

# St Stephen's Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	101455
<b>Local Authority</b>	Bexley
<b>Inspection number</b>	355000
<b>Inspection dates</b>	27–28 January 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Joanna Toulson

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>	5–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	420
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Anthony Woodcock
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mary Masterson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	27 February 2008
<b>School address</b>	Ruskin Avenue Welling DA16 3QG
<b>Telephone number</b>	02083039738
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 16 lessons taught by 15 teachers, observed an assembly and held meetings with pupils, governors and staff. They observed the school's work and looked at the school improvement plan, minutes of governing body meetings, a variety of policies and risk assessments, documentation relating to pupils' progress and safeguarding, lesson plans and pupils' work. The questionnaires returned by 104 pupils and 167 parents and carers were also scrutinised.

The inspection team looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The success of the school's current strategies in bringing about improvements in writing in Key Stage 1.
- Whether attainment in mathematics is falling in Key Stage 1.
- How effectively the quality of teaching and learning is being improved through the school.

## Information about the school

This school is larger than most of a similar type. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds with the next largest group being of Black African heritage. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is lower than average with few at the early stages of learning to speak English. The school has a lower than average number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Most of these relate to difficulties with speech, language and communication or autistic spectrum disorders. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The school has the Healthy School Award. The before- and after- school provision on site is not managed by the governing body and is subject to a separate inspection.

**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

St Stephen's Catholic Primary School provides a good education for all its pupils as well as a good level of care, guidance and support. Pupils feel safe in the bright, airy environment. Parents and carers, pupils, staff and the governing body are all rightly proud of the school, and the shared commitment to the strong Catholic ethos results in a harmonious, supportive community. Adults are good role models and there are strong relationships across the school. These, together with opportunities to promote pupils' personal development, including, for example, assemblies which celebrate personal achievement and promote empathy with others, are key to pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The behaviour of pupils is exemplary. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy. One pupil told an inspector, 'We practise healthy eating and keep fit so that we do not have problems when we get old.' The very high attendance rate is an indication of how much pupils enjoy the school and all it has to offer. ♦ All staff care a great deal about the welfare of the pupils and there are effective partnerships with a wide range of agencies. The good, imaginative curriculum, taught by committed teachers and effective, well-trained support staff, includes an excellent range of enrichment activities which pupils enjoy. Parents and carers are extremely supportive of the school and receive good information about school life and how they can help their children to learn.

Staff receive very good professional development and this is resulting in good and improving teaching and learning. Good and sometimes outstanding teaching is characterised by a lively pace and activities which engage and excite pupils. Where teaching is less effective, opportunities are missed for pupils to assess their own learning against clear criteria. While planning for the needs of all groups of pupils is mostly good, opportunities are sometimes lost to challenge the more-able pupils during lessons.

There has been good improvement since the last inspection due to the drive and vision of the headteacher and other key staff who have worked well together to move things forward quickly. School self-evaluation is accurate. Senior leaders know the progress of each pupil and quickly put in place additional support if needed. This careful monitoring of how well pupils are doing is a key factor in accelerating the rate of progress that pupils make. The improvements in the rate of pupils' progress and in the quality of the teaching and learning are evidence that there is a good capacity for further improvement. ♦ While safeguarding measures are satisfactory in ensuring that pupils are safe, the school has identified the need to formalise the system for recording information about vulnerable pupils. While the school carries out required risk assessments on a variety of areas of school life and has appropriate policies, these sometimes lack detail or are not fully up to date.

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

- Raise the quality of teaching and learning to that of the best by:
  - ensuring that the more-able pupils are challenged in all lessons ♦
  - giving more opportunities for pupils to assess their own learning. ♦
- By March 2011, improve the systems for safeguarding by:
  - keeping the information about vulnerable pupils in a way which records details clearly ♦
  - ensuring that all policies and risk assessments are fully up to date and signed so that it is clear that they have been reviewed and shared by all staff.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**2**

Pupils start school with skills that are generally at or below the levels typically expected for their age. By the time they leave Year 6, pupils' attainment is above average and their achievement is good. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified quickly and receive very good support, as do those few pupils at the early stages of learning to speak English as an additional language. As a result, they make good progress academically as well as in their personal development. Black African pupils and White British pupils do as well as each other, with no group underperforming. Attainment in mathematics in Key Stage 1 has been on a downward trend for the last three years, but a strong focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning is leading to improvements. For example, in an effective Year 1 lesson, pupils made good progress because they were given opportunities to talk about their methods and the number patterns they saw. The teaching and learning of writing is very good, following a focus on encouraging reading, the good teaching of letters and sounds, and exciting links across the curriculum. For example, in an outstanding literacy lesson in Year 2, pupils had visited Oxleas Wood where they had hunted for Cuddly from the story 'Emily Brown'. Back in the classroom, they drew on their experiences in the wood to make their writing lively and interesting. In another effective lesson in Year 1, pupils were investigating light as part of their literacy work around the story of the 'The owl who was afraid of the dark'. These links make learning meaningful and pupils are excited to talk about what they are finding out. Pupils become good young citizens and learn about their own culture and that of others through, for example, music and art, and by celebrating a range of festivals. Projects, such as the one carried out by Year 6 to develop the playground, give good opportunities to develop life skills as well as enabling pupils to improve their own community.

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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>	2
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>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</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>	1
<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?

Where teaching is good or outstanding, work is well matched to the needs of all pupils. Pupils have opportunities to talk about their learning with their partner or in small groups and are encouraged to extend their ideas through effective questioning. In the minority of lessons, where teaching is less effective, there is too little difference between what is expected of different ability groups and as a result, the more-able pupils are not sufficiently challenged. There is sometimes an overemphasis on the 'hands up' strategy which means that opportunities are lost for pupils to discuss their ideas. The school recognises that the marking of pupils' work in mathematics does not always give pupils guidance about how to improve and a revised marking policy is being drawn up to address this. Currently, in all subjects, pupils have too few opportunities to assess their own work or that of others.

The curriculum provides rich and varied experiences. During the inspection, pupils enjoyed dancing the jitterbug during a physical education lesson while another class visited the nearby Chislehurst caves as part of their topic on light. The recent focus on reading, with visits by authors such as Anne Fine and Michael Rosen, is a good example of how pupils' interests are harnessed to make learning fun, while promoting good achievement.

The good care that pupils receive is noted by a parent whose son has special educational needs: 'The school is doing everything possible to support him and ensure he fulfils his

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potential.' Another parent commented that, 'All my children have attended St Stephen's, and the older two, now left, were well prepared for secondary school.'

*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>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, ably supported by her effective senior team, has been instrumental in driving school improvement since the last inspection. The focus on supporting teachers to improve their practice, and so accelerate the rate of progress that pupils make, has been successful and there is a real determination to ensure continued improvement. The close monitoring of how well pupils are doing reflects this determination to also ensure that all pupils have equal opportunity to do their best and that no pupil is subject to any form of discrimination. Middle leaders receive high quality training and work alongside senior staff to monitor standards. The governing body is very supportive of the school and works closely with staff to support school improvement. The school makes a strong contribution to promoting community cohesion through its work in the local parish and with its links to schools further afield. While several aspects of safeguarding are good, safeguarding is no better than satisfactory overall because these good aspects are not in place across all areas.

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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>3</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**

The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and this has resulted in a marked improvement in the provision since the last inspection. Much good work has been done to improve the quality of assessment when children join Reception and this means that staff have a better understanding of the needs of individual children. There are good opportunities for children to visit school before starting but the lack of home visits is a missed opportunity to get to know the children in their home environment. In effective whole-group sessions, clear modelling of language by the teacher is encouraging the good development of speaking and listening skills. The children enjoy the activities because they include visits as well as visitors in school. For example, children were excited about their recent visit to the fire station and enjoyed seeing the photographs displayed and talking about what they had seen. Children choose from a range of activities which engage and sustain their interest. For example, children enjoyed making their fire engines and good questioning from the adult meant that they both asked and answered questions about what they were doing. The outside area is well planned and is used well to develop children's skills. During the inspection, children were outside playing at being vets, talking about the ailments of their animals and developing early writing skills by making appointments, under the guidance of an adult. Planning is in place for the whole year which limits the ability to take account of children's interests in the activities provided. Children feel very safe and happy in this caring environment and are developing good personal skills very quickly. Even the youngest pupils know that they should eat healthily. As one child said, 'You're not allowed to drink coke ♦ only water or juice.' Parents and carers appreciate the work of the staff, as summed up by a parent who said, 'My son has made the best start to school I could have wanted.'



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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

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers are very satisfied with the school and feel that it is a caring environment where pupils feel safe. A very small minority of parents and carers were concerned about the behaviour of some of the pupils, particularly during playtimes. The inspection team found no unacceptable behaviour and found that the school has good systems for managing it when it does occur.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Stephen'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 167 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 420 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	96	57	66	40	3	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	108	65	58	35	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	72	43	83	50	5	5	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	69	41	88	53	5	5	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	90	54	73	44	2	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	78	47	77	46	5	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	94	56	66	40	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)	64	38	72	43	7	7	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	77	46	76	46	4	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	72	43	72	43	6	6	4	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	56	34	86	51	7	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	111	66	51	31	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	105	63	54	32	4	4	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and 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 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## 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.**



28 January 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Stephen's Catholic Primary School, Welling DA16 3QG**

Thank you for welcoming us so warmly when we visited your school recently. The other inspectors and I really enjoyed meeting you and seeing you working so well in your lessons. We thought you were extremely well behaved and it was lovely to see how kind and respectful you are to each other. All the staff care a great deal about how well you are doing and how happy you are. They make sure you get extra help with your work if you need it and are working hard to make your learning as interesting as possible. You know how to keep yourself safe and healthy. We agree with your teachers that St Stephen's is a good school and you are right to be proud of it.

To improve your education even further, we have asked your teachers to:

- make teaching even better by:
- making sure that those of you who find learning easier are challenged to work hard in all lessons
- giving you more opportunities to make your own decisions about how well you have done in a lesson.
- always make sure that policies and other paperwork about keeping you safe are kept fully up to date.

You can help your school by continuing to work hard and by telling your teacher if you find the work too easy or too hard. Thank you again for welcoming us into your school.

Yours sincerely

Joanna Toulson

Lead inspector

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