

St Richard's Catholic Primary School

Castle Avenue, Dover, Kent, CT16 1EZ

Inspection dates 12–13 September 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- The trend of improving achievement now securely established through most of the school has not yet had time to have a sustained impact on attainment by the end of Year 6. While pupils' progress has accelerated, this has not yet compensated for significant deficits in the prior learning of the oldest pupils.
- Progress and attainment in mathematics by the end of Year 6 have lagged behind that in reading and writing in the last two years.
- While leadership and staffing are now stable and the quality of teaching more consistent, the school recognises the need to ensure consistency of expectation, classroom management and assessment practice across the staff team.

The school has the following strengths

- Provision and children's progress have improved significantly in the Early Years Foundation Stage and are now good.
- Good teaching in Years 1 and 2 is ensuring consistently good progress and higher attainment by the end of Year 2. Declining outcomes in reading at the end of Year 2 were reversed in 2012 as a result of targeted deployment of pupil premium funding.
- Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are now making accelerated progress as a result of increasingly effective teaching and more rigorous assessment.
- Pupils entering Year 6 in 2012 did so at a much higher level and with fewer deficits in learning than their predecessors in 2011.
- Senior leaders and governors are relentlessly focused on improving pupils' achievement and their efforts are showing success.
- Improved provision is now in place for pupils new to the English language.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning and the management of teachers' performance are effective.
- Pupils are safe and behave well in lessons and around the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 15 lessons, of which three were joint observations with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and another governor, with the school's middle and senior leaders and with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 15 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of school documentation including records of the monitoring of teaching, the main school improvement plan, records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding and extracts from the school's tracking of pupils' progress. A scrutiny of pupils' written work was also undertaken and inspectors listened to pupils reading.

Inspection team

George Logan, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Jill Thewlis

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Richard's is a smaller than average primary school. It has been federated with St Edmund's Catholic School (secondary) since 2008. Both schools share the same governing body.
- The executive headteacher has strategic management responsibility for both schools. Each unit has a head of school with day-to-day responsibility for the education and care of the pupils. The current head of school joined St Richard's in an acting capacity in September 2010, following an extended period of unstable leadership and staffing issues. Her appointment became permanent in March 2012.
- While the majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds, the proportion of pupils from homes where English is not the first language, mostly from Eastern Europe, has increased significantly in the last three years and is above that found nationally. These pupils now form around one third of those on roll; a high proportion are at an early stage of learning English. The school serves an increasingly mobile population, so that the level of pupil mobility is high.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is above the national average.
- The school has recently gained Healthy Schools, Safe School and Get Set School awards.
- The school does not meet the current government floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school offers a breakfast club which is managed by the governing body. This formed part of the current inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching always enables pupils to make good progress by:
 - effective induction of all teaching staff to ensure the same expectations of pupils' work and progress and a commonality of approach to classroom and behaviour management
 - securing consistency and accuracy in the assessment of pupils' attainment and understanding implementing consistently the strategies now in place for the effective support of pupils who enter school at the early stages of learning English as an additional language.
- Build upon existing initiatives to consolidate and improve pupils' achievement in mathematics by:
 - rigorous monitoring to ensure that pupils' progress in mathematics is at least at the expected level year on year
 - making sure that staff are confident and accurate in their assessment of pupils' knowledge and understanding of mathematics
 - ensuring that pupils are able to apply their mathematical skills and understanding to real-life problems.
- Implement the planned strategy to ensure that the higher attainment in reading now emerging at the end of Year 2 is built upon successfully in Years 3 to 6.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Children enter Reception with skills in line with those expected for their age. The active intervention of school leaders and local authority staff has ensured that both provision and outcomes have improved recently. As a result, children's progress is now good, with an increasing proportion, including those who enter new to the English language, now attaining levels beyond those expected by the end of the year.
- Progress has also improved in Years 1 and 2. This reflects effective interventions to raise the quality of teaching and assessment, in particular teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve. As a result, attainment is rising by the end of Year 2, and is now above average for the majority of pupils, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- The sustained decline in attainment in reading by the end of Year 2 has been arrested and standards are now rising. The deployment of pupil premium funding to staff training, the acquisition of additional resources and rigorous monitoring of progress have resulted in significantly improved outcomes.
- During the extended period when there was limited continuity of leadership or staffing, many pupils did not make the progress of which they were capable. This led, over time, to significant accrued deficits in their learning. As a result, attainment by the end of Year 6, although broadly average overall, has been inconsistent for some years. This was particularly so for the Year 6 cohort in 2012. Progress has also been variable, although more consistently satisfactory in reading and writing than in mathematics in the last two years. Progress in reading by the end of Year 6, while satisfactory, has yet to reflect fully the improved skills coming through the school.
- Determined leadership has ensured that progress is improving rapidly across the school. Despite the increasing proportion of pupils at an early stage of learning English, and relatively high mobility levels, most pupils made accelerated, generally good, progress in the last year. Many are now working at levels close to those expected for their age. Pupils who entered Year 6 at the beginning of the current school year already have significantly higher attainment levels than did corresponding Year 6 pupils in the previous year.
- The school is restructuring the provision for pupils with special educational needs. Greater consistency in the management of pupil behaviour has seen fewer pupils identified as having behavioural, emotional or social needs. Overall, these pupils make progress in line with that of other pupils. Additional pupil premium funding has been deployed to improve support for pupils for whom English is an additional language and for their families.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The school recognises that progress has, until recently, been inconsistent. That said, greater stability in staffing, the elimination of weak teaching, greater consistency in classroom practice and higher expectations of what pupils can achieve have all contributed to significantly improved progress by pupils in the last year. School leaders have been effective in setting clear targets for improvements in the practice of individual teachers.
- In almost all lessons, relationships are good. Where learning is most effective, the pace of the lesson is brisk and assessment is used well to match work closely to pupils' needs and to establish what will engage their interest most successfully. This was evident in a Year 6 history lesson where pupils experienced a variety of stimuli to enable them to relate to the feelings and responses of those who had lived through the Blitz. In other, less successful, lessons, there are occasional issues of slow pace and, at this early stage in the school year, of some lack of challenge for the most able pupils.
- Pupils in the Reception class learn well because the sessions offer a wide range of well-planned activities. A well-planned induction programme has ensured that children are well prepared for school and settle quickly. As a result they are able, even within a few days, to sustain attention well. Effective intervention by adults ensures that children work

cooperatively from the beginning and learn quickly.

- The teaching of reading is good in Years 1 and 2, consequently progress has improved. This good practice is now moving through the school so that overall achievement in reading is at least satisfactory.
- The school recognises the need to consolidate the progress made in previous terms and sustain improvements in practice. While there is broad understanding amongst staff as to the implementation of assessment practice, some variation remains, for example in the use of individual targets, pupil self-assessment and the marking of pupils' work. Some staff provide guidance as to the next steps in learning. Others do so to a lesser extent. The school is also fine tuning its arrangements for supporting pupils at the early stages of learning English, particularly those who are older. This is to ensure that staff, including teaching assistants, are effectively deployed to meet pupils' needs.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils engage readily in their learning, are well motivated and say that they enjoy school. Most parents and carers who expressed a view feel that behaviour is good. School records indicate that exclusions have declined markedly and pupils confirm that the school is increasingly calm. There are few recorded incidents of inappropriate behaviour and significant disruption of lessons is rare. Where these occur they are managed effectively. Pupils feel very confident in the adults around them.
- The school is an increasingly diverse, but very inclusive, community and provides for pupils with a wide range of needs. Incidents of racist behaviour and exclusions are rare.
- There are no current reports of bullying of any type. Pupils understand that bullying may take different forms, such as internet bullying or in response to physical differences or gender orientation. However, they are also confident that individuals are generally accepted for what they are.
- Pupils have a good understanding of risk, supported well by the school's input on personal and internet safety. Good provision in the breakfast club successfully ensures pupils' safety and well-being.
- Attendance is broadly average, although there is an increasing trend of younger pupils being taken on homeland visits during term time. This is beginning to affect overall attendance figures. Pupils generally arrive at school punctually.

The leadership and management are good

- In recent terms, the highly-effective management team has successfully targeted long-standing weaknesses. As a result, Early Years Foundation Stage provision has improved, standards by the end of Year 2 have risen, there is a trend of improved progress across the school, particularly in reading, and teaching is improving. Although there has been insufficient time for the impact fully to work its way through the school, pupils' learning has improved significantly.
- School self-evaluation is accurate. The school knows itself well and has a clear, well-judged agenda for further improvement. Monitoring and evaluation are rigorous and accurate.
- School leaders are consistently focused on improving the quality of teaching. Performance management is rigorous and provision for the professional development of all staff is good. Middle managers, while relatively inexperienced, are highly committed and know exactly what needs to be done to sustain current improvements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - governance is good
 - the well-established federation governors have a thorough understanding of the issues which have faced the school and have been closely involved in driving change
 - the governors have a good understanding of school performance data and contribute to decisions about the deployment of funding, in particular the pupil premium, to raise pupils'

achievement.

- The school recognises the high level of effective support it has received from its local authority in recent years, particularly during a period of instability and staff changes.
 - Progress since the last inspection has been good. Pupil numbers have risen significantly. The school convincingly demonstrates that it currently has good capacity to improve.
 - While the curriculum has inevitably prioritised the key core areas of reading, writing and mathematics, pupils have good breadth to their learning. Older pupils, for example, are now taught science by a specialist teacher, so ensuring that they have a quality experience of the subject. The school draws upon considerable subject expertise through the close links with its secondary partner. Extra-curricular provision is extensive.
 - Pupils' spiritual and moral development is strongly supported through collective worship and the religious education programme. Cultural awareness is effectively promoted through charitable work and many church links, as well as the increasing diversity of the school community itself.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	118771
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	401785

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	193
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Phillip Smye-Rumsby
Headteacher	Chris Atkin (Executive headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	28 April 2010
Telephone number	01304 201118
Fax number	01304 201118
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