

# St Augustine's Catholic Primary School

Wilman Road, Tunbridge Wells TN4 9AL

**Inspection dates** 12–13 November 2015

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The headteacher, supported by a strong governing body, has taken strategic action since the last inspection to improve pupils' achievement. Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, now leave the school well prepared for their secondary education.
- By the end of Year 6 in 2015, pupils' attainment, including that of disadvantaged pupils, was above the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. It was significantly so for the most-able girls in writing and for the most-able boys in mathematics.
- Teaching has improved, especially in lower Key Stage 2, as a result of a high quality professional development programme. This includes the effectiveness of marking and feedback in workbooks. Pupils now understand more readily what they need to do to improve their work and so their progress has accelerated.
- Attendance is now high.
- The good teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) enables pupils, including those who arrive at the school speaking little or no English, to reach above average standards in reading.
- Pupils are very well cared for by all adults in the school, and so they feel completely safe and secure. Year 6 pupils assert that bullying of any kind is rare.
- Pupils' behaviour in and around the school is usually exemplary. Almost all pupils, staff and parents who completed the online questionnaires expressed positive views about pupils' behaviour.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strongly promoted. The pervading atmosphere is welcoming, calm and harmonious.
- Provision in the early years is good for children of varying abilities and from a wide range of backgrounds.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not consistently challenge most-able pupils appropriately, especially girls in mathematics and boys in writing.
- Although the marking and feedback in workbooks have improved, there is still more to be done to ensure that it is all as effective as the best in the school, as seen in lower Key Stage 2.
- The new system for assessing pupils' achievement without levels is not yet full embedded. Although teachers are delivering the new National Curriculum, they are not consistently basing their planning on pupils' assessed learning needs.
- Subject leaders are relatively new to their roles and require further support to embed best practice.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all teaching, learning and assessment is consistently good or better by:
  - challenging pupils appropriately in all lessons, especially more-able girls in mathematics and more-able boys in writing
  - strengthening marking and feedback in workbooks in Key Stage 1 and upper Key Stage 2 so that pupils are always clear about the next steps they need to take to improve their work
  - developing staff expertise in using the new assessment system for assessing pupils' achievement without levels so that all staff are confident in using this information to plan teaching that appropriately challenges all pupils.
- Improve leadership and management by supporting subject leaders to:
  - develop their roles in promoting achievement in their areas of responsibility
  - embedding the new system for assessing pupils' achievement without levels.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Since the last inspection, the headteacher has implemented a programme of coaching and mentoring for teachers, supported by the Local Collaborative Trust group of schools. This has been highly effective in improving quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. The school now provides a good quality of education for all its pupils over time.
- Senior leaders and governors know the school well and have an accurate picture of its performance. They regularly monitor and evaluate progress in the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. Leaders share this information with all staff in order to secure their support and to ensure a team effort in moving the school forward. All staff who completed the online questionnaire agree that the school has improved since the last inspection.
- The school's procedures for checking on the quality of teaching are thorough. Checks on the performance of all staff lead to appropriate support and training. This develops their practice and leads to improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Pay progression is linked to performance against the national teachers' standards.
- The curriculum beyond the core subjects is organised into cross-curricular topics that inspire and motivate pupils. The ethnic diversity represented in the school is celebrated in the curriculum wherever possible, through learning about life and culture in other home countries, so all pupils feel included. Alongside this, British values are strongly promoted through displays, assemblies and in the personal, social, health and economic education programme.
- The curriculum, together with strong links with the church, contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school's motto, summed up in the acronym, 'GROWING', underpins this with references to 'God'; 'Respect'; 'Open our hearts'; 'Worship and wonder'; 'Inspire'; 'Nurture' and 'Grow'.
- Leaders actively promote equality of opportunity and good relations, and racist incidents are extremely rare in the school. Vulnerable groups of pupils achieve well and gaps are closing, although leaders acknowledge that there is even more to do to promote the achievement of most-able pupils, especially for girls in mathematics and boys in writing.
- Leaders make effective use of pupil premium funding to deploy additional classroom support and ensure that disadvantaged pupils achieve their best.
- The primary physical education and sport premium funding is used for staff training and to give pupils access to a wide range of sporting activities and sports clubs. More pupils are now engaged in competitive sports, with particular success recently in local football and swimming events.
- The diocese and the local authority have provided valuable support that has contributed to the school's improvement. Partnership arrangements that the school shares with other local schools through the Local Collaborative Trust have also been beneficial where staff have visited good schools to learn from their practice.
- Staff who responded to the online questionnaire gave their unanimous support for the leadership of the school. Friendly, respectful relationships between staff, and between staff and pupils, ensure a harmonious, secure atmosphere so that everyone, adults and pupils alike, enjoys coming to school.
- Almost all parents who responded to the online survey, Parent View, expressed positive views about the school, and the vast majority agreed that they would recommend it. One parent wrote: 'My children are very happy at this school. The teachers have a lovely, caring approach and I am confident that my children's needs will be met, both academically and emotionally.'
- Middle leaders are relatively new to their roles and the impact of their leadership of subjects, particularly in relation to assessment, is in the early stages of development.
- **The governance of the school**
  - Governance is good. Governors carried out a skills audit after the last inspection, enabling them to ensure that they have the right mix of skills to fulfil their roles and responsibilities. They use information on teaching and pupils' achievement provided by the school to question and challenge leaders and give support, where required. Governors monitor the school improvement plan rigorously and are aware of gender gaps in pupils' achievement.

- Governors set clear targets at the headteacher’s performance review and they have supported her effectively in delivering the improvements that have taken place since the last inspection. They understand that pay progression is dependent on the quality of teaching and pupils’ progress. They know that the quality of teaching has improved as a result of the coaching and mentoring programme that has been put in place.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Pupils say they feel very safe in school, and staff and parents concur. Safeguarding procedures are robust and up to date, including the ‘Prevent’ training to recognise signs of radicalisation and extremism. This is now included in the safeguarding policy.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Almost all the teachers currently at the school were present at the last inspection. They have engaged very positively with the staff development programme introduced by the headteacher so that the quality of their teaching has improved.
- In the lower Key Stage 2 classes, teaching is consistently good. Sometimes it is outstanding. Teachers have high expectations of what each pupil can achieve, including the most-able and disadvantaged pupils. In these classes, pupils with special educational needs are often well supported by skilled teaching assistants and additional resources, so they achieve well.
- In Key Stage 1, good teaching of phonics enables pupils to develop their skills for reading well, including pupils who speak English as an additional language. Teachers and teaching assistants pronounce sounds accurately and this forms a secure basis for the above average standards in reading across the rest of the school.
- The school has focused on improving achievement in writing, especially for boys, with some success. There has been an increased emphasis on selecting topics of particular interest to boys, such as the Roman army and Viking warriors. In addition, there has been a drive to improve English grammar, punctuation and spelling, together with vocabulary choices, that has been effective. The gap between the achievement of girls and boys in writing is closing this year.
- The teaching of mathematics has also improved, and the gap between the achievement of girls and boys is also closing this year. Where teaching is at least good, teachers convey their high expectations of pupils’ achievement by setting tasks of appropriate levels of difficulty for the different ability groups, including the most able. In a lower Key Stage 2 lesson on problem solving and reasoning in mathematics, the teacher challenged pupils’ thinking by asking probing questions and correcting misconceptions quickly.
- High expectations and challenge are also evident in marking and feedback in pupils’ workbooks, where teaching is effective. For example, one teacher had written, ‘Tell me what method you used to work these out and why you think it was the best.’ The pupil had responded, ‘I used taking away the tens and then the ones. It is the best method for me because it is easier to work out.’ Regular reflection on and evaluation of methods and processes in mathematics stimulate pupils’ deep learning and mastery of skills. In the best workbooks, presentation and handwriting are also exemplary.
- Although there are also some examples of good marking and feedback in Key Stage 1 and in upper Key Stage 2, this is not consistently the case, and so pupils’ progress is not as rapid as it could be in writing and mathematics.
- The school has devised a system for setting exciting homework activities linked to class topics to extend pupils’ knowledge and understanding and to make features of the topic memorable. For example, in Years 5 and 6, tasks included: writing a Viking saga; designing a Viking board game; drawing or painting a Viking longboat; and writing a Viking play to act out to the class. The range of samples of homework arising from this topic demonstrated that parents also often enjoy supporting their children at home with these tasks.
- The new assessment system has only been in place since the start of this school year, and teachers are not yet fully confident in using it to assess pupils’ achievement and to plan future learning for groups of pupils.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare** is outstanding

### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Parents are overwhelmingly positive in their views about the pastoral care for the well-being of their children.
- Pupils say they feel very safe and they know they would receive help from an adult quickly if they had any concerns or problems. They especially value and respect the support of the family liaison officer.
- The shared ethos of 'Growing together' has developed a school community where everyone feels valued and included, regardless of their background.
- Pupils in Year 6 have a secure knowledge about different kinds of bullying, including cyber-bullying, racism and homophobia. They have had very little experience of these issues in school either as recipients, perpetrators or onlookers. They know how to keep themselves safe on the internet.
- Pupils' understanding of healthy eating and keeping fit is secure. They recognise that their increased participation in sports is having a positive impact on their fitness. They also have a good awareness of the harmful effects of drugs, alcohol and smoking.
- Pupils experience rich opportunities to develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally. These experiences equip pupils to be thoughtful, caring and confident in school, and prepare them well for their future lives as British citizens.

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils' impeccable conduct reflects the school's effective strategies to promote high standards of behaviour. Pupils are self-disciplined and polite; incidences of misbehaviour are rare and well managed.
- The atmosphere in and around the school is harmonious and purposeful. Even when teaching is less effective, pupils concentrate well and try to do their best. Pupils say they would appreciate having more equipment at playtimes so they could play more constructively.
- Pupils discuss and debate issues in a mature and thoughtful way. They are considerate towards one another and respect each other's points of view.
- Attendance has improved and it is now high because pupils enjoy coming to school.

## **Outcomes for pupils** are good

- Standards across the school have improved. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2015 was above the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics, significantly so in girls' writing and in boys' mathematics. Progress across Key Stage 2 accelerated last year and almost all pupils made at least expected progress. Progress in mathematics was significantly above the national average, especially for boys. Progress also accelerated in reading and writing, although boys' writing was not as strong as that of girls. A few pupils did not make expected progress in reading.
- The attainment of disadvantaged pupils at the end of Year 6 in 2015 was above that of other pupils in the school by an average of 10 months. It was above that of all other pupils nationally by one year. The rate of progress of disadvantaged pupils improved between 2014 and 2015. Although these pupils made slightly less progress overall than other pupils in the school, their progress was faster than that of all other pupils nationally.
- Standards in Key Stage 1 have continued to rise since the previous inspection. Attainment at the end of Year 2 in 2015 was above the national averages, significantly so in reading and mathematics. The attainment of boys and girls was broadly in line with each other in reading and mathematics, but boys' attainment in writing was below that of girls by approximately one year.
- All pupils who speak English as an additional language made at least expected progress across all three subjects last year. These pupils continue to make good progress this year, with many exceeding the expected standards.

- The school's current data show that the majority of pupils are making at least expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards expected in the new National Curriculum are higher than previously, and teachers and leaders are working hard to ensure that pupils catch up and meet or exceed age-related expectations by the end of the year.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make just as much good progress from their starting points as other pupils in the school. This is because they receive well-targeted support for their personal, social and emotional needs, as well as for their academic needs.
- Gender gaps, where girls tend to attain better in writing and boys tend to attain better in mathematics persist, but the school's current data show that gaps are closing.

## Early years provision

## is good

- Children enter the Reception class with levels of skill and development that are broadly in line with those typical for their age, even though a high proportion speak little or no English. By the end of the year, the proportion reaching the expected good level of development was above average in 2015. This represented good progress from starting points and was a significant improvement on the previous year. As a result, children were well prepared to enter Year 1, although typically boys did not attain as highly as girls, especially in their communication, language and literacy skills.
- Currently, boys' attainment in Reception is lower than that of girls, especially in their communication, language and literacy skills. Teachers have not been planning enough boy-orientated activities that will enable the boys to catch up. The early years leader is aware of the gender gap and she is now ensuring an increased focus on boys' achievement.
- The Reception classrooms and outside play area are exceptionally well resourced and organised, with clear labelling of equipment and instructions showing the purpose of activities to help adults promote focused learning. Staff provide good-quality opportunities for children to play and learn across all areas.
- Teachers plan activities that promote children's learning well by engaging their interest. For example, a small group were making models of Divali lamps. They talked about the Hindu and Sikh custom of Divali while they took great care to shape and decorate their models.
- Children select activities and resources independently, and they settle well to concentrate on their chosen activity for sustained periods of time, maximising their opportunities for learning. Children were observed filling and emptying containers with coloured water from a trough in the outdoor area; concentrating on their letter formation while writing; building model houses with bricks; and offering cups of tea and cakes in the cafe role-play area. They also enjoyed riding on makeshift broomsticks, wearing witches' hats and acting out scenes from *Winnie the Witch*.
- The early years leader is experienced and confident in her knowledge about how young children learn best. She has introduced an effective new system for assessing children's attainment in the first six weeks of schooling and tracking their progress across the Reception year.
- Learning journals describe children's achievements through photographs, samples of work and annotations. They provide a comprehensive record of the progress of each individual child for parents and staff, as well as for the children themselves.
- Partnerships with parents are strong, as evidenced in the comments made by parents on Parent View.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	118781
<b>Local authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	10005777

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	311
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mark Dennison
<b>Headteacher/Principal/Teacher in charge</b>	Jackie Warren
<b>Telephone number</b>	01892 529796
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.st-augustines.kent.sch.uk">www.st-augustines.kent.sch.uk</a>
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<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	2–3 July 2013

## Information about this school

- This is a larger than average sized primary school.
- Approximately half of the pupils are White British. A large range of minority groups ethnic are represented, the largest being any other White background.
- A larger than average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language. Some of these arrive in school with very little or no knowledge of English.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is low.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported by the school, including those with a statement or education, health and care plan is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school is part of the Local Collaborative Trust, a mutually supportive cluster of schools working together to raise standards.
- The headteacher has been in post since January 2013.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 19 lessons or parts of lessons, several of which were joint observations with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors spoke to a number of pupils about their experiences of the school and heard pupils in Years 2 and 6 read.
- Meetings were held with five members of the governing body, school leaders and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors considered a wide range of evidence, including the school's record of the quality of teaching over time and pupils' current work in books.
- Inspectors took account of 16 responses to the online staff questionnaire, 25 responses to the online pupil questionnaire and 48 responses to Parent View. Inspectors spoke to some parents.
- Inspectors observed the overall work of the school and checked various documents and procedures, including the school's plans for improvement and arrangements for checking pupils' achievement. Inspectors also examined documents relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance, and looked at the minutes of governing body meetings.

## Inspection team

Angela Konarzewski, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Stephanie Scutter	Ofsted Inspector
Barbara Chevis	Ofsted Inspector



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