



St Elizabeth's Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 102910
LEA Richmond Upon Thames LEA
Inspection number 276793
Inspection dates 10 July 2006 to 11 July 2006
Reporting inspector Sheila Nolan AI

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary	School address	Queen's Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Richmond
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		TW10 6HN
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	020 8940 3015
Number on roll	217	Fax number	020 8332 0986
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Reverend P Mathias
Date of previous inspection	27 November 2000	Headteacher	Ms C T Brett

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 10 July 2006 - 11 July 2006	Inspection number 276793
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Saint Elizabeth's Catholic Primary School, situated in the Archdiocese of Southwark, serves families from a wide geographical area. Pupils come mainly from White European backgrounds with close to a third having a home language other than English. Few pupils are eligible for free school meals. Attainment on entry is slightly above average. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities or with statements of special educational need account for a lower than usual proportion of the school population. The school has enjoyed stable leadership over many years and is heavily oversubscribed.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

'I cannot recommend the school and its teaching staff highly enough', commented a parent. Saint Elizabeth's is an outstandingly effective school of which staff, parents and pupils are rightly proud. The excellent leadership of the headteacher, very well supported by the deputy and other staff, ensures the school evaluates its work incisively and accurately. Governors, who challenge the school exceptionally well, concur wholeheartedly with the inspection judgement.

High standards have been maintained year-on-year with results in the top five percent of schools nationally in 2005. Provisional results for 2006 indicate even further improvement with around three quarters of pupils reaching the highest available levels. From a slightly above average base in the reception year, pupils make good progress towards the expected learning goals. By the end of Year 2, standards are above average. Progress accelerates thereafter and pupils achieve very well by the end of Year 6 because of rigorous tracking and carefully managed learning support. Consistently good or better teaching and the high priority given to care, guidance and support are major factors in the school's success as is pupils' outstanding personal development. Parents' aspirations and willingness to contribute to all aspects of school life also play a significant role. The school recognises that its curriculum can be improved further by making more explicit the links between subject areas. This echoes pupils' views. They would like more opportunities to use their 'art and history' in other lessons.

In sustaining high standards between successive inspections, the school has demonstrated its strong capacity to continue to improve. The last inspection identified a single issue for improvement; the school has addressed this very well and pupils are now involved in assessing their own learning. Value for money is outstanding.

What the school should do to improve further

- plan cross-curricular links to increase opportunities for pupils to transfer knowledge, skills and understanding across subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils achieve standards that are much higher than those expected nationally, meeting the demanding targets set by the school. Well above average results in national tests have been sustained year-on-year. Dedicated leadership, shared community values and very strong parental support have all contributed to academic success. 'We succeed because we are ambitious for our pupils', reflected a middle leader.

From a slightly above average starting point, children in the reception class make good progress towards expected learning goals. Progress in mathematical development is particularly strong for the current group although faster for boys than girls. Girls outperform boys in creative development.

Reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 are well above average. In 2005, pupils achieved well although some able pupils, particularly boys, did not reach their ambitious targets in reading and mathematics. Progress accelerates between Years 3 and 6 for all groups of pupils because of very well-focused interventions to support learning. Year 6 achievement last year was outstanding. Over twice as many pupils as those nationally reached the highest levels in English and science. Provisional test results for 2006 indicate even higher performance by able pupils in English and mathematics.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. They enjoy attending and work hard. 100 % attendance is not uncommon. 'The school is really welcoming with friendly teachers', noted Year 6. The school council enables pupils' views to be heard and they are rightly proud that their contributions helped redesign a school wall and acquire 'buddy benches'.

Pupils feel very safe in school and in the small playgrounds. A useful zebra crossing on the drive helps remind them of road safety. Relationships with teachers and friends are positive and behaviour is excellent. Spiritual, moral, cultural and social development is outstanding. Assemblies provide frequent opportunities for prayer and reflection. Pupils show a sensitive awareness of customs and cultures other than their own, supported by interesting projects and displays.

Most try to eat healthily and much appreciate the rewards for choosing a healthy lunch. They are keen to take on a wide range of responsibilities with younger pupils. Their strong awareness of others less fortunate than themselves results in work for charities and collection activities such as 'mufti' days. Good attention to basic skills and 'real money' activities help pupils effectively prepare for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The pupils' work reflects consistently good teaching which is sometimes outstanding. This is evident in lessons and events during the inspection and supports the school's judgement of teaching and learning as 'very good'.

Underpinning all lessons are warm working relationships and high expectations of behaviour and performance. Praise is used particularly effectively so that pupils are keen to learn and diligent in completing tasks. Pupils say that teachers make lessons enjoyable but make sure they learn what they should. This is because teachers plan especially well and do their best to match work carefully to individuals' needs. They encourage pupils to take control of learning through a range of strategies to help them assess their understanding, a notable improvement since the last inspection.

Information and communication technology is increasingly well used to engage pupils. Reception children, for example, were much encouraged in designing a 'Goldilocks card' modelled through the use of technology.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good, and from Reception to Year 6 ensures that pupils make progress. It offers particular opportunities to enhance writing skills. The school recognises, however, that there is scope to increase the links between subjects so that pupils have more opportunities to transfer their talents and skills. A distinctive element of the curriculum is the focus days and weeks, such as arts week. These use the expertise of parents and specialists to enrich pupils' experience and provide snapshots into future careers. Personal, social and health education is carefully centred around 'Every Child Matters'. In the Foundation Stage, independent and well-resourced activities complement teacher-led sessions effectively. Enrichment activities beyond the school day are very varied. Pupils have good opportunities to learn three European languages, to benefit from specialist music tuition, to become a 'mad scientist', and to join in many sporting activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding throughout the school. Pupils are well known individually to staff and their personal development is carefully supported and monitored. Any concerns about vulnerable pupils are quickly followed up. Good liaison with external agencies underpins the sensitive care for the very few pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Procedures for child protection, health and safety, and risk assessment, are thorough. Pupils are quite sure that they can talk freely about problems with adults. Bullying is very rare but isolated incidents are followed up carefully.

Academic monitoring is excellent and the careful tracking and support systems in Year 6 are now extended throughout the school. The school has evolved very helpful activities to involve pupils in assessing their own learning. Pupils have targets and are keenly aware of how well they are doing. Parents and children regularly review progress with teachers both in traditional meetings and in the 'parents-pupils-teachers' daytime conferences.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Outstanding leadership and management are reflected in sustained high performance between successive inspections. The headteacher's challenging vision for improvement is supported very effectively by the deputy and class teachers. This gives the school a very clear sense of direction. Middle leaders are fully accountable for their teams and their impact is apparent in the quality of classroom practice and in pupils' fast progress. The small Foundation Stage team is well managed. Governance is exceptionally

effective. Well-informed, long-standing members are 'critical friends' and encourage the school to take on new tasks such as leading a primary learning network.

There is a strong culture of self-evaluation. Excellent monitoring procedures ensure that governors and teachers have an accurate picture of strengths and weaknesses. 'We look hard at all we do and try to do it even better'. Parents' views are sought regularly. Designated volunteers ensure that communications between school and home run smoothly. 'The headteacher's door is open at any time' noted a parent. The overwhelming majority of parents support the school strongly and are pleased with the 'consistently good quality of pupils' learning experience'. A very few parents expressed individual concerns but these were not substantiated during the inspection. The single issue from the last inspection on involving pupils in the assessment of their work has been effectively implemented. The school has a robust capacity to improve further. It readily shares its vision for improvement in its work with the wider educational community.

The school is well staffed. Unavoidable absences and changes are managed considerately. Accommodation, although cramped, is very well kept and imaginatively managed. Good arrangements with nearby institutions supplement facilities for sport. The learning environment is colourful and stimulating. Value for money is outstanding.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	1	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Pupils

You may recall that we inspected your school whilst you were rehearsing for a musical. Although you were all very busily engaged in class and other end-of-term activities, you welcomed us warmly. Thank you for your contributions to the inspection and for telling us how much you enjoy school. Those of you who are moving on to Year 7 were clearly thrilled by your latest test results and by your success in getting to the secondary schools of your choice.

You and your parents are rightly proud of Saint Elizabeth's. The majority of you think it is excellent. So do we. The headteacher and staff are very ambitious for you. They make sure that you not only enjoy work but that you reach high standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science. There are many other things that are good about your school. You are very well looked after. Teachers know you all individually. They make sure you are safe, try to eat healthily and contribute well to the community. Although your accommodation is a little cramped, you get good opportunities to exercise in nearby playing fields. Your classrooms are colourful and stimulating to help you learn. You also do your share to learn successfully. You behave very well, attend regularly and work hard. Above all, you judge your own progress in learning well.

The school listens carefully to your views. You are spoilt for choice in clubs and other out-of-class activities. Interestingly, your school agrees with you that it could do more to encourage you to use your many talents in lots of different subjects. You mentioned you were particularly keen to do more art and history. To help in this your school plans to find ways of highlighting the links between your subjects.

With best wishes for the future

Sheila Nolan

Lead Inspector