



# St Augustine of Canterbury RC VA Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 109268  
**LEA** South Gloucestershire  
**Inspection number** 278170  
**Inspection dates** 10 May 2006 to 11 May 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Martin Kerly AI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Boscombe Crescent
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Downend
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11		Bristol, South Gloucestershire BS16 6QR
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01454 866690
<b>Number on roll</b>	300	<b>Fax number</b>	01454 866694
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Dr D Marsh
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	6 November 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr P Upton

<b>Age group</b> 4 to 11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 10 May 2006 - 11 May 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 278170
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is an above average sized Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided school. Around 40 per cent of the pupils are taught in classes with more than one year group. Most come from the Catholic community across a scattered and wide range of residential areas. Almost all pupils are White British but there is a small but growing group of pupils from various ethnic minority groups and also for whom English is an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is smaller than in most schools. On entry, children's attainment reflects the full ability range but overall is marginally below that normally found.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The school has many good features and a few that are outstanding. Nevertheless, the overall effectiveness is satisfactory because the leadership team, during a time of significant absences of senior staff, has not been able to maintain fully the previously good academic achievement. The school has a broadly accurate view of its performance but its judgement that teaching is good is too generous. Improvement since the last inspection has been slowed by staff absences but the school now has the capacity to improve. It provides sound value for money.

In Reception, children achieve well as a result of good teaching and standards are mainly above national expectations by the time they enter Year 1. In Years 1 to 6, achievement is satisfactory by most pupils and good for those who have learning difficulties. By Year 6, standards are marginally above the national average but below those at the last inspection.

Teaching is satisfactory with a number of good features. It is good in Reception. In Years 1 to 6, it is good in several classes but inconsistent, partly as a result of interruptions caused by long-term absences. Other factors include variable quality in matching work to different groups and in making sure pupils know how they can improve.

Pupils' personal development is good. Their spiritual and cultural development is excellent as is their responsibility towards their wider community. Their moral and social development is very strong. The school provides high levels of care and good support.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Governors fulfil their roles well. The headteacher has a clear vision and his effective leadership skills ensure the school's mission statement is fulfilled. However, this statement lacks sufficient focus on academic standards and achievement. The frequent and extensive absences of senior staff have partially reduced the effectiveness of the leadership team from previously strong levels. They have also slowed the progress in strengthening previously reported inadequate monitoring and evaluation processes by subject leaders who are not yet fulfilling their roles adequately.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching by using the good models within the school to promote consistency across all classes in how pupils are helped to learn.
- Strengthen the role of specific senior leaders and subject leaders in helping to raise standards and the quality of provision.
- Improve the rigour and effectiveness by which the school's performance is monitored ensuring it relates closely to pupils' achievement.
- Review the mission statement to ensure pupils' academic achievement is fully included.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Given pupils' starting points, achievement is good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory overall throughout Years 1 to 6. A few children enter Reception with relatively low language, mathematical and creative skills but most are broadly in line with that found nationally. Children progress well in Reception as a result of carefully presented activities across a wide range of areas. By the end of the year, standards are mainly above national expectations with most children reaching, and a good proportion exceeding, the nationally expected goals for learning. However, in writing and creative development a few remain below the expected level.

This good progress is not maintained consistently in Years 1 to 6 so that here overall achievement is satisfactory. Progress is more rapid in Years 2, 5 and 6 where learning in lessons is frequently good. Those pupils with learning difficulties achieve well, and some exceptionally well as a result of carefully planned and targeted intervention and support. The few pupils for whom English is an additional language make good progress.

By the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils attain standards marginally above the national average in English, mathematics and science. Few exceed the national average in writing in Year 2. In Year 6, fewer pupils are likely to exceed the national average in English and science than did last year. This is in line with expectations, given the pupils' slightly lower starting points. However, most are likely to achieve their reasonably challenging targets.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good with some outstanding features, reflecting the focus in the school's detailed mission statement. Pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance is above the national average. They show good attitudes to school and behave well. Pupils' spiritual and cultural development is excellent and their moral and social development is also very strong. During the inspection the beautiful central courtyard was particularly well used by older pupils for relaxation and reflection after taking their national tests. The extensive range of creative-arts work reflects pupils' religious beliefs and their awe and wonder of creation. 'Only children can change the world' was the explanation given by one pupil when asked about the unusual orientation of the Earth on a stained glass window made by pupils. The school's links with Poland are adding further strength to their cultural awareness.

Pupils' contributions to their community are excellent. For example they show a powerful awareness and insight into the lives of the homeless, and show their strong commitment by collecting items for them such as blankets and deodorant. Older pupils take their responsibilities seriously. They form strong and lasting friendships with younger pupils as buddies. The enthusiastic school council has seen its good ideas adopted including the high quality refurbished toilets and the extensive playground apparatus. One member of the council said, 'we can change things and add things to make our school better'. Pupils have a good awareness of safe and healthy lifestyles

and the school successfully encourages more of them to walk or cycle to school. They are prepared well for the next stage in their education.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the Foundation Stage, children learn well as a result of good teaching with a good balance of activities indoors and out. Assessment is used well to help plan the next steps.

In Years 1 to 6, teaching is satisfactory but inconsistencies lead to a variation in the quality of pupils' learning. Extensive staff absences have led to frequent disruptions and temporary changes. A significant minority of parents are justifiably concerned about this situation and its impact on their children's learning. Class size varies considerably from 23 to 35 pupils, following a recent influx to specific year groups. Some of the largest classes have pupils from two year groups. These are supported well by additional teaching assistants.

In some years, particularly in Years 2, 5 and 6, teaching is good with work carefully matched to the needs of different groups, for example when learning about negative numbers on a temperature gauge. In all years, pupils with learning difficulties are taught well. In most classrooms there is limited reference to pupils' targets, although in Year 6 there is excellent guidance to pupils about how to improve. Teachers' marking is inadequate in some cases with an over-emphasis on celebration and little on how to improve. In other classes it is good, for example in Year 2 where detailed comments are encouraging a dialogue between teacher and pupil.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory with some good features. In Reception it is good, fulfilling all requirements with imaginative activities. Joint planning helps ensure smooth links to Year 1. The curriculum in Years 1 to 6 meets the requirements of the National Curriculum but lacks innovative ways of linking subjects and clear guidance on the progression of key skills. The provision for personal, social and emotional development is strengthened by the visits to the 'life-skills bus'. Teachers work carefully from a whole-school plan to ensure pupils in split year groups cover similar topics over time in all subjects. In some classes there is an over-reliance on worksheets in a number of subjects, including science and geography, narrowing the range of curriculum experiences promoting open-ended study skills. The school has the Artsmark Award in recognition of the good creative-arts work. There is a satisfactory range of club activities and Year 6 pupils enjoy a residential visit to Exmoor.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 2

Care and support is good, a view endorsed by almost all parents. Pupils feel safe and well cared for. Most pupils receive satisfactory guidance on their work. A few teachers, however, do not consistently share curriculum targets or tell pupils what they need to do to improve their work. The high standard of care is reflected in the way pupils respond to each other, for example in an assembly led by pupils for whom English is an additional language. Pupils with learning difficulties and physical disabilities are very well supported by a committed team of well trained teaching assistants and others, and fully included in all activities. The many and varied strategies in place ensure these pupils' self-esteem is enhanced. Clear school rules provide an effective framework for good behaviour and there are innovative approaches to support pupils who have trouble with anger management and sustaining friendships. One such pupil said of a lunchtime club, 'This club is all about making friends and learning to get along with each other'. There are effective systems in relation to child protection and health and safety.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has a clear vision and effectively ensures the school's detailed mission and aims are successfully fulfilled. These aims focus exclusively on the Catholic ethos and do not place sufficient emphasis on academic standards and achievement. The recent prolonged absences of senior staff created instability and additional workloads on others, particularly the headteacher. This in turn has compromised the effectiveness of the leadership team which has not been able to maintain the previously good academic achievement, and impaired the school's ability to implement improvements. This is particularly the case in the monitoring of standards and teaching which was a weakness at the time of the last inspection, and is still not as effective as it should be. However, the problem of staff absence is diminishing, leading to more effective leadership and stability. As a consequence the school now has an adequate capacity to improve.

Many judgements on teaching are too generous and do not relate sufficiently to the academic progress of pupils. Consequently, the school's view of teaching is more optimistic than is warranted. The trio model of peer monitoring by teachers in neighbouring classes was a good first step but lacks rigour and needs extending to give subject leaders an improved whole-school perspective. There is improved data to help track the progress of pupils but this is not readily accessible in its current form.

Governors fulfil their roles well. The chair provides good leadership and key governors are well informed about the school's strengths and weaknesses and provide a good balance between support and challenge. They ensure the school provides sound value for money.

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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>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	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	2	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	NA

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	4	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
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

Dear Pupils

Thank you for making us feel so very welcome on our recent visit to your school. We enjoyed talking to you and seeing some of your work. We are pleased to say there are a number of things that are good about your school, but there are also some things which need to get better.

Here are some of the most important things that we found to be good.

- You behave well and are exceptionally thoughtful about the joys of life and the needs of others.
- Children in the Reception class do well in their work.
- Your headteacher and all the staff make sure you are all very well cared for and those of you with problems are supported very well and do well in your work.
- You enjoy school and your attendance is good.
- The governors work hard to make sure the school feels a good place to be in.

We have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to work on these things:

- make sure teachers share their good ideas about how to help you learn more
- be clear about what is expected of all the senior staff and subject leaders and how they can help to make things better
- make sure that there are good ways of checking how well the school is doing and what changes are needed
- look again at the aims of the school to check they say enough about learning in your lessons.

Yours faithfully

Martin Kerly Lead Inspector