



St Augustine's Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Better
education
and care

Unique Reference Number 118781
Local Authority Kent
Inspection number 291254
Inspection dates 11–12 December 2006
Reporting inspector Ruth Westbrook

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Wilman Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Tunbridge Wells
Age range of pupils	4–11		TN4 9AL
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01892 529796
Number on roll (school)	317	Fax number	01892 529796
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Michele Palmer
		Headteacher	J Mann
Date of previous school inspection	24 September 2001		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
4–11	11–12 December 2006	291254

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a large primary school on the outskirts of Tunbridge Wells. As the only Catholic school locally, it takes pupils from a wide area and from a variety of backgrounds. The proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals and with learning difficulties and disabilities are below the national averages. About a fifth of pupils come from minority ethnic groups, including 17 pupils who are at an early stage of learning English. The school received a Healthy Eating Award in 2003, Artsmark in 2006, and Inclusion Quality Mark in 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The overall effectiveness of the school is satisfactory and improving. Pupils of all ages are reaching average standards and achievement is satisfactory by the end of Year 6. This was the case at the time of the last inspection but there has been some variability in standards and progress from year to year since then. Improvement has been greater in the last two years because the school's leadership has more closely checked its work and better highlighted improvements needed in teaching and learning. Standards in literacy have improved across all years because the quality of planning has improved and teachers are clearer about what to teach and how to teach it. Last year, a focus on numeracy brought about improvement in the standards reached by most learners at the end of Year 6.

Leadership and management are satisfactory because areas of weakness have been identified and actions have been put in place to address them. However, the impact of the actions has not been checked or evaluated consistently by senior and middle leaders. As a result, improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory because, although the issues are being addressed, the pace of improvement has been too slow in the past. The new headteacher appointed in 2006 has put in place more effective systems for the school to check on and evaluate its work. These systems are linked to clear plans to improve teaching and learning and raise standards. Other school leaders are committed to implementing these developments, indicating that the school's capacity to improve is satisfactory.

Although teaching and learning have improved recently, they remain satisfactory overall because there are inconsistencies in the ways teachers plan for individual need. For example, there is little specific planning in lessons for the needs of pupils whose first language is not English. There are also inconsistencies in the level of challenge for abler pupils. Currently, there is a focus on the quality of teaching and learning in science, where there has been least improvement in standards and where some abler pupils are underachieving. Although the planning for numeracy and literacy has improved, the curriculum is satisfactory because the science curriculum does not include enough opportunities for investigational activities.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good because they are supported by a strong programme of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are good levels of care and support which promote pupils' personal development well, notably the secure environment which is created where all are valued and included. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall because the quality of guidance given to pupils about their work is not consistent, and not always helpful in telling them how to improve. Targets set for pupils lack sufficient challenge as they do not aspire to achievement which is better than satisfactory.

The quality of provision in the Foundation Stage is good because of the careful attention given to meeting children's individual needs. Their curriculum is well planned within a stimulating environment. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the

school's work and particularly appreciative of the improved communication between the school and home since the appointment of the new headteacher.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure leaders at all levels are fully involved in monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and pupils' work.
- Improve pupils' achievement in science, especially that of more-able pupils.
- Ensure that targets set for pupils are challenging and that they are supported adequately to meet them.
- Improve the skills of teachers so that they can better meet the needs of pupils with English as an additional language.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Children's attainment on entry to the school is broadly average but covers a wide range. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage, particularly in personal development. In 2006, pupils in Year 2 reached broadly average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. In relation to their starting points, this represented satisfactory progress.

In 2005, standards in writing in Year 6 improved substantially as a result of the introduction of 'dedicated writing time'. This improvement has been sustained in 2006. Action taken to improve the teaching and learning of numeracy meant that in 2006, standards improved to be close to average and progress was satisfactory. Although standards in science are average, they have not shown improvement and the ablest pupils are underachieving.

Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make satisfactory progress, benefiting from targeted support which focuses on improving literacy and numeracy skills. The progress of pupils who have English as an additional language is satisfactory because the school has recently developed its skills in identifying the language needs of pupils and has put additional support in place.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good because of effective care and good attention to promoting spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school's diverse population works and plays together in good harmony. Constant attention to developing independence ensures Reception children make good progress in their personal development. Pupils' behaviour is good and pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe. Pupils enjoy their learning, in particular the opportunities to be involved in practical activities. They are sensitive to others and reflect on, for instance, the true meaning of Christmas. Social awareness is raised through supporting the work of various charities. Cultural provision is good and

introduces pupils to various cultures within the United Kingdom and worldwide, especially through religious education, art and music. Attendance is good and consistently above the national average. Pupils are involved in community events, such as singing and art displays. Healthy lifestyles are promoted effectively. The election of school council members and fundraising give a sound introduction to aspects of life beyond school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, but the school recognises that there is a lack of consistency. Across all classes, marking is satisfactory and good in English. In other subjects, it does not always let pupils know what they must do to improve, partly because minor errors, such as in graph drawing, are not corrected. The analysis of what pupils have achieved, especially in English and mathematics, has improved. However, the information is not always used to meet pupils' needs fully. The support for pupils with English as an additional language is not always sufficiently well planned in lessons, although it is better when they are taught in small groups. Good relationships between pupils and adults aid learning, but teaching assistants are not always used to best effect. Pupils make good progress when encouraged to discuss ideas in small groups. Expectations are not always high enough in relation to the pace at which pupils work. In Reception, time is often used very effectively to engage and stimulate children. They have good opportunities to take responsibility for aspects of their own learning; this is not so consistently developed elsewhere in the school.

Through a well-planned programme of personal, social and health education, pupils learn the importance of a healthy lifestyle, and how to keep themselves safe. The curriculum is extended well by visits to local places of interest, and by a variety of visitors for particular events. A good range of after-school clubs develops sports skills.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum provides a balanced education which meets statutory requirements. The school makes sound provision for the needs of pupils in mixed-age classes through a two-year programme which ensures that topics are not repeated. Recently, the school has improved curricular plans for literacy and numeracy and this has contributed to the improvement in standards. However, literacy and numeracy are not consistently reinforced in other subjects. Plans for teaching and learning in science are currently being reviewed to include more opportunities for investigation. Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) meets national curriculum requirements, and the application of ICT is developing quickly in many subjects. The Reception curriculum is good, and children develop early skills through a wide range of discovery and investigational activities.

Through a well-planned programme of personal, social and health education, pupils learn the importance of a healthy lifestyle, and how to keep themselves safe. The curriculum is extended well by visits to local places of interest, and by a variety of visitors for particular events. A good range of after-school clubs develops sports skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development is good because of good care and guidance, particularly through the personal, social and health education programme and religious education. Pupils know there are adults, including a trained counsellor who visits weekly, to whom they can turn if necessary. The excellent care provided for Reception children is exemplified by the extensive links made with home before they start school; as a result they settle in to school very quickly and confidently. Child protection and health and safety procedures are securely in place. Improving procedures allow the school to monitor pupils' progress, especially in Reception and in English and mathematics, but the information on pupils' progress is not consistently used across the school to ensure all are challenged and supported to reach them. Consequently, pupils are not always sure of their personal targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management across the school are satisfactory. The recently appointed headteacher has a clear vision of how to improve standards and the progress which pupils make across the school. She has made an accurate assessment of the plans needed to move the school forward and in her short time in post has started to make a very positive impact. For example, communication with parents 'has improved enormously,' establishing 'an open atmosphere'. Other school leaders, and governors, have recognised this and are lending full support to the improvement plans.

The school's self-evaluation is generally accurate. Understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses is based on sound analysis of data. The checking of the school's work by the school's leadership is not yet happening systematically enough to ensure consistency of practice across the school. The headteacher has started an effective programme of checking which will involve other members of the school's leadership but this programme is at an early stage. It is enabling leaders from the different phases to work together and this is improving the effectiveness of planning. The targets currently set for the school do not aspire to better than satisfactory progress for pupils.

Governors give satisfactory support to the school. A large number of governors are new to their posts, including the Chair, but they have quickly established procedures to ensure effective support to the school, and have a sound understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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 the 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 performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Recently, we visited your school. Thank you for being so friendly and welcoming to us. We enjoyed our visit and talking to you.

We thought you might like to know what we found out about your school and how we think it can improve.

- Your school provides you with a satisfactory standard of education.
- It has improved recently. The improvements have been mainly in literacy and numeracy but not in science.
- The headteacher and staff in the school look after you well and make sure that you are safe.
- You behave well and show care and concern for each other.
- Your attendance at school is very good. You enjoy school and lessons, especially when there is a practical activity.
- Most of you make satisfactory progress in lessons and teachers are working hard to improve the quality of their teaching and your learning so that you can make even better progress.

We have asked the school to do a number of things:

- To check more regularly the quality of teaching and your work.
- To improve your achievement in science, so more of you reach the higher levels.
- To set more challenging targets for you and give you lots of guidance about how to reach them.
- Try to make it easier for those of you who are just starting to learn English to understand the work you have to do.

We hope that you will do your best to help staff to put these in place and make the school even better than it is.