

St Dunstan's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103455
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	336085
Inspection dates	14–15 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Ted Wheatley

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	300
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Father C Fitzpatrick
Headteacher	Mr Antony Kenny
Date of previous school inspection	21 February 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors, who observed 17 lessons taught by 12 teachers. Inspectors talked to groups of pupils, staff, governors and school improvement partner. They observed the school's work, looked at pupils' books, information about their progress and school planning. They looked at 93 parental questionnaires.

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

- how effectively teaching meets the needs of different groups of pupils
- the effectiveness of procedures to deal with absence
- how effectively apparent weaknesses in science and information and communication technology have been dealt with.

Information about the school

This is an average sized school. Most pupils come from White British backgrounds. The few pupils of minority ethnic heritage speak mainly Urdu, Gujarati or Polish. A small proportion of these pupils are in the early stages of learning English. A broadly average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. These pupils have either moderate learning difficulties, autistic spectrum disorders, speech and language difficulties or hearing impairment. The school has national Healthy Schools status and the Activemark award. The school runs a before- and after-school club.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. It has outstanding strengths in how well partnerships promote pupils' learning and well-being and in promoting community cohesion. Attainment is above average and, despite being slightly lower this year because of the larger proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities in Year 6, it is generally rising. The most able pupils do particularly well, especially in English and mathematics. Pupils make good progress and their positive attitudes to learning make a significant contribution to this. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities generally make good progress. Some of these make excellent progress but a small proportion make less progress than would normally be expected. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress and some make excellent progress. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children make good and sometimes excellent progress and by the time they enter Year 1 the standards they reach are generally above average.

Pupils enjoy school and take delight in learning. They behave well and are considerate in their dealings with each other. They have a good understanding of the importance of having a healthy lifestyle, most pupils eat sensibly and all take part in the daily 'wake-up, shake-up' exercises. Pupils feel exceptionally safe. They know how to behave in the face of risks and say that bullying is extremely rare. Pupils readily take on responsibilities: the school council represents pupils' views well and helps organise social events. Pupils have good literacy, numeracy and computer skills which prepare them well for the next stage of their education.

Teaching is good and improving. Relationships are very good and help motivate pupils to learn. Learning is usually fast paced with a wide range of activities that catch pupils' attention and establish positive attitudes to learning. Work is usually challenging, and matched to the learning needs of most groups of pupils although occasionally work is not matched to the learning needs of some lower attaining pupils. This is mainly because the available detailed assessment information is not used effectively to plan work that is matched to pupils' prior attainment or to help track how well pupils make progress. The best marking tells pupils how well they are doing and how to improve and time is then provided for pupils to follow up on the advice given. However, this is inconsistent and pupils are not always clear about how well they are doing or how to improve. The curriculum is good and benefits from close links with the adjacent secondary specialist college, particularly in developing investigative science, computer skills and in the range of well supported sports activities. There is an effective emphasis on literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) throughout the curriculum to help raise standards in these subjects. The school has dealt with

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relative weaknesses in science and ICT well.

The quality of care, guidance and support is good. The level of support for pupils, and their families, in vulnerable situations is excellent. Transition arrangements to support the move to secondary school are good, and excellent for the majority of pupils who go on to the secondary school close by. Strategies to reduce absence are good and have helped to raise attendance to average. The before- and after-school clubs care well for those attending.

The school is well led and managed. The headteacher gives a clear direction for the work of the school. He is ably supported by all in leadership roles and has managed staffing difficulties sympathetically and effectively. The governing body is supportive and challenging. Self-evaluation is good and the school accurately identifies the areas it needs to improve. Efforts to promote community cohesion have an outstanding impact on how well pupils understand and respect the traditions of people from different ethnic and social backgrounds. Pupils' progress and attendance are improving, teaching is improving, and the capacity to sustain improvement is good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' progress by January 2011 and make better use of assessment information to:
 - make sure that work is always matched to the learning needs of all pupils, especially of the lowest attaining pupils
 - guide teachers' planning and to help track the progress of all pupils
 - develop pupils' skills in assessing their own performance and to plan the next steps in their learning
 - ensure marking gives specific guidance on how to improve work, and is supported by opportunities to act on the advice given.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Learning is good and for some pupils of all abilities it is outstanding. Pupils' progress in literacy and numeracy is improving and progress in writing is especially good. For example, in a lesson on recounting a story from a personal point of view, pupils worked in pairs practising what they wanted to say and explaining their ideas before they wrote anything down. Improving progress in numeracy is effectively promoted by numeracy activities in other subjects. For example, drawing graphs in science and then extracting information from them is effective in developing pupils' ability to handle numerical data and to calculate. Pupils' ability to think and work independently is improving as the range of problem solving and enquiry activities expands. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities stalls a little when activities are better suited to more able pupils. Nevertheless, progress by these pupils and those with English as an additional language is good overall and sometimes excellent when they receive exceptionally good support that is sensitively matched to their learning needs.

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Pupils enjoy being at school. Their contributions to the school community are good. For example, many pupils are involved in eco activities, organising the school playgrounds, links with other schools, as dinner monitors and playground supervisors. They raise money for charities and have well-established links with a school in Chicago. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They have exceptional social skills, relate their behaviour to Christian values and value the traditions of pupils from different backgrounds in their school.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Learning is interesting and fun. Teachers have high expectations of how pupils should behave and achieve, and the extremely good relationships in classrooms ensure the high levels of involvement and effort made by pupils. Teachers encourage pupils' engagement in learning through questioning, discussion and varied, challenging activities. While assessment is accurate and the school has a lot of information about pupils' performance, teachers do not always use it well enough to track pupils' progress or to ensure the work is matched to their learning needs. Teachers encourage pupils to

¹ 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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assess their own work, and that of one another, but pupils are not always clear about what they are looking for or how they move on.

The curriculum motivates pupils to want to learn. Writing and numeracy activities, which are established in most subjects, contribute effectively to improving basic skills. For example, interpreting data from graphs helps pupils to understand mathematics, and using computers to research ideas about feelings contributes well to pupils' personal, social and health education. The range of trips and visitors enriches pupils' experience. There is a wide range of activities, especially sports, run at lunchtime and after school, with a good level of support from pupils. Provision for ICT is good. Although enquiry activities are not fully embedded in the science curriculum, they are improving. For the most part, the curriculum is well organised to meet the needs of all groups of pupils.

The school takes a great deal of care of pupils and liaises closely with families and external agencies to ensure individual social and educational needs are well met. This is exceptionally good for pupils experiencing personal and emotional difficulties, and is appreciated by families. The impact of efforts to deal with absence is effective. It includes synchronising the holidays with the nearby secondary school, and working intensively with a small number of pupils to reduce their absence. Procedures to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are good. Support for these pupils is well planned and organised and for the most part is effective. For example, trained support staff and special resources are used well to promote the learning of pupils with hearing impairment or speech and language difficulties.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher is ambitious for the school and is determined that standards and progress must continue to improve. His ambition is reflected in the work of all staff. Work to improve teaching is successful and ensures staff have good professional development opportunities. The governing body provides considerable support, helped by increasing involvement in the school's day-to-day activities. Governors are fully involved in school improvement planning and setting school targets. Although lower attaining pupils occasionally do less well than their classmates in lessons, the school is working effectively to ensure all pupils achieve equally well overall, and the differences in progress made by different groups of pupils are narrowing. Efforts to eliminate discrimination of all types are effective. For example, the school ensures that pupils do

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not miss out on educational activities because of financial hardship. Excellent links with the local authority, social services and church organisations contribute effectively to pupils' well-being and learning. For example, pupils' learning benefits significantly from the science, sports and ICT support it receives from the nearby specialist college. Engagement with families is good and the school seeks parents' and carers' views and acts on them. Excellent promotion of community cohesion is exemplified by pupils' extensive knowledge and respect for the traditions and values of cultures represented in the school and local community, and their knowledge of cultures around the world. At the time, of the inspection the requirements for safeguarding were in place.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress across all areas of learning and the most able make excellent progress. A small minority of children start school with skills that are below national expectations for their age, especially in literacy and calculating, but children generally reach or exceed expected levels by the start of Year 1. Progress is especially good in the development of personal and social skills, physical and creative skills and in knowledge and understanding of the world. Teaching is good. Relationships are very good and encourage children to become fully engaged in learning activities. Children enjoy learning and join in all activities with increasing confidence. The range of activities is good, both inside and outside, and children generally have access to the full curriculum. Opportunities for developing speaking and writing skills in the outdoor area are a little limited, although improving. Adults' assessment of children's performance and

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progress is generally secure, but not always sufficiently focussed on their learning needs or on identifying the next steps in learning. Staff are aware of this and the use of assessment is improving. The quality of care and support and relationships with families are excellent, with very good communication and extensive opportunities for parents to find out about the Nursery and staff before children join. Leadership and management are good, and staff have a good understanding of the areas for improvement.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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

The great majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire are almost entirely supportive of the school. A small number of parents and carers feel that confidential matters about other children are discussed in their hearing when they come to school, and some feel that the annual report on pupils' progress came too late in the school year. Inspectors found that the school had listened to parents' concerns and acted to address both of these issues. Some parents feel that unacceptable behaviour is not dealt with adequately, but inspectors saw almost entirely good behaviour and effective strategies to deal with the occasional low level misbehaviour of a few pupils.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Dunstan's 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 93 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 300 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	56	60	34	37	3	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	61	66	29	31	3	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	39	42	46	49	4	4	3	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	40	43	39	42	9	10	3	3
The teaching is good at this school	44	47	44	47	3	3	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	36	39	47	51	7	8	3	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	47	51	41	44	4	4	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)	43	46	39	42	3	3	2	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	45	49	39	43	3	3	2	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	47	52	31	34	10	11	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	28	30	49	53	11	12	4	4
The school is led and managed effectively	43	46	38	41	8	9	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	44	48	41	45	3	3	2	2

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	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). 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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



16 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Dunstan's Catholic Primary School, Birmingham, B14 7LP

Thank you for making us so welcome when we inspected your school. You told us a lot about your school and what you think of it. We judge this to be a good school, and here are some of the good things we found during our visit.

You make good progress from the Nursery through to Year 6.

Teaching is good and you enjoy learning. There are lots of trips and visitors to make learning interesting.

You feel really safe in school. You behave well, work hard, treat each other kindly and show respect for everyone, wherever they come from.

The headteacher, staff and governors work hard to make sure the school is good and continues to improve.

You know what you need to do to be healthy. Most of you eat sensibly and take lots of exercise.

Those of you who have responsibilities carry them out well. You care about people in the world who are less fortunate than yourselves.

The school takes good care of you and makes sure you are safe.

In order for the school to be even better we are asking your teachers to:

- make sure that work is always matched to your learning needs
- improve the way the school uses the information it has about you to plan work, to keep a good record about how well you are doing and help you assess how well you are doing
- make sure marking tells you exactly what you need to do to improve your work and for teachers to give you time to correct or make your work better.

You can help by asking teachers if you are not sure how well you are doing or how to improve your work. If you find work too easy, then tell teachers so that they can help you do better. We wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Ted Wheatley

Lead inspector

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