

St Giles Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124352
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	314899
Inspection dates	7–8 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Sally Noble

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	227
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Claire Harrison
Headteacher	Mrs Anne Green
Date of previous school inspection	24–27 May 2004
School address	Charles Street Cheadle Stoke-on-Trent Staffordshire ST10 1ED
Telephone number	01538 753220
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This slightly larger than average school is composed predominantly of White British children. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. There has been some instability in staffing since the last inspection, including an acting headteacher and acting assistant headteacher. The current headteacher took up post in February 2007.

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 quality of education and the quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. The last two years have seen a period of significant change at St Giles, during which time the sensitive leadership of the recently appointed headteacher has helped to develop a tighter focus on raising standards and a clearer identification of underachieving groups of pupils. A number of ongoing staffing issues have now been resolved, a new leadership team has been established and school development priorities are better defined. These developments indicate that the school has satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

Children's attainment on entry to the school varies from year to year but is currently fairly typical for children of their age. The school's national test results show that most pupils achieve satisfactorily, reaching average standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. However, a minority of pupils are not making enough progress in Key Stage 2 in mathematics. This is because procedures for assessing pupils' progress are not undertaken frequently enough and are not sufficiently accurate. The main weaknesses are pupils' calculation skills and their ability to apply their skills when solving mathematical problems.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory but there is no established system for senior leaders to check that all staff follow agreed policies. The impact of this is that teaching practice is not consistent and staff are not always sure of the standard of work they should expect. This results in work that is not always challenging enough and too few opportunities for pupils to contribute actively in lessons, or to use their initiative to develop their own ideas. Teachers' subject knowledge in mathematics is weak because the school does not have an agreed view on how different strands of mathematics should be taught. Pupils are beginning to review their own work and this is helping them improve their achievement in writing. This practice is less well developed in mathematics. Staff are dedicated to providing a rich range of extra-curricular clubs, and pupils participate enthusiastically in a wide range of sporting activities. However, the curriculum is currently imbalanced because too little time is given to subjects such as art, design and technology, history and geography.

Pupils' personal development, well-being and behaviour are satisfactory, but the way in which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles is an undoubted strength. Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory. In lessons, they behave well, even though they are somewhat passive at times. Around the school, their behaviour is more boisterous. A small minority of parents expressed concerns about pupils' behaviour and some pupils say that occasional bullying is not always dealt with effectively. Whilst there are some problems with noisy, jostling break times and movement around the building, overall, the school is a safe and secure environment, and staff are generally committed to following up incidents in an appropriate manner. Pupils' good spiritual development is at the core of all that happens in school. Pupils' social, moral and cultural awareness is satisfactory. Older pupils regularly help and support the youngest children with 'Huff and Puff' exercise sessions and other such activities. In addition to the current opportunities for pupils to take responsibility, the school council members would welcome a more defined role in school. Pupils are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of their education and the future world of work.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory and there is a strong focus on the children's personal, social and emotional development. The Foundation Stage manager is new to this age range and, while still finding her way, shows a real determination to improve and develop the recently reshaped provision. Basic skills are covered satisfactorily and there is an appropriate balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Staff are beginning to make effective use of the recently established outdoor learning area to ensure the children have regular access to all areas of learning in an outdoor environment. Planning has improved over the year but does not always take sufficient account of regular observations of children at work and at play to ensure that activities provide the correct level of challenge for all children.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are undertaken more frequently and with greater accuracy.
- Improve the teaching of calculation skills and problem solving in mathematics.
- Raise teachers' expectations to ensure that learning is stimulating and challenging enough for all pupils.
- Improve monitoring and self-evaluation procedures to keep a closer check on the work in lessons and ensure that action is taken to identify and rectify weaknesses.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. Across the school, satisfactory teaching and planning result in the large majority of pupils making steady progress and reaching broadly average standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. In both Key Stages 1 and 2, there are indications that the drive to improve marking and provide clearer information to pupils about what they need to learn within a lesson is addressing weaknesses in writing. School data show clearly that progress in writing and reading is better than that in mathematics in most classes. For a small minority of pupils, progress in mathematics in Key Stage 2 slows due to teachers not having a clear enough understanding of pupils' current levels of attainment and their next steps in learning. The lower attaining pupils make satisfactory progress because of the support they receive from the adults working with them. At times, however, pupils are over reliant on the support of one adult and there are too few opportunities for them to demonstrate what they can do independently.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Attendance is good and the vast majority of pupils are polite, confident and cooperative. Pupils behave well in lessons but in between lessons, a small minority move too quickly around the narrow corridors and engage in overly noisy and disorderly play at break times. Isolated instances of silly behaviour are not always picked up quickly enough and 'nipped in the bud' by supervisory staff. One pupil summed the situation up, 'I would like to think the school council could make the school a better community, with no people being nasty, but some children don't listen.'

Pupils make a satisfactory contribution to the life of the school by working on the school council and helping the youngest children. A few parents and some members of the school council feel more could be done to develop the 'pupils' voice' regarding decisions on school life and the learning. Inspectors agree with this view.

Pupils say that they like coming to school. In lessons, however, many pupils remain passive in whole class work and only offer a view when pressed. They are slow to take the initiative and are sometimes reluctant to make decisions for themselves. Pupils have a good understanding of the need to be healthy. Many make sensible choices of food at lunchtime, and participation in sport both within and outside of lessons is good.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The best teaching in the upper part of the school challenges pupils and motivates them to learn. The oldest pupils regularly review and improve their work to obtain a better standard. In most classes, teachers work hard to make the steps in learning clear to pupils. However, practice is not consistent and this hinders progress for a minority of pupils. For example, a number of teachers are over reliant on the use of published schemes and work is not challenging enough. Teachers do not have a shared understanding of how to teach calculation skills and problem solving in mathematics. Some of the mathematics activities do not enable pupils to make enough progress because the assessment of what pupils can do or need to do next is not precise enough. As a result, some groups of pupils are not challenged sufficiently, or they are frustrated because the work is too hard. Interactive whiteboards are beginning to be used to model key areas of learning and provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has improved. However, the new computers have not been installed for long enough for them to have had a real impact on pupils' learning, particularly the development of their writing skills. Lesson introductions are often too long and result in passive pupils becoming restless. Teaching assistants move the learning on well when they are working in small groups but are not always sufficiently involved during lesson introductions.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Whilst the school teaches all the subjects required by the National Curriculum, not enough thought has been given to the time allocated to different subjects or how they relate to each other. As a result, pupils have too little time to work on some subjects, such as art and design, design and technology, history and geography. The time allocated to individual subjects also varies markedly from class to class. For example, some classes undertake over four hours of religious education a week, while others have two. Not enough opportunities are planned to enable pupils to use their initiative and develop independent learning skills. Good use is made of specialist music and physical education teachers who enthuse and motivate pupils to give their best. For example, pupils sing together with a passion and commitment which is rarely found in other schools. A good number of visits, lunchtime and after-school clubs make the curriculum more interesting for the pupils. The range of sports activities, sports fixtures with other schools and opportunities for pupils to take part in competitions is an undoubted strength of the school, much appreciated by both pupils and parents.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school provides effectively for pupils' health and welfare. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are in place and pastoral care is satisfactory. Appropriate care is given to pupils with learning difficulties and there are good links with outside agencies and other partners, especially the local high school. An example of this is the multimedia ICT project that the oldest pupils prepare to share with new friends and peers after transfer. The impact of this is that Year 6 pupils enjoy a smooth transition to the next stage of their education.

Academic guidance is satisfactory, but targets for individual pupils and those for underachieving groups are not always challenging enough or linked appropriately to pupils' next steps in learning. Pupils do not always know when they have met their targets. Staff are beginning to link academic targets to what data tells them about pupils' progress but this work is not yet systematic enough to speed up achievement for some groups of pupils, particularly in mathematics in Key Stage 2.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school has made satisfactory progress over the last two years following a period of instability. Headway has been made in improving some aspects of assessment, such as the use of marking, and encouraging pupils to use a range of strategies to improve their work, but practice varies from class to class. The headteacher, senior staff and governors are aware that there is now a real need to ensure that they keep a frequent and robust check on the work in classrooms to improve consistency in teaching and in the use of assessment procedures in order to improve pupils' progress. Whilst the school keeps a more careful check on pupils' attainment and progress than it did a few years ago, procedures for data collection and analysis are not effective enough. Subject leaders are enthusiastic but do not have enough involvement in monitoring and evaluating their subject areas or in systematically leading improvements. Governors are aware that the governing body did not hold

the school sufficiently to account in the years following the previous inspection, but have become more rigorous in their support for the school and fulfil their responsibilities satisfactorily.

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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?	3
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	3
The effectiveness of boarding provision	
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

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?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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 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?	3

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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



9 May 2008

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Giles Catholic Primary School, Cheadle,
Staffordshire, ST10 1ED**

Thank you so much for welcoming Mr Sims and me when we visited you recently. We really appreciated the way you greeted us and took time to chat to us about your school. We know that you are proud of your school and enjoy being there. We think St Giles is a satisfactory school with some strengths.

These are the main things we found out about your school.

- You make satisfactory progress in your work but there are some weaknesses in mathematics.
- Nearly all of you behave well in lessons, but some of you are too noisy and rough at break times.
- You say you like coming to school, but you do not always participate enough in lessons.
- You have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and enjoy being active in sports.
- You are provided with interesting clubs but do not have enough opportunity for art, design and technology, geography and history.
- You are good at singing.
- Most teachers are starting to show you how to improve your work but some of your targets and work are not hard enough.

In order to make the school better than it is we have asked the school to:

- assess your work more carefully
- make sure that your teachers plan work that is not too hard or too easy
- help you improve your work on calculating and problem solving in mathematics
- see how well you are doing by looking at your work in books, visiting you in lessons and talking to you about your learning more often.

You can help your school to improve by being sensible at break times and being willing to participate actively in lessons and share all your good ideas.

Best wishes

Sally Noble
Lead inspector