

Saint Clare's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120220
Local Authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	339635
Inspection dates	27–28 April 2010
Reporting inspector	Christopher Green

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	208
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sheila Stacey
Headteacher	Jane Monaghan
Date of previous school inspection	21 February 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 20 lessons or part lessons and observed seven teachers. They held discussions with governors, pupils and staff, and observed the school's work, especially the records of the progress pupils are making, teachers' planning and the school improvement plan. The inspection team analysed 57 questionnaires from parents, and others from pupils and staff.

Inspectors reviewed many aspects of the school's work. They looked in detail at the following:

- the factors contributing to pupils' improved performance since the previous inspection
- the effectiveness of the school's action to improve pupils' attainment and progress in mathematics
- how well teaching meets the needs of the more able pupils
- the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage reception class.

Information about the school

St Clare's Catholic Primary is an average sized primary school. Almost all its pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average, and most of these pupils have specific learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. Significant staffing changes have occurred since the school was previously inspected in 2007 and there have been some extended staff absences. The school is undergoing considerable building improvements which are due to be completed by January 2011.

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

Saint Clare's Catholic Primary is a good school and improving. Parents value the education their children receive. 'St Clare's is a super school with fantastic staff. My children have loved their time here!' This comment from one parent's questionnaire response captures the message from many.

Care, guidance and support, and aspects of pupils' personal development are strengths of the school. The spiritual and moral development of the pupils is outstanding. Pupils thoroughly enjoy learning. They are kind, considerate and relate very well to each other and to adults. Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school and contributes positively to the good progress made. Pupils could accept more responsibility for their own learning and make more extended oral contributions in lessons than is currently the case. They do not show as much initiative in the development of their work as they should. They adopt healthy lifestyles by eating well and participating in regular exercise. Many make outstanding contributions to the school and to the wider community, for example by taking on additional responsibilities via the school council and chaplaincy team and participating in many local and diocesan events. A school councillor explained some of the contributions with considerable poise. 'The chaplaincy team deals with the spiritual side of our learning across the community - hearts, emotions and liturgy; those of us on the council deal more with learning through our head, hands and feet!'

Children enter with levels of knowledge and skills that are broadly in line with those expected for their age. Pupils' progress is good overall, although inconsistencies in the provision and assessment of learning cause the rate of progress to be slower than it might be in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Learning and progress are improving in Year 1 and Year 2 and are good. More accurate assessments, which are used to inform the teaching, account for this. Pupils' performance in English by Year 6 has been significantly above average for many years, as it was in the science results in 2009. It is on an improving trend in mathematics where it was average in tests taken in 2009. Further improvements in provision and outcomes for mathematics mean that in the current Year 6, standards in mathematics are above average. Positive action taken by the school has resulted in this improvement, for example more curriculum time is given over to the study of mathematics and the school has introduced more opportunities for applying mathematics in other subjects.

In most lessons, assessment data is used well to match tasks to pupils' abilities and needs. Targets for learning are pitched appropriately and with ambition. However, in Early Years Foundation Stage tasks and targets are not matched as consistently or as well as they might be to the learners' needs. Across the school, the pace of teaching is usually lively, but occasionally becomes too slow when lesson introductions are overly

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long.

The headteacher, deputy headteacher and staff have successfully created a positive learning ethos across the school and a most welcoming atmosphere. Parents and carers are pleased with the care and education provided for their children. The school demonstrates a significant contribution to community cohesion, especially at the school and local community levels. School self-evaluation is accurate and there are suitable plans in place to improve the school, in particular the use of assessment of pupils' progress to inform teaching and to raise attainment in mathematics. Senior staff are focused on implementing these plans and embedding best practice. The school's recent trend of significant improvement shows that it has a good capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve provision and children's progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - improving the quality of the curriculum and resources
 - using more precise assessments of children's development to match learning activities to meet their individual needs.
- Increase the opportunities for pupils to take initiative and develop skills of independence in their learning by:
 - enabling them to take more responsibility for the development of their work
 - setting tasks and targets that require them to make choices and decisions for themselves
 - encouraging them to improve their oral contributions in lessons.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Achievement is good and pupils enjoy what they do. Assessments and the lessons seen indicate that attainment by the end of Year 2 is broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. Well-focused teaching has led to the improvements evident in the current Year 2 class, but there is still room for more improvement in Year 1 and Year 2, especially in developing pupils' speaking.

Pupils have good opportunities, especially in English lessons to discuss their work in pairs and in groups. By Year 6, pupils read well. They plan and write reports and create well-balanced arguments in a wide variety of contexts. Writing is inspired by extracts from literature and film and skilful direction and questioning by the teachers help pupils to produce interesting work. Across the school, pupils are eager to write. They are taught how to form letters properly and write confidently in the lower classes and they tackle writing assignments without hesitation as they move up the school.

Positive steps are being taken to raise pupils' attainment in mathematics from previously low levels. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils made good progress investigating the interior angles of polygons. Using the pattern they had identified, more able pupils created an algebraic expression that could be applied to find the interior angles of any polygon. The

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good progress that pupils are now making in mathematics means that attainment is on a strong improving trend. Attainment has risen from being significantly below average two years ago to above average in the current Year 6. Younger pupils coming through the school are demonstrating improved skills in numeracy so that the higher levels of attainment in Year 6 are on course to be sustained in future years.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive effective support from teachers and teaching assistants. They make good gains in their learning because of this. Both boys and girls are making good progress. Previous differences in the attainment of boys and girls are now not significantly different from the national picture.

Pupils' social and cultural development is good. They feel safe, well cared for and know how to keep themselves away from danger. They are well prepared for their futures. Attendance levels are above average and pupils are developing their basic skills of literacy and numeracy. They are particularly good at applying reading and writing skills to tasks across other subjects.

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	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
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	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

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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Teachers plan carefully for the needs of different groups of pupils and share the purpose of lessons consistently, so pupils know what they are expected to learn. More able pupils are challenged well, especially in Years 3 to 6. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning, listen carefully and respond well to their teachers' clear instructions and explanations. Questioning is used well to check pupils' understanding. Teaching assistants support learning well, particularly for those pupils with special educational needs. Teachers sometimes give overly long introductions to lessons and do too much of the talking themselves, without challenging the pupils to speak out clearly and at length. When pupils are pressed to do so, they can speak very well.

The curriculum is well organised and promotes both academic and personal development. Excellent attention is given to English and its use across the curriculum. Planning for mathematics and other subjects is improving with the development of the school's 'creative curriculum'. This provides imaginative links between subjects, which add relevance and meaning to learning and opportunities to apply skills in different situations. The curriculum is enriched by an extensive range of clubs, visits and visitors. These are much enjoyed by the pupils, especially those which are rather unusual, such as their visit to the magistrates' court and the visit by the local Member of Parliament to school. Gifted and talented pupils comment positively on the 'enrichment clubs' to which they are invited.

Good quality care, support and guidance are at the heart of the school's ethos and contribute well to pupils' personal development. One parent, typical of many, wrote, 'Our children are so happy and love every day. The staff are committed, open and friendly'. Well organised arrangements serve the pupils well and contribute to their confident behaviour and positive attitudes.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
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, governors and staff have created a clear vision for the school and have built positive partnerships with parents and the diocese. The leadership team is relatively new, but these senior leaders have settled into their roles well and lead by example from the classroom. They communicate high aspirations to staff about securing improvement.

School improvement planning identifies a number of important priorities such as raising standards by improving the quality of teaching. There is scope for improving the

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cohesiveness of the school improvement plan by making it for a period that runs beyond just one year.

Governors are supportive and have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and those aspects where the school is performing less well. They are instrumental in evaluating the school's performance. Parents are well engaged as are other partners. Beyond support for the Early Years Foundation Stage, Local Authority assistance has not been used as much as it could. Statutory requirements are met and there are very good procedures to protect and safeguard pupils. Equality is promoted well and discrimination is tackled very effectively as a key tenet of the school's mission.

Community cohesion is promoted well. The school has good knowledge and understanding of the community it serves and uses this well to promote a series of activities, which bring positive advantage to the school and the wider community. Pupils show an excellent understanding of their own faith and good knowledge of others. The school recognises that pupils do not have enough first hand contact with people who are different to themselves and is addressing this. Pupils' involvement in overseas initiatives and charities, such as 'Fair Trade in Africa' and the 'Haiti Appeal', contribute well to cultural development and global understanding.

The school manages its resources particularly well in meeting the needs of pupils in Years 1 to 6, especially in its use of teaching assistants. Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils are good because of effective leadership and management.

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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

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The Early Year Foundation Stage is satisfactorily led and managed. The school has developed good relationships with parents and children settle quickly. As a result, children feel secure, safe and grow in confidence. They enjoy their learning and relate well to each other. They make satisfactory progress in their personal and social development and in gaining communication, mathematical, creative and physical skills. During a 'bug-hunt', children's rapid gains in their knowledge and understanding of the small creatures that they had found were most evident, as was their great excitement over their observations.

The teacher and assistants work closely as a team. Some recent developments have been successful through work undertaken with advisers from the local authority. However, it is recognised that more work is needed to improve planning and the balance of adult-led learning and allowing children to explore and work independently, both indoors and out. Some aspects of the curriculum and the resources that support it are tired and not as imaginatively organised as they might be. Systems to assess and record children's progress and attainment also need further improvement. Information is not used effectively enough to modify the plans for teaching and learning activities so that they meet the needs of the children as precisely as they could.

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

The vast majority of parents and carers who returned the questionnaires are happy with their child's experience at the school. Parents and carers are particularly pleased with safety in school and the sense of their children's enjoyment of school. The inspection team agrees with the parents' positive views. A very small minority of parents feel that the school does not communicate well enough about pupils' behaviour and progress, staff absence and forthcoming events. It is the inspectors' view that the school is open and approachable and promotes at least satisfactory two-way channels of communication.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Saint Clare'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 57 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 208 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	32	56	24	42	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	35	61	22	39	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	25	44	28	49	1	2	2	4
My child is making enough progress at this school	24	42	29	51	4	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	31	54	24	42	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	26	46	28	49	3	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	26	46	31	54	0	0	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)	25	44	30	53	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	22	39	32	56	1	2	2	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	25	44	27	47	4	7	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	21	37	35	61	1	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	24	42	28	49	4	7	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	33	58	24	42	0	0	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

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.



29 April 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of Saint Clare's Catholic Primary School, Leicestershire, LE67 3SF

Thank you for your welcome and sharing your work and ideas with us. We thoroughly enjoyed our visit and meeting you. We think your school is good and that it has some really outstanding features.

You enjoy school and are committed to trying hard and doing well.

The school is an exciting and pleasant place in which to learn.

By Year 6 you are really good at English and are making good progress in other subjects too.

You get on well with each other and behave in ways that help everyone learn.

You have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and fit.

You feel safe at school because the adults take good care of you.

You make excellent contributions to the school and to the wider community.

There are a few things that we are asking the school to do to make it even better.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage should be given some better equipment and a wider range of activities that meet their interests and needs.

Increase the opportunities teachers give you to think about how you could develop your own work, take initiative and choose interesting ways to do things. Teachers could encourage you to explain difficult ideas more precisely and clearly.

Thank you again for all your help. We wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Green

Lead inspector

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