

St Stephen's Catholic Primary School

Ruskin Avenue, Welling, Kent DA16 3QG

Inspection dates

3–4 November 2015

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- Leadership at all levels is outstanding. Since the last inspection, school leaders have tackled what needed to be done. They have transformed teaching, learning and assessment through embedding a highly successful coaching culture throughout the school.
- The governing body is totally committed to ensuring the school is as good as it can be. Governors are highly ambitious for the school and have played an effective role in supporting the leadership team in developing outstanding provision.
- Regular outings, visitors and enrichment activities promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and this is a real strength of the curriculum.
- Outstanding teaching over time has resulted in excellent achievement for pupils in reading, writing and mathematics. From their starting points, pupils make outstanding progress. By the time they leave Year 6, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. The school's test results for the previous three years have exceeded national averages in all areas.
- Provision in the early years is outstanding. Teaching is inspirational and responsive to children's different needs. Children are confident, know how to keep themselves safe and form secure relationships.
- Pupils behave extremely well. A strong focus on good manners and courteous behaviour is evident.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure consistency across all Key Stage 2 classes for pupils to make as rapid progress in mathematics as in other subjects.
- Ensure consistently legible handwriting is promoted across the school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding

- Leaders and governors have created a culture of ambition and drive. All staff have benefited from excellent training and support, closely linked to performance management. Coaching is firmly in place throughout the school at all levels. Teaching staff, including teaching assistants, are engaged in an ongoing programme of lesson observations, professional dialogue and reflection. A detailed analysis of the impact of this programme on pupils' learning has been instrumental in lifting the quality of teaching. This has ensured pupil outcomes that are above national figures.
- The inspiring curriculum challenges pupils to think deeply about all aspects of life in Britain and beyond. School leaders recognised the negative impact that recent news items about the troubles in Syria were having on their pupils. A local imam was invited in to speak to the pupils, and links have been made with the local mosque. This has contributed to pupils' understanding and appreciation of the wide range of cultures further afield and the importance of working with others.
- Pupils thrive through the school's thoughtful development of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are engaged in many activities to support their own and others' well-being. For example, they have willingly collected for the homeless at Christmas. At the time of the inspection, the foyer was full of food collected for the homeless as part of the community's harvest celebrations. There is strong ownership of the school's mission statement by everyone. As a result, pupils are positive representatives of their school.
- Leaders' actions to raise standards for disadvantaged pupils are highly effective. The support provided has helped these pupils to make rapid gains. As a result, outcomes at the end of Key Stage 2 were above national averages in reading, writing and mathematics for disadvantaged pupils in 2015. Funding is used to ensure that eligible pupils fully participate in all aspects of school life. Funding supports extra-curricular activities such as individual tuition for specific musical instruments, trampolining lessons and therapeutic play sessions.
- Sports funding is well spent to ensure that pupils have access to enhanced lunchtime activity, including the 'craze of the week'. It also involves coaching lunchtime staff in introducing new skills to pupils. Funding is also used to employ specialist sports coaches to support teachers in delivering the highest quality sporting provision.
- The curriculum is evaluated regularly and reviewed at governing body meetings. Curriculum leaders also contribute effective reports to governing body meetings. Leaders are aware that an area for improvement is to develop the mathematics curriculum further. They have put actions in place recently into the Reception and Key Stage 1 classes. This has resulted in rapid progress over the last year. However, despite good and outstanding progress in all subjects, progress in mathematics is not rising as rapidly in some classes in Key Stage 2.
- Leaders' checks on the quality of teaching and learning are rigorous. They do this by looking closely at planning, lesson observations, learning walks, parent and pupil voice surveys and pupils' work sampling. All monitoring is closely linked to the school's coaching programme and annual staff performance management.
- The school has a productive relationship with its local authority, which has provided good support and advice on presenting effective self-evaluation.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - is a clear force for improvement and governors have an accurate overview of what needs to be done to benefit the pupils' achievement and welfare
 - ensures that the school is held to account for the distribution of funding, including the sports and pupil premium funds and staff performance management.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff quickly identify any pupils at risk of harm. Senior leaders are persistent in ensuring referrals to agencies are followed through and that detailed records of vulnerable pupils are kept. Summer workshops were led by a neighbouring local children's safeguarding board (LCSB) to support parents, staff and governors. The purpose of the workshops was to make sure that all pupils are safe and staff are aware of current laws relating to safeguarding.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding

- Inspection evidence indicates that pupils make at least good or outstanding progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Senior leaders and governors have systematically tackled all areas for improvement identified from the previous inspection report. This has led to teaching and learning that are typically outstanding throughout the school.
- Leaders' commitment to the training of all staff ensures that teaching, learning and assessment are of the highest quality.
- Teachers regularly demonstrate strong subject knowledge. Questioning techniques by both teachers and teaching assistants were seen to challenge and deepen pupils' thinking and learning. Teaching and learning of equality of opportunity are real strengths.
- Teachers provide pupils with sharp feedback in line with the assessment policy about what pupils can do to improve their knowledge, understanding and skills.
- Strong progress is made in reading, as phonics (the sounds that letters make) is exceedingly well planned to help pupils build their knowledge quickly. This is well supported with projects that encourage reading throughout the school such as visits from published authors and regular work with a local author. These activities have contributed to pupils' appreciation of books. Teachers use well-chosen stories to make learning fun. Theatre groups bring challenging texts by Shakespeare and historical legends such as Beowulf to life.
- In addition to the school and class library, a book swap is in place for pupils. This has been extended to parents and families. There is clear enjoyment of reading throughout the school. Teachers plan for and evaluate the impact of reading, encouraging pupils to try out different types of book. This was evident as pupils progressed through the school. They are taking increasing responsibility for recording evaluations of a range of texts they had chosen and read in their reading records.
- Pupils' writing is of a high standard, and effective curriculum planning ensures that writing takes place across a whole range of curriculum subjects and areas. Pupils are aware of the purpose, organisation and structure of their writing. However, fluency in handwriting throughout the school is inconsistent.
- Tasks in mathematics are demanding and reinforce pupils' knowledge of and fluency in number. There are many opportunities for pupils to solve problems and reason mathematically. Pupils and staff use models, images and practical resources well to support problem-solving and explanations of how they did it and why their method works or why the answer is what it is. Pupils are not afraid to 'have a go'. However, there are fewer opportunities for pupils in Key Stage 2 to develop fluency in recording their mathematical understanding.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Pupils learn about a range of social topics. For example, a display titled 'Are we all immigrants?' demonstrated their understanding of British values and the cultural experiences of others and themselves. Many of the displays demonstrated pupils' thoughtfulness and understanding of being both an individual and part of a wider society locally, nationally and globally. As a result, pupils present themselves as confident, clearly spoken individuals who are rightly proud of their school.
- Pupils are excited to come to school and are highly motivated to do well. They are able to talk about their learning and how they assess their own performance. They can talk about how to get even better in all they do. They proposed and contributed to the design of the playground gym to enhance their play and well-being opportunities.
- Excellent sporting activities, a broad curriculum and the school's commitment to supporting its therapeutic specialists, contribute to the strong relationships seen. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe and are well supported.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Relationships are excellent and pupils are fully engaged in lessons and enjoy their learning activities. All adults have the highest expectations of behaviour and learning.
- The school environment actively promotes excellent behaviour through its many high-quality displays. Pupils talked to inspectors about the 'power of one', the whole-school oath signed by all to combat bullying, including cyber-bullying. This initiative was launched through a theatre workshop and has led to an anti-bullying display in the heart of the school.
- Attendance is excellent; pupils value their education and rarely miss a day's learning. The school business manager is proactive in ensuring good attendance and punctuality. She works closely with staff and families, gaining their support so that they have a clear understanding of the systems in place. Attendance has been above national averages for the past three years and persistent absence has been well below national figures. An analysis of data shows attendance levels remain strong.
- Inspection evidence confirms that pupils and most parents are confident that any rare incidents of bullying or poor behaviour will be dealt with swiftly.

Outcomes for pupils

are outstanding

- Overall, pupils' achievement is outstanding. They enter the school with starting points that are generally below those typical for their age. Pupils make outstanding progress in all subjects as they move through the school. They are eager to discuss and share their learning and are well-spoken representatives of the school.
- Current in-school performance data are strong and reflect the learning seen in pupils' workbooks. All groups, including pupils with special educational needs, pupils with disabilities, disadvantaged pupils, and the most-able and lower attaining pupils, make good or outstanding progress from their starting points. There are no significant gaps in achievement between different groups in the school.
- The 2015 results in the national phonics check (the sounds that letters make) were above the national expected standard. This was also the case for the previous two years.
- At the end of Key Stage 1, 2015 assessments exceeded national standards for the third consecutive year in reading, writing and mathematics. The percentage of pupils attaining higher than average levels at the end of Key Stage 1 was also higher than national figures over the same period.
- Test results for Year 6 pupils in 2015 were better than national standards in reading, writing and mathematics for all pupils, including pupils who are disadvantaged. In 2015, the percentage of disadvantaged pupils attaining higher than average levels at the end of Key Stage 2 was also higher than national figures in reading, writing and mathematics. For all pupils, the percentage attaining higher than average levels at the end of Key Stage 2 was higher than national figures for reading and writing but in line with the national figure for mathematics.
- Current pupils continue to make rapid progress in mathematics, but academic performance in some Key Stage 2 classes is uneven.

Early years provision

is outstanding

- The Early Years Foundation Stage leader has a clear vision which provides effective early years provision. She ensures that formal meetings and information-sharing with nursery providers and parents of children in Reception Year, and activities such as stay-and-play sessions, coaching sessions for staff and evaluating practice with other settings are used to plan precise next steps in children's learning.
- Teaching is typically outstanding. Coaching for staff on questioning has ensured the development of an engaging, rich curriculum in a well-resourced learning environment. This results in purposeful teaching. Both the early years leader and a member of her team are trained outdoor education leaders. During the inspection, there was real excitement as children were 'warriors' engaging with nature, learning how to preserve natural habitats and describing their 'finds'.
- Outstanding leadership ensures additional funding and purposeful teaching result in strong outcomes for all children. As a result, they are well prepared for Year 1. In 2014, the percentage of children achieving a good level of development was well above the national average for all pupils. Disadvantaged children in the school outperformed non-disadvantaged children nationally and in the school.
- Children's behaviour is excellent. The children are helpful and cooperate well with each other. The school's cycling initiative has resulted in the purchase of balance bikes, and strong partnerships with external cycling trainers and parents. This early years initiative is to ensure that all Reception Year children leave the setting able to ride a bike safely. This was achieved last year and is part of this year's curriculum.

School details

Unique reference number	101455
Local authority	Bexley
Inspection number	10001220

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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	421
Appropriate authority	the governing body
Chair	Elizabeth Brett
Headteacher	Mary Masterson
Telephone number	020 8303 9738
Website	www.st-stephens.bexley.sch.uk
Email address	admin@st-stephens.bexley.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	27–28 January 2011

Information about this school

- St Stephen's Catholic Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds with the next largest group being Black or Black British African. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups is higher than the national figure. However, few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is similar to the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through pupil premium funding is low. The pupil premium is additional government funding that schools receive to support those known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils joining the school at other than normal times is below the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The headteacher is a local leader of education and a national pupil premium reviewer. She also provides support through the Corpus Christi Partnership of schools, mentoring a newly appointed headteacher.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in all classes. Of these 25 observations, nine were made jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors held discussions with groups of pupils, staff, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. Inspectors listened to pupils read and looked at work in pupils' books and the school's information showing pupils' progress.
- Inspectors examined a range of documentation provided by the school, including the school's own self-evaluation and checks on its performance and the quality of teaching. Records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding were also considered.
- Inspectors took account of 59 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and 23 questionnaires completed by members of staff. Inspectors also met a number of parents informally before the start of the school day to hear their views about the school.

Inspection team

Jean Thwaites, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Christina Cleugh	Ofsted Inspector
Jennifer Nutt	Ofsted Inspector
Joyce Ryan	Ofsted Inspector
Michelle Thomas	Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2015

