



St Dunstan's Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 103455
Local Authority Birmingham
Inspection number 286664
Inspection dates 21–22 February 2007
Reporting inspector Laurie Lewin

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Drayton Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Kings Heath
Age range of pupils	3–11		Birmingham B14 7LP
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0121 4644648
Number on roll (school)	302	Fax number	0121 4644028
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Fitzpatrick
		Headteacher	Tony Kenny
Date of previous school inspection	1 April 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average sized school. Although most pupils come from the immediate vicinity, some come to school from further afield. While most pupils are from white cultural backgrounds, a significant number also come from a number of other ethnic backgrounds. When children start school in the Nursery, they usually show attainment that matches the level expected for their age. However, in some years the attainment of children on entry has been below this level. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities varies quite a lot from year group to year group, being slightly above average for the school as a whole. However, in some year groups the proportion of pupils in this category is significantly above average. The proportion of pupils with statements of learning need is also above average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is slightly higher than in most other schools.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory overall education for its pupils and its strong provision for care, guidance and support, results in pupils showing good personal development. Most individuals enjoy school and work hard in lessons. Relationships with staff are strong and this encourages pupils to feel confident, safe and secure. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory as result of sound teaching. Teaching assistants support staff and pupils well. Children have been making satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage. However, recent improvements mean that provision in this part of the school is now good so that the children currently progress well. Progress across the rest of the school is satisfactory in English, mathematics and science, so that by the end of Year 6, pupils are currently on course to reach average standards. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school accurately evaluates its own performance. The headteacher has done well to lead the school through a phase where there have been difficulties with staff changes and finance. Although these difficulties have now been resolved, they placed constraints on the rate at which the school has been able to progress over the last few years. Staff and governors work well together. There is a good team atmosphere and a strong commitment to move the school forward rapidly from this point onwards. Coupled with good quality action plans, this means that the school has a good capacity to succeed in the future. Success is already evident, for example, with good headway in improving standards in writing in recent times. The school provides a satisfactory curriculum that is enhanced by a wide range of additional activities that stimulate pupils' interests and motivation to learn. In particular, the school makes very good use of its links with partner organisations such as the adjacent secondary school to help strengthen pupils' learning in areas such as sports and science. Staff rightly recognise that there is still some way to go in ensuring that work provided in lessons stretches the more able pupils sufficiently. Test results indicate that these pupils have not always progressed as rapidly as they should. Most pupils behave well and have a good knowledge of how to keep themselves fit and healthy. Staff work well to support a few pupils who display social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. However, the behaviour of these individuals occasionally disrupts their learning and that of other pupils. The school has recently put in place robust systems to check how well pupils are progressing. However, the information gained is not yet used with enough precision to guide teachers' planning and to help set the next steps in pupils' learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teachers provide work that stretches the more able pupils.
- Develop new ways of working with the few pupils who display social, emotional and behavioural difficulties to prevent any disruption to learning in lessons.
- Use assessment information with greater precision to help guide lesson planning and the setting of targets for pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

By the end of the Foundation Stage, most children have been attaining the expected levels. As a result of recently improved provision in this part of the school, children are now making good progress and are set to improve upon the standards reached last year by the end of the Foundation Stage. In the 2006 Year 2 national tests, results showed that pupils reached average standards in writing but below average standards in mathematics and reading. Nonetheless, the school's performance tracking information shows these pupils had made sound progress from a lower than usual starting point. Results at Year 6 showed that although pupils made sound progress in English and mathematics, standards were below average. Progress and standards in science were a particular weaknesses. The school has worked effectively across the current academic year, making good use of support teaching from the secondary school, so that science is now back on track. Assessments in the current academic year and work seen show pupils in Year 6 are now making sound and in some cases good progress. They currently reach average standards in English, mathematics and science. The current work also indicates better performance by the more able pupils than previously. Nonetheless, the school correctly identifies that more work needs to be done to ensure more able pupils consistently perform as well as they should across the school. Good support helps pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities to make sound progress. This is also true for pupils from other ethnic backgrounds and for those who speak English as an additional language.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

'It's good fun at school ...it's good being with your friends ... we get lots of good activities and good food at lunchtimes.' These were just a few of the comments from pupils that helped to convince inspectors that pupils are happy to come to school. Those spoken to indicated that they get on well with one another and they feel confident that 'there is always someone to help you if you have a problem'. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils learn to reflect deeply about the world around them and how they fit into it. They gain a good sense of contributing to their community by responding well to the responsibilities they are given as monitors and prefects and through charity fund raising. Through the work of the school council pupils come to understand that their views are important and can influence and help bring about change, such as the work done with staff to introduce healthier lunchtime meal options. Pupils gain a solid range of basic skills to help ensure their future well-being. However, the school recognises that there is scope for boosting this area of pupils' skills further. The school works hard to promote good attendance. Current attendance levels are satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers prepare lessons carefully to maximise pupils' interest and enjoyment. They usually manage pupils' behaviour well and provide clear explanations. The atmosphere in lessons is normally purposeful, with all individuals trying hard. In a few lessons seen, tasks were particularly well matched to pupils' needs so that individuals were challenged and the pace of work was good. However, this was not consistently the case, and occasionally more able pupils were not sufficiently extended by the work and did not progress as well as they could have. Teachers regularly assess pupils' progress. However, the information gained is not always used with enough precision to help guide lesson plans and set targets to help pupils improve. The behavioural difficulties of a few pupils occasionally has an adverse affect on the pace of learning in lessons. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language are well supported. Teaching assistants play a valuable role in this aspect.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum meets the needs of most pupils. However it does not always provide enough opportunities for the more able pupils to be extended by the work that is planned for them. Across the school, pupils' learning and their enjoyment of school are enriched well by the wide range of extra activities, trips, visits and visitors provided. The strong focus on promoting personal, social and health education within the curriculum fully supports pupils' personal development. The school has begun to make links between subjects to boost pupils' learning, but recognises that more needs to be done in this area to maximise learning opportunities across the curriculum. In the Foundation Stage, teachers are good at providing activities that give a good balance between children learning to work independently and with adult support. However, facilities for encouraging their learning in the outdoor areas are not sufficiently developed.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school is vigilant about ensuring pupils' safety and all procedures such as those to do with child protection are rigorously applied. The strong relationships that are built between pupils and the staff mean that all individuals develop with confidence, feeling well supported and happy to come to school. Staff work together as a very good team to ensure that individuals' personal needs are met fully. They react quickly to support any pupil who has a problem. The work of the school's learning mentor is especially effective in this respect. Staff provide sound academic guidance for pupils. However, they have correctly identified the need to increase the precision with which

assessment information is used to set pupils' targets and the need to involve pupils more closely in assessing their own work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Although overall progress has been satisfactory, a deficit budget and staffing turbulence slowed the school's progress in recent years. The headteacher has worked well with the staff and governors to put the school budget back on track and stabilise staffing. This places the school in a much better position to move forward with its action plans. Governors monitor the school's work closely and carry out their roles well. The recent development of the roles of team leaders on the staff is a good initiative that has helped widen the overview of all staff and ensure they have a clear part to play in the school's development. However, the school rightly sees the need for these roles to become firmly embedded so as to reinforce the ability of staff to drive up standards and pupils' achievement further. The school has effectively managed the deployment of teaching assistants to support pupils' learning, particularly in relation to helping pupils who have behavioural difficulties. However, staff are now rightly aware of the need to introduce a fresh approach to managing this support so as to avoid any disruption to the learning of other pupils in lessons.

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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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

- I am writing to let you know how much we enjoyed coming to visit your school. Thank you for making us so welcome and helping us during the school's inspection. We especially enjoyed hearing about the activities you said you liked. The school is doing a satisfactory job. Here are some of the things we noticed.
- Your achievement as you move through the school is satisfactory.
- The school is right to be looking at ways of making the work a bit more challenging for those of you in the top groups who manage tasks easily.
- The school is also right to focus on using the information about your progress to help teachers plan even better lessons and to improve the targets they set for you.
- Most of you behave well in lessons and work hard with the tasks you are given.
- We think that your teachers need to look at more ways to support the small number of children who have behavioural and emotional difficulties so that no interruptions in learning take place during lessons.
- You have lots of interesting activities to help make your work interesting.
- You like your teachers and teaching assistants and you told us, 'They try hard to make the lessons interesting and fun.' We agree with you and think they are doing a sound job.
- The school does a good job of taking care of you so that you can all feel safe and well supported. We wish you all the best in the future. Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly.