

St Charles's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112902
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	311044
Inspection date	24 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Sue Hall

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 on roll	
School	213
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Norman Garlick
Headteacher	Mr Steven Williamson
Date of previous school inspection	23 February 2004
School address	The Carriage Drive Hadfield Glossop Derbyshire SK13 1PJ
Telephone number	01457 852692
Fax number	01457 864576

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspection evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the progress and achievement of all pupils and especially boys, if teaching and the curriculum meet the needs of all pupils and whether monitoring and evaluation are rigorous enough to identify areas for further improvement. Evidence came from classroom visits and discussions with staff, pupils and governors. Samples of pupils' work and school documents were also examined. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in as much detail, but the inspection found nothing to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified. These have been included, where appropriate, in this report.

Description of the school

This average size primary school is situated in Hadfield on the north-west edge of Derbyshire and serves the local Catholic parish and surrounding area. The number of children eligible for free school meals is average. The proportion from minority ethnic groups is well below the national average as is the number speaking English as an additional language. The proportion with additional learning needs, including those with a statement of special educational need, is below the national picture. The school holds Investor in People and Healthy School awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. This judgement matches the school's evaluation of its own effectiveness. Children say they really enjoy all aspects of school life. Their excellent behaviour has a very positive impact on their progress. Parents are mostly very pleased with the quality of education and care provided for their children and one rightly notes, 'It is a very family oriented school with a great ethos'.

Children enter the Foundation Stage with skills, knowledge and understanding that are slightly above the expectations for their age and girls already often do quite a bit better than boys. All children make good progress in the Reception class and enter Year 1 having exceeded the targets expected of them. In Years 1 to 6, pupils continue to make good progress and by the age of eleven, standards are often well above national averages. Pupils did particularly well in national tests and assessments in 2007, attaining standards in English and mathematics that were significantly better than most other schools. Good levels of literacy and numeracy prepare pupils well for their future. Data indicates that girls do better than boys, and to a greater extent than seen nationally. The school is addressing this issue well through, for example, the purchase of resources and a choice of topics to appeal to boys. Overall, boys and girls of all abilities and from all backgrounds achieve well. School data indicates pupils in Year 2 do exceptionally well in science but this is not always reflected in pupils' work. Test data at eleven indicates standards are not quite as high in science as they are in other subjects.

The personal development of the pupils is outstanding, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are many links with the local church and religious themes are an important part of school activities. These help pupils develop a strong moral dimension to their lives. The school also does much to help develop cultural and multi-cultural awareness through art, music and religious education. Many pupils are exceptionally good at understanding the needs of those younger than themselves. For example, at lunchtime, four-year-old visitors are able to play on the large school yard, because older pupils are highly aware of safety issues. Pupils show a good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle, although more remains to be done to convince them and their parents of the benefits of healthy packed lunches. There are good opportunities for the pupils to take on responsibilities and develop an understanding of their role in the school and wider community. Attendance has improved recently and is good but some pupils still arrive slightly late.

Teaching and learning are good. Because pupils' behaviour is excellent and most are keen to learn and do well, staff are able to plan activities where pupils work with partners and in groups. This helps develop their independence and confidence. The planning of lessons usually ensures a good match of tasks to the abilities of pupils. However, at times more could be expected of some pupils. The curriculum is good. It is broad and generally well balanced, with strengths in the number and range of extra curricular activities on offer, including sport and the arts. The school has focussed well on developing reading and writing skills and, from the Foundation Stage onwards, children make good and sometimes excellent progress in these aspects. However, there is not always enough emphasis on open-ended investigative and experimental activities, especially in science, to enable pupils to solve problems more effectively. Whilst the school building is suitable to deliver the curriculum, some parts are shabby. This does not set a good example to everyone of the importance of looking after the school environment, although some good displays of work do help to raise pupils' self-esteem.

The care, guidance and support for pupils are good overall and pastoral care is excellent. Pupils are very well known to and cared for by all staff. There are close and sometimes long-standing links with families, which help support the school community very effectively. Procedures for child protection and for safeguarding pupils are effective. The school acts immediately should any shortfall in procedures occur. Senior staff have had some success in improving assessment procedures since the previous inspection. The school now has a satisfactory range of information available to check and track the progress made by individuals and groups. However, there are inconsistencies in assessing younger pupils' skills. Assessment data is collected and managed by the headteacher, but this information is not always well known to other staff or used consistently to track the progress of particular groups.

Leadership and management are good. Effective systems for monitoring the work of the school result in accurate school self-evaluation. There is a good emphasis on continually improving standards and on how this can be achieved, although some planning is not rigorous enough to identify the small things that secure improvement. The work of subject leaders in mathematics is particularly effective, because they have a good grasp of data and work enthusiastically to support colleagues. Such leadership gives the school a good capacity for continued improvement, even though there are temporary arrangements to manage work in science. This capacity is also supported effectively by the work of governors who have a good grasp of how effective the school is and where strengths and weaknesses lay.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good. Most are confident, keen and eager to start school. Many have good speaking skills for their age and are able to name colours and shapes in a matching game. Children settle very well in the Reception class and make good progress. This is often very good in the rapid development of early reading and writing skills. There are strengths in the curriculum, especially in the way it encourages imaginative play. For instance, children currently enjoy role-playing what they would do on the beach. Teaching and learning are generally good and provide lots of encouragement to the children. However, staff sometimes miss opportunities to make activities both interesting and challenging. For example, using worksheets to identify items beginning with particular letter sounds is less effective in stimulating interest using descriptive language, than finding and sorting actual items from around the class.

What the school should do to improve further

- Place greater emphasis on problem solving and investigative work in science.
- Ensure that assessment routines are secure and that information is used to track pupils' progress more closely.

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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?	2
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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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	2

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?	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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
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	2
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

25 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Charles's Catholic Primary School, Hadfield, SK13 1PJ

Thank you very much for looking after me when I visited your school recently. I really enjoyed meeting you in lessons, in assembly, at lunchtime and when I spoke to several of you, including the school council. I think there are lots of things that are good about your school.

These are some of the best things I found:

- Your behaviour is excellent and you have a very good understanding of how to keep yourself and others safe.
- You enjoy your time in school, try hard with your work and want to do well.
- You have a very good understanding of right and wrong and work well with others.
- You make good progress in your work and often reach high standards.
- Those of you in the Foundation Stage really enjoy role-play activities.
- Teaching, learning and leadership are all good which makes the school run smoothly.

This is what that I think should be improved:

- The staff should provide more opportunities for you to take part in experiments and investigations to help your work in science.
- Teachers could check your progress more carefully and use the information they have to set work that is not too hard or too easy for you all.

To help your school even more please try to encourage your parents to help you eat more healthily and arrive on time.

Yours sincerely

Sue Hall

Lead inspector