

St Catherine Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102424
Local Authority	Hillingdon
Inspection number	355185
Inspection dates	30 November 2010–1 December 2010
Reporting inspector	John Carnaghan

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 of pupils on the school roll	223
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Martin St John
Headteacher	Sara Benn
Date of previous school inspection	6 March 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They saw 14 lessons and eight teachers and held meetings with pupils, parents, members of the governing body and staff. They observed the school's work, and looked at its records, assessments and policies and 91 parents' and carers' questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- The effectiveness of leaders in improving teaching to secure good progress in pupils' learning.
- Children's attainment on entry and exit from the Early Years Foundation Stage and their overall progress.
- The reasons for previous variations in attainment between year groups and how well the school is addressing these issues.

Information about the school

St Catherine Catholic Primary School is slightly smaller than average. Over half of its pupils are from minority ethnic groups; the largest of these groups are from Mixed, White (other) and Black African heritage. The school has a small group of pupils from Irish Traveller backgrounds. The school has about half the average proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities; the largest group of these have moderate learning difficulties. The Early Years Foundation Stage has a Nursery and Reception class.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

St Catherine Catholic Primary is a good and quickly improving school. The engagement with parents and carers is a very significant strength. Effective leadership correctly identified developments in teaching as a key to success and leaders have rigorously gone about boosting teachers' skills, so that the overall quality of teaching and pupils' learning has moved from being satisfactory to good. As a result, pupils achieve well and are suitably prepared for the next stage of their education.

Lessons are lively and well planned to provide interesting experiences. Pupils' maturity and pleasure in taking part in activities ensure they learn well. The effective use of assessment enables those who need extra help to receive it, so that the achievement of all groups, including pupils with moderate learning difficulties, is now good and has improved well in recent times.

Children make a good start to school life in the Early Years Foundation Stage, quickly settling in and demonstrating good social skills, such as independence and the willingness to share and take turns. However, teachers' assessments of this age range are not summarised well enough to provide a clear enough picture of children's progress in each of the areas of learning.

Good care ensures that pupils' personal development is strong. Behaviour is good and relationships are very positive. Pupils demonstrate an outstanding understanding of the factors that promote healthy lifestyles and most take up activities that improve their well-being. For example, a very large majority eat the healthy school meals and those who bring a packed lunch happily conform to rules that prohibit excessive sugar in food and drinks. There are also excellent levels of participation in sports activities both during and after school. The interesting and varied curriculum engages pupils' interest well, but the school agrees that it lacks close links with schools in contrasting parts of the United Kingdom and wider world. As a result community cohesion is no more than satisfactory.

Parents are grateful for the school's many strengths. Many praise the care provided and the quality of teaching. One typical comment was, 'Each year I have seen my child grow and develop with the unique input from each teacher and the extensive range of opportunities outside the classroom.' Pupils are also delighted with the school. One eloquent group of Year 5 pupils, when asked what they would change if they were the headteacher for a day, unanimously said, 'Nothing!'

School leaders and managers embed ambition and drive improvement well. They have taken concerted, effective actions to address weaknesses and, in particular, have improved monitoring and teaching since the previous inspection, thereby increasing pupils' progress. Good self-evaluation informs the school's relevant plans for the future, which articulate clearly what it needs to do to improve further. The school's capacity for

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sustained improvement is good. Leaders are ambitious to ensure that all lessons are consistently good with an increasing proportion that are outstanding.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment by building on and developing good practice in teaching and the use of assessment so that lessons are consistently good and more lessons are outstanding, especially by setting clear expectations and ensuring that all lessons are equally challenging.
- Ensure that assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage systematically summarises pupils' progress, providing accessible records for staff and parents.
- Broaden community cohesion by developing links with other schools in contrasting parts of the United Kingdom and the world.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Recent initiatives by the school, particularly those focused on improving learning, have increased progress. It has ensured greater consistency of teaching and learning so that previous variations in attainment are now minimal. Pupils enter the school with skills that are below those levels expected for their age and leave with levels that are average, which shows good overall achievement from their starting points.

Pupils are keen to do well, attend very regularly and are interested, enthusiastic learners who enjoy school and invariably take lessons very seriously. Good learning was very evident in a Year 6 mathematics lesson which was characterised by effective planning that meant the session was focused, moved on at a swift pace and was challenging for all pupils. This lesson also demonstrated how the effective support of teaching assistants helps pupils to make good progress. Leaders and teachers ensure that different pupils' needs are accurately identified and subsequent actions ensure that pupils from all backgrounds, such as those from Traveller families, and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make good progress. With improving progress, the achievement of all groups of pupils is now good.

Consistently good behaviour makes a strong contribution to the positive atmosphere and good learning in lessons. Pupils work hard and are courteous and friendly. They conduct themselves very well around the building and playground, taking responsibility for their own conduct and showing great awareness of the needs of others. The overwhelming majority of pupils report they find the school a safe place, knowing there is always a friendly adult nearby should they need help or advice. The curriculum helps them to accurately assess and avoid potential dangers, whether on the busy local roads or on the internet.

Pupils play a constructive role in school life, cheerfully taking on responsibilities and joining in discussions in the lively school council. Issues raised in school council meetings receive a sympathetic response; for example a number of rewards for endeavour, such as the headteacher's tea party, came about as a result of pupils' suggestions. One pupil reported, to general agreement, 'The school council do a good job; they act where pupils might be upset.'

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Pupils embrace new experiences and they demonstrate a good understanding of people of different faiths and cultures sharing common values. However, there are few links with the community beyond the local area to extend this to best possible effect. Consistently good behaviour and relationships are a testament to pupils' impressive moral and social development. They enjoy a range of artistic and sporting activities that benefit their developing cultural understanding.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Effective monitoring has led to more consistent teaching and there are common strengths to lessons. Teachers plan carefully with a clear focus on what is to be learned. These learning objectives are clearly explained at the start of lessons and used effectively to review pupils' learning at the end. This has a positive impact on progress. Teachers' questioning is often a strength. For example, in one Year 4 mathematics lesson, the teacher's direct questions cut through potential confusion and challenged all pupils to think deeply about the best way to solve division and multiplication problems. Pupils are well managed. Teachers are enthusiastic and demonstrate good subject knowledge, inspiring pupils. In English and mathematics lessons work is usually precisely adjusted to challenge and support pupils of all abilities, but this is less evident in other subjects. Teaching assistants are capable and carefully deployed to help particular individuals or groups. For example, a Year 6 group of higher-attaining pupils were kept at full stretch by

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the probing questioning of the teaching assistant as they worked on fractions. Pupils' work is thoroughly and sympathetically marked so that individuals are aware of their standards and what they need to concentrate on improving.

Some variations in teaching remain and this sometimes links to the challenges being given. Occasionally teachers do not make their expectations clear enough, so pupils can be confused about how to go about their tasks and cannot put in their usual effort. Regular, systematic assessments, carefully monitored by senior staff, provide a clear picture of pupils' overall progress. However, analysis of the progress of pupils identified for extra support is less informative, so it is not always easy to judge the success of these interventions.

The curriculum is well planned so that topics and themes link subjects together in interesting ways, such as when drama is used to help develop pupils' understanding of historical themes. Pupils report they really enjoy 'fun' events, such as Traveller awareness week. They also appreciate the numerous extra-curricular opportunities offered, talking very positively about trips to Roman sites and to a local synagogue. The school's policy of making all after-school clubs free has led to many pupils taking part in additional sporting and other enrichment opportunities.

Consistently strong care promotes pupils' good personal development and enjoyment of school. Assessment data are perceptively used to target groups of pupils for support through a range of strategies linked to English, mathematics and social skills. Initiatives relating to social skills have been particularly successful in engaging potentially disaffected pupils more fully with school life, such as those from Traveller backgrounds. The school can point to numerous striking successes and many parents recognise the school's sympathetic attitudes and approachability. The school makes judicious use of outside agencies to provide additional support if required.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and senior staff have channelled their efforts well to improve the school. More rigorous monitoring has led to the adoption of good practice in most lessons. The introduction of more thorough assessment has had two significant outcomes. First, it provides clear information for teachers so they are able to offer the correct degree of challenge and support in lessons to all groups of pupils. This has increased the proportion of good teaching in the school, improved learning and helped even out previous variations in attainment. Second, it provides unambiguous evidence that progress has improved sharply and is now good. More accurate assessments have assisted leaders in holding staff

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accountable for the progress of pupils in their class. Such initiatives have led to more consistent teaching, boosting progress. Staff are careful to include all pupils and this ensures there is good equality of opportunity and no discrimination. Effective self-evaluation has enabled the school to prioritise areas for development effectively.

The governing body systematically evaluates the school. Members regularly meet pupils, staff and parents to understand their views. They engage in the evolution and monitoring of the school development plan and offer good challenges when required. The governing body is fully involved in ensuring that pupils are safe and is in regular contact with the school over this area. The school has up-to-date safeguarding policies and its record keeping is rigorous. Staff are vigilant and well trained and there are examples where the school has shared good practice with other schools. A very large majority of pupils say they feel safe at school.

The school has very positive relationships with all groups of parents and carers. It successfully engages with groups of parents who might otherwise be hard to reach. Parents' and carers' views are regularly canvassed on a whole range of issues, including the school's vision. They receive comprehensive information about all aspects of their child's schooling and many enjoyed coming to the Early Years Foundation Stage nativity play.

Collaboration with a group of local schools has brought many benefits, including enrichment of the curriculum through sports and creative arts weeks. Links with a local outstanding school have enabled the sharing of good practice and benefitted teaching and learning. The local church is used extensively for worship and special occasions. The school has audited its community cohesion provision and is aware that it lacks links with schools in contrasting environments, both in the United Kingdom and abroad. However, it constitutes a very cohesive school community and has developed good associations with the local community, including with schools of different faiths, and this has helped aid pupils' good overall spiritual and cultural development.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Teachers plan thoroughly to offer a broad range of interesting activities that cover the required areas, meet children's needs and engage their interest. The attractive environment inspires positive attitudes from children. Relationships are good and children are managed with confidence, displaying good behaviour. Most sessions are enjoyable and strike the correct balance between adult- and child-chosen activities and work indoors and out. Occasionally, classroom sessions are over-directed by adults, so children do not have enough opportunities to choose freely and to develop independence. Overall, most children make good progress in their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage and especially so in their personal development. For example, they gain in self-confidence and develop good learning habits which stand them in good stead as they move up the school. They quickly learn to choose for themselves and, for example, take responsibility for tidying up and make good gains in basic reading, writing and mathematical skills.

The leadership of the stage is beginning to evaluate provision comprehensively and is effectively supporting improvements, particularly in the Nursery. Attainment is regularly assessed by all adults. However, leaders understand that it is not always consolidated into clear summaries of each child's progress that are accessible to staff and parents and they are keen to improve this. Relationships with parents and carers are very positive with opportunities for open communication at the start and end of each session, one reporting, 'Brilliant Nursery; they really look after the children.' All adults share a commitment to caring for all children, creating a secure and happy environment.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

A higher than average proportion of parents and carers returned the questionnaire. Parents are largely supportive of the school and few express any concerns. In the parental inspection survey the very large majority who replied were happy with their child's experience at the school. Almost all reported that the school helps to keep their child happy, safe and healthy. A few had concerns over the way behaviour is dealt with, the help they receive to support their child's learning and way the school meets pupils' individual needs. The inspectors found that during the inspection behaviour to be good and well managed. The support for individual needs is good and the support given to the partnership with parents is outstanding.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	57	63	32	35	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	51	56	38	42	2	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	37	41	44	48	7	8	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	39	43	43	47	6	7	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	42	46	41	45	4	4	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	31	34	45	48	13	14	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	39	43	51	56	1	1	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	35	38	45	49	4	4	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	34	37	44	48	12	14	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	36	40	42	46	11	12	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	26	31	52	57	8	9	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	35	38	48	53	4	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	45	49	42	46	4	4	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



2 December 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Catherine Primary School, West Drayton UB7 7NX

Many thanks for the warm welcome that you gave to the inspectors when we recently visited your school. We all thought you were polite and well behaved and it was a pleasure talking to you.

St Catherine Primary is a good school and it is improving because the headteacher and her staff team have made teaching better, so you make faster progress. Lessons are fun and you play your part really well by such good behaviour and all your hard work. We find you are well cared for and it was good to see that so many of you and your parents agree. This helps your good personal development. We were particularly impressed with your excellent understanding of how to grow up into healthy adults and the outstanding links between the school and your parents and carers.

School leaders and members of the governing body know the school well and their plans for the future are good. We have asked the school to focus on improving these areas.

- Raise the standard of your work by improving teaching and your learning so that all lessons are good and more are outstanding.
- Use assessments made in the Nursery and Reception classes to provide a clearer picture of how each child is getting on.
- Develop links with schools in different parts of United Kingdom and the world to help broaden your understanding and involvement in the wider community.

You can help by continuing your very positive efforts.

Once again, many thanks for all your help. It was a pleasure meeting you.

Yours sincerely

John Carnaghan

Lead inspector

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