

St Philip's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104001
Local Authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	336217
Inspection dates	4–5 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Bogusia Matusiak-Varley

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	250
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Wendell Gopaul
Headteacher	Stuart Brown
Date of previous school inspection	9 October 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors spent two thirds of the inspection time observing eight teachers in 22 lessons. They held meetings with parents, groups of pupils, governors and staff. They observed the school's work, and looked at policies, systems and procedures to raise standards. They also considered safeguarding procedures. They analysed and considered the views expressed in 66 parental questionnaires.

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

- the effectiveness of systems to raise standards in English and mathematics for different groups of pupils
- how well staff use assessment to challenge different groups of pupils, especially those who are more able
- the quality of leadership and management at all levels in enabling pupils to prepare for their future economic well-being.

Information about the school

The school serves an area with many social and economic disadvantages. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average, as is the number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The range and nature of the special educational needs are mostly related to speech/language and moderate learning difficulties and behavioural issues. The profile of the school's intake has altered considerably since the last inspection, with a growing number of pupils being admitted for whom English is an additional language. Nearly half the pupils are learning English, of which one fifth are at the early stages of language acquisition. The largest groups of pupils are Black British African, Black British Caribbean and Eastern Europeans. Over half the staff are new to the school, as is the chair of governors. The school has gained external recognition for its work through, for example, Investors in People, the Healthy Schools Platinum Award and the Basic Skills Quality Mark.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

The school provides its pupils with a satisfactory quality of education. It provides a particularly good range of extra-curricular activities which help pupils to enjoy learning and supports the development of good spiritual and moral values well. The curriculum, which is otherwise satisfactory, ensures pupils have a good knowledge of healthy lifestyles. Parents are generally pleased with the school. 'My child wants to be here 24 hours a day,' said one delighted parent. Pupils are polite, respectful and are very fond of their teachers. 'Our teachers are great; we get to do fun things and they help us with our learning', said one Year 6 pupil.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and improving rapidly, especially in Years 4 and 6. While standards by the end of Year 6 are just below average in English and science, they are average in mathematics. Progress is satisfactory overall, but does vary across the school. It is not yet good because not all staff use assessment information sufficiently to challenge all pupils. In some lessons, more able pupils do not learn at a fast enough rate. Pupils learning English as an additional language make satisfactory progress overall and good progress when they work on their individual learning plans. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make consistently good progress, as their provision is well-co-ordinated, support staff are effectively deployed and there is regular review of individual targets. Whereas the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in the school as a whole, the most rapid progress is made by pupils in Years 4 and 6, where teaching is consistently good. The introduction of booster classes, a homework club and interventions aimed at raising standards is having a strong positive effect on the achievement of older pupils; however, this work is not yet consistently built upon in all lessons.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage enter the school with low attainment in all areas of learning. They achieve well in personal, social, emotional and physical development but achievement in early reading, writing and number skills is only satisfactory because there are missed opportunities to develop these skills through play. Older pupils speak impressively about healthy eating and the positive effects of exercise. Attendance is inadequate in spite of the learning mentor's best attempts at improving it and this has a detrimental effect on some pupils' progress. Pupils' preparation for future economic well-being is satisfactory, but their knowledge of other cultures and religions in the United Kingdom is very basic.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The newly formed senior management team has ensured that there is a clear vision for the school but middle leaders new to their posts have not yet undertaken sufficient training in monitoring and evaluating

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provision. School self-evaluation is accurate and the correct priorities have been identified for improvement. Governance is satisfactory, and the newly appointed chair of governors is already a driving force for school improvement. The school has made sound improvement since its last inspection and its capacity to improve is satisfactory, as evidenced by the increase in standards in mathematics and improving rates of progress in reading.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in reading and writing for all groups of pupils, but especially more able pupils, by ensuring teachers are sufficiently trained in using information from assessment to plan tasks to meet pupils' needs.
- Improve provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that children have more opportunities to develop their skills of early reading, writing and number formation.
- Work more closely with parents to increase attendance.
- Ensure that pupils have more opportunities to learn about the cultures, creeds and traditions of the United Kingdom.
- Develop the roles of middle leaders by providing rigorous training in how to monitor and evaluate provision.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils work hard in lessons and stay on task. Very good displays in classrooms include 'learning walls' which prompt pupils to get over 'being stuck' in their work. In a good Year 6 mathematics lesson on measuring angles, pupils made good progress because the class teacher expertly set the learning objective in a real life context making the pupils laugh by telling them how her cupboard was lop-sided because the wall was not measured properly.

By the end of Year 2, standards in reading and writing in recent years have been below average. In mathematics, the school has managed to attain broadly average standards, which represents good achievement. The recent measures taken to introduce phonics and guided reading are helping raise standards quickly and securely. Pupils learning English as an additional language sometimes struggle with writing because, at times, in lessons they are not being given sufficient prompts to help them meet their individual learning targets.

Pupils have satisfactory attitudes and behave appropriately. They say that they feel safe in school although a few parents disagree with this view. Pupils know about internet safety and what to do about cyber-bullying. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils have good awareness of the teachings of Christ and the importance of giving things up for Lent. They know right from wrong and know who to turn to if they or their friends feel uncomfortable. Pupils care about their school and

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their immediate community. For example, they know about the importance of recycling and have delivered a petition to 10 Downing Street on 'caring for the planet'. Pupils are prepared for transfer to secondary school satisfactorily.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Teachers are hard working and want the best for their pupils. Displays around the school are very well presented, encouraging pupils to develop a love of learning. Classes are tidy and well organised, with a good range of resources. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used effectively, but the pace of lessons slows down when teachers do not use information from assessment to plan activities for the different ability groups in their classes. Teachers' marking is supportive but, sometimes, is not prescriptive enough in defining precisely what pupils need to do to improve.

The good range of curriculum enrichment activities helps pupils to make satisfactory progress. Staff are making secure links across subjects including in helping pupils to apply literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. Visits from the clergy and emergency services support pupils' learning about and involvement in the local community. The recent focus

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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on sustainability is having a positive impact on pupils' skills of citizenship.

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. The school works soundly with a range of agencies to improve provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those learning English as an additional language. Satisfactory links with the local secondary school enable pupils to get to know their new school and ease transition.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders and managers have satisfactorily embedded ambition and drive to raise standards. A well-focused school development plan with clearly defined areas of responsibility has been developed. Job descriptions and responsibilities are being reviewed so that staff expertise is used even more effectively to raise standards. Senior leaders and the governing body are ambitious in moving the school forward. They promote equality of opportunity satisfactorily and ensure that any discrimination is quickly tackled. Staff are now held to account for standards by regular pupil progress reviews. The promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory overall, but pupils feel part of their immediate community and take a great pride in ensuring that the local area is litter free. Governance is satisfactory: governors ensure that all statutory requirements are met, safeguarding procedures are secure and that staff are answerable for standards. Partnerships with other schools and organisations are satisfactory. Governors are aware that the school could engage parents more effectively and are already planning more frequent pupil reviews. The school deploys its resources adequately and provides sound value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3

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	
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with very low attainment in all areas of learning. This is still the case by the time they leave the Reception class, except in personal, social, emotional and physical development, where attainment is in line with that of children of a similar age. Learning and progress are satisfactory due to satisfactory teaching. Welfare arrangements are effective. Behaviour is generally good. Satisfactory systems are in place to monitor how well children are learning. Resources are plentiful, especially in the well laid out outside learning environment, but staff spend too long observing children and do not intervene enough in their play. This prevents learning from being better than satisfactory. Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are satisfactory. Much has been achieved in a very short time, especially in the good pastoral care the children receive.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Most questionnaires returned were positive and indicated that parents and carers are generally pleased with the school. Although a few parents are not entirely happy, most are pleased with what the school offers their children. A small minority would like to have more information on their children's progress. Inspection evidence indicates that the school is aware that, in spite of secure tracking of pupils' progress, it needs to improve its practice in sharing this information with parents. Some parents think their children are not stretched enough. Inspectors agree with these views in relation to more able pupils but the school is putting systems in place to address this.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Philip'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 66 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 250 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	38	58	27	41	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	35	53	25	38	2	3	2	3
The school informs me about my child's progress	26	39	31	47	7	11	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	27	41	31	47	6	9	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	27	41	33	50	2	3	2	3
The school helps me to support my child's learning	24	36	38	58	3	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	26	39	36	55	3	5	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)	20	30	37	56	4	6	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	20	30	38	58	4	6	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	27	41	32	48	3	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	22	33	38	58	2	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	26	39	34	52	2	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	33	50	30	45	1	2	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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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.



8 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Philip's Catholic Primary School, Smethwick, B66 3DU

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we came to visit your school. Your school provides you with a satisfactory quality of education.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good gains in learning in personal, social, emotional and physical development. You make good progress in mathematics and reach the levels most pupils attain by the age of 11. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress.

You enjoy the good range of clubs and visits provided, especially for sport, and you have good knowledge of healthy eating and a sound knowledge of staying safe.

You have good links with your local community and you participate well in all aspects of church liturgy.

You demonstrate good knowledge of spiritual and moral development. You generally get along well with one another.

Your school is satisfactorily led and managed.

We have asked the school to do a few things to improve the education you receive, including to:

- make sure that teachers give you work that is just right for your individual learning needs; not too hard and not too easy
- help you get higher standards in reading and writing, especially for those of you who find learning easy
- improve attendance levels by working even more closely with your parents and those who look after you
- teach you more about the different nationalities and cultures that make up the United Kingdom
- ensure teachers with responsibilities find out more about by checking more often on how well you are learning.

Yours sincerely

Bogusia Matusiak-Varley

Lead inspector

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