

# St Alban's Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	106771
<b>Local Authority</b>	Doncaster
<b>Inspection number</b>	356025
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 June 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Stephen Fisher

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>	181
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Graham Kirby
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Jo Ayres
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 March 2008
<b>School address</b>	Wadworth Street Denaby Main, Doncaster South Yorkshire DN12 4AQ
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors who visited 11 lessons. The inspectors observed seven teachers and other staff and held discussions with members of the governing body, staff, pupils and a representative of the local authority. They observed the school's work, and looked at school policies, pupils' assessment information, curriculum planning, improvement plans, local authority reports about the school and safeguarding documentation. The inspectors analysed the responses contained in 40 questionnaires received from parents and carers, 93 from pupils and 17 from staff.

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

- The achievement of pupils in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The extent to which the school is meeting the needs of boys.
- The capacity of school leaders to raise achievement.

## Information about the school

St Alban's Catholic Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportions with special educational needs and/or disabilities and with a statement of special educational needs are low. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups is low and there are none who speak English as an additional language. The school has gained a number of awards, including the Activemark, Healthy School and 'Eco' school status. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught by two part-time teachers in one Reception class. The school has experienced considerable turbulence in staffing since the last inspection as the result of staff turnover and some long-term absence.

**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

St Alban's Catholic Primary School is a satisfactory school. It takes good care of its pupils, who say that they feel safe, enjoy lessons and that adults take good care of them. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. They have a good understanding of how to keep healthy. For example, one Year 2 pupil explained, 'If you don't exercise, your muscles won't grow.' The extent to which pupils contribute to the life of the school and to the wider community is good. They take on a range of regular responsibilities, including those to support the smooth organisation of break times.

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with a range of skills that are, overall, below those typically expected for their age, particularly in their language development. Children make satisfactory progress and their skills remain below average by the time they enter Key Stage 1. During the inspection good teaching was observed in all three key stages and this enabled pupils to make good progress in those lessons. Pupils' work in their books and pupils' performance data show that over time they make satisfactory progress in the development of their reading, writing and mathematics skills, but that their progress and the quality of their learning is now improving securely and quickly. Attainment in English and mathematics was low but it is now improving strongly. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, and both were often good during the inspection. In the lessons where learning was good all pupils were motivated, challenged to do their best and given good support as they worked, although such practice is not consistent throughout the school. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils but do not consistently provide them with good quality information about how well they are doing and how they can improve.

Leaders have accurately evaluated the school's strengths and areas for development. The school has introduced a range of initiatives to improve standards in reading, writing and mathematics, but their impact has been limited. The recently appointed class teachers and the associate deputy headteacher are making a good impact, although the monitoring of teaching and learning has yet to show consistently good outcomes for pupils. Although pupils' performance information has not been used effectively and lines of accountability have not been clear enough in the improvement-planning process. Improvements to the curriculum and teaching styles have been successful in meeting the needs of boys and improving their performance to match that of girls.

Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements but policies and processes lack full clarity. The school is a very cohesive community and it has good links with the parish and with local community groups. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is strong. They embrace new experiences enthusiastically and offer reasoned views about moral issues, though their understanding of the diversity and difference at the national and global levels is less well developed. The school has coped very well with the difficulties

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faced as a result of the high staff turnover. New staff have had a positive impact on standards, all staff display positive attitudes and leaders demonstrate the determination and ability to continue to improve provision and outcomes for pupils. As such, the school has a satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

Up to 40% of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit from an Ofsted inspector before the next Section 5 inspection.

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

- Raise attainment in reading, writing and mathematics throughout the school by ensuring that:
  - teaching is consistently effective in securing good pupil progress
  - teachers have high expectations of all pupils
  - teachers give pupils clear and regular feedback about how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve
  - school leaders more robustly monitor the quality of teaching and learning and provide support for staff to enable them to improve.
- Strengthen leadership and management, and school governance by:
  - making effective use of pupils' performance information to raise expectations and improve standards
  - ensuring that improvement plans show clear lines of accountability, timescales and intended outcomes.
- Ensure that the school adds more clarity to its policies and procedures in order to raise the quality of safeguarding to good or better rather than satisfactory.
- Plan and implement strategies to improve pupils' understanding of cultural diversity.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**3**

Pupils throughout the school enjoy their learning. For example, in a Year 1 lesson pupils quickly settled to produce written descriptions of cats and dogs and in a Year 5 lesson they were keen to ask questions and contribute their ideas to the plan for a class assembly presentation. Pupils listen well and follow instructions promptly. Most are keen to do their best and they work enthusiastically, particularly the younger pupils. Good relationships and a positive atmosphere were evident in almost all lessons seen during the inspection and pupils made good progress as a result. However, progress over time has been satisfactory in reading, writing and mathematics because of the disruption to pupils' learning caused by exceptionally high staff turnover. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress overall. However, those with a range of significant and complex needs make good progress as a result of their carefully designed pastoral and learning support programmes.

By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils' attainment remains low in English and mathematics, although the gap between the school's and national standards has closed significantly since 2009. There is convincing evidence that learning and progress are currently at least satisfactory and that they are improving securely. Recent improvements, such as new

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units of work that place a focus on practical activity and the use of individual targets for pupils, are clearly beneficial and have quickened the pace of improvement.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school and know who to turn to if they have any problems. Although their attainment is low, the development of their basic skills is satisfactory overall. Pupils' personal qualities are satisfactory; in many respects they are good. For example, pupils demonstrate responsibility and thoughtfulness in lessons, show consideration for others, are dedicated to their work to improve the school grounds and understand the importance of recycling materials.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	4
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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</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>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</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?**

Teachers and support staff maintain good relationships with pupils and there is good team work amongst staff. The atmosphere in lessons is purposeful and pupils' learning and behaviour are managed well. For example, in a Year 2 mathematics lesson, while the two adults each worked with groups of pupils, those pupils who were expected to work independently did so with concentration to construct a tally of the types of sweets in packets and produce bar graphs illustrating their findings. In the most effective lessons pupils are given clear instructions, interesting and relevant practical activities and are challenged to produce their best work. In the less successful lessons time is not as well used, information about prior learning is not always taken into account sufficiently to plan for improvement in skills and knowledge, and pupils have limited opportunities to talk

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about their learning. Marking is regular and accurate and pupils are given praise and encouragement. Assessment informs planning. However, although assessment informs planning, there is sometimes insufficient emphasis on giving pupils clear and regular feedback about how well they are doing, showing them what they need to do to improve and supporting them to do so.

The school has maintained a broad and balanced curriculum since the last inspection and invested heavily in programmes to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. The school's Christian ethos is evident in the curriculum and pupils are given good opportunities to reflect on their experiences. The curriculum places an increasing emphasis on pupils learning through practical activity, such as gardening, and the popular 'Let's Get Cooking' lessons, which help develop their speaking and listening and mathematical skills. A relatively small number of extra-curricular clubs are offered to pupils.

Pupils are given good care, guidance and support throughout the school. Clearly targeted support for potentially vulnerable pupils and those who have troubled lives has significantly improved their behaviour, confidence, relationships and attitudes to school. The school's 'nurture provision' and 'Rainbows support programme' play a significant part in this success and the school also liaises effectively with local authority agencies to support pupils and their families. The school has effective arrangements for the transition of pupils to secondary school, although the arrangements for induction to the Reception class are less well developed. While attendance is satisfactory, the school does all it reasonably can to promote good attendance, including the use of incentives, as well as involving local authority agencies in cases of low attendance.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## How effective are leadership and management?

Despite the considerable difficulties faced in the last year, leaders remain ambitious and are motivated to continue to improve the school. Leaders' analysis of performance data has given them an understanding of where weaknesses lie but this data has not been used effectively enough to set high expectations, plan clear and specific strategies for improvement and to promote pupils' better progress in every year group. There is effective team work and morale is good. Recent appointments, including that of the associate deputy headteacher, have strengthened the school leaders' capacity to monitor and support the quality of teaching and improve pupils' outcomes, and, in particular, to support the teachers who are new or relatively new to the profession.

Governance is satisfactory. The governing body meets its statutory responsibilities and is very supportive of the headteacher and staff. However, members of the governing body

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rely heavily on receiving information about performance from the headteacher and its role in monitoring standards is not well developed. The school keeps pupils safe and the governing body have been particularly effective in ensuring the security of the premises. The school keeps the safety of all pupils and staff under regular review and takes prompt and effective action where deficiencies are identified, though it does not formally record action taken. All safeguarding regulations and duties are met, although the school acknowledges that further clarity to its policies and procedures are required before their effectiveness can be judged to be good.

The school has effective procedures for tackling any form of discrimination and it promotes equality of opportunity well. Concerted and effective action has been taken to improve curriculum provision so that it engages with and promotes the enjoyment and learning of boys and to develop good strategies for promoting the well-being and learning of potentially vulnerable pupils. The school is a very harmonious, cohesive community. It has strong links with its Parish church and is held in high regard in the local community. The school's promotion of pupils' understanding and appreciation of the diverse nature of the wider world is underdeveloped.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<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>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>3</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>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Though the overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory, provision has a number of good features. Children behave well, readily follow instructions from adults and sustain concentration in self-chosen and adult-directed activities. They play and learn happily and safely and are curious about the world around them. For example, they enjoyed using magnifying glasses to look at tadpoles in a tank and used words such as 'change', 'grow' and 'disappear' in their explanations of how a tadpole turns into a frog. Displays of children's work celebrate their achievements and promote their



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self-confidence, as in the display, 'I am alive, wonderful God, wonderful me.' The sense of wonder experienced by children was clearly articulated by one of a group working at a table and about to plant some beans, who emphatically stated, 'These are magic beans, they get bigger if you water them.'

There is a good balance between planned and adult-led activities that are clearly focused on meeting children's specific learning and social needs, and the provision of opportunities for children to choose activities for themselves. Adults successfully encourage spoken language development and there is an appropriate emphasis on the development of children's reading, writing and numeracy skills. The indoor environment is bright and stimulating, with a good range of resources to entice children to investigate and explore. The outdoor area is comparatively small and less well resourced, but freely used and enjoyed by children.

The teachers have had to gain a rapid understanding of the specific nature of assessment practice in the early years and, while they have been successful, their practice is still developing. 'Learning journey' books have been introduced to demonstrate children's achievements, and parents and carers can contribute to them, though the school's systems for involving parents and carers in their children's learning are not highly developed. The children are cared for well and all statutory requirements are met. However, as a result of staffing changes over the last three years there has not been a consistent and long-term approach to curriculum development or to assessment practice, for example.

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

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

## Views of parents and carers

There was a low rate of return of questionnaires from parents and carers. Most stated that their children enjoy school, that the school meets their children's needs and keeps them safe. A small minority raised concerns about how the school deals with unacceptable behaviour. The inspection team investigated these concerns and judged that the school manages pupil behaviour well. Concerns were also raised about the high levels of teaching staff turnover. These concerns were investigated, and included discussions with school leaders, the governing body and a representative of the local authority. The inspection findings in this respect are described in the main and leadership and management sections of the report.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Alban'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 40 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 181 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	25	63	13	33	2	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	24	60	13	33	2	5	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	14	35	23	58	2	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	14	35	20	50	2	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	16	40	17	43	3	8	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	15	38	17	43	3	8	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	12	30	21	53	6	15	1	3
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)	14	35	23	58	2	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	16	40	19	48	1	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	12	30	16	40	8	20	2	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	10	25	23	58	3	8	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	13	33	17	43	5	13	2	5
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	18	45	16	40	4	10	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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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.**



16 June 2010

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Alban's Catholic Primary School, Doncaster DN12 4AQ**

Thank you very much for making us so welcome when we inspected your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you in lessons and at playtimes, and listening to your views about your school. This letter is to tell you what we found out.

This is a satisfactory school. This means that, although your attainment in English and mathematics is lower than those in most other schools, you are making satisfactory progress in the development of your knowledge and skills. We were impressed by your good behaviour, your enthusiasm for school life and how you enjoy the range of responsibilities that you are given. We were also impressed by your knowledge of how to keep healthy and how to stay safe.

Many of you, especially those in Key Stage 2, know that the school has experienced a lot of staff changes in the last three years. This has made things difficult for your school leaders but we are pleased to note that the adults who help you are very positive about moving the school forward and determined to do so. In order to help that process, we have asked them to do a number of things. These include focusing strongly on:

- further improving your reading, writing and mathematical skills
- leaders regularly monitoring how well you are doing and using the information about your learning to make sure that you make even better progress
- making sure that the governing body and leaders make it even clearer how their systems will keep everyone safe
- giving you more opportunities to learn about the lives of different people in Britain and around the world.

It was a pleasure to meet you - please keep trying to do your best!

Yours sincerely

Stephen Fisher

Lead inspector

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