and the searching questions. The pace of learning is impressive and pupils do not waste a minute. Assessment is of high quality and is used far more effectively than in the past to move pupils to the next steps in their

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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learning. Teachers are all aware of their pupils' capabilities and prior understanding, and plan very effectively to build on this.

There are strengths within the curriculum. Themed events such as 'Multi-Faith Week' promote key skills very successfully because they combine learning across subjects. The strong personal, social and health education programme supports potentially disruptive pupils well, enabling them to participate fully in school life. A programme of mentoring in both key stages is also helping to support those pupils who may be at risk of underachieving and vulnerable pupils. Targeted, small group teaching is impacting positively on standards in literacy. Information and communication technology is becoming an increasingly important part of learning. The school recognises that further work remains to be done to provide a more creative curriculum that provides activities to motivate younger boys in particular.

The school is a highly supportive community, where pupils are able to thrive socially and academically. Pastoral care is outstanding and nowhere is this better exemplified than in the extremely supportive work of both the special needs coordinator and of the learning mentor. The outstanding support they provide to pupils who might find learning difficult not only supports their academic progress, but also promotes their personal development. Parents and carers greatly appreciate the care shown to their children. The school takes the welfare and safety of its pupils very seriously. Good intervention strategies are starting to reduce the number of exclusions. A well-structured range of support procedures promotes pupils' good personal development.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b> Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	<b>1</b>
	1
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher, governors, senior and middle managers have all developed a clear reflective vision for the school. Together, the senior management team has successfully embedded ambition, with a determined commitment towards raising attainment and improving overall school performance. The team has a clear overview of strengths and weaknesses and an accurate perception of what needs to be done. Safeguarding pupils is of paramount importance. Secure procedures are rigorously applied by all staff and regularly reviewed by both staff and governors. The school improvement plan is an accessible working document with appropriate priorities for development.

The school is strongly inclusive and every pupil feels valued as an individual. Pupils are made very aware of how to tackle discrimination because they gain good insight into

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how people of different faiths and other sections of society function through their visits to, for example, synagogues and mosques. Community cohesion is very strong at a local level. The school is a well-integrated, harmonious community that is held in high regard within the local community. At a global level, the school promotes pupils' awareness of the diversity of cultures very effectively and is at an early stage of forging links with other schools and communities across the world.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

**Early Years Foundation Stage**

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills, knowledge and understanding that are typically well below those expected for their age. Early language and literacy skills are particularly weak. Children make good progress in both the Nursery and Reception classes. A strong emphasis on children's personal, social and emotional development enables children to develop confidence and self-esteem. Good links with families encourage parents and carers to become involved in their children's education right from the start. Children develop a good early understanding of how to stay fit and healthy. The staff seize on every opportunity to extend children's early language and literacy skills. Teaching and support staff work together well as a team and make learning fun. Activities are exciting and, as a result, children enjoy their work a great deal. Occasionally, activities do not provide the right level of challenge, particularly for the more able. Teaching is good and focused observations provide valuable insight into the rate of progress of individual children. The earlier identification of potentially vulnerable children is starting to have a positive impact on progress because one-to-one support is targeted more effectively. Outdoor learning is developing



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well but the restricted space and layout of the building sometimes limit children's freedom to choose whether to work indoors or outside. Leadership and management are good and the co-ordinator has a very clear view of strengths and weaknesses. Staff share a strong commitment towards improvement.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

**Views of parents and carers**

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. They particularly like:

- their children's enjoyment of school
- that their children feel safe
- the quality of teaching.

There were few concerns. A very small minority of parents and carers feel:

- the school does not take enough account of parents and carers' suggestions and concerns
- the school does not help them enough to support their children's learning.

The inspection team followed up all the concerns raised. It found that the school provides a good range of information for parents and carers. The school recognises that greater involvement of parents and carers and better communication are important areas for further development.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Catherine of Siena Catholic Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 99 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 224 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	65	66	33	33	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	68	69	30	30	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	55	56	39	39	3	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	55	56	42	42	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	52	53	46	46	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	54	55	39	39	5	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	47	47	50	51	1	1	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	38	38	49	49	3	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	46	46	49	49	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	39	39	54	55	2	2	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	35	35	48	48	10	10	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	48	48	47	47	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	60	61	36	36	1	1	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
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.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
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.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



23 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Catherine of Siena Catholic Primary School, Birmingham, B15 2AY

Thank you for looking after Mr King and me so well when we visited your school this week. You were all so friendly and polite to us and we enjoyed talking to you about your work. There were lots of smiling faces. We thought you worked hard and played together very well.

You go to an outstanding school. You make excellent progress and reach above average standards by the time you leave. Your spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Well done!

These are some of the things we found out about your school:

- you are very proud of your school
- almost all of you have above average attendance because you enjoy school
- you enjoy your work and want to do well.

These are the things we have asked your headteacher and teachers to do to improve your school even more:

- help some younger pupils to reach higher levels, particularly boys in reading
- check whether each one of you is making enough progress so that you can get help earlier if you need it
- make sure that your work is really interesting, for boys as well as girls
- allow you to judge more often how much progress you have made in lessons.

You can all help by keeping up the good work and trying to do your very best at all times.

Yours sincerely

Kath Campbell

Lead inspector

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