

More Park Roman Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118774
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	339300
Inspection dates	29–30 September 2010
Reporting inspector	Graeme Bassett

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	198
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Colin Watson
Headteacher	Carol Smith
Date of previous school inspection	2 May 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 12 lessons and observed all seven teachers. They held meetings with the headteacher, subject leaders, teachers, other staff, governors, groups of pupils and a few parents and carers. They looked at pupils' work, teachers' planning and assessment files, school statutory policies and the school's improvement plan. Added to this, inspectors scrutinised curricular planning documents, pupils' tracking and assessment records, evaluations of teaching carried out by the school and the minutes of governors' meetings. The team also analysed questionnaires, including 102 returned from parents and carers, 52 from pupils and 22 from staff.

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

- The effectiveness with which the leaders and managers are coping with the staff changes
- The effectiveness with which the school has stopped the decline in attainment and with which it is promoting a rise in attainment and achievement for all pupils especially in mathematics and writing. ♦

Information about the school

More Park Catholic Primary School is an average sized primary school serving a wide area around West Malling. Pupils are taught in seven classes including a Reception class for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Over the past two years there have been significant staff changes including a new headteacher promoted from within the school, a new deputy headteacher and three newly qualified teachers.

Most pupils are of White British heritage. A small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language have recently joined the school. The proportion eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. Their needs mostly link to specific and moderate learning difficulties, speech, language and communication and emotional and social difficulties. There is a privately organised breakfast club on site which is attended by pupils from the school.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. It has some good features and is well thought of in the local community and among parents and carers. It is steadily overcoming the problems it has recently faced because of staff changes and the school staffing is now stable. The headteacher, working well with the staff, governors and parents and carers, is the driving force behind the planned developments, and significant improvements in improving the teaching, the curriculum, recording assessments and informing parents of their child's progress. This work is already raising the quality of education, especially for the older pupils. The headteacher provides good direction to the work of the school and is successfully building up leadership and management roles at all levels. Nevertheless, the headteacher and staff are fully aware that there is still much to do to cope with recent staff changes, and that some of the proposed developments have not yet had time to have an impact. As a result, the school's capacity for sustained improvement in the future is currently satisfactory.

The recent improvements are appreciated by the vast majority of the parents and carers, many saying that they are extremely pleased with the changes they have seen in the school. As a result of satisfactory self-evaluation, the school rightly identifies writing and mathematics as priorities for improvement. However, the school development plan is not easy to follow or to evaluate the school's successes, as in places it is too complex.

Pupils' attainment in English has been significantly above average for several years. However, as a result of recent inconsistencies in teaching, pupils' attainment is currently broadly average not only in English, but also in mathematics and science. However, the decline in attainment has been halted. Teaching is satisfactory overall but with good teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Year 6. There are some aspects of good teaching in other classes. However, in these year groups the use of accurate assessment records is not yet rigorous enough to ensure that tasks are matched to the precise needs of pupils, especially the least able and, particularly, in mathematics, to ensure that learning is consistently good. In some lessons the pace of work is slow and pupils are not challenged sufficiently with probing questions. Consequently, progress is currently satisfactory overall from the pupils' time of entry to the school. The curriculum is satisfactory but developing well. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to pursue their own research, exploration or investigation.

There are some strong aspects within the school, especially in the way leaders and managers develop pupils' creative, social and personal skills and ensure that good safeguarding procedures are in place. All staff provide good pastoral care, guidance and support for everyone, especially for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result, each pupil grows in confidence as a valued individual. The vast majority of pupils have a good knowledge of what is right and wrong. Their attendance

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and behaviour are good and this has a positive impact upon their attitudes and builds a family atmosphere within a positive Christian ethos.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment, particularly in mathematics at Key Stage 2, by ensuring that teachers use assessment records more precisely to match tasks to meet the needs of all pupils but especially for lower attaining pupils.
- Improve the quality of teaching from satisfactory to good by: ♦
 - involving pupils in their learning through practical experiences and investigations ♦
 - developing a brisk pace to lessons
 - posing questions that probe and promote pupils' understanding and knowledge
- Ensure that the leaders and managers at all levels create a simpler development plan that identifies clearly what the school needs to do to improve and defines sharper ways of evaluating and measuring its success. ♦

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils achieve satisfactorily and acquire adequate basic skills for their future. All groups, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make satisfactory progress. There is no significant difference between the progress made by boys and girls. Those pupils who are at the early stages of learning English make good progress in learning the spoken language.

From observations in classrooms and work seen, it is clear that most pupils make steady progress, but observations also confirm that this is now being accelerated effectively, especially in Year 6. A good proportion of these older pupils are currently on track to do better than in previous years. These pupils are beginning to successfully transfer the standard of written work seen in their English books to other subjects. As a result, pupils' attainment in their English work is generally better than in other subjects. Pupils work with enthusiasm and skill with information and communication technology (ICT), in Year 5 researching information about the Greeks and in Year 6 by creating biographies about Walt Disney.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and have good social skills. They are polite, courteous and behave well. They feel safe in school and have a good understanding that they must eat healthily and take regular exercise. Pupils' contribution to the school and wider community is good. They enjoy being monitors and acting as house captains and as members of the school council. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good but nevertheless their awareness of the richness and diversity of British society is less well developed. Pupils achieve well in the creative arts especially music. This helps to give all pupils confidence and to build up their self-esteem.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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?

The staff have good relationships with pupils and they show real concern for each pupil's welfare and happiness. All pupils are involved in all that the school does. The frequent discussions that teachers have about each pupil's progress are a good feature of the support given to all pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported securely but sometimes teaching assistants do not take a sufficiently active role to support them during the introductions to lessons.

In lesson planning, tasks are not always matched accurately to the needs of pupils. Opportunities that are used to develop writing in Year 6 are well focused and effective, but are not yet embedded strongly enough across the school. In other year groups, pupils often spend too much time listening to the teacher. For example, in one class, although pupils had eagerly brought in books about their topic, they were not encouraged to carry out their own research from them. This limited pupils' opportunities to be involved in investigations, stunted their interest and slowed down their pace of work.

Whole-school assessment tracking records are developing well and are used effectively to identify those pupils who are falling behind in their learning and in need of additional support to move them on. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly. However, they do not always write comments that enable pupils to understand exactly what small steps they need to take next in order to improve.

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The curriculum is being developed successfully, with pupils having a class choice in selecting themes. Topics that link subjects are making learning more meaningful and raising pupils' interest and enthusiasm. Out-of-lesson clubs and activities improve pupils' musical and sporting skills and are supported well. Good use is made of visits and visitors to augment the learning in history and geography. However, the curriculum is not yet raising pupils' awareness of the customs and traditions of other people in this country.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

It is evident that the headteacher is committed to pursuing the very best for the pupils to bring about improvements. Under her guidance, the leaders and managers have established challenging targets to improve the school. The clear vision for the future is shared effectively with the wider school community but the school plan is not easy to follow and in places is too complex. The headteacher has established a consistent approach to monitoring the quality of teaching and sampling pupils' work to raise attainment and progress. The impact of actions to improve teaching and learning is having a greater effect in Key Stage 1 where attainment by the end of Year 2 is now rising steadily following several years of broadly average attainment. However, some of the monitoring initiatives are not yet fully embedded, especially in Key Stage 2. The management of special educational needs is satisfactory and the manager uses frequent scrutiny of pupils' achievement to effectively identify those pupils who need greater support. Leaders promote equality of opportunity satisfactorily. Governors are dedicated and actively involved in monitoring the work of the school. They provide satisfactory support to staff, pupils and parents and carers and ensure that the school's safeguarding procedures are good. The promotion of community cohesion ensures that pupils' understanding of and respect for different communities and cultures is satisfactory overall with good aspects within the school, local community and internationally.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with levels of skills broadly as expected for their age in most areas of learning but many have weaknesses in their writing and calculation skills. Currently, the children have been in school for two weeks and they have settled to the routines of the class very well and their social and emotional development is good. Their enthusiasm for learning was seen as they explored the garden plot and dug for worms. Provision for children's welfare, especially for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, is good. Staff ensure that both the inside and outside areas are fully used and that there is a good balance of teacher-directed and child-initiated activities. Teaching is well organised, providing high expectations for all children. These are based on good assessment procedures that help staff to plan accurately the next steps in children's learning. Teaching assistants play a vital role in assessing and supporting the development of children in their target group. By the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, most children have made good progress in the different areas of learning. However, the school recognises correctly that there are some who still have weaknesses in their writing and calculation skills.

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	2

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Stage	
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Views of parents and carers

The very large majority of parents and carers who replied to the questionnaire and those who spoke to inspectors expressed full support for the school. Parents and carers frequently commented about how impressed they are with the school's work in supporting pupils' learning and personal development.

Nearly all questionnaires were positive and expressed no overall concerns although a few parents and carers had concerns about their child's progress. It was judged by the inspection team that the recent development for sharing pupils' targets with their parents and carers gives accurate and up-to-date information about progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at More Park Catholic Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 102 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 198 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	54	53	44	43	4	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	73	72	27	26	2	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	37	36	60	59	3	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	31	30	51	50	13	13	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	36	35	59	58	3	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	32	31	63	62	4	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	38	37	58	57	4	4	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)	40	39	49	48	5	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	32	31	58	57	2	2	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	36	35	56	55	3	3	3	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	34	33	55	54	4	4	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	44	43	49	48	2	2	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	51	50	46	45	2	2	2	2

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.



1 October 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of More Park Catholic Primary School, West Malling, ME19 6HN

Thank you for helping us when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed meeting you and finding out about your school. We found that your school provides you with a satisfactory education. Thank you for telling us your very positive views when you completed the questionnaire. It helped us to get a clear picture of your school. Well done!

These are the things that we judged to be good in your school.

- Your headteacher and the staff are working hard to make things better for you.
- You like your school and are treated as individuals. Many of you enjoy the responsibilities you undertake.
- Your attendance is good.
- Everyone cares for and supports you well in your work and in helping you to understand that it is important to be healthy and fit.
- The teachers, other staff, your parents and carers and other people work together well, and links with your parents and carers are good
- You are all developing positive attitudes towards your work and towards each other.
- Your contributions to your school and to the local community are good.
- You are very polite and your good behaviour helps to create a positive environment in school. ♦

There are still some ways in which your school could be better. We have asked your headteacher and governors to do the following.

- Improve your work, particularly in mathematics, by planning tasks that are right for each one of you, not too easy and not too hard, especially for those who find learning difficult.
- Provide tasks that actively involve you in lessons, such as investigations, and question you more about what you are doing. ♦
- Provide a clear plan to show how the school is going to get better and how this will be checked.

Once again, thank you for your help. You can help further by asking your teachers how you can make your work better.

Yours sincerely

Graeme Bassett

Lead inspector

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