

St Adrian's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117470
Local Authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	312626
Inspection date	28 April 2008
Reporting inspector	Ian Jones

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	240
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Andy Petch
Headteacher	Mrs Yvonne Hawkes
Date of previous school inspection	27 June 2005
School address	Watling View St Albans Hertfordshire AL1 2PB
Telephone number	01727 852687
Fax number	01727 850822

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: How effectively the school supports all learners to make progress; Pupils' involvement in and understanding of assessment and target setting; How well pupils develop the appropriate skills to become responsible citizens of the future.

Evidence was drawn from lesson observations, the scrutiny of the school's assessment tracking records, discussions with the headteacher, staff, pupils and governors and from general observations around the school. 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

This is an average sized primary school situated in a residential area of St Albans. The proportion of pupils with a White British background is about average and one in ten pupils speaks English as an additional language. The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is low. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those pupils with a statement of special educational need are below average. The school has gained the Healthy Schools award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Governors, pupils and parents are right to be proud of the school because it is outstanding. 'The ethos of the school is excellent, as is the behaviour of the children. The school provides a very caring and nurturing environment,' commented one parent, echoing the views of many. Christian values strongly underpin its work. Pupils are particularly well cared for, and their personal development and well-being are outstanding. Arrangements for their care and protection are securely in place and pupils report that they feel safe. They look after each other very well and demonstrate a keen understanding of how to stay healthy. One pupil, with the approval of many others, said, 'We love school because we all work together to make sure we are all happy.' They enjoy frequent opportunities to take responsibility around the school. For example, older pupils act as 'play leaders' for younger pupils, and support learning for younger ones in the regular themed events planned by the school. Pupils enjoy the wide range of learning opportunities the school offers and their attendance is good. They quickly become eager and confident learners, cooperating exceptionally well with each other during lessons and at playtimes. The school is outward looking and has developed strong links with the community, taking part in a range of events and raising money for charitable causes.

By the time they leave the school at Year 6, pupils reach standards in English, mathematics and science that are exceptionally high. This, together with their mature attitudes to learning, ensures that they are extremely well prepared for secondary education and the world beyond. Achievement is excellent because the school makes very good provision for pupils' learning. The quality of teaching is consistently high and the carefully planned curriculum includes an exceptionally wide range of additional learning opportunities. The school is not complacent, however, and has identified aspects to improve its effectiveness by providing even higher standards of challenge in science lessons.

Leadership and management are exceptional. The inspirational headteacher is effectively supported by a well-developed leadership team. Together with the governors, they hold a sharply focused and perceptive vision for the development of the school, based on a clear understanding of what is required. Governors and senior staff work closely together to monitor the school and strategies for improvement are put in place when necessary. For example, the school recognised that pupils who are more able needed greater challenge. The headteacher led her colleagues in analysing provision and in providing regular opportunities to challenge and motivate these pupils. As a result, this has brought about the desired improvements. Pupils are frequently engrossed in lessons, and say that they enjoy them immensely.

The school effectively uses data to analyse pupils' performance. For example, the pupils have challenging targets and they are clear how these targets support their progress and help them improve their work. Target setting is embedded in English and mathematics but not yet in science. Pupils understand how marking helps them to improve their work. As a result, they respond positively to teacher's feedback. Rigorous systems are in place to map the progress of every individual pupil carefully and to provide additional support at an early stage when needed. Therefore, pupils of all abilities, including the more able and those who need additional support or find learning more difficult, are effectively supported. As a consequence, the overwhelming majority of pupils make swift progress and do their best.

The school listens very carefully to its pupils and values their ideas and suggestions. For example, the school uniform was changed to reflect the views of pupils. In response to their suggestions,

the school hosts an annual talent show that raises money for good causes and allows pupils to demonstrate their abilities. Furthermore, as a result of work by the school council, additional playground equipment was provided to make playtimes more enjoyable.

The curriculum is enriched through a range of visits and themed events that successfully motivate pupils to learn. These initiatives help broaden the curriculum, enhance pupils' sense of citizenship and contribute well to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural education, which is outstanding. Pupils' spirituality is further enhanced by participation in a range of religious celebrations and festivals. French is taught throughout Key Stage 2. Staff are very committed and welcome opportunities to work together to take the school forward. Governors are knowledgeable and astute. They offer a very effective balance of support and challenge to the headteacher and her team. As a result, standards are rising. The school evaluates its work very well and has made significant strides since the last inspection, indicating an outstanding capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The Foundation Stage is very effective because children are provided with a firm foundation for their future learning. When children enter the Nursery, attainment is broadly in line with national expectations. Children make rapid progress and are well supported across the curriculum, so they enter Year 1 with standards that are above those expected of their age. Teaching is of a consistently high standard and children enjoy the wide range of challenging tasks because they are interesting and well suited to their abilities. Relationships are excellent and there are close links with parents. This enables children to settle in very quickly and to become increasingly confident and independent. They thrive in a very purposeful, happy and challenging atmosphere. Children are eager to learn, and build securely on previous skills because the curriculum is well planned and stimulating. The Foundation Stage is well managed and teachers maintain a very careful check on children's progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop target setting procedures in science to further involve pupils in their learning and raise standards.

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

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	2
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?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
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	1
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

29 April 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Adrian's Catholic Primary School, St Albans AL1 2PB

Thank you for making me so welcome, talking to me and helping me during the recent inspection. It was very enjoyable coming to meet you and finding out all about your school. I am sure you will enjoy performing in the talent show, it certainly sounds like lots of fun! You will be pleased to know that the school is doing an outstanding job.

Here are some of the most important parts of the inspection report that you might like to know about.

- You work hard in lessons and your achievement as you move through the school is excellent. This helps you to reach high standards.
- Your personal development is outstanding. You clearly enjoy your time in school and I was very impressed by your excellent behaviour.
- You have really good work planned for you, and your teachers work hard to make it all as exciting and interesting as possible.
- You told me that your teachers and teaching assistants are doing a great job and are lots of fun - I agree with you. You have such talented people working with you.
- Your headteacher does a tremendous job of helping everyone work together to make the school as good as it is.

I have asked the teachers to improve the school further by developing target setting with you in science to make sure you really understand what you need to do next to improve.

Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly when I came to see you.

Ian Jones Lead inspector