



St Swithun's Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 116386
LEA Portsmouth LEA
Inspection number 279811
Inspection dates 8 November 2005 to 9 November 2005
Reporting inspector Peter Thrussell AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Taswell Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Southsea
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Hampshire PO5 2RG
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	02392892339
Number on roll	292	Fax number	02392297690
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr M Walters
Date of previous inspection	9 October 2000	Headteacher	Mr A Murray

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 8 November 2005 - 9 November 2005	Inspection number 279811
-----------------------------	---	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by 3 additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This large, popular Catholic primary school is situated in the coastal town of Southsea. Most of its pupils are of British white heritage, with few from minority ethnic backgrounds. Both the number of pupils with learning difficulties and those receiving free school meals is below average. Children start school with broadly average knowledge and skills. Attendance is good.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with some outstanding features. It provides good value for money. Children receive a good start to their education in reception and many exceed their expected learning goals. The quality of education throughout the rest of the school is good. Pupils make good progress in their learning and in Year 6 consistently attain well above results in national tests. Ongoing progress is carefully checked. Assessment information is used well to organise learning groups. Procedures for monitoring progress in the longer term are developing. Currently, they do not provide staff with a full enough indication of what individual pupils should be working towards, so that planning their work supports their learning more fully. Although pupils are set targets in literacy and numeracy, not all recall these, nor are they sufficiently aware of how well they are doing in meeting them. Pupils' personal development is very good. They greatly enjoy working and playing alongside each other. This helps foster very good relationships, the care they show for each other, and their exemplary behaviour. They have an extremely good awareness of people whose faiths and culture are different from their own. The leadership of the head teacher is good. The deputy head teacher and governing body both provide effective support. Staff management roles have been effectively developed. Parents are very positive about their children's care, enjoyment and progress at the school. However, some feel that they could be better informed about school developments and procedures. The school has made good progress since the last inspection and very high standards have been maintained. It has clearly identified its strengths and where it could improve further, and is well placed to continue making progress.

What the school should do to improve further

* Further develop and use assessment information in planning work and helping pupils to be more aware of how well they are doing.* Keep parents better informed about school developments and procedures.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards on entry to reception are as expected. Children get a good start to their education; they make good progress and most achieve all of the learning goals expected at this age. A significant number exceed them. There have been recent changes both to staff and the approach to learning in reception. These changes are already showing that children very quickly settle to school, form very good relationships, and quickly develop skills vital to their future education. In Years 1 and 2, pupils continue to make good progress. The school's performance in national tests for Year 2 has been consistently above average. In Years 3 to 6, pupils continue to build effectively on earlier successes. In Year 6 pupils' overall performance in national tests has consistently been well above average, and in some recent years exceptionally high. Effective action has been taken in Years 1 and 2, to further raise the attainment of more able pupils

in mathematics; the school ensured that the teaching provision for all sets was consistent and that teachers set challenging targets for pupils to aim for. The school identified writing to be the weaker element of English and is working to further improve this by providing more opportunities for writing in other subjects and better monitoring of individual progress. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in meeting the learning targets set for them, due to the effective care and support given to them. The few pupils at early stages of learning English are also well supported, enabling them to make good progress as well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are very good. Attendance is above average. They are very enthusiastic about school and have very positive attitudes to learning. Relationships are built around mutual respect between adults and pupils. This results in exemplary behaviour, particularly in the degree of self discipline that is developed. Pupils are confident, polite and courteous. They enjoy school, particularly those lessons where learning is well focused, music and after school clubs. Pupils show very good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Cultural development is outstanding as it draws pupils' attention to a wide range of faiths and cultures. This was shown in an assembly where Muslim parents and children shared their Eid celebrations. Pupils make a good contribution to the life of the school. The school council is well established with pupils proudly involved in contributing to decision making. The buddy system particularly helps younger pupils to feel safe and involved. Pupils understand healthy lifestyles, and know the importance of eating the right food, regularly drinking water and taking exercise. All of this, along with very well developed academic skills, prepares pupils well for their future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall. Lessons are carefully planned. Activities imaginatively engage pupils so that they work enthusiastically and in a focused way. In the best lessons, high expectations and very good pace demand much of pupils, who respond positively. In a Year 2 mathematics lesson, pupils very quickly developed mental number strategies in a game activity as a result of very good pupil and teacher relationships. Less effective teaching occurs when the pace of learning is held up through too long being spent on introductions, and when work is not planned carefully enough for the learning needs of all pupils. Teachers work very closely with teaching assistants and other adult helpers, enabling them to support all pupils very effectively in their learning. The use of assessment to monitor and track pupils' progress is still being developed. The identification of individual long term targets for teachers to plan towards is not yet clearly established. Consequently progress is not as good as it could be for some pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good curriculum. All requirements are met in a well developed, broad spectrum of interesting activities. Most pupils, including those in reception classes and those with learning difficulties, have their needs effectively met. The curriculum is tailored well to developing pupils' knowledge and understanding. Their understanding of how to stay safe and healthy is well promoted through carefully structured personal, social and health education activities as well as in physical education lessons. Computer facilities are good and skills in using them are well developed and supported throughout the school. There is a good range of well attended extra-curricular activities. A significant number of musical opportunities develop these skills effectively. Visits, including the Year 5 residential farm week in Devon and day activities carefully linked to subject learning, add to pupils' enjoyment. This fosters good levels of achievement across a number of curriculum areas.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

'Excellent pastoral care; we feel very lucky to be able to send our children to this school.' This comment by a parent sums up the excellent care the school provides for its pupils. Pupils know that adults have their well-being at heart. They feel safe and know that any unpleasant incidents in school are quickly and sensitively sorted out. Staff provide good role models and children's confidence and self-esteem is nurtured throughout the school. Health and safety routines and risk assessments are fully in place and conscientiously observed. Child protection procedures are clear and widely understood. Parents are generally supportive of the school's work to help and care for their children. Systems for tracking the progress of pupils are developing. Individual literacy and numeracy targets inform pupils of the direction of their learning. However, they are not all sufficiently aware of these or of their progress in meeting them. Good relationships with pre-school groups enable important information to be shared so that children settle quickly in their new settings.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The head teacher and deputy head teacher provide good management for the school. They give clear direction for the school's work and focus strongly on the all round development of pupils. The school is accurate on self-assessment, although underestimating the effectiveness of its leadership and management. The head teacher has steered the school well through its expansion. He has built up a strong staff team, and effectively encouraged and developed the managerial role of key staff. The Foundation Stage is well led and the provision for pupils with learning needs is effectively managed. Subject leaders are aware of the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects, and take well planned action to improve provision and further raise attainment and progress. The school regularly checks the quality of its teaching and

learning. Areas of considerable strength as well as areas for improvement are identified. However this has been slow to further raise the overall quality of teaching and learning. The school is looking at ways of sharing good practice in order to do this. There are good opportunities for staff development closely linked to both individual and school needs. The work of the governing body is good. Governors are very supportive and clearly know the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Finances are well used. Recent extensions and alterations to the school buildings have further developed an effective learning environment. Parents are very supportive of the work of the school. There is a thriving parent teacher association. A significant number, however, do not feel sufficiently informed about the school. The team agrees that more could be done in raising parents' understanding of procedures and developments that are necessarily made.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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
--	-----------------------	--------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	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?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	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	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	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?	2	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?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	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

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

I am writing to you to let you know what we found out when we visited your school. Thank you for taking part in the inspection. We spoke to many of you during our visit and you were always interesting to talk to, polite and helpful. You spoke enthusiastically about enjoying school and all the activities that you can take part in.

We liked these things the most: * You behave extremely well, work hard and enjoy your lessons. * You are learning things more quickly than in many schools. * The school is very caring and listens to you. * You are very responsible in the jobs they ask you to do. * You make healthy choices. * The school provides challenging and interesting things for you to do. * You are extremely well aware of people who have different beliefs and ideas. * Your head and deputy head teacher do a good job.

We have asked the school to work on these things now: * Use the information they have on how well they expect you to do to plan even more challenging and enjoyable for you all. * Help you to be more aware of how well you are doing in school and how you could improve further. * Help some of your parents to understand more why changes occur in school.

Thank you Again

Peter Thrussell, Lead Inspector