

St Louis Roman Catholic Primary

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124768
Local Authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	359767
Inspection dates	15–16 September 2010
Reporting inspector	June Woolhouse

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	5–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	241
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Julienne Whipp
Headteacher	Mrs Teresa Selvey
Date of previous school inspection	19 November 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors visited 18 lessons and all ten teachers were observed at least once. Inspectors held meetings with school leaders, governors and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at school policies, the school development plan, pupils' work, displays and photographs. Parents and carers returned 71 questionnaires and inspectors analysed these and questionnaires from staff and pupils.

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

- The learning and progress of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to determine the effectiveness of provision in Nursery and Reception.
- Pupils' attainment and progress, particularly those in Years 3 and 4, to evaluate the effectiveness of planning and teaching and the impact of mixed age classes.
- The extent to which pupils feel safe and whether all safeguarding procedures are fully established.
- The effectiveness of subject leadership in managing pupil assessment, setting appropriate targets and tracking progress across all key stages.

Information about the school

This average size school takes predominantly Catholic children from a wide area. It is set in attractive grounds near the centre of Newmarket. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average; their needs include speech, language and communication and emotional, social and behavioural difficulties and moderate learning difficulties. Very few have a statement of special educational needs. An increasing number of children speak English as an additional language and an above average proportion comes from minority ethnic backgrounds. The school provides a fully extended service to parents, carers and the community. The school has Healthy Schools status and the Active Mark award. Since the last inspection, the local authority has agreed to reorganise schools in West Suffolk from three to two phases, so that Year 4 pupils will stay at this school at the end of this year.

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 Louis Primary is a good school. Pupils reach levels above those expected by the end of Year 4. They achieve well, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those whose first language is not English. In addition, pupils' personal development is very well promoted within the school's Catholic ethos because adults give outstanding care, support and guidance to all pupils. This results in outstanding behaviour and attitudes to learning, above average attendance and excellent contributions to the school and local community. Pupils' ability to work together harmoniously and support each other in lessons and at other times, contributes to a positive and effective learning atmosphere. They willingly take on a range of responsibilities, starting in the Early Years Foundation Stage, express themselves very confidently in the school council and have seen ideas to improve school facilities come to fruition. They are respectful of each other and all adults. The school is inclusive and functions as a cohesive community. This is supported by good links with local organisations, but there are no formal links further afield. Nevertheless, increasing numbers of pupils from minority ethnic groups, especially from Eastern Europe, quickly settle to school routines and thrive because the school provides outstanding support for all pupils. The vast majority of parents and carers are fully supportive of the school, reflected in this comment, 'We are delighted with St Louis and all it has to offer. The children are very happy and learning well'.

The headteacher leads the staff well and has forged an enthusiastic and committed team increasingly able to take responsibility for maintaining and improving the quality of pupils' learning. She expects and benefits from a professional attitude to improving all aspects of teaching through well-targeted professional development programmes and regular monitoring of teaching and learning. Governors have taken decisive action to improve their understanding of roles and responsibilities, particularly regarding safeguarding pupils, outdoor provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage and pupil progress. Safeguarding procedures are good. The school recognises the need to further increase community cohesion within a national and global context. There are outstanding links with parents, carers and a range of agencies that support pupils' learning and well-being.

School leaders are evaluating learning and teaching with increasing accuracy and rigour using national assessment guidance. This together with accurate self evaluation in other aspect of the school's work has resulted in good improvement since the last inspection and shows that the school has a good capacity to continue to improve. Senior leaders use the school-wide tracking system skilfully to track progress and identify, for further support, individuals who are falling behind. Not all middle leaders are sufficiently knowledgeable in linking these outcomes with the way pupils' performance is measured against national standards and the expected rates of progress from year to year. Sometimes pupils' targets are too ambitious and take too little account of their starting points and abilities.

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Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, having entered the Nursery class with a range of abilities that are usually below that expected nationally. They enjoy playing in the improved facilities for outdoor learning. Planning for the Nursery class has placed too little emphasis on promoting children's communication, language and literacy, and creative skills. Senior leaders recognise this and have taken action which has resulted in greater consistency, although it is too early to judge the impact on children's learning and rates of progress within each year group.

School resources are well managed and leaders take good account of the planned increase in numbers as the school changes to a primary school with pupils up to Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve curriculum leadership and management by:
 - training middle leaders about the measurement of pupils' attainment and progress, in all year groups, so that national comparisons are more accurate and all data are understood
 - using assessment outcomes as a starting point to set realistic but ambitious curricular and performance targets for all pupils.
 - Implement a revised plan for community cohesion by spring 2011 to include national and international links with contrasting schools.
 - Improve provision in the Nursery by:
 - planning and facilitating children's learning across all six areas, in particular all aspects of communication, language and literacy and creative development
 - ensuring that outdoor activities can take place regardless of the weather.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils make good progress in lessons because teaching takes account of a wide range of needs, especially in mixed age classes, and teachers understand that learning is more successful when pupils are engaged first-hand. Pupils work together very well and often collaborate in pairs or small groups to solve problems or consolidate previous learning.

Pupils in Key Stage 2 were observed helping each other to understand the importance of precise vocabulary when they were planning their writing. They worked together enthusiastically to sort adjectives according to their relevance when describing a heroic character. They discussed which words would best describe certain characters, listening carefully to each other and taking turns in a mature way.

In another lesson pupils enjoyed sharing ideas of an imaginary world which led to good quality writing because there was time to consider alternatives or build up a picture together. Pupils in Key Stage 1 enjoyed a well-planned dance lesson and moved with skill and imagination enhanced by well-chosen musical clips. They were confident in using their bodies to show they understood the difference between moving quickly or more slowly and how they could stretch or curl up when making particular shapes.

Pupils say they feel safe in school and know who they can talk to should a problem arise. The ability to express themselves clearly and work in teams prepares them well for more complex work in the secondary school. Pupils understand how to stay healthy, enjoy

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sports and know they can access water throughout the day. The school's achievement of the Healthy School award is reflected in pupils eating healthily because meals are well-prepared and balanced. Pupils represent the school on the Newmarket Youth Council. Their spiritual, moral and social development is good, reflected in outstanding behaviour, which impacts most positively on learning, respect for each other and very good levels of collaboration. Pupils' awareness of other cultures and traditions is more limited. Pupils, parents and carers benefit from additional learning opportunities provided by the Extended Schools programme.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
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?

Teaching is good overall and the majority of lessons are well-planned to take account of the broad range of needs, especially in mixed-age classes. Clear learning objectives are shared with pupils and most know what is expected by the end of the lessons. Teachers use interactive white boards well to display important information such as learning objectives but also, for example, paragraphs of well-written text to show good quality writing of well-known authors. Pupils have opportunities to think and reflect on what they read together. This was particularly effective in Key Stage 2 when pupils planned a story board or planned a paragraph of descriptive writing using the style of recognised authors. Teachers use talk partners effectively enabling pupils to explain first-hand and clarify quickly, in pairs, what they are learning. In less effective lessons teachers talk too much

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and do not give clear enough explanation of and instruction in how pupils should set about solving problems. The increasing use of national assessment materials to judge pupils' attainment has improved the way teachers plan for the precise needs of different groups. Teaching assistants support groups effectively as well as assisting in one-to-one instruction, enabling these pupils to keep up with their peers. Good quality marking informs pupils of what they need to do next in order to make good progress.

The curriculum is broad and balanced. It is organised effectively into six areas which mirror those in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Subjects are linked through themes with an emphasis on creativity and allowing pupils' interests to be included. Visits to the local area and further afield plus visitors into school, enhance pupils' learning. The school's excellent links with the Catholic parish and local pyramid of schools, for example taking part in the pilgrimage to Walsingham and seasonal musical events, enrich pupils' experiences. Pupils' personal development is further enhanced by planning of science and personal, social and health education. Pupils enjoy a good range of extra-curricular activities. Sporting opportunities are extensive and contribute well to pupils' healthy lifestyles and are reflected in Healthy Schools status and the Active Mark award.

Care, guidance and support are strengths of the school. The needs of particular groups such as those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, pupils from vulnerable circumstances, or the more-able are accurately identified and catered for most effectively through individual or small group planning and teaching. Consequently these pupils make good progress along with the rest of their class. Persistent absence has been tackled well since the last inspection and attendance is now above average. The school has excellent links with parents, carers and a range of agencies, for example the police and the local authority special educational needs advisory service. Pupils' individual needs are well known to staff and procedures are very well embedded from the time they start school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

Leadership and management are good and there is a common purpose amongst staff to drive improvement, firmly embedded by the hard work and dedication of the headteacher. She is ably supported by her deputy and together they have reorganised responsibilities and improved the leadership skills of key stage leaders. Team work extends to curriculum planning, evaluation of teaching, and detailed assessments of pupils' work. Carefully chosen professional development activities to further increase knowledge and understanding of effective teaching and learning spearhead this approach to school

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improvement. Governors are increasing their impact on school matters and know the schools strengths and weaknesses sufficiently well to challenge senior leaders. Consequently attainment remains above national expectations at the end of Year 4. The school promotes equality of opportunity well, because pupils' needs are identified rapidly, especially those who join the school later partway through their education. A plan to improve community cohesion is in place and good links exist locally, especially those with the Catholic church. As yet links further afield are not in place and school leaders rightly recognise the need to enhance pupils' cultural understanding and prepare them further for life in a multi-cultural society. Safeguarding pupils is paramount. Good procedures are fully implemented so that pupils know how to distinguish between visitors who can be with them without their teacher and those who cannot.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
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	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Nursery class with a wide range of abilities, but are generally below the nationally expected level, especially in social, emotional and language skills. They make good progress, especially in the Reception class, and by the end of the Reception year achieve in line with national expectations. Good induction procedures help children to settle happily and explore with some confidence a range of good quality resources and materials. Nursery children enjoy using paint to produce a hand print or filling a dump truck with sand. They are keen to run and climb outside. Their progress is satisfactory. Children in the Reception classes make better progress because all adults fully understand the learning needs of young children and are skilled at intervening to take learning forward. The outdoor area is an extension of the classroom set up to provide good opportunities to explore and investigate their surroundings. Children are looked after with utmost care and attention by all adults. Welfare arrangements are fully in place and children's safety is a high priority. There are positive relationships with parents and carers

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who are encouraged to play a full part in their children's education. They are well informed about what their children will experience and learn.

Teaching is good and there are examples of outstanding practice in the Reception classes where adults develop children's learning through sensitive intervention with individuals or small groups. Children make good progress because teachers engage them in interesting and practical sessions that do not last too long but give sufficient time for practice. Regular assessments are completed effectively through first-hand observations and each child has a comprehensive record of achievement by the end of the year. There is some inconsistency of practice between the year groups. Broad plans to improve provision across both year groups to assist adults to better understand the needs of young children and adapt their practice accordingly are in place.

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 Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

About a third of parents and carers returned questionnaires. The vast majority fully support the school. A few believed their concerns were not sufficiently addressed or that the school was not well-led and managed. Inspectors found that every attempt to engage parents and carers in the education of their children is taken. The school is well-led and managed borne out by pupils' levels of attainment, their good progress and that all of them said they enjoyed school when they completed the pupil questionnaire.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Louis Roman 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 71 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 241 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	57	80	11	15	2	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	47	66	23	32	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	34	48	30	42	3	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	38	54	24	34	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	53	75	16	23	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	42	59	24	34	2	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	44	62	25	35	0	0	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)	36	51	28	39	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	38	54	30	42	0	0	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	38	54	27	38	3	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	31	44	27	38	7	10	3	4
The school is led and managed effectively	39	55	24	34	6	8	2	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	51	72	18	25	2	3	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	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.



17 September 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Louis Roman Catholic Primary, Newmarket, CB8 7AA

I am writing to tell you how much my team and I enjoyed being with you in school recently. We would like to thank you for helping us to complete the inspection and giving up your time to talk to us. We were very impressed with many things about your school especially your excellent behaviour, courtesy to visitors and how well you work together in class. You are making good progress in your lessons because you listen carefully to your teachers and express your views clearly and sensibly. You have good teachers who plan interesting work and help you to understand what you are learning and how to improve. However, not all the teachers understand how your work is compared with other children across the country. I have asked your headteacher to help them in this area. I have also asked your teachers to set targets that challenge you and to improve the planning of activities and the quality of the outdoor area for children in the nursery. Finally I have asked that the governors make a plan so that you can learn about other communities who live further away from Newmarket including other countries overseas. This will help you to get a view of how children live, the customs they keep and the religions they follow.

I do hope the rest of the year is productive and successful. It will be exciting for Year 4 to be the very first class to go into Year 5 next September without moving to another school; and then into Year 6. Work hard and continue to enjoy your time at St Louis.

Yours sincerely

June Woolhouse (on behalf of the team)

Lead inspector

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