

The Giffard Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104383
Local Authority	Wolverhampton
Inspection number	343751
Inspection dates	14–15 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Georgina Beasley

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	224
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Maria Posiwnych
Headteacher	Mrs Ann Lombardi
Date of previous school inspection	18 June 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Nineteen lessons were observed and nine teachers seen. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, staff and governors. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' work, teachers' planning, individual education plans, assessment data, monitoring reports and a number of policy and procedural documents. Questionnaires from 42 parents and carers were received and analysed.

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

- the progress of girls, more able pupils, those who speak English as an additional language, and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities
- pupils' cultural development and contribution to the community
- whether tasks meet the different learning needs of all pupils in lessons
- whether the school's monitoring systems are now rigorous in securing effective and rapid improvements, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Information about the school

Pupils come from diverse ethnic backgrounds in this average size school. A far higher proportion of pupils than average speak English as an additional language. About a third of pupils speak Polish. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is smaller than average and relate to moderate learning difficulties. Children start in the Nursery soon after their third birthday and most move to the Reception class in the September following their fourth birthday. The school has Healthy Schools status. The school operates a breakfast club before the start of the ordinary school day. When the school was last inspected, it was given a notice to improve the quality of leadership and management.

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

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. This is a satisfactory school. There has been significant improvement since the previous inspection in the quality of teaching and in pupils' learning and progress. The headteacher, with good support from the local authority and other outside agencies, has implemented rigorous systems for checking whether improvement strategies are working. Subject leaders play a more active role in monitoring pupils' progress and learning, and know when achievement starts to slip. The governing body now has a clear picture of the school's work because governors know what to look for and the questions to ask. Monitoring systems are rigorous but the school does not always identify the precise reasons for weaker aspects of its work and so determine the most effective way to rectify matters. The improvements since the last inspection show the school's satisfactory capacity to improve further.

Attainment in English and mathematics is average. Pupils make satisfactory progress from their broadly average starting points and their achievement is satisfactory. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Good teaching was seen in most year groups and teaching is consistently good in Years 2 and 5. Teachers use assessment information to put pupils into groups according to their ability for some reading and writing lessons. This enables them to challenge more able pupils to exceed expected levels and to build literacy and numeracy skills for all pupils systematically. In some other lessons not all teachers use assessment information to identify precisely what they want pupils to learn. As a result, planned outcomes focus on completion of tasks rather than on the knowledge and skills pupils need to acquire to make good progress. Children in the Nursery and Reception make satisfactory progress but do not have enough opportunity to choose what and where to learn and so show whether they are capable of achieving higher levels.

Parents are particularly pleased with the school's ethos and the way it helps their children to develop personally. Behaviour is good. One parent commented, 'The school promotes a positive community ethos and the children are encouraged to respect and care for each other.' This is evident in the way pupils support each other at playtimes and in lessons, especially pupils new to the school. Pupils feel safe because they care for each other and they know that adults care about them too. Most say that adults listen to them and explain how they can improve their work in lessons. This gives pupils a secure knowledge of how well they are doing and what they need to do next to reach higher levels. Pupils' contribution to the school community is satisfactory. Close partnership with three local schools and with other Catholic schools supports pupils' satisfactory

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spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen teachers' use of assessment to identify precise learning objectives and provide the support and challenge in lessons that ensure that all pupils make good progress throughout the school.
- Build more rigour into monitoring activities to identify the reasons for any underachievement and implement strategies for securing sustained improvement.
- Provide more opportunity in the Nursery and in the Reception class for children to choose what and where to learn and so demonstrate their capabilities early.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 is average in English, mathematics and science, reflecting satisfactory learning and progress. Boys and girls achieve equally well. Learning and progress in lessons are satisfactory but the increasing proportion of good teaching is resulting in higher attainment this year in all year groups. More able pupils across the school have made up their previous underachievement to reach levels expected for them because they receive greater challenge in many lessons. Younger pupils involved in the reading recovery programme make good progress. They say that they are 'good at reading' and talk confidently about favourite stories. Pupils who speak English as an additional language and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress. Achievement in writing has been good this year. Pupils enjoy using their imaginations to write stories and poems. Pupils use interesting words to express creative ideas and their spelling is mostly accurate. Most get their ideas down quickly, although many pupils are hampered by poor handwriting skills. Learning and progress are consistently good for pupils in Year 2 and Year 5 because tasks support the learning of all ability groups. In a good literacy lesson, for example, some pupils wrote invitations that included all of the relevant information that guests needed to know to arrive at a party at the right time and place, while others wrote instructions for a planned game using accurate words and connectives to ensure the reader could follow the correct sequence.

Pupils say they feel safe in school. They know the importance of leading healthy and active lives, although the organisation of equipment and space sometimes limits the opportunities for physical activity at playtimes. Pupils make a satisfactory contribution to the school and local parish through involvement with the church, helping at special events such as the 'multicultural day', and acting as reading and play buddies. They have a suitable awareness of different communities and cultures in this country and in the wider world through curriculum projects and raising money for charity. Attendance is satisfactory and pupils arrive in school on time. They have satisfactory literacy,

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numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills to give them a sound foundation for the future.

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

How effective is the provision?

Lessons are mostly interesting because activities are practical and require pupils to investigate and/or solve problems. Pupils enjoy working with a partner because they can share ideas and support and challenge each others' thinking. Pupils enjoy mathematics lessons because teachers give them real-life problems to solve. Some teachers use assessment information well to plan learning that develops different skills and at different levels to meet the range of pupils' abilities in lessons. However, when lessons focus on what pupils will produce rather than on the skills they will develop, pupils are not clear about what they need to do to extend their learning. This is especially so for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Teachers' written feedback ensures pupils know generally how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

The curriculum gives pupils a broad range of learning experiences, although the focus

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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on improving pupils' literacy and numeracy skills has resulted in some narrowing of the curriculum this year. There is a satisfactory range and variety of extra-curricular opportunities. The breakfast club gives pupils a settled start to the day. Satisfactory arrangements ensure that the youngest children settle into Nursery quickly and older pupils are confident to transfer to their respective secondary schools. Home visits take place for children who start Nursery in September but are not part of the school's procedures for those who start at other times. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive suitable support and guidance to enable them to make satisfactory progress. Attendance has improved this year due to the support given to reducing the number of children who were persistently absent.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and governors have been successful in raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can do and in building a staff team that has successfully improved teaching and learning. As a result, there has been significant improvement this year in pupils' achievement. Subject leaders meet regularly with the headteacher and each other to monitor pupils' progress through a rigorous analysis of assessment; discussion about what was observed in lessons and looking at pupils' work. As a result, they have a clear picture of the school's strengths and areas in need of further improvement. They use assessment information to move pupils to different groups according to their current achievement for some literacy lessons. The school's monitoring procedures robustly identify weaker aspects of its work and in pupils' attainment but do not always focus enough on finding out the precise reasons for the weakness. For example, the school knows, after looking at writing books, that pupils' handwriting should be neater. The school has not identified the precise reason for this and planned the most effective action to ensure sustained improvements.

The governing body ensures rigorous systems are followed for pupils' safety and welfare. As a result, pupils say that adults care about them and listen to any concerns. The governing body has improved its effectiveness this year. New systems are in place to challenge the school and hold it to account for its performance through frequent and regular meetings with staff, the headteacher, and the local authority. The school promotes its diverse ethnic groups well through multicultural events. There are some formally planned opportunities to celebrate and learn about the diversity and different

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community groups in the rest of the country and across the world. The school has satisfactory arrangements for ensuring pupils' equal opportunities. More able pupils are making faster progress this year and additional supports have been put in place to raise the achievement of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. Partnerships with parents and local community groups provide satisfactory enrichment for pupils' learning.

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

Children in Nursery and Reception make satisfactory progress. They make good progress in the Nursery in their personal, social and emotional development. Most do not reach expected levels in all areas of learning by the end of the Reception year.

Teaching and the curriculum are satisfactory. Regular assessments or capturing 'magic moments' in the children's personal development, literacy and numeracy allow staff to guide learning and progress in these areas effectively. Fewer assessments are made for monitoring the children's progress in speaking skills, physical and creative development, and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. As a result, the school has a less secure picture of the children's achievement in these aspects. The children make good progress when they choose what and where to learn because they are more engaged with their learning. A small group of children enjoyed sharing their writing and explained clearly how they made their plastic block 'fish tanks' and cardboard tube telescopes. Adults joined in with the activity to extend the children's vocabulary and thinking. Sometimes adults plan the activity the children will complete rather than the knowledge, skills and understanding they want them to develop. As a result, activities

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do not always support learning and do not give the children enough opportunity to demonstrate whether they are capable of learning more and so achieve higher levels. Some adults miss the opportunity to extend the children's skills, vocabulary and learning because they focus their attention on one activity for much of the time.

Parents value being able to stay with their children in the Nursery for the first part of every session. As a result, parents have extended their friendship group and feel able to support their children's learning more effectively. The planned classroom refurbishment has been carefully thought through in terms of how the improved environment will support the curriculum and so the children's learning. Overall, leadership and management of this stage are satisfactory. There is also a satisfactory focus given to action planning to improving the quality of teaching and learning.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

Views of parents and carers

Most parents and carers are pleased with the school. Inspectors agree with the large majority who say that the school keeps pupils safe, that behaviour is good and that the school has a positive ethos. Some concerns were expressed about the consistency in the quality of teaching and in their children's progress. Inspectors agree; teaching is better in some year groups than in others. The school has provided only a few opportunities for parents to learn about its work and to help parents and carers to support their children's learning in literacy. Few have taken place for numeracy and for Polish speaking parents, who would value learning more about how pupils are taught in the United Kingdom so that they can further support their children at home.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Giffard 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 42 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 224 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	17	40	24	57	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	19	45	23	55	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	18	43	22	52	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	14	33	21	50	5	12	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	13	31	24	57	4	10	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	10	24	23	55	6	14	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	9	21	30	71	2	5	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	12	29	25	60	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	11	26	26	62	2	5	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	11	26	25	60	5	12	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	10	24	25	60	4	10	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	15	36	22	52	4	10	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	14	33	22	52	5	12	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.



19 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Giffard Catholic Primary School, Newbridge, WV6 0HR

Thank you for your welcome when we visited recently and to those of you who told us so much about your school.

We have decided that your school is satisfactory which means it does some things well, but some things could be better. These are some of the good things.

You are all making satisfactory progress. You make good progress when the teachers make sure the work that they ask you to do helps you to learn well.

You all get along, and so behave well in lessons and when you are outside on the playground.

The headteacher and all of the staff make sure that the school is safe and most of you say you feel safe in school.

The headteacher, teachers and governors check your progress closely and know when you are not learning as well as you should.

We have asked the school to make sure that:

- the headteacher and teachers find the reasons why you do not always make the progress you should so that they can choose the best way to help you make faster progress
- the teachers identify and share with you precisely what they want you to learn in lessons and to give you work that helps you to make good progress all of the time
- those of you in the Nursery and Reception can choose more often what and where to learn so that you can show what you are really capable of doing.

You can all help by asking your teachers questions about what you are learning and why and then by trying your best to do the hardest work you can manage.

Thank you again for your welcome and for being so polite when talking to us.

Yours sincerely

Georgina Beasley

Lead inspector

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