

St Alban's Catholic Primary School

Beauchamp Road, East Molesey, KT8 2PG

Inspection dates 6–7 December 2012

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Pupils achieve well in both their personal and academic achievement in all year groups. This is because the school places personal and academic well-being at the centre of all it does. By Year 6, pupils' attainment in English and mathematics is well-above average.
- Determined and resolute leadership has been crucial in moving the school from satisfactory to good in a relatively short space of time.
- The school has coped well during a period of change since the last inspection. The new staff, senior leaders and the governing body are united in their commitment to an ambitious vision for the school's future and that of its pupils. This has had a positive impact on the school's overall effectiveness.
- The headteacher, staff and the governing body have worked very effectively together to improve the quality of teaching since the previous inspection and ensure that the broad curriculum provides a wide range of learning experiences to meet the needs and interests of every pupil.
- There is a strong sense of community in the school and pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning are strengths of the school. Pupils feel very safe and display a high level of respect for the feelings and well-being of others as well as being highly articulate.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage settle quickly and make good progress.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The impact and contribution of some of the teaching assistants in lessons is inconsistent and, although the school is addressing this issue, there has not been time for it to have been resolved fully.
- The more-able pupils are not always challenged enough in all lessons in Key Stage 1.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with half-a-day's notice.
- The two inspectors observed all members of staff teaching in 17 lessons. This included a joint observation with the headteacher. The inspectors also looked at a cross section of pupils' work in all year groups.
- Children from Years 2 and 6 were heard to read individually. Guided reading sessions involving older pupils were observed, as well as lessons in phonics (the sounds that letters make) with pupils in Key Stage 1 and children in Reception Year.
- The inspection team held meetings with groups of pupils, members of the governing body, subject and key stage leaders, the school improvement adviser, and members of the senior leadership team.
- The inspectors looked at a wide range of evidence, which included; the school's development plan, the school's data for tracking progress and attainment of each pupil and specific pupil groups, curriculum and lesson plans, governing body documentation, and the work pupils were completing in their books.
- The school's self-evaluation information was also scrutinised.
- The inspectors met parents and carers at the beginning of the school day. They evaluated 42 responses from parents and carers to the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- Pupils' behaviour, both inside and outside of the classroom, was observed and the inspectors checked the school's health and safety and safeguarding procedures.

Inspection team

Mark Anderson

Lead inspector

Marion Hobbs

Team inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average, single-form-entry primary school in an urban setting.
- The majority of pupils come from White British families.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is substantially lower than average. The proportion of pupils identified for special help at the level known as school action is slightly below average, whereas the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs and those at school action plus is just above average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- A new Chair of the Governing Body has been appointed and some new members have joined.
- There has been almost a complete change of form teacher personnel since the last inspection.
- The school has joined the ECM Cluster (Esher, Cobham and Molesey).

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop and improve the contribution and impact of all teaching assistants, by :
 - involving teaching assistants in all aspects of planning
 - developing the role of teaching assistants in the classroom to ensure that they have a greater impact on children's learning.
- Improve the pupils' achievement at Key Stage 1 in mathematics and English at the higher levels, by:
 - ensuring planning takes much more account of the particular levels pupils work at in each subject
 - ensuring that the more-able pupils are provided with frequent opportunities to use their above-average literary skills to develop their ability to complete longer pieces of writing successfully, including when working in other subject areas.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and understanding that are slightly above those that are expected for their ages. They make good progress in all the areas of learning and particularly in their personal, social and emotional development.
- The most recent data collected by the school show that progress is good in all classes as pupils move through Years 1 to 6, with a significant minority making rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- More-able pupils in Key Stage 2 receive challenging work in mathematics and English to make sure they achieve their potential.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and those known to be eligible for the pupil premium, make similar progress to all other pupils because they receive an effective level of support, especially in lessons.
- The majority of pupils in all year groups take genuine pride in the presentation of their work and the quality of the creative work produced by the pupils is of a high standard.
- Almost all lessons are interactive and stimulate the pupils. Older pupils learnt very well in a literacy lesson based on the Second World War, as their senses were 'captured' by sound effects from the blitz and a speech by Sir Winston Churchill, while at the same time viewing thought-provoking images.
- In Key Stage 2, the school's heightened expectations have resulted in a much higher percentage of Level 4 results, and in particular, Level 5 results in English and mathematics, being achieved. The results achieved at Key Stage 1 are above average and improving but not yet quite as strong as Key Stage 2, particularly in writing and for more-able pupils.
- Since the previous inspection, there has been an increased focus on reading, and from an early age children develop a love of reading through inspirational story-telling and having lots of fun in phonics sessions. The results the school achieved in the Year 1 phonics test were substantially above the national average. The children in Years 2 and 6 who were heard to read during the inspection were very enthusiastic and showed good skills in reading new words and understanding what they read.
- The majority of parents and carers who completed the online questionnaire (Parent View) believe their children are making good progress.

The quality of teaching is good

- The teachers' enthusiasm, subject knowledge and knowledge of their pupils mean that lessons are well planned and engage all the pupils. The learning tasks are challenging and thought-provoking, which means that the pupils' attitudes to learning are extremely positive. In a Year 3 lesson, the pupils, thoroughly, enjoyed writing individual poems based on a fascinating variety of rocks and gem stones.
- The leadership of teaching has become increasingly rigorous and performance management is used well by the school to improve the standard of teaching. Weaknesses in the quality of teaching noted in the previous inspection have been eliminated and this is supported by the teachers' genuine desire to keep improving the school and reflected in the consequent rise in pupils' achievement.
- In the large majority of lessons, teachers ensure that learning runs at a brisk pace and that the work set is sufficiently challenging for all levels. The teachers' questioning skills are good and keep all pupils 'on task' and involved.
- Classrooms are colourful, stimulating and well organised, with many impressive displays of the pupils' work on show.
- Teachers' relationships with pupils are good. Pupils say the staff are friendly and approachable. However, teachers and teaching assistants do not always work together as effectively as they might.

- Teachers use improved systems for checking pupils' progress now and identify accurately how much progress individual pupils make in lessons and over time.
- The quality of teachers' marking and verbal feedback is good, although pupils are not always given an indication of how to improve their work, which can hinder progress.
- Teachers model and promote good social skills consistently and pupils respond well. Regular opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their speaking, listening and social skills through the consistent use of 'talk partners'.
- Provision for disabled pupils, those with special educational needs, and those who are eligible for the pupil premium is carefully thought out and planned. The small group sessions and one-to-one support have a strong impact on closing the gap in their achievement compared to other pupils. A support group lesson in mathematics showed the pupils making sound progress in mastering the concept of fractions and thoroughly enjoying themselves!
- More-able pupils in Key Stage 1 are not always challenged enough to reach the higher levels of achievement, particularly in writing, as they do not have enough opportunities to apply their skills in more demanding tasks in a range of subjects.
- Staff who teach in the Early Years Foundation Stage have adapted their planning and observations effectively to comply with the new curriculum for children of this age. Phonics teaching to children in Reception and Key Stage 1 is precise and adapted to suit different ability levels, so pupils learn quickly.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The headteacher and staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and attitudes. Consequently, pupils show a high level of regard and respect for others and happily celebrate their peers' achievements and successes. Relationships between pupils and adults are very positive throughout the school.
 - Parents' and carers' questionnaires confirm this picture, with the great majority believing behaviour to be good.
 - Pupils support the view that behaviour is good. They feel safe and secure and the older pupils are aware of internet dangers.
 - Attendance has improved and is now significantly above average.
 - Pupils are keen to take an active role in school life. The school council provides a voice for pupils and the wide range of activities ensures that there is 'something for everyone'. The more-senior pupils say that they enjoy particularly the opportunities they have to look after the younger ones and are very good role models.
 - The curriculum is enhanced by many trips, stimulating visits and residential weeks in Years 4 and 6, when pupils are exposed to new experiences and unfamiliar surroundings. Pupils are prepared extremely well for such trips and learn first-hand how to stay safe outside of their school and local community environment.
 - Pupils, clearly, understood what constitutes bullying and unanimously reported that such behaviour was exceptionally rare and were very confident that any minor incidents of inappropriate behaviour were dealt with immediately.
 - There are clear systems to record poor behaviour or racist incidents, but such incidents are very rare and are dealt with appropriately.
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The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and the governing body have worked effectively since the previous inspection in restructuring the leadership and management team and the governing body.
- Accurate and honest self-evaluation has enabled the school to tackle successfully a wide range of improvements since the previous inspection. The impact of these actions has resulted in the establishment of a comprehensive and accurate system to measure pupils' progress, much higher expectations and an improvement in the pace of learning, and a significant rise in pupils' attainment. These improvements demonstrate a good capacity to sustain high standards and continue the school's improvement.
- The senior leaders' sharp focus on the management of teaching and learning, assessment, and analysis of performance data has resulted in the improvement in teaching throughout the school. Key stage and subject leaders, along with the class teachers, are involved more regularly in checking pupils' progress within and across classes.
- The promotion of spiritual, social, moral and cultural values, knowledge and understanding has been enhanced considerably through a number of new initiatives, such as links with two other schools, pupil visits to Japan and the Dominican Republic, and 'twinning' with another 'St Alban's' school. The school has established new links with the local and international community, expanding the pupils' knowledge of the world considerably. Pupils have excellent opportunities to reflect during class and whole-school assemblies. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is especially strong and this reflects the Christian ethos of the school.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity strongly and discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.
- The curriculum is enriched by a variety of clubs, ranging from dance and skipping to football, and visits which assist pupils' learning and personal development while at the same time bringing 'learning to life'. For example, pupils talk very enthusiastically about how participating in residential trips broadens their outlook, builds their self-confidence and raises their awareness of the wider world in the 21st century.
- All statutory requirements relating to safeguarding are met and there is no evidence of any discrimination.
- Professional development courses are undertaken to meet not only the needs of individual teachers, but also the needs of the school as a whole.
- The great majority of parents and carers are positive about how the school supports their children's education. They are extremely positive with regard to their children being happy and safe in school and in relation to them being taught well and making good progress.
- The local authority has provided effective support to the school since the previous inspection, including in developing its leadership capacity. This has been a contributory factor in enabling the school to move from satisfactory to good.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has a much clearer understanding than previously of how well pupils are taught and the attainment levels they reach, because members have had training on data analysis, including on how well the school is doing compared with others. This has made the governing body more effective in its monitoring role. The governing body, along with the headteacher, has played a fundamental role in improving the school since the last inspection and in tackling areas of weakness decisively. Governors ensure that the school's finances are managed effectively and spending, including the funding provided by the pupil premium, is allocated appropriately. It ensures that staff pay is closely aligned with pupils' achievement through the performance management process. The governing body is extremely supportive of St Alban's School, while at the same time is equally challenging. Members receive regular reports from the headteacher and make frequent visits to the school. The governing body is led effectively by its Chair, who reviews its practices regularly and ensures that governors are professionally trained and developed. Governors ensure that statutory requirements are met and that safeguarding arrangements are rigidly implemented to keep children safe.

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	125239
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	406302
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	Ellie Origo
Headteacher	Martin Brannigan
Date of previous school inspection	3–4 March 2011
Telephone number	020 8979 5893
Fax number	020 8941 4527
Email address	admin@stalbans.surrey.uk.sch

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