

# St Austin's Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	108254
<b>Local Authority</b>	Wakefield
<b>Inspection number</b>	356332
<b>Inspection dates</b>	3–4 November 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Rosemary Eaton

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>	357
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Olivia Rowley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr David Willis
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 June 2008
<b>School address</b>	Duke of York Street Wakefield West Yorkshire WF1 3PF
<b>Telephone number</b>	01924 303710
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<b>Email address</b>	headteacher@st-austins.wakefield.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 12 lessons, each taught by a different teacher, and held meetings with groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body, and staff. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documents including the school's plans for its future development, safeguarding policies and records, samples of pupils' work and assessment information. The 116 questionnaires returned by parents and carers were analysed, as were those completed by pupils and staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The effectiveness with which teaching meets the wide range of pupils' needs and enables all groups to learn well.
- How well marking and individual targets are used to make pupils aware of what they need to do in order to improve.
- The quality and frequency of opportunities for pupils to use literacy and numeracy during lessons in other subjects.

## Information about the school

This is a larger than average sized primary school. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. A below average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. Since the previous inspection, the school population has changed in that the proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds or those who are in the early stages of learning to speak English as an additional language, have increased and are well above average. Around 13 minority ethnic groups are represented in the school, the largest groups being of Pakistani or Polish heritage. The number of pupils joining the school at other than the usual time varies considerably from year-to-year but is often particularly high in Years 5 and 6. The school has gained the Activemark and Eco-schools Bronze awards and achieved Healthy School status.

**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?****2****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****2**

## Main findings

Pupils list a host of reasons why they so clearly enjoy attending this good school. Understandably, they describe it as 'a happy place to be' where 'everyone tries hard'. Outstanding care, guidance and support means that pupils are entirely confident that they are safe in school and that the adults look after them. Leaders and other staff are determined that pupils develop into well-rounded individuals. As a result, their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exceptional. They learn to understand, respect and value the cultures of others within the school's open and welcoming environment. Pupils are proud and happy to explain and celebrate with others their beliefs and traditions. They comment, for example, 'Christmas is great, although we don't have it at our house'. Because they respond so positively to the school's encouragement to care for each other, pupils are considerate and their behaviour is excellent.

When they join the Early Years Foundation Stage, most children's skills are at least below and at times well below the expectations for their age. During their time in school good progress ensures their attainment is broadly average by the end of Year 6. However, attainment is typically stronger in English than in mathematics. The school's careful analysis of assessment information has revealed that pupils tend to have some difficulty in using their numerical skills and knowledge to solve mathematical problems. Pupils' learning and progress have improved since the previous inspection in line with developments in teaching. For example, marking and the use of pupils' individual targets are now more effective so pupils are clear about how they can improve their work. Teachers usually pitch lessons sufficiently accurately so all groups of pupils learn well and make good gains in knowledge, skills and understanding. Occasionally, tasks do not provide enough challenge for some pupils, in particular the most able, which means that their learning and progress slow down.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher work closely together to ensure that the school's caring nature is retained alongside the unwavering drive for improvement which is shared by all staff. Accurate self-evaluation is used effectively to focus efforts on areas that will make a notable improvement to pupils' outcomes. Hence, work has already begun to raise attainment in mathematics. Thorough planning, with responsibilities distributed between leaders at all levels, means that aspects, such as teaching pupils about the sounds made by different letters, have improved and had a positive impact on attainment in reading and writing. All this indicates clearly that the school has good capacity to continue to improve.

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

- Raise attainment in mathematics by ensuring that pupils:

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- learn systematically the skills needed to solve mathematical problems
  - have more opportunities to apply these skills during lessons in mathematics and other subjects.
- Accelerate pupils' progress by ensuring that work is always matched closely to the needs of all, in particular the most able.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**2**

Pupils arrive at lessons ready and willing to work. Their thoughtful behaviour has a strong impact on their learning. They pay close attention to teachers and to each other, which makes everyone confident to volunteer to answer questions or express their point of view, even when they are still learning to speak English. Pupils' ability to work together in pairs or small groups is frequently exemplary. They readily share resources, take turns and negotiate amicably the best way forward. Although they invariably try hard, work in some lessons does not allow all pupils to make the best possible gains in knowledge, skills and understanding, because it is not pitched at high enough levels.

From their individual starting points, all groups of pupils make good progress year on year. Those in the early stages of learning to speak English take time to gain a working knowledge of the language, but when this has been achieved they progress well and achieve in line with other pupils. The pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities also thrive and make good progress as a result of the effective support they receive. The school attains most of the targets it sets for pupils to achieve. Within the average band, generally fewer pupils attain the nationally expected levels in mathematics than in English.

From a young age, pupils learn to appreciate exceedingly well how the school keeps them safe and the ways in which they can take some responsibility for their own safety. For instance, pupils in Year 1 understand why they must not run in the event of a fire drill and know that staff check the registers to make sure every pupil is safe. Behaviour is frequently excellent, as when pupils join together for prayers at the start of each day. They are confident that the very rare incidents of thoughtless behaviour by pupils are dealt with swiftly by staff. Pupils are well aware of the importance of healthy lifestyles, for example, drinking water voluntarily at regular intervals or joining in lunchtime or after-school exercise clubs. Attendance is improving strongly and is currently in excess of the school's target. Pupils skip and run into school in order not to be late. They readily take on a range of responsibilities, for example, as classroom monitors, school councillors or gardeners. Pupils in the early stages of learning English as an additional language benefit greatly from the efforts of others who are always quick to explain or translate. Aware that many people in the world are less fortunate than themselves, pupils enthusiastically support varied causes at home and abroad. Their strong work ethic, understanding of the need to conserve resources, and ability to use literacy and information and communication technology (ICT) to help them learn help to ensure that pupils are prepared well for their future lives, despite some lack of a systematic approach to solving problems involving numeracy.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

<sup>1</sup> 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?

Relationships between adults and pupils are first-rate. Pupils relish their teachers' praise and encouragement, and rise to their high expectations of behaviour. Teachers regularly promote personal development in the course of lessons. For example, Year 1 pupils were reminded that all creatures have to live somewhere, so a ladybird that appeared in the classroom must be treated with care. Teachers make good use of learning resources, such as interactive whiteboards. They use questions effectively to check pupils' understanding and press them to think hard. Teaching assistants make strong contributions to lessons, often by supporting groups of pupils such as those with special educational needs and/or disabilities or in the early stages of learning English as an additional language. Pupils seldom find tasks too difficult but occasionally there is insufficient extra challenge for pupils who should be working at higher levels than others in the class.

The curriculum provides a clear framework for learning, through which pupils build up their knowledge, skills and understanding. They have good opportunities to apply literacy and ICT skills in other subjects. The school is now seeking to increase the emphasis on providing more open-ended investigative work in mathematics, in order to equip pupils better with skills and strategies for solving mathematical problems. Personal, social and health education is deeply embedded throughout the school. Enrichment opportunities are many and varied and are greatly enjoyed by pupils. Visits and visitors have a powerful impact on learning. For example, a language assistant is currently teaching Key Stage 2

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pupils Mandarin and about Chinese culture. Clubs include topics such as football, chess, science, choir and mathematics.

Every pupil is known as an individual and support is carefully targeted to help them benefit from their time in school. Systems to promote good behaviour are highly effective as seen in the improvements made by pupils who join the school with a history of challenging behaviour. Attendance is promoted extremely promptly, rigorously and successfully. The school and the education welfare officer work closely with parents and carers when the attendance of particular pupils causes concern. As a result, attendance improves dramatically as individuals grow older. The school's work with families facing difficult circumstances is often exemplary, involves close working with external agencies, and enables pupils who could be vulnerable to flourish. Links with the high school are strong, for example, through the shared learning mentor, and support transition very well.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The school is ambitious for its pupils. Staff typically praise the strength of teamwork within the school. This indicates leaders' success in establishing a collegiate approach where staff are encouraged to put forward ideas for school improvement and work together to tackle any problems. Staff are helped to develop their leadership skills, for example, through support to lead staff meetings when introducing initiatives. The arrangements to monitor teaching and learning are well organised and involve senior and some middle leaders. The outcomes are used to improve individual teachers' practice and plans are being implemented to share common themes in order to increase the consistency of teaching. The governing body fulfils its responsibilities well. Its clear view of the school's strengths and areas to develop is increasingly the result of first-hand monitoring. Safeguarding is in line with recommended good practice. Child protection procedures are given appropriately high priority and the school's vigilance and perseverance have led to other agencies refining their own practice. The school works very effectively to provide each child in its very diverse population with equal opportunities. For example, children often join the Reception Year having had no nursery experience. To compensate, the school has extended the hours children are able to attend. The school's very close-knit community includes pupils' families. It reaches out to its local community, for example, through work with churches and schools, and is currently developing more global links such as extending pupils' communications with children in China.

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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

When they join the Reception Year, children's language skills are often particularly weak. Staff treat these as a priority, for example, successfully encouraging children to listen carefully and teaching them systematically about the sounds made by letters. The good progress children make in this area enables them to develop well across all areas of learning. Staff provide a good balance of activities led by adults and those chosen by children. The learning environment is stimulating, particularly indoors, and encourages children to explore and get involved in learning. Sometimes, activities do not have a clear enough purpose and children are not prompted sufficiently. This means that children are happily occupied but may not be learning well because of lost opportunities for speaking and listening. Assessment is rigorous and regular. Children's progress is tracked carefully to help adults target extra support where necessary. Parents and carers are encouraged to share their own observations of their children, contributing to journals that record landmarks in learning. The good quality relationships established quickly between staff, children and their parents and carers help to ensure that children settle and begin learning straight away. Leaders have a clear vision for developing the provision, based on careful monitoring and evaluation and their knowledge of the needs of young children.



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*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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 Stage	2

## Views of parents and carers

About one third of parents and carers returned the questionnaire. Their views were almost entirely positive and were endorsed by the inspection. For example, the inspectors support parents' and carers' strong belief that their children are safe in school and that the quality of teaching is good. Several parents and carers wrote appreciative comments about the school, such as, 'My child is cared for and treated as an individual'. A small number described particular concerns, some of which were beyond the scope of the inspection. The inspectors considered the points raised but were unable to endorse most of them. However, the inspection does support the view held by a few parents and carers that the most-able pupils are occasionally not provided with sufficient challenge.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Austin's 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 116 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 357 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	81	70	34	29	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	89	77	26	22	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	68	59	44	38	3	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	64	55	46	40	3	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	74	64	42	36	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	58	50	52	45	3	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	61	53	52	45	1	1	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)	51	44	54	47	1	1	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	55	47	53	46	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	63	54	41	35	3	3	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	49	42	54	47	3	3	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	71	61	39	34	2	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	74	64	39	34	1	1	0	0

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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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](http://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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



05 November 2010

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Austin's Catholic Primary School, Wakefield, WF1 3PF**

Thank you for being so welcoming and helpful during your school's inspection. We really enjoyed our short time with you and would particularly like to thank the pupils who gave up their time to talk to the inspectors about the school. We judged St Austin's to be a good school. These are some of the best features:

- your behaviour is outstanding and means that everyone can enjoy their time in school
- you feel extremely safe in school because the adults take such excellent care of you
- you respect each others' beliefs and everyone is free to feel proud of their own culture
- you learn well and make good progress, because teaching is of good quality
- the school arranges lots of interesting visits, visitors and clubs
- all the adults in school work together to provide you all with a good start to your education
- the school's leaders know just what needs to be done to make your school even better.

To help, we have asked the school to do two things.

- We noticed that you sometimes find it hard to solve problems involving mathematics so we want you to have more opportunities to do this sort of work.
- Occasionally, some of your work is not hard enough, especially for those of you who work at higher levels, and we want your teachers to make sure you all have work that is at just the right level.

You can help by continuing to work hard. We send our best wishes to each of you.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Rosemary Eaton

Lead inspector

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