



St Amand's Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 123224
LEA Oxfordshire LEA
Inspection number 281435
Inspection dates 8 December 2005 to 9 December 2005
Reporting inspector Alan Jarvis AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	St Mary's Road
School category	Voluntary aided		East Hendred
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Wantage OX12 8LF
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01235 833342
Number on roll	155	Fax number	01235 861320
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs J O'Rourke
Date of previous inspection	27 November 2000	Headteacher	Mr J G Laverty

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 8 December 2005 - 9 December 2005	Inspection number 281435
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Amand's is a small Catholic primary school. It serves the local village but around one half of pupils travel from further away. Pupils' home circumstances range across the whole spectrum but most are favourable. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds but some come from Irish, other White, Caribbean and Asian minority ethnic backgrounds and all are fluent in English. A below average proportion has a disability or learning need. None has a statement of special educational need. There are more boys than girls. The school currently has no permanent deputy headteacher. Attainment on entry is broadly average but above average in some years.

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 views achievement, teaching, the curriculum and its effectiveness as good. Inspectors judge them satisfactory but there are some good features. The school has the full confidence of parents. Pupils enjoy school, are well cared for and included well in all activities. They develop good personal attributes within a positive Catholic ethos. In Reception, children reach standards which are in line with expectations and develop good social skills. They are effectively developing their computer skills because of the good resources available and the higher priority now given to this area. Both the Year 2 and Year 6 pupils in 2005 were higher attaining year groups on entry to the school. Year 2 pupils achieved well in both reading and writing. The Year 6 pupils sustained good progress in these areas. In contrast progress in mathematics, whilst satisfactory, was not as brisk particularly for boys and some higher attaining pupils. The main reason why progress in English is stronger than in mathematics is that teaching is stronger, particularly in Year 6. Assessment information is not used well enough to sharpen learning and ensure that all groups of pupils achieve well throughout the school. Science results have often been on a par with English but these dipped last year. Behaviour is good but marred by the behaviour of a small number of boys, especially when they are not effectively challenged in lessons. Leadership, management and governance are satisfactory. However, the school development plan and systems for tracking pupils' progress are not as sharp as they should be and so the drive for improvement is only sound. The rising standards in English, particularly writing, and good improvements to ICT demonstrate the satisfactory improvement made since the last inspection and capacity to improve further. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

* Raise standards and progress in mathematics, particularly for boys and higher attaining pupils to the good levels seen in English.* Ensure the quality of teaching and assessment are consistently good so that pupils are challenged and behave well.* Ensure the school development plan and systems to track pupils' progress are sufficiently rigorous to drive improvement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory overall. Over recent years standards have mostly followed the national trend but there are some signs of improvement. Children in the current Reception class are making satisfactory progress and by the start of Year 1 standards are likely to be in line with expectations. In Year 2, the 2005 test results show that standards were above average in reading and writing and average in mathematics. Progress through Years 3 to 6 is also satisfactory but stronger in English than in mathematics. The Year 6 results in 2005, for a more able group of pupils, were well above average in English and above average in mathematics. The challenging targets

set for English were exceeded but those in mathematics were not. The school correctly identifies that the higher attaining pupils and boys ought to do better in mathematics. The usually good standards in science dipped because a few higher attaining pupils underperformed. The small numbers of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, and from minority ethnic backgrounds made satisfactory progress overall although some did better in individual subjects. Girls perform better than boys throughout the school. The school has put right the shortcomings in ICT noted at the last inspection. Boys and girls now make good progress throughout the school in their computer skills. The high priority given to music is reflected in the good numbers learning a musical instrument and the beautiful singing heard when pupils prepared for the Christmas production.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Most show positive attitudes to learning and enjoy coming to school. Attendance is satisfactory but has fallen from previously high levels. The school is addressing this and current figures show an improvement. Pupils are polite and friendly to visitors. They relate well to each other and members of staff. Some instances of bullying have taken place. However, discussions with pupils and staff confirm that pupils are responding well to the school's good anti-bullying procedures. Most pupils behave well in lessons but when teaching lacks challenge, some boys lose concentration and misbehave. This slows down their progress and hampers others' learning. One girl said 'I wish some boys would be more sensible in lessons and not distract us'. Pupils are learning to live in a community and demonstrate care for others. Citizenship skills are developing well through the pupils' participation in initiatives such as the school council and eco-committee. For their age pupils show a good understanding of how to keep safe and maintain their health because of the good provision on offer. The good progress made in literacy, strong ICT skills and good teamwork is preparing most pupils well for the next stages of education, but weaker numeracy skills hold some back.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory overall but strong in Year 6. Reception children learn at a productive pace because the teacher plans a well balanced set of activities which match their growing skills. In Years 1 to 6 most teaching enables pupils to work productively. Teachers soundly match work for pupils of different abilities and ages. Teaching assistants are well deployed and offer sound support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. However, teaching is not consistently challenging, particularly in mathematics. This limits all groups of pupils achieving consistently well. This is because: * marking does not consistently pinpoint what pupils need to do to improve; * more able pupils are not always set work that challenges them enough, and; * the

detailed information teachers have on what pupils can do is not used to set small achievable targets and quicken pupils' learning. Sparkling teaching in Year 6, especially in English, sets it apart from that elsewhere. It provides a good role model for others. Learning quickens in this class because the tasks set are consistently challenging, but not too hard. Consequently both boys and girls thrive on a feeling of success.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum for children in the Reception class is satisfactory. There is a good emphasis on learning through play. Older pupils benefit from a broad range of learning experiences. A strong emphasis is placed on the development of literacy skills. This is generally not the case in mathematics, where the development of number and problem solving skills is not as good as it might be. In contrast, there is a strong emphasis on ICT and some good emerging examples of this being used to enhance work in other subjects. This is particularly so for the oldest pupils where this approach is effectively raising standards in pupils writing in Year 6 and motivating the boys in this class to try even harder. A wide range of activities is provided for the pupils outside of lessons, including clubs, visits and residential trips. Sport, computer activities and a homework club are particularly popular. A good personal, social and health education programme has a good impact on their personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Good care supports the pupils' enjoyment of school and growing self-esteem. Procedures for child protection, risk assessment and health and safety are robust and staff training is fully up to date. Teachers know their pupils well and relationships are positive. Adequate levels of support are provided for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities which enables them to make satisfactory progress. Effective links have been established with other support agencies. Procedures for assessment are satisfactory overall with examples of good practice emerging within the school. Some useful systems are being developed to record the progress of pupils. However, teachers do not use this data effectively to track pupils' progress and pinpoint where extra support is needed.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher promotes a caring and supportive ethos in which pupils feel safe and enjoy their learning. Staff changes and difficulties in appointing a deputy headteacher have hampered improvements in teaching, assessment and pupils' achievement. The views of both pupils and parents are used to highlight priorities. The school's self-evaluation is too generous but the areas that need attention are correctly identified in a development plan of sound quality. These key documents are insufficiently rigorous and so the drive for

improvement is not as good as it might be. For example, the development plan lacks detail and milestones to guide monitoring. Consequently, it is hard to keep a check on the school's success in improving standards and teaching. The monitoring of teaching has improved but the headteacher and senior staff are not sharp enough in checking on pupils' academic progress. Governors give the headteacher their full support, are well led by the chair of governors and take a keen interest in the work of subject leaders. They have established an effective system to judge the performance of teachers which is being extended to non-teaching staff this year. There are clear plans for them to bring more rigour to their work and develop their role as 'critical friends'. The budget has been managed well and is in a healthy position. Accommodation is good. The school is well endowed with computers.

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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?	3	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	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	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?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	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	3	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	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	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	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

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

We really enjoyed our visit to your school just before Christmas. Thank you for being so helpful and friendly. We enjoyed seeing your work, chatting to you over lunch and listening to your thoughts in the playground and around the school. We think your school provides a satisfactory education and has some good features.

We are most pleased about: * the good progress you are making in English; * your computer skills and the way you are starting to use them in a range of subjects; * your beautiful singing; * the way children in the Reception class work well together, and * your enjoyment of school and the many ways in which you are learning to take good care of yourselves, keep healthy and develop as good citizens; we particularly like the work of the eco-committee and school council. Keep it up!

We feel your school would be better still if: * you did better in mathematics, particularly boys and some more able pupils; * your teachers gave you clearer targets to aim for and let you know what you need to do to improve; * work set in lessons were challenging; * every one of you concentrated and behaved well, and * the way the school plans its developments were more detailed. We hope you carry on enjoying your education, continue to improve and help your teachers all you can.