

St Aidan's Roman Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	102846
Local authority	Redbridge
Inspection number	376773
Inspection dates	16–17 May 2012
Lead inspector	Penny Spencer

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	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	465
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bill Whiston
Headteacher	Helen Brown
Date of previous school inspection	10 December 2007
School address	Benton Road Ilford IG1 4AS
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Age group	3-11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Penny Spencer

Additional inspector

Christopher Crouch

Additional inspector

Trevor Neat

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 19 lessons seeing all teachers. They held meetings with senior and middle leaders, members of the governing body, parents, and several groups of pupils. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line Parent View survey in planning the inspection. They observed the school's work, looked at work in pupils' books, and at the school's analysis of data, the school development plan, school self-evaluation and records of monitoring of teachers' performance. Inspectors also analysed the 240 parents' and carers' questionnaires, as well as those from staff and pupils.

Information about the school

This larger-than-average Catholic primary school serves a diverse population. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is slightly above average. The majority of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. Almost half of pupils speak English as an additional language. Approximately 65% of pupils belong to the Catholic faith with the remainder embracing a wide variety of other beliefs. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average. The proportion of pupils joining or leaving the school at other than the usual times is higher than average. The school has gained a number of awards including National Healthy School Status, Activemark, Artsmark and ICT mark. The school has a breakfast club managed by the governing body. In recent months, there have been several staff changes. These include the recruitment of several new teachers to cover sickness and maternity leave. The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum requirements for pupils' attainment and progress.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This happy, inclusive and multi-cultural school is good because it is well-led and managed and all pupils make good progress. It is not yet outstanding because the quality of teaching is not outstanding overall and does not enable all pupils to make maximum progress.
- Achievement is good. Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and this is sustained and improved as they move through the school. Consequently, by the time they leave at the end of Year 6, all groups of pupils achieve standards that are broadly in line with those of their peers nationally. Occasionally some higher ability pupils, especially in Key Stage 1, are not challenged enough to achieve as highly as they might.
- Good teaching overall stimulates the pupils' imaginations, drives learning forward and is the foundation for good achievement. Although teaching enables pupils to achieve well, inconsistencies in the marking for some pupils, means they are not always sure of how to improve. Poor presentation in many pupils' books detracts from their achievement and does not reflect their ability.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are highly motivated and work hard. Pupils are polite, cooperate well with adults and each other and enjoy their learning.
- The headteacher is supported ably by her senior leadership team, a well-led governing body and effective middle leaders. The school's performance is well managed. Leaders ensure that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well promoted, especially through music and art. The school's Catholic ethos is present in all it does. Pupils are given time to think through a good range of issues and this practice promotes a spirit of enquiry, developing them as reflective citizens.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By summer 2013, raise achievement by ensuring that teaching in all classes is

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good or better through:

- more effective marking of pupils' work so that their mistakes are corrected and misunderstandings are clarified
 - higher expectations for handwriting and presentation of work to reflect the pupils' ability
- Improve planning in Key Stage 1 to ensure work consistently challenges those pupils who could do harder work.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are below, and sometimes well below, those expected for their age. They make good progress. By the end of their Reception Year, most children's skills are in line with those expected for their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy and in their personal development.

Pupils continue to make good progress, and attainment in Key Stage 1 is rising, although attainment at the higher levels is not yet as good as it could be. Continued good progress means pupils leave Year 6 with attainment that is broadly average; the percentage of pupils achieving at the higher levels has increased, especially in English. Rigorous analysis of assessment data shows a steady rise in current outcomes for all pupils.

Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, as well as those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress from their starting points because their needs are carefully assessed and work is planned appropriately.

Pupils, who read to the inspectors, had a very positive attitude to reading, which was further evidenced during observations in the classrooms. Younger pupils show developing skills appropriate for their age, supported by a regularity of reading both at home and school; attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is above average. By the end of Year 6 pupils are showing a great deal of sophistication in their reading ability and understanding of different texts and authors ensuring they are well placed to move on to the next stage of their education. Pupils' ability, to both decode words and understand the books they are reading, is supported by the structured approach to the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) used throughout the school. This is ensuring that pupils are making better-than-expected progress in reading.

Pupils have high aspirations and are determined to do well. Their positive attitudes and the sensible way in which they work together contribute significantly to their effective acquisition of knowledge and development of essential skills.

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers feel their children are making good

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progress in school.

Quality of teaching

The inspection confirms the judgement of almost all parents and carers, that their children are making good progress because they are taught well and their individual needs are carefully met. Much teaching is lively and pitched carefully to meet each pupil's needs.

Children are given a stimulating start in the Early Years Foundation Stage because good, well-organised teaching creates learning opportunities that are personalised for the needs of every child. Inspectors witnessed outstanding teaching, during a Reception class session, where children took part in a mock conference to organise events for the Olympics. They showed sustained concentration and obvious enjoyment, leading to exceptional learning experiences for all.

Teachers are secure in knowing how well pupils are doing and the needs of different groups throughout the school. As a result, teachers generally plan activities that are appropriately challenging for different groups of learners by age and ability. However, sometimes the level of challenge is too low for more-able pupils, especially in Key Stage 1 and, as a result, they occasionally make less progress than other groups of pupils.

Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and those who speak English as an additional language, do well because learning is carefully tailored to their needs. Very effective deployment of learning support staff allows all pupils to access the curriculum effectively.

Teachers encourage 'talk partners' and plan good opportunities for speaking, including role play and drama. This helps pupils to generate ideas and use their learning targets which are clearly laid out in their books. Consequently, pupils often refer to the levels at which they are working. The best marking of work is thorough and challenges pupils to correct their mistakes. However, there are inconsistencies in approach that mean some pupils are not always clear about their next steps for improvement.

Teaching of reading and writing is exceptionally well structured with pupils being taught in ability groups across the school. As a result, teaching is securely targeted to the needs of the pupils which is leading to a sustained rise in outcomes for all groups. Many parents commented particularly on how this approach has improved their children's learning. As one parent commented, 'My child has been given a great start in life due to the teaching and commitment of the staff at St. Aidan's'.

Teachers' plan the creative, enquiry-based curriculum, well, to offer a wide range of developmental opportunities. For example, pupils in Year 6 used their class webpage to post poems and stories for their classmates and visitors to comment on, while pupils in Year 2 worked out how to re-home a family following a fire, including

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ensuring there was a fire alarm in the new property. These opportunities successfully support the pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils from diverse backgrounds get on well together. They are courteous, polite and support one another well. Staff model how relationships can be built on mutual respect and consideration for the feelings of others. Consistency in managing behaviour allows pupils to retain their vibrant character within an atmosphere that is purposeful and caring.

Pupils in Year 6 take on responsible roles in leading house forums, as sports captains and playground helpers. They were keen to explain how they had to apply correctly for the jobs and have an interview with the headteacher to make sure they were suitable. After discussions at House Forum meetings with all members of their houses from Year 1 to Year 6 they use their budgets to support fundraising events for their chosen charity or for school improvement, such as purchasing new playground equipment. They take these roles very seriously and ensure that money is not wasted. They act as strong role models for the rest of the pupils and contribute effectively to the overall good behaviour.

The school has very comprehensive procedures in place to check on and promote attendance. As a result, and because of pupils' very positive attitudes towards school, attendance levels are above average. Punctuality to school and to lessons is consistently good.

Pupils demonstrate a very strong awareness of how to identify risks and keep safe, including when using the internet. Bullying was said to be very rare including cyber bullying and if there is any it is dealt with quickly and effectively. Almost all parents and carers feel the school keeps their children safe and that behaviour is good. Some pupils, in their responses to the questionnaires, were less sure that behaviour was good most of the time. Discussions, by inspectors, with pupils from all key stages in a variety of situations did not bear this out at all.

Leadership and management

Good leadership and management provide the school with a sharp focus on improvement and a clear vision for future development. Self-evaluation is accurate and informs good-quality strategic planning that provides a clear path for the successful implementation of its aims. School leaders have developed an environment in which there is a constant drive to raise achievement. The rigorous analysis of assessment data enables leaders to focus their attention on ensuring every child realises their potential.

The governing body provides good strategic direction and has been determinedly involved in the school's improvement. They provide a good level of challenge to school leaders, regularly analysing the performance of pupils and monitoring

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improvement. These features underpin the school's strong capacity for further improvement.

The school has raised the involvement of middle leaders, who have successfully managed a wide range of curriculum improvement initiatives to enthuse learners. The good curriculum is broad and exciting with well-developed provision for the needs of all pupils, using a range of technology to enhance learning. It builds well on pupils' previous learning and their first-hand knowledge of diversity and other cultures. Pupils comment excitedly on the opportunities they have, to take on real-life roles as part of their topics. The take-up of the wide range of extra-curricular activities is high and parents and carers are very appreciative of the extra opportunities available for their children.

Leaders' and managers' impact on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very positive. Through their committed, faith-based, ethos they promote a strong climate for pupils to work and play together harmoniously. Pupils' actions show their good understanding of right and wrong. This good practice and the supportive atmosphere for pupils' learning and personal development reflect the school's rigorous attention to promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination.

School leaders have worked effectively to engage with parents and carers who are always welcomed into the school. The majority of parents and carers say that their views are sought and acted upon, and they are kept very well informed of the progress of their children.

The school site is well maintained and arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements; staff have a robust knowledge of procedures to safeguard pupils' welfare and safety.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



18 May 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Aidan's Roman Catholic Primary School, Ilford, IG1 4AS

Thank you very much for the friendly welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking with you and seeing you at work and play. We particularly enjoyed talking to you about what it is like to be a pupil in your school, hearing you read and coming to see your lessons. Your parents and carers are very pleased with the school. This letter is to tell you that we found that St Aidan's is a good school. Some of the things that make it good are that:

- you behave well and you are very helpful, thoughtful and polite
- you work hard and you make good progress to achieve well
- you enjoy your lessons and your curriculum topics are interesting and exciting
- you have effective school leaders and teachers who make sure you are safe.

To help your school to be even better we have asked your headteacher and senior leaders to:

- make teaching even better by asking teachers to mark your books more effectively so that you know exactly what you have done well and what you need to do next
- make sure those of you who find the work easy are challenged even more
- ensure that you always present your work well, with good handwriting, so it is easy to see how well you are doing.

You can help by continuing to work hard and by enjoying everything you do at school.

We send you our best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Penny Spencer
Lead inspector

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