

St Thomas of Canterbury RC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100357
Local Authority	Hammersmith and Fulham
Inspection number	276294
Inspection dates	17–18 October 2005
Reporting inspector	Andrew Howe

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 on roll	
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Father Norbert Fernandes Mrs Angela Rundle
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Estcourt Road Fulham London SW6 7HB
Telephone number	02073858165
Fax number	02073850918

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

St. Thomas of Canterbury is a larger than average primary school. The great majority of children come from Roman Catholic families. The proportion of pupils receiving free school meals is above average. The local area is one of social deprivation. The great majority of children come from ethnic groups other than white British and about half do not have English as their first language. There are 28 different languages spoken in the school. Many speak Portuguese. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is above average. The school has Investors in People status. Improvements, including the provision of a new hall, have been made recently to the accommodation that dates from 1848.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade:

What the school should do to improve further

* Improve the quality of teaching to that of the best teachers.* Raise pupils' achievements in mathematics.* Improve provision for outdoor learning in the Foundation Stage.

Achievement and standards

Grade:

Personal development and well-being

Grade:

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade:

The school rates the quality of teaching and learning as satisfactory and inspectors agree. All teachers develop good relationships with pupils and manage behaviour well. A good working atmosphere is achieved in all classrooms. Detailed assessment helps pupils and teachers plan the next steps in learning in many lessons. Lively teaching often helps to keep pupils listening and learning. In some lessons, work is carefully matched to pupils' needs but this is not always the case, particularly for the more able in mathematics. Good lessons seen were also characterised by rapid pace, open questioning and an awareness that children learn in different ways. Teaching pupils in groups according to their ability is used effectively, especially in English, providing a high level of support both for those with learning difficulties and for those whose first language is not English. Generally, good use is made of support assistants to enhance the achievements of pupils with learning difficulties. Some teaching although satisfactory is not rigorous enough to accelerate learning and limits achievement. Teachers do not always demonstrate clearly what they wish pupils to do. Marking, although thorough and positive, does not help pupils understand what they need to do to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade:

The curriculum is good. Some creative links are made between subjects. For instance, study of the 'Diary of Anne Frank' enables the school to bring together aspects of history and literacy. Special weeks, such as 'Book Week', also enthuse pupils. The school is developing the curriculum to meet the needs of its pupils, and has a well-developed personal, social and health education programme. This involves discussion during circle time, and includes attention to sex and relationships education and to drugs awareness. A notable strength is the range of extra-curricular activities, which include opportunities to play a range of sports. Good opportunities are also provided for music making. Provision to support the above average number of pupils with learning difficulties, and those for whom English is an additional language, is good. The area for outdoor learning for children in the Foundation Stage is unwelcoming. Its use to enhance learning is not planned for fully.

Care, guidance and support

Grade:

The school works well with parents and outside agencies to support pupils. All staff are very approachable. Parents are given good quality information about their children's progress and the curriculum. There is very effective induction and ongoing support for pupils whose first language is not English. A particularly positive feature is the number of staff who speak a range of languages, so that pupils are communicated with effectively. There are good and effective measures in place to safeguard children's wellbeing and health and safety. Pupils with learning and behavioural difficulties are well catered for. Effective links with the church help to support families in difficulties. Staff know children well and go out of their way to help them to do their best and to promote their health and welfare. Targets are used to guide pupils' learning, but until recently have not been used consistently. As a result, their impact on learning is not yet clear enough.

Leadership and management

Grade:

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Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for your help during the inspection. We really enjoyed finding out about your school. Everyone was very friendly and made it easy for us to do our job.

Here are some of the things that we believe are good: * You enjoy coming to school; * All the adults in the school take good care of you. They keep you safe and teach you how to be healthy; * You learn well in English; * You all work together very well and your behaviour is good; * Your headteacher and other teachers and helpers are trying hard to make the school better; * Your parents and many of you think the school is doing a good job.

We believe there are some things that the school could do better: * Make all lessons as good as the best. * Help you learn faster in mathematics. * Improve the outdoor area for the children in the Reception classes so that it is a pleasant place to learn.