

St Louis Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110480
Local Authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	337512
Inspection dates	11–12 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Helen Hutchings

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	209
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Julian Thurairajah
Headteacher	Margaret Louisy
Date of previous school inspection	12 March 2010
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors spent around half the time that pupils were in lessons observing learning. Inspectors visited 15 lessons involving eight teachers. Inspectors observed the school's work, and held meetings with representative groups of governors, staff and children. They looked at the school's improvement plans, assessment information and curriculum planning. In addition, 106 parent and carer and 28 staff questionnaires were received and analysed along with 110 questionnaires from pupils.

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

- the progress made by children in the Nursery and Reception classes and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities
- how well school leaders use the school's partnerships with parents and carers, other schools and external agencies to give pupils interesting and valuable learning experiences.

Information about the school

Pupils in this school come from a wide range of backgrounds. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and for whom English is not their home language are higher than most schools and have increased since the last inspection. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is average and mainly related to behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Amongst its awards, the school holds Investors in Families and UNESCO Associated School awards.

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

1

Main findings

St Louis Catholic Primary School is a highly successful school. All members of the staff and governing body work very hard towards the same aim of providing the highest possible quality of education for the pupils. The 'St Louis Way' gives everyone a warm greeting, exemplified in the ceremony when Reception children are welcomed into the school and given gifts by their buddies. Adults in the school care exceptionally well for pupils, achieving just the right balance between support and challenge in their dealings with them. The result is that pupils are very mature and confident for their ages while still enjoying life as children. Relationships across the whole school community are respectful and mutually supportive. Pupils say that they feel very safe from bullying and other forms of harassment. They know that their views are listened to and they are confident that they will be given help if it is needed. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the contribution they make in helping the school to be 'fantastic and fun'. St Louis offers excellent opportunities for pupils to take on responsibilities, for example as buddies, prefects, house responsibilities and playground leaders involving pupils of all ages, and contributing to the exceptionally strong family ethos.

Children in the Reception class are settled and secure in their routines. They make good progress and develop their early learning skills well because of the effective range of activities planned for them. Not enough use is made of the outdoor area and children do not currently have enough activities to stimulate their imaginations and encourage their creativity further. The school is aware of these minor weaknesses and has plans to address them. From the firm foundation of Reception, pupils of all abilities achieve exceptionally well through the rest of the school. Attainment is above average and improving, representing outstanding progress from below average starting points when children enter the school. Pupils respond enthusiastically to good teaching and the rich and interesting curriculum, showing high levels of concentration and commitment in lessons. Their excellent behaviour helps in taking learning forward rapidly. As pupils commented, 'We look after other people to make them feel safe and we learn quite a bit every minute.' In a few lessons, pupils have to listen to their teacher too long, reducing the time they have to consolidate their learning by doing things for themselves. Pupils have an accurate understanding of the quality of their work and what they have to do to improve it further because of high quality marking and the clear targets agreed with them.

One of the key reasons for the school's success is its attention to detail in everything it undertakes. For example, vibrant displays remind pupils of the extensive activities they have undertaken and the things they have achieved, and many show the value placed on the different backgrounds, faiths and languages of pupils in the school. Under the

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inspirational and focused leadership of the headteacher, staff research new initiatives carefully before adoption so that they are clear about how changes will impact positively on pupils' experiences and learning. The school has improved significantly since the last inspection, with better teaching leading to higher attainment and pupils making much faster progress. Attendance has improved and is now high. All of these positive outcomes illustrate the school's exceptional capacity to improve even further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all teaching matches the quality of the best by always giving pupils enough time to consolidate their learning by working on their own tasks.
- Improve opportunities for children in the Reception class by:
 - completing the refurbishment of the outdoor area and using it as an outdoor classroom more regularly
 - giving children more activities to improve their creative and imaginative development.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

Pupils enjoy school greatly and behave outstandingly well in lessons and around the school because adults deal with them fairly and consistently so that boundaries are clearly understood. Pupils take a real pride in their work and present it well. They achieve exceptionally well across all aspects of the school's rich curriculum, not only in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Other subjects, such as modern foreign languages, design and technology, art and music, are seen to be equally important and pupils produce work of a high standard. Pupils are particularly proud of the success of the school choir in local competitions. They develop a wide range of learning skills systematically through their topic studies, where all subjects are linked imaginatively. This makes learning highly relevant and practical. Only one example of many seen in the school was the exceptional quality of learning when Year 6 pupils set up their own 'Egyptian Museum', making the artefacts, displaying them and organising the running of the museum. The project made an excellent contribution to pupils' economic understanding as well as developing personal leadership skills and the capacity to work together effectively as part of a team. Pupils respond very well to teachers' high expectations for them to investigate and try things out for themselves. As a consequence, they have a strong awareness of how they learn and what they have to do to raise the level of their work. As pupils gain confidence through the school, they gain a momentum in their learning and their progress accelerates.

Pupils trust others and are considerate and polite. During the inspection, pupils' care and compassion for others was seen in the way small groups of pupils used the school's prayer room where pupils go for calm, spiritual help when they need additional support. Pupils have, for their ages, a good understanding of their responsibilities towards others, shown in their appreciation of the principles of restorative justice and recently in the school council's organisation of a 'slipper day' to raise funds for the victims of the Haiti

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earthquake. They have a good understanding of the need for exercise and a healthy diet, and respond well to the school’s health promotion strategies. Many take part in active sports activities, either at lunchtime or through extra-curricular clubs.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment ¹	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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils’ behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Everyone in St Louis School is treated as an individual. Staff are very aware of and sensitive to pupils’ needs, for example caring exceptionally well for pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable and involving external agencies when appropriate. Teaching assistants are well trained to lead programmes to help pupils in danger of not making the expected rate of progress. In lessons, they support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language very well. These groups of pupils make the same outstanding progress as others because they are known well and work is matched accurately to their needs. The school’s curriculum is exceptionally well planned in topics so that pupils develop subject knowledge and a range of learning and life skills in a coherent and interesting way. Topics are used very well as the basis for developing numeracy or particular styles

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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of writing, for example where Year 5 pupils wrote convincing arguments to persuade the judge to deliver heavy sentences for the Great Train Robbers as part of their Crime and Punishment study or when Year 1 pupils wrote about their walk to the postbox. Pupils are motivated by practical work and gain greatly from it because teachers develop pupils' investigative skills systematically from their earliest days in the school and encourage them to think things through for themselves.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has been highly successful in bringing about improvement by valuing everyone's contribution and enabling staff to develop their practice. Teachers make very effective use of the rigorous systems in place to track and improve pupils' progress. Teamwork amongst staff and governors is very strong and staff have an accurate, though in some respects modest, understanding of the school's strengths. There is no hint of complacency in this school. Staff and governors have high aspirations and rigorously review the impact of the school's work. They are enthusiastic to make even more improvements and plan next steps carefully. The partnership with parents and carers is strong, shown in the recent Investors in Families award. School development priorities are shared with parents and carers, helping them to feel informed and enabling any concerns to be dealt with honestly and positively. A similar approach is taken to make the best possible use of links with other schools and external agencies, for example in providing additional lessons in design and technology, science and modern foreign languages, all greatly enjoyed by the pupils involved.

The school's status as a UNESCO Associated School bears testament to its success in promoting community cohesion, and is reflected in pupils' exceptional spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is a school which proactively challenges any form of discrimination and promotes equality. The celebration of diversity is highly evident throughout the school, helping pupils to reflect on differences in culture and faith, within a highly cohesive community. There is a sensitive approach to developing pupils' understanding of culture in the United Kingdom, alongside raising their understanding of national and global issues through the range of topics they study and a well-planned series of special events. Arrangements to safeguard pupils are rigorous, showing the school's vigilance and concern for the welfare of all pupils.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Careful induction procedures and good leadership and management help to ensure that children make good progress from the time they start in the Nursery or Reception classes. The partnership with parents is strong and good strategies, such as the 'Stay and Share' sessions, give parents opportunities to make the school aware of their views and keep parents aware of their children's development. Children's attainment on entry varies from year to year but is generally below and sometimes well below that expected for their age, particularly in their communication skills and in their personal and emotional development. Adults interact well with children so that children's language skills improve rapidly. They effectively encourage children to enjoy school and develop their early literacy and numeracy skills, although children join Year 1 with skills still below those expected for their age. Children are active and can talk about healthy food and what is 'good for us'. They cooperate well together in the activities provided for them, for example in counting games and 'writing' messages home. Improvements made to the outdoor area are being used well to develop children's physical and coordination skills, and the school realises that there is potential for further development to use this area as a more vibrant outdoor classroom. The classrooms are bright and well organised to promote a wide variety of activities, although opportunities to stimulate children's imagination to promote creative development are not as strong as those designed to promote other areas of learning.

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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

Almost all parents and carers are tremendously positive in their views on the school and hold it in high regard, shown in typical comments such as 'St Louis is a truly wonderful school' and 'The school recognises the importance of social development of the children as well as academic success.' They are particularly pleased that their children are happy and safe at school, and that they are informed about their children's progress. A few parents and carers expressed concern that they are not helped to support their children's learning. Inspectors found that the school makes great efforts to give parents and carers the information they need. A few parents commented on this aspect as a particular area of success, in comments such as 'We find staff to be extremely approachable and helpful' and 'I have attended workshops about reading, writing and maths and these have been very helpful.' A few others indicated that they believe that behaviour is not dealt with effectively and this has already been addressed elsewhere in the report.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Louis 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 106 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 210 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	61	58	44	42	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	71	67	32	30	2	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	59	56	44	42	2	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	59	56	39	37	4	4	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	57	54	46	43	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	61	58	37	35	6	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	48	45	55	52	2	2	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)	49	46	47	44	3	3	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	50	47	45	42	5	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	46	43	50	47	7	7	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	43	41	53	50	4	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	65	61	40	38	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	63	59	41	39	2	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.



15 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Louis Catholic Primary School, Aylesbury, HP20 2XZ

Thank you for making the inspection team so welcome when we visited recently. We found the things you told us very helpful in making our judgements about how well the school is doing. We agree with you that yours is a fantastic school and is improving all the time. Children get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception. You clearly enjoy lessons and adults help you to make really rapid progress. Your attainment is above average because you work very hard in lessons and know exactly what you have to do to improve your work further.

You show your maturity and care for one another in many ways, for example acting as buddies for younger children or as playground leaders to make sure that everyone is included in your games. You also show this in your excellent, considering and welcoming behaviour. You get on very well together and say that you are like a big, happy family. You told us that the school sorts out any problems quickly and that you trust the staff to help you when you need extra support.

The headteacher and other staff manage the school really well and are always looking at how to make things better. You too are good at offering your ideas for this and you know that your ideas are listened to. All the staff and governors care deeply about making sure that you have good opportunities. We want the school to continue to give you good support and help and have asked staff to do some important things to make it even better. They are:

- to make sure that you always have enough time to work on your own and that you do not have to listen to your teacher for too long
- to make the Nursery and Reception outside area even more exciting and give children in these classes new ways for imaginative play.

You can help by continuing to work hard and listening carefully to your teachers.

We wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Helen Hutchings

Lead inspector

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