

# St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	118199
<b>Local authority</b>	Isle of Wight
<b>Inspection number</b>	379562
<b>Inspection dates</b>	7–8 February 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Michael Pye

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

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<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>	135
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Father A Glaysher
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jo Anderson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	30 September–1 October 2008
<b>School address</b>	High Street Carisbrooke Newport PO30 1NR
<b>Telephone number</b>	01983 522747
<b>Fax number</b>	01983 521050
<b>Email address</b>	stocprimary@tiscali.co.uk

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	7–8 February 2012
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## Introduction

Inspection team

Michael Pye

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed seven lessons including those involving linking sounds and letters. He also heard pupils read. A total of six teachers were seen. The inspector spoke to parents and carers and held meetings with members of the governing body, pupils and staff. The inspector took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's and pupils' work and looked at data relating to pupils' attainment and progress. The school's development plan, lesson and curriculum plans, governing body documentation and school policies and procedures, particularly those relating to the health and safety and safeguarding of pupils, were scrutinised. The inspector looked at 39 questionnaires completed by parents and carers as well as those returned by staff and pupils.

## Information about the school

Pupils in this smaller-than-average-sized primary school come from a predominantly White British background. The largest minority ethnic group consists of pupils from Any Other White background. The proportion of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs is currently above average. The main group consists of pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties. Currently, the number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is below average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. Early Years Foundation Stage provision is made for the children in the Reception class. A breakfast and after-school club, managed by the governing body, is situated on the school site. The school has been nationally recognised through gaining the enhanced Healthy Schools award.

The school is federated with another Roman Catholic primary school on the island. After school reorganisation on the island, St Thomas of Canterbury School now has its first Year 6 class. Consequently, there are no current national published data by which the school's performance can be compared against national floor standards.

**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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key findings

- This is a good school. Pupils achieve well and enjoy their lessons.
- Pupils, including those [who are disabled and those who have special educational needs](#), make good progress throughout the school, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Pupils attain above average standards in writing, reading and mathematics. Boys generally have lower levels of literacy on entry to the school, and although they too reach above average standards in writing, they are not as far ahead as the girls.
- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers plan a wide range of activities that meet the different learning styles of pupils. Nevertheless, some inconsistencies exist between teachers. Not all teachers use questioning to revisit and challenge pupils at a more difficult level or use assessment data to plan learning that challenges pupils of different abilities. Also, the use of short consolidation periods during lessons to ascertain the extent of pupils' understanding is not used consistently.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils feel very safe and have very positive attitudes to learning.
- Leadership and management are good. The caring, Christian-based ethos has been effectively combined with high expectations of pupils' academic work. There are particular strengths at the senior level and in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Some inconsistencies exist between subject leaders in the degree to which they use challenging success criteria against which progress can be measured in their development plans for improving pupils' academic performance.
- Governors act as a critical friend to the school because they monitor the work of the school well, for example through regular visiting. While they speak to pupils this is not done on a formal basis and hence opportunities are lost to explore their views in more depth. Their ability to raise questions is not maximised because they have not received focused training in the interpretation of assessment data.

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

- Raise attainment in writing, particularly for boys, by ensuring that all teachers:
  - use regular consolidation periods during lessons to identify any gaps in learning
  - consistently use assessment data to plan work that challenges pupils of different abilities
  - use questioning techniques that consistently challenge all pupils.
- Maximise the impact of leaders and managers on school improvement by:
  - making sure subject leaders use challenging criteria in their development plans against which success can be measured
  - ensuring that governors receive focused training in understanding assessment data
  - governors arranging formal meetings with pupils so as to ascertain their views on a range of school issues.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

The levels of skills and knowledge of children entering Reception vary from year to year. Occasionally they meet age-related expectations but at other times, such as with the current cohort, are below the expected levels. There is, however, a consistent picture across the years of weaknesses on entry in aspects of literacy and numeracy. The children achieve well overall in the Early Years Foundation Stage and make good progress in areas such as linking sounds and letters. They leave Reception with the majority having met or exceeded their early learning goals, although writing, especially for boys, is the weaker element. As pupils progress up through the school, the gap between boys and girls is closing as the curriculum gives good opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills across different subjects.

All pupils, including the small number from minority ethnic groups, make good progress. The vast majority of parents or carers who returned the questionnaire also agree that this is so. In the 2011 end of Year 2 assessments, attainment was above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, also attained above the national average and make good strides in their learning.

The school has successfully managed the transition to an all-through primary and the older pupils in school achieve well. Work seen in the current Year 6 is of a standard which is generally above the national average, in English and mathematics. Reading standards are also above average when pupils leave the school.

Younger pupils are confident when reading and they dismantle or segment individual sounds in words well. One boy identified the inspector by sounding out 'O' 'f' 's' 't' 'e'

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'd' prior to pronouncing the whole word with confidence. Pupils talk about their favourite authors. 'Roald Dahl is fun,' and, 'Enid Blyton's stories are exciting.' Reception children link sounds to letters correctly and identify words such as 'jam'. In Year 1 they ask questions willingly of an 'alternative' Goldilocks prior to taking the 'hot seat' themselves. They show great respect for the views of others. Older pupils write increasingly complex sentences about character and setting, for example when writing at length a fantasy story based around 'The Dump'. These pupils are also answering more difficult word problems in mathematics. Pupils say they enjoy school. This can be seen in the positive way they approach their work. It can also be seen in their relaxed and happy response to the varied activities provided in the breakfast and after-school clubs.

### Quality of teaching

The vast majority of parents or carers returning the questionnaire believe that teaching is good. The inspector agrees with this. The curriculum is well planned and this enables pupils across the school to gain knowledge and skills at a good rate. In Reception, the children benefit from good teaching about linking sounds and letters because of the strong subject knowledge of the teacher. Elsewhere in school, very strong relationships in lessons result in pupils willing to engage with their learning. However, teachers do not consistently use their secure subject knowledge to revisit pupils' learning in lessons or to further question and challenge their understanding. A very effective lesson for older pupils saw different ability groups being challenged well because of the good use being made of test and assessment data to match tasks closely to pupils' abilities. As a result, progress was rapid and pupils were engaged throughout. However, these approaches are not yet embedded across the school. Pupils' motivation for learning is often boosted by the good use of computers and interactive whiteboards. Basic skills are well reinforced in classrooms through vocabulary lists and the use of dictionaries. Good verbal feedback from teachers helps ensure that pupils know how to improve their work. Teachers' marking provides clear pointers for improvement and most, but not all, pupils respond positively to the guidance given.

Teaching makes an important contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to collaborate together, to explore moral and social issues in lessons and to learn about different faiths and cultures through visits and visitors. Activities such as these contribute to the quality of learning, summed up by one parent and echoed by others, 'I am impressed with the excellent learning environment. My boys have found it deeply caring while challenging, fun and exciting.'

### Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils state that the school is friendly and a safe place to be. Inspection findings confirm this. The school reinforces the 'keep safe' messages through road safety and 'stranger-danger' sessions and the promotion of safety in lessons. Pupils have a

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good, clear idea of what constitutes bullying. They mention computers and explain that they are kept safe because the school blocks anything 'nasty'. One pupil said, 'This is a non-bullying school.' Pupils state that the school deals with any incidents quickly and effectively. All parents who returned the questionnaire believe their children are safe. Behaviour in class and around the school is good and discussions with pupils indicate that this is the norm. Pupils are keen and enthusiastic learners and their enjoyment of school is reflected by their above average attendance. The school is focusing more upon the small minority of pupils whose parents do not ensure that they arrive on time for school every day.

The pupils make a telling contribution to creating an atmosphere conducive to learning. Pupils are polite and courteous and show respect to adults and classmates. They have respect for the views and beliefs of others and show their readiness to contribute to the life of the school as a community by taking responsibility for their actions and behaviour and by carrying out roles such as prefects, house captains and head boy and girl with great maturity and enjoyment.

### **Leadership and management**

Improvement since the last inspection has been good. The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well; parents from minority ethnic backgrounds are invited into school to talk to pupils about their experiences and pupils benefit from visits to places of cultural interest and diversity. The effective manner in which leaders of the school ensure that the curriculum is well matched to pupils' needs has resulted in improvements in writing for both boys and girls and although girls are further ahead the gap is narrowing. Literacy and numeracy links are well reinforced across the curriculum, with boys being attracted to writing through the use of topics that reflect their interests. Speaking and listening opportunities are planned regularly and demanding texts challenge the pupils. Pupils' high respect and tolerance for others are the result of the established ethos within the school, based around the effective promotion of equality and non discrimination. The school is successful in dismantling barriers to learning experienced by pupils who find school life difficult through well-planned intervention strategies and the utilisation of outside support agencies. As one parent wrote, 'The school makes every child feel part of the 'family' created here regardless of ability, background and religion.'

Senior leaders have shared effectively the vision for improvement. More distributive leadership means this vision is reinforced by wider numbers of accountable leaders. Subject leaders are developing their skills and are involved in monitoring, evaluation and development planning. This has led, for example, to the promotion of 'thinking skills' and problem-solving approaches in mathematics lessons. However, there are inconsistencies in the use of measurable and challenging success criteria when action planning to improve pupils' academic performance. School leaders are benefiting from the developing links with a partner school and sharing good practice.

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The experienced headteacher has led improvements in teaching through a focused programme of lesson observations and valuable feedback to teachers. She has also made good use of pupil tracking data and analysis to monitor and improve progress. In Reception very detailed analysis of entry and on-going levels is allowing the school to more accurately identify children's progress rates. Such aspects, together with improved writing standards, sustained good progress and the good behaviour and above average attendance rates of pupils support the school's good capacity to improve.

Governors gain a good knowledge of the school through their visits and verbal reports from subject leaders. They regularly receive reports on aspects of safeguarding and health and safety. Appropriate recruitment checks on adults are carried out, child protection training is well embedded and an on-going check kept on the breakfast and after-school clubs. Safeguarding arrangements are secure. Governors raise questions and challenge the school when necessary, although their knowledge of how to interpret assessment data is insufficiently developed. During visits they miss opportunities to talk more formally with pupils to identify their views about school life. Communication with parents and carers, for example through an effective website and newsletters, is good. The great majority of those responding to the questionnaire agreed that they are kept well informed and expressed satisfaction with how the school is led and managed. Pupils also benefit from some well-established partnerships with the local schools. This has resulted in the sharing of good practice and effective transition arrangements being put into place for Year 6 when leaving the school.



## 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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**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.**



9 February 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary School, Newport  
PO30 1NR**

You may remember my recent visit. You were eager to tell me about your school and I listened carefully to what you told me. You told me yours is a good school, and I agree.

You progress well and this is the result of the good teaching you receive. You also told me that you really enjoy the projects that you are set, that lessons are 'fun' and that you enjoy school. Your above average attendance shows this! I saw that you use computers to help you learn. You told me that the teachers give you good guidance about how to further improve your work. While most of you are challenged by the work set, I have asked that all of your teachers plan work that ensures you all make good progress in lessons. You could help by telling them when you are finding the work too hard or too easy. I have also asked that they ensure that their questioning ensures that you have to think hard when answering.

I was very pleased to see that you behave well. You told me you feel safe and that if there are any incidents then you know the school will act to help you. You have very good opportunities to help with the running of the school and to take on responsibility. Well done to the prefects, house captains and your head girl and boy.

Your headteacher leads the school well and, like the other adults, wants things to improve even more. The school makes good plans for the future, but I have asked that all leaders make sure they can accurately see the improvements made by any changes they introduce. The governors have been asked to learn more about how to use the information they have on your work, and to talk to you more regularly about what you feel about school.

Thank you again and I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Michael Pye  
Lead inspector

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