

St George and St Teresa Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104101
Local Authority	Solihull
Inspection number	308512
Inspection date	10 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Rodney Braithwaite

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 on roll	
School	232
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Daniel McHugh
Headteacher	Des Foxon
Date of previous school inspection	5 July 2004
School address	Mill Lane Bentley Heath Solihull B93 8PA
Telephone number	01564 774906
Fax number	01564 772894

Age group	3-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

the effectiveness of school strategies for improving writing in Key Stage 1, and the standards of more able pupils in mathematics in Key Stage 2

the overall quality of teaching in the school, and its effect upon the learning of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and gifted and talented pupils

the effectiveness of the leadership and management of subject coordinators.

Evidence was gathered from observations of pupils at work and play, discussions with staff, governors and pupils, scrutiny of documentation and an analysis of parents' views. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

The school serves a local community with a majority of families living in favourable circumstances. As a Catholic school, it also draws a minority of pupils from a much wider area. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds, with very few from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is very low. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average, and increasing.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

St George and St Teresa Catholic Primary School is an outstanding school. The happy and exceptionally caring atmosphere reflects its strong Catholic ethos, which guides staff and pupils alike. Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. Pupils love coming to school and enjoy their learning and each other's company; one boy cheerfully described his school life as 'exhilaratingly good'. Pupils join in the wealth of activities the school provides with great enthusiasm, are kind and respectful to each other, and their attendance is consistently excellent. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school, exemplified by comments such as, 'we feel honoured to be part of the school family', and 'words cannot express our appreciation of the school', which 'develops the whole child'.

Children make an excellent start to school in the Nursery and Reception years, making good progress because they are so well taught. Good progress continues throughout Years 1 to 6, where pupils achieve well and reach standards well above the level expected for their age. Standards have been sustained at high levels for a number of years, other than a slight fall in writing at the end of Year 2 in 2006, and a drop in the number of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 in mathematics in Year 6 in 2007. Evidence shows that pupils' achievement in writing and mathematics in these year groups has been improved because of the effective action taken by the school. Very demanding targets have been set to aid improvement, and the school's tracking of progress, the work in pupils' books and observations in lessons indicate that these will be met. The school recognises, though, that more able pupils especially have yet to be set consistently challenging work in mathematics in all years in order for them to make maximum progress. The effective introduction during the last two years year of the Assessment of Pupil Progress [APP] pilot scheme is already helping teachers to enable all pupils to quicken their progress. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are very well supported and work from well-adapted materials. As a result, they make the same good progress as their peers.

Teaching is good and helps pupils to make good gains in learning. Teachers' very good relationships with their pupils and their encouragement of independence and pupils learning to think for themselves are strong features. Very occasionally, lessons lack pace and sharp focus on learning outcomes, with the result that not all pupils move forward as well as they should in their learning. Academic guidance is effective in helping pupils know what they need to do to improve their work. Teachers give pupils, both verbally and through marking, very clear guidelines on how to improve and what their personal targets are. Pupils are also actively encouraged to make accurate self-assessments of their learning. The successful introduction of the Building Learning Power programme is helping pupils to deal with new learning challenges with high levels of confidence. Teaching assistants make a very effective contribution to learning, especially that of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The school is providing a stimulating curriculum, with a considerable number of high quality extra-curricular activities. However, in line with the school's philosophy of never standing still, much new planning is focusing on presenting a more vibrant and creative curriculum. Good progress is being made on increasing provision for the gifted and talented pupils identified by the school. A very strong focus on health and safety assists pupils in building an exceptionally good understanding of these important aspects. This has been put to very good use during the extensive building work in the last year. Pupils name many adults they can turn to if they have problems, and they have an excellent knowledge of healthy living. When asked about lunch

choices, one girl agonised about which was the healthiest food she had chosen for lunch, an apple or chicken curry. Pupils are very proud of their sporting prowess in many different competitive activities with other local schools. Members of the school and class councils are pleased with the success of their suggestions for energy saving and composting of waste. Pupils from Year 6 talk avidly about their residential trips to Alton Castle and, particularly, Treginnis in South Wales for a week. 'We learned how to be independent, how to work in a team, and how to make new relationships.' This, together with opportunities to run a school bank, the development of enterprise skills through organising fund raising activities for charity, and high skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology, enables pupils to be very well prepared for their future economic well-being.

The leadership and management of the school are outstanding. The headteacher sets very high standards of pastoral care and has an encyclopaedic knowledge of the school and its priorities. He has very high expectations that the school's provision should meet the full needs and aptitudes of the diverse range of pupils. This passion for continually raising the bar, and always offering the best for the pupils, is shared by all leaders and managers, reflecting a very good capacity for further improvement. A further shared strength is that the school is never complacent and is always looking to improve. The school has actively raised the contributions and accountability of all subject leaders recently, so that they now have a clear view of their responsibilities, with regular opportunities to monitor and evaluate their subject. Resources, including staff, are used very effectively, and the headteacher works closely with governors in order to secure successfully a wide range of grants to enhance the school's provision for pupils. This results in the school providing excellent value for money. School self-evaluation is very detailed and reflects accurately the impact of the many initiatives taken by the management. The governing body, which is under strength at present, is well informed about all areas of school management, has considerable professional expertise to offer in several school aspects and makes a good contribution to the leadership and management of the school. Governors share strongly the passion of school leaders to offer 'only the best' for the pupils.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The majority of children start in the Nursery with abilities and skills a little above the average for their age, although there is now a wider range of abilities than in past years. Children make good progress and become progressively more confident and independent as they progress into the Reception class. Most of them exceed the goals expected by the time they enter Year 1 and start well prepared for work in the National Curriculum. This is helped by a programme of continuous induction as the two classes are next to each other and sometimes enjoy activities together. Teachers are very well supported by learning assistants and volunteers, who contribute to the very good teaching that helps the children learn so successfully. During the inspection, children in Reception showed alertness and enjoyment when listening to a story about snails. When asked how a snail might better reach a leaf, one boy said 'If he took his shell off it would help, but then he would be a slug!' Children are willing volunteers, and show high levels of independence. Their behaviour and relationships with each other are exemplary. Pastoral care is very strong, enabling children to make excellent progress in their personal development. Resources are good and accessible to children, including a well-designed outdoor area, which is scheduled for further enhancement. The high quality of leadership in the Foundation Stage ensures a very active and rewarding partnership with parents, exemplified by one parent's

comment, 'The whole team of staff is extremely professional, caring and every child matters to them.'

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teachers set a consistent level of challenge in mathematics for more able learners in all years, in order that their progress is more rapid.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

11 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St George and St Teresa Catholic Primary School, Solihull B93 8PA

Thank you all for making me so welcome when I visited your lovely school recently. You were so interesting to talk to and I really enjoyed hearing about all the things you love about your school. You all said what an outstanding school you go to, and I agree. Many of your parents told me that as well. Perhaps you would like to know what I found out about the school.

- You are well taught, make good progress and reach high standards by the end of Year 6.
- Your behaviour and attitudes to your learning are excellent. You get on very well with each other and all the adults in the school, who you trust and turn to if you have a problem.
- You are careful to be safe, and have done terrifically well in moving around the school while the new building has been going on for such a long time.
- You enjoy leading healthy lifestyles, and I am glad so many of you know all about healthy foods. I was very impressed with how well you do in sport against other schools. Year 5 looks to have some star cricketers of the future!
- The adults look after and care for you very well, especially those of you who have more difficulties than others.
- You have a good knowledge of your learning targets and enjoy celebrating your successes. I like the way older pupils assess their work and their own behaviour, including the girl who said she 'was trying to be less bossy'.
- Your headteacher and the senior team are doing an excellent job in making sure that you get the best care and education possible. Even when you are doing well, they are never satisfied, and are always looking to improve the school. I hope that you will too. I have asked them to make sure that those of you who are really good at maths are given hard challenges by the teachers in every class, so that you can reach your personal best.

I think that you will be as proud of your new building in September as you are about everything else in your school. Keep doing your best.

Yours sincerely

Rod Braithwaite Lead inspector