

Shrewsbury Cathedral Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123554
Local Authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	340365
Inspection dates	11–15 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Ian Jones

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	155
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Father Christopher Matthews
Headteacher	Mrs Frances Abela
Date of previous school inspection	2 May 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors saw all teachers and visited 10 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at policies and documentation on teaching and learning, the curriculum, procedures for assessing and tracking pupils' progress, the school improvement plan and information about the Early Years Foundation Stage. They analysed a total of 78 parents' questionnaires.

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

- the achievement of more able pupils and whether teaching is sufficiently challenging for them
- how well pupils enjoy responsibilities and contribute to the school and wider community
- how well the different aspects of the curriculum contribute to outcomes for pupils
- how well leaders and managers at all levels use information to deliver improvement.

Information about the school

This smaller-than-average school is situated on the outskirts of Shrewsbury. The majority of pupils are White British, and very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average, although the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is above average; the statements arise mainly from specific learning or physical difficulties. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is broadly average. The school has gained a number of awards including Healthy Schools Gold Award, Safer Schools and the Sports Active 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

Shrewsbury Cathedral Catholic Primary School provides a satisfactory education. Pupils are enthusiastic and eager to learn, as reflected in their good attendance. Almost all parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire expressed much confidence in the way the school cares for and supports their children. One reflected the views of many, saying, 'The school provides a safe and nurturing environment for the children. It has a family appeal and I would recommend it to anyone.'

The good curriculum is successful in encouraging pupils to behave well and try their best and it contributes effectively to the pupils' personal development and well-being. Long-term plans include a broad range of experiences for pupils to enjoy learning. Almost all pupils report feeling safe and secure and they have formed trusting relationships with adults and one another. They enjoy school and are eager to accept the good range of responsibilities offered; consequently they make a good contribution to the school and wider community. Teaching is satisfactory. When it is most effective, learning is stimulated by well-planned and exciting activities that fire the imagination of pupils. However, in some lessons, progress slows because the tasks do not provide enough challenge and planning does not take enough account of progress made previously by pupils. Attainment is broadly average by the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6. Progress, although satisfactory overall, is uneven from year to year and between subjects. For example, the school has been successful in raising achievement in writing, an issue at the previous inspection. Improvement in other subjects has been less secure. Teaching in mathematics is inconsistent, with some lessons offering limited opportunities for pupils to apply number skills in practical activities and reflecting expectations for achievement that are too low. Science lessons are not always challenging enough to ensure that the more able pupils make enough progress. Not enough pupils are doing well for their age at Key Stage 2 in mathematics and science. The pace of learning and the quality of teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage are satisfactory, reflected in the sound progress made. The Reception class provides a secure environment and adults work well with parents and carers to meet children's needs.

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school. She has led colleagues in analysing problems accurately and devising useful plans to deliver the improvements required. A good example is the school's tracking and assessment system. Following improvement, this is now providing useful information about pupils' progress and identifying pockets of underachievement, and the school is beginning to respond more quickly to provide the necessary support.

Governors are enthusiastic and supportive of the school; however, their systems for

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monitoring school improvement are not sufficiently robust. Similarly, subject leaders do not have a precise enough view of the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects, restricting their ability to deliver the improvements required. Despite these limitations, clear-sighted leadership and the successes so far show that the school has a satisfactory capacity to continue to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate the progress pupils make in mathematics by:
 - developing teaching expertise to increase the amount of good teaching
 - ensuring that all pupils are consistently challenged in their work
 - providing stimulating problem solving tasks and opportunities for pupils to apply their number skills
 - using assessment and prior attainment information to plan lessons that meet pupils' learning needs consistently well.
- Increase the proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels for their age in science by consistently providing challenging investigative learning activities that are closely matched to pupils' needs.
- Strengthen school leadership by:
 - ensuring greater involvement of subject leaders in the monitoring of teaching and learning, identifying the best features and spreading good practice
 - increasing the effectiveness of school governors as critical friends in overseeing provision and holding the school to account.
 - 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**

In the lessons observed, pupils enjoyed their learning. Their work in class and in their books reflected the broadly average standards seen in test results. However, inconsistent use of day-to-day assessment to plan lesson activities meant that work was not always pitched at the right level to challenge pupils in their learning. This was seen to be slowing the progress of some pupils, particularly the more able pupils in Key Stage 2 and especially in science and mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress and are appropriately supported by teaching assistants who provide the necessary care and encouragement.

Pupils say that they trust that adults will deal effectively with any rare incidents of misbehaviour. They have a good understanding of how to eat healthily and many participate in the good range of sports and activities provided after school. Pupils know that their ideas and views are respected. Many pupils demonstrate maturity, often taking the lead when organising charitable fundraising or when representing the views

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of others. They thrive on the many opportunities they have to contribute to their local and wider community, including, for example, through the good links established with other schools. Pupils have a strong sense of their own community, but their knowledge about ethnic and cultural diversity in British society is less secure. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, and pupils strongly respect the interests and opinions of others. Pupils regularly engage in a range of musical and sporting activities within and beyond school.

The school is effective in its efforts to promote good attendance through good links and partnerships with parents and carers, outside agencies and the local community. Pupils are well behaved, polite and courteous. They show initiative and know that the staff will listen to and respect their views.

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	3
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	2
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	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers set high expectations for effort and behaviour. Where teaching is good, teachers set clear learning objectives which pupils understand; pupils are challenged at an appropriate level according to their needs; interesting activities are provided; and

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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teaching assistants are used well to support learning. In less effective lessons, these qualities are not consistently seen and work does not always precisely meet the needs of pupils. Marking praises effort and often matches progress against the learning objective. However, guidance on what pupils should do next to improve their work is rarely given.

The newly revised curriculum provides pupils with increasing opportunities to learn across a range of subjects within a general theme, and is generating much enthusiasm from pupils and teachers alike. Pupils benefit from a good range of trips, events and activities arising from the curriculum and varied extra-curricular opportunities, which are well supported. Sport and music are particular strengths of provision, and pupils enjoy the wide range of activities offered. The school acknowledges that the recent improvements to the curriculum have yet to impact fully upon standards of achievement.

Care and support are strong features in the school and this is endorsed by the positive response in most parents' and carers' questionnaires. The good aspects of pupils' personal development result from well-organised systems for promoting good behaviour, relationships and respect for each other. There is good intervention and effective work with outside agencies to assist the school in supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with specific learning difficulties. The school ensures that pupils' safety and security are given a high priority.

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher is a driving force for school development. She is ambitious for the school and is successfully motivating staff and governors to strive for further improvement, so that expectations of what pupils can achieve are rising. She has a good understanding of the strengths and areas of need within the school. Improvements such as those to the curriculum and to systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress are too recent for their full impact to be felt on all outcomes of the school's work. Despite plans now in place, opportunities for staff to share effective practice have been limited in the past, resulting in varying quality of teaching across the school. Nevertheless, improvements in the teaching of writing demonstrate that the school is ensuring greater equality of opportunity for all pupils. Good channels of communication enable parents and carers to be consulted on a range of issues. This enhances the school's

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understanding of the needs of individual pupils and contributes effectively to their well-being, as do the school's good links with other schools.

Governors have a sound understanding of the challenges faced by the school and where further improvement is required. They play a useful role in helping to set priorities for school development, although they rely too heavily on the headteacher for important information and are not sufficiently rigorous in holding the school to account. School leaders ensure that safeguarding procedures are appropriately in place and staff have a high level of awareness regarding pupils' safety. The school works satisfactorily to promote community cohesion through a number of initiatives to engage pupils with others from the local community, but opportunities to promote community cohesion beyond the immediate community are more limited.

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	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	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

The Early Years Foundation Stage provides a welcoming environment where children settle quickly and enjoy attending. Children start with levels of knowledge, skills and understanding that are broadly as expected for their age and make satisfactory progress. The curriculum is being revised to provide a better balance between child-initiated and teacher-directed activities, with a greater focus on developing independent learning. Behaviour is generally good, supported by effective behaviour management, and arrangements for safeguarding are satisfactory. The deputy headteacher, who is new in post as Early Years Foundation Stage co-ordinator, has made a promising start in her role and quickly established routines and good pastoral

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support for children. Procedures for tracking and recording academic progress and for using this information to inform planning are adequate. The school has plans to improve the outside learning environment to encourage children to move more freely between indoor and outdoor activities.

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 very large majority of the 78 questionnaires returned from parents and carers were very positive. Parents and carers believe that this is a caring and supportive school. Several expressed positive comments about the positive and friendly family ethos of the school. Although a small minority are concerned about the effectiveness of the school's behaviour management, inspectors saw consistently good behaviour in lessons and around school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Shrewsbury Cathedral 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 78 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 157 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	53	68	21	27	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	69	88	9	12	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	43	55	34	44	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	43	55	31	40	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	55	71	23	29	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	45	58	31	40	2	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	45	58	33	42	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)	38	49	35	45	2	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	45	58	31	40	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	33	42	31	40	10	13	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	32	41	40	51	1	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	39	50	36	46	2	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	54	69	21	27	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 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.



13 January 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Shrewsbury Cathedral Catholic Primary School, Shrewsbury, SY1 2SP

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school recently. I enjoyed talking with you, and I was impressed by your politeness and courtesy and the way you get on with your teachers and each other. I think yours is a satisfactory school and I know from talking to you and reading your questionnaires that you enjoy school and being with your friends.

Your headteacher and the staff make sure that you get along well with each other and that you make satisfactory progress. They are good at ensuring that you are well cared for and in helping you feel safe in school. I was pleased to see how well you take pride in your school and look after it. I was also pleased to see how well you care for your books and take responsibility around the school.

I have asked the headteacher and other staff to improve your school further by doing the following:

- helping you to make better progress in mathematics by giving you work which is carefully planned to challenge you and encourage you to use new skills to solve problems
- giving you interesting research activities in science which particularly help those of you who are more able to achieve well
- making sure that teachers and governors develop a really clear view of how well the school is doing so that they can support you to do even better.

I hope you will play your part by continuing to work hard and do your best.

I wish you every success in the future.

Ian Jones

Lead inspector

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