

St Chad's CofE (C) Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124265
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	328093
Inspection dates	5–6 May 2009
Reporting inspector	John Eadie

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	343
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Barry Wilson
Headteacher	Gareth Davies
Date of previous school inspection	13 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	The Gateway Redstreet Newcastle ST5 7AB
Telephone number	01782 562507
Fax number	01782 565094

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

St Chad's is a larger-than-average Church of England primary school. Almost all pupils are White British and none is at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is significantly lower than average as is the proportion with statements of special educational needs. Early Years Foundation Stage provision is made in a part-time Nursery and two Reception classes, though many join in the Reception classes as the Nursery does not have sufficient places.

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. It has moved on well since the last inspection and improvements are gathering pace. There is still work to be done, but leaders and managers have a clear vision of the way forward and there is a shared determination to continue the upward movement. The very positive responses to the parental questionnaires show their appreciation and, as one typically put it: 'There have been many changes since my son started five years ago, all positive for the children.'

Children start in the Nursery with levels of skills and knowledge broadly in line with expected levels for their age. Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is currently satisfactory but improving. Progress through the rest of the school is good and by the time pupils leave at the end of Year 6, they have reached standards that are significantly above average and have achieved well. Pupils of all ability levels make good progress, with almost half expected to reach the higher Level 5 in the national tests in Year 6 this year and several of those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities predicted to reach the expected Level 4 in these tests.

There are a number of significant strengths in the school. One of the most important of these is pupils' personal development and well-being. Pupils are developing very well into responsible and caring young people who have a keen sense of their role in society. They behave well and relationships at all levels in the school are very good. They adopt healthy lifestyles extremely well. The bulging trophy cabinet demonstrates success in a very wide range of sporting tournaments, in which almost half of the pupils represent their school. Pupils are also very well aware of how to keep themselves safe and say that there is always an adult to turn to if they have a concern. The school places a high priority on pastoral care and parents appreciate this, saying for example: 'My child is receiving excellent care.' Academic guidance is generally good. For example, pupils' progress is carefully monitored so that support can be quickly provided for any in danger of falling behind. However, pupils do not always know the next steps in learning they have to take to improve and teachers do not often refer to these when they mark pupils' work.

Pupils enjoy school a good deal. They find lessons interesting and engaging as teachers provide many opportunities for discussion and active learning. The curriculum also plays a key role in pupils' enjoyment as there is a rich and broad range of curriculum opportunities. For instance, good links with two local secondary schools have provided specialist teaching for the most able in mathematics and aided the school in setting up good quality French teaching. Extra-curricular provision is good; for example, pupils in Year 3 thoroughly enjoyed their dance lesson with a local professional dancer. The arts are well developed, as a parent said: 'School plays and concerts are always good and well thought out.'

The key to the school's improvement has been the drive and vision of the headteacher, ably assisted by a relatively new senior management team. This vision is communicated extremely well and all staff and governors share the desire for continuous improvement. Parents confirm these views, saying such things as 'the headteacher has excellent vision', and 'the staff and the headteacher are very motivated and enthusiastic'. Bearing in mind the progress the school is making and the rising standards, the school is well placed to continue its upward journey.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children get off to a good start in the Nursery though their progress in the Reception classes is not so good. However, throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage they make at least satisfactory progress in all areas of learning and this progress is good in their personal and social development. They form very good relationships with their key workers and their behaviour is good. By the time they leave Reception they are working at average levels.

In this safe and secure environment, staff show high levels of commitment for the welfare of children. Provision for children's learning and development is satisfactory and improving. Staff observe children's achievements and track children's progress satisfactorily. They are beginning to use this information to plan the next steps in learning. Teachers plan some good adult-led activities. Sometimes these are based on children's own ideas, to help children of all abilities work towards the next steps in their learning - for example, in developing their understanding of letters and sounds. Some activities that children choose for themselves do not have a sufficiently clear focus on what it is that children are expected to learn. The outdoor environment does not provide children with enough stimulating and exciting experiences in all areas of learning.

Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. The newly appointed leader is developing a strong team of teachers and teaching assistants who are successfully involving families in their children's learning. Staff are aware of what needs to be done to raise achievement and this is evident in the improving rates of children's progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that pupils know exactly what they need to learn next, and that teachers consistently use these targets when they mark pupils' work.
- Improve provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage by: – planning and using the outside area to develop all aspects of children's learning – ensuring that it is clear what children are expected to learn in all the activities that they choose for themselves.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children join the school with standards that are broadly in line with those expected. By the time they leave at the end of Year 6, they have reached standards that are significantly above average in English, mathematics and science. They therefore make good progress through the school and are achieving well. Standards in mathematics have been lower in the past, but there has been a gratifying improvement this year as a number of initiatives have taken effect. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress as they are supported well. Those with particular gifts and talents also do well as extra challenge is planned well for them. Pupils achieve especially well in sport as there is a very wide range of opportunities for them to compete both in school and in inter-school competitions.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are proud of their school. They say: 'This is a school where we never give up; we try our best.' Overall, their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, with their spiritual

development being enhanced by the close links with the church. Relationships are strong and pupils respect the moral and spiritual values promoted by the school. However, their knowledge of other cultures and traditions is not as well developed.

Pupils' behaviour is good and they respond well to the praise and rewards given. Older pupils learn valuable first-aid skills. Pupils' preparation for life after school is good. They make good progress in their basic skills and work well together when sharing ideas and supporting each other.

Pupils have an outstanding understanding of healthy living and particularly appreciate taking part in the wide range of sporting clubs and activities. They enjoy healthy snacks at break. Pupils make a good contribution to the community. The pupils' council is effective in bringing about improvements to school life. Pupils also enjoy supporting children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and working with pupils from a local special school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Lessons are often typified by a buzz of active learning. There are very good relationships between teachers and pupils, which means that pupils are very keen to do well. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' progress, particularly for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However, there are times when they are not sufficiently well directed during whole-class sessions and sit passively. Teachers make good use of the lesson objective to give pupils' learning a focus and often return to this objective at the end of the lesson so that pupils can judge the effectiveness of their learning. Teachers make good use of information and communication technology, particularly the interactive whiteboards in their classes, to interest and engage the pupils. Marking is regular but often does not point pupils to their next steps in learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is particularly well planned and designed to meet the pupils' needs. It is broad and contains a wealth of extra experiences to interest and inspire. For example, lessons in dance and drama from visiting experts add greatly to pupils' enjoyment and learning. Leaders are working towards a more holistic vision for the curriculum, but this is in its early stages and links between subjects are not well established. A good range of trips and visitors into school makes the curriculum more relevant. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good and so they make good progress. Pupils with particular gifts and talents have been identified and good provision is made for them, particularly in sport and mathematics. An extremely wide range of extra-curricular activities adds considerably to pupils' enjoyment of school and their adoption of healthy lifestyles. There is a good programme to promote pupils' personal, social and health education. For example, older pupils are enjoying a first-aid course.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The welfare of the children is at the heart of the school's ethos. Staff show high levels of care and concern for pupils' emotional needs. There are effective links with families and external

agencies to support pupils with particular difficulties. Procedures for safeguarding met current government requirements at the time of the inspection and the school pays good attention to pupils' healthy and safety. Good procedures are in place to promote good behaviour and regular attendance.

Support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. Early identification of difficulties, helpful individual education plans, effective intervention programmes, adult support in lessons and careful monitoring all contribute to enabling these pupils to make good progress.

There are good systems in place to track pupils' progress and pupils are given academic targets. However these targets are not always used effectively in lessons or through marking to help pupils improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Under the dynamic guidance of the headteacher, the new leadership team, formed 18 months ago, is increasing the pace of improvement. Their monitoring is rigorous and they have put in place a number of effective initiatives. For instance, the increased focus and breadth of intervention strategies in mathematics has raised standards. All staff and governors are involved in monitoring, and together they have built a clear picture of the school's strengths and areas for development. However, this does not feed into the staff's and governors' involvement in the school's self-evaluation. Governors are knowledgeable and support the school well, whilst offering good levels of challenge. This extends to setting challenging targets, both for pupils' progress and for school development. The school has a good plan to promote community cohesion but at present, this has only been effective in its involvement with the local community. Pupils' understanding of United Kingdom and global issues are still in an early stage of development.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Chad's CofE Primary School, Newcastle, ST5 7AB

Thank you so much for welcoming us so warmly when we visited your school recently. We were very impressed with how well behaved and polite you were. Many of you told us how proud you are of your school and how much you enjoy it. We are not surprised as it is a good school.

These are some of the best things we found out about your school.

- You know how to stay healthy and take part in a great many activities. Well done at winning all the cups for different sports!
- You are making good progress and reach above average standards by the time you leave.
- You are being taught well and the range of things planned for you to learn is good.
- You are developing well into sensible and responsible young people.
- All adults take very good care of you.
- Your headteacher and all the staff and governors have good plans to make your school even better.

We have suggested to the school some improvements that could help you make even better progress.

- We have asked your teachers to make sure that know your targets better, so that you understand what you can do to improve your work even more.
- We think that better use could be made of the outside area to help the youngest children in the Nursery and Reception class make the best possible progress.

I know you will do your best to help your headteacher and teachers make your school even better by continuing to work hard.

Yours faithfully

John D Eadie

Lead inspector