

St Louis Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123844
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	340440
Inspection dates	11–12 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Peter Clifton

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	211
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Anthony Dixon
Headteacher	Richard Triggs
Date of previous school inspection	25 September 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 15 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and pupils. They looked at school documentation, including development planning, recent monitoring reports, safeguarding procedures and pupils books. Inspectors analysed 72 responses to the parents questionnaire and took account of the views of parents talked to during the inspection and on the telephone.

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

how well teaching promotes good progress for all groups of pupils in each year group, especially high attainers and boys

the success of changes made across the school to improve standards in mathematics

how well leaders have made improvements through monitoring, particularly to improve the quality of teaching and tackle any underachievement

the use of targets in lessons, including marking and pupils own assessment of how well they are doing.

Information about the school

This is a slightly smaller than average primary school which serves a wide area of Frome and surrounding villages. The proportion of pupils who are entitled to free school meals is well below average. Most pupils are of White British origin, with the next largest groups being White from other backgrounds and pupils of mixed White and Asian heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average, mainly with literacy and numeracy needs. There are very few pupils who speak English as an additional language.

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

This is a satisfactory school. Pupils achievement is satisfactory and standards are broadly average. Learning and progress are strongest in Years 3 to 6. Teaching in Year 1 builds well on pupils basic skills. However, towards the end of Key Stage 1 learning and progress are weaker at times because teaching does not always meet the needs of the more-able pupils and lacks urgency and pace. The previous inspection report identified two areas for development; to raise the achievement in mathematics particularly for the more-able, and improve the quality of teaching. The 2009 results for Year 6 pupils show that an above average proportion of boys and girls reached the higher Level 5 in mathematics. However, more remains to be done particularly in Year 2 to raise the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels at the end of Key Stage 1. The headteacher and other leaders are involved in monitoring and evaluating teaching. They have a clear understanding about strengths and weaknesses and what needs to be done to improve. Despite this, a few weaknesses remain which have not yet been tackled urgently enough to increase the proportion of good teaching across the school. The schools capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory.

Pupils behave well in and around the school and have a good understanding of how to keep safe and lead healthy lives. Their spiritual, social and moral development is good and is reflected in their very courteous, friendly manner, cooperative working in lessons and in the way that older pupils support and help younger ones, for example in the playground. They respond well to the regular opportunities provided to reflect on important issues or join in with prayer. Attendance is average and there are clear procedures in place to follow up on any absence. Nearly all pupils report that they are well cared for and that there is always someone to talk to or to help them. They enjoy coming to school and are eager to please. They particularly like the clubs offered after school and the music activities which are strong. The school keeps pupils safe and secure.

Teaching, learning and the curriculum are satisfactory. Relationships in lessons are good and pupils confidently answer questions and respond well to discussions. The use of assessment to help pupils understand the next steps in their learning is inconsistent, as is the quality of marking. Teaching assistants actively support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, ensuring they achieve as well as others. Provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. The children enjoy school and join in eagerly with all the activities offered. However, they do not always have sufficient opportunity to make choices and decisions for themselves. This is limiting the childrens independence. During the inspection, there were some good opportunities for the pupils to learn independently. For example Year 6 pupils applied their

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understanding to tackle angle problems. However, in a few other lessons seen during the inspection the work given involved completion of uninspiring worksheets which kept the pupils busy but limited their learning. Opportunities are missed for the pupils to develop their learning through challenging problem solving activities.

Leaders track the progress of individual pupils on a regular basis so that additional support can be targeted where it is needed. However, the use of this information to provide a picture of current progress being made by groups of pupils in different years is at an early stage of development. This is hampering leaders efforts to target support and hold staff to account for the standards being reached. All the current requirements to keep children safe are in place including child protection procedures. Governors provide a satisfactory level of challenge to leaders for the academic standards being reached. They do not receive enough information about the pupils current progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the consistency of learning and progress made by different groups of pupils and in different years by:
 - sharpening monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning to give a stronger focus on remedying areas of weakness
 - developing the use of assessment information to hold teachers to account more fully for the progress their pupils make and enabling governors to provide a stronger level of challenge to leaders
 - improving the match of work to pupils needs across the school, but particularly towards the end of Key Stage 1.
- Provide better opportunities for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to make choices about their learning and widen the range and frequency of independent learning and problem solving activities across the rest of the school.
- 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

Across Years 3 to 6 progress and learning are at least satisfactory and sometimes good. Improved questioning of boys and a greater emphasis on practical tasks is helping to strengthen progress especially in mathematics. Lessons in Year 3 observed during the inspection actively involved the pupils when learning about telling the time. Progress remains weakest for younger pupils because expectations are not consistently high enough, particularly for more-able pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to other pupils. They are helped by the considerable amount of individual support provided outside of lessons. The few pupils who speak English as an additional language are well integrated and learn securely alongside their classmates.

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The Year 6 assessment results in 2007 and 2009 were above average. Although the 2008 results were average they show a particular weakness in the performance of boys in mathematics. The most recent 2009 results show a marked improvement with standards in English and science being significantly above average, and those in mathematics just a little behind. The results for boys were much improved. Current standards across Years 3 to 6 are broadly average.

Attainment on entry to the school fluctuates between being in line with that expected to above. The results in Year 2 in 2008 and 2009 were average. Standards in mathematics have been weaker because there are two few pupils reaching the higher levels of attainment. Given the pupils starting points, these results should be better.

The pupils say that school is a friendly place to be and that there is no bullying. They enjoy school and comment that they have a lot of friends. Apart from the occasional falling out they get on well together. Pupils are developing a good awareness of how to keep fit and healthy, and many of them go to after-school sports clubs. Pupils learn about different faiths and backgrounds, but have limited experience of mixing or working with others from different cultures. Pupils make a satisfactory contribution to their school community through the school council. The impact of their work is constrained because they have limited responsibility to run things for themselves. Pupils develop satisfactory skills for their next stage of learning.

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	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	3

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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The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
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How effective is the provision?

Strengths of teaching include the good relationships and the positive attitudes that pupils display to learning. They are quick to respond to the requests of teachers and eager to answer questions. They like being chosen to explain their understanding to the rest of the class using the electronic whiteboards. During the inspection, lively and stimulating teaching in Year 3 ensured high levels of engagement, and regular evaluation of pupils learning ensured that more difficult work was moved on to at just the right moment. In contrast to this, learning in a few lessons is passive because of a reliance on worksheets and information being given too slowly and repetitively. This results in a few pupils, particularly higher attainers, not moving on quickly enough. Pupils have targets for improvement but they are not referred to regularly enough. The curriculum has strengths in music, sport, art and enrichment through visits and after-school activities. Good personal and social provision makes a considerable contribution to the pupils mature attitudes and well-being. However there are limited opportunities for the children to choose in Reception. Through the rest of the school too much learning is over directed with limited opportunities for the pupils to investigate different solutions to problems or set their own tasks.

The good care that pupils receive is reflected in the way that adults respond to pupils worries and deal with any minor incidents around the school and in the playground. Pupils are very clear that their concerns will be listened to and confidently confide in adults knowing their problems will be quickly sorted out. Nearly all pupils spoken to, and through the questionnaire, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, gave a positive view about the support and guidance that enabled them to take part fully in all aspects of school life. Opportunities are sometimes missed to develop pupils independence.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders are well motivated and keen to improve the school. They are largely a new team with a broad range of different experience. Senior leaders rightly recognise the need to sharpen the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and to develop the role of

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some subject leaders. While there is good practice in the school to share expertise and drive forward improvement, links with other schools to support this endeavour are at an early stage of development. The governors have a range of valuable skills which are yet to be used to their fullest extent to help raise standards and provide a strong challenge to leaders. The school is a very calm and orderly community. Recent building improvements have added to the schools good arrangements for safeguarding pupils that promote their enjoyment of coming to school and have improved their safety, for example, through better fencing. Relationships with parents are satisfactory. The questionnaires returned showed a broadly equal number of commendations and concerns expressed. Provision to secure equal opportunities for all pupils is satisfactory. There has been improvement in the attainment of boys where the school has targeted action. There is a satisfactory strategy in place to promote community cohesion based on a clear understanding of the schools own local context. Pupils awareness of life in multicultural Britain is being promoted and there are links being developed with a contrasting school to further their understanding.

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
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	2
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

When children enter Reception they have skills and knowledge that are in line with or above those levels expected for their age. They make satisfactory progress in their learning. They enjoy their time in school particularly when they are able to play freely and make choices about their learning. They make good progress in their personal and social development, settling quickly and cooperating well. They speak confidently. Other

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aspects such as their creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world are not as strong. There are sometimes too few opportunities for children to make choices about what they want to do next or to initiate their own learning so they can become more independent.

Children are safe and secure and welfare arrangements are effective. They particularly enjoy using the class computers. For example, children use the mouse successfully to build number sequences. They help each other to get the right answers. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Staff are keen and committed to improving the provision in the setting. Appropriate assessment procedures are in place but not always used to their fullest extent to ensure that the more-able children are sufficiently well challenged. The resources provided for learning are good.

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

In addition to the completed questionnaires a small number of parents contacted the lead inspector to explain their views in more detail. The school has a positive relationship with most parents and carers. Parents agree strongly that their children are happy and that they are kept safe. Communication through newsletters between parents and the school is regular, and school surveys have shown good levels of satisfaction. The inspection survey outcomes are not quite as positive. There are several comments written by parents, highly commending the work of the school, notably the support for pupils with particular needs and the welcoming nature and approachability of staff. However, a few parents raised concerns about the progress their children are making, noting inconsistencies in teaching. Some also commented about lack of homework. The inspection findings show a number of these comments to be justified.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Louis Primary 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 72 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 211 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	40	56	32	44	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	40	56	31	43	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	22	31	45	63	2	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	20	28	46	64	4	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	23	32	44	61	4	6	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	21	29	46	64	5	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	32	44	36	50	3	4	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	15	21	41	57	5	7	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	20	28	45	63	4	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	16	22	42	58	2	3	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	19	48	67	4	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	22	31	44	61	2	3	3	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	30	42	36	50	5	7	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 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Louis Catholic Primary School, Frome BA11 3AP

Thank you for being so welcoming and helpful when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed looking at your work, seeing you in lessons and talking to so many of you. We were all impressed by your friendliness and how confidently you expressed your opinions. The valuable information you gave us was a great help. You go to a satisfactory school. The adults in the school care for you well. We were impressed by your very positive attitudes that nearly all of you have to learning. You behave well in lessons and around the school.

You make satisfactory progress in your lessons so that you achieve as well as children in most other schools.

You are helpful to others. You told us that there is no bullying.

You are learning to lead healthy lives, enjoy keeping fit and are safe at school.

You reflect on important issues in assemblies and join in with prayer well.

Teaching is satisfactory. It is best for pupils in Years 3 to 6.

Some of you do not know your targets well enough.

The youngest children in Reception do not get enough time to choose what they want to do to learn.

We are asking your school to do these things to help you to learn better:

That your headteacher and others work as well as they can to make sure that all of your lessons help you to learn as much as possible, for example to check that the work you are given is at just the right level.

That the school measures your progress better so that your teachers and the governors can check that you are doing as well as possible.

Increase the opportunities for the youngest children to choose their activities so they will become more independent.

Give you more activities which enable you to learn independently, such as solving different problems.

Yours sincerely

Peter Clifton

Lead inspector

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