



St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 118199
LEA Isle of Wight LEA
Inspection number 285263
Inspection dates 27 June 2006 to 28 June 2006
Reporting inspector Gehane Gordelier HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	First	School address	High Street
School category	Voluntary aided		Carisbrooke
Age range of pupils	5 to 9		Newport PO30 1NR
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01983 522747
Number on roll	87	Fax number	01983 521050
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Kevin Doran
Date of previous inspection	30 November 2004	Headteacher	Mrs Laura Fairhurst

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
5 to 9	27 June 2006 - 28 June 2006	285263

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary is a small, voluntary aided village school. It mainly serves the Carisbrooke community and there are also pupils from the Newport area. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage; there are a small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is very low. The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly in line with the national average.

In April 2006 the school was federated with St Mary's Catholic Primary School under one governing body.

When the school was inspected in December 2004, it was judged to require special measures.

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 judges its overall effectiveness as satisfactory and the inspectors agree. The school has made good progress in all of the key issues since going into special measures in December 2004. In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures. The school offers satisfactory value for money and has demonstrated through its progress that it has the capacity to continue to improve.

The behaviour of pupils is good. They make at least satisfactory progress in most areas of learning. Staff are now well led and managed and as a result, standards are rising. Progress is good in the Foundation Stage and at Key Stage 1, although some capable pupils are not achieving as well as they could in mathematics. Progress at Key Stage 2 is satisfactory. Improved teaching of phonics and progress in information and communication technology (ICT) are contributing to higher standards. Younger pupils enjoy their lessons more than older pupils because learning lower down the school is more interactive and presented in a more meaningful and engaging context.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. It is consistently good in the infants and Foundation Stage but satisfactory overall at Key Stage 2. Most teachers are making better use of data, but do not always make enough use of assessment and evaluations to inform and review planning. The curriculum is broad and balanced but there is no clear overview of cross-curricular links. It is not sufficiently clear how the work in some subjects, such as personal, social, and health education (PSHE) develops from year to year and this is reducing the rate of progress made in those subjects.

The leadership team provide the school with a clear sense of direction and purpose. The role of subject leaders is developing well although they are not yet contributing fully to whole-school improvement. Nevertheless, there are now better systems in place to monitor the effectiveness and progress of the school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure there is consistently good teaching throughout the school, so that all pupils receive a good level of challenge and understand the point and purpose of their learning.
- Ensure good use is made of assessment data and evaluation to inform and review lesson planning.
- Develop curriculum planning to ensure good progression in pupils' learning.
- Further develop the role of leaders and managers so they contribute more fully to whole school improvement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement and standards are satisfactory overall. Pupils make good progress in Reception and, by the end of the Foundation Stage, they are in line to meet the goals

expected of them. The achievement and progress in Key Stage 1 is good overall, although some of the higher attaining pupils do not do as well as they could in mathematics. By the end of Year 2 standards are broadly in line with the national average and the school has met and, in some cases, exceeded its challenging targets.

At Key Stage 2 standards are satisfactory and rising. Teachers are making better use of data to build on pupils' prior attainment and set pupils individual targets. Although planning is good for core subjects not all planning takes sufficient account of the different ways in which pupils learn. As a result strategies to provide varying levels of support and challenge are not as successful as they could be.

The coherent approach to teaching phonics has helped pupils to improve their confidence and ability to read and write new and unfamiliar words. This, as well as the good progress in ICT, is securing improvements across the curriculum.

Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities receive effective support and are making satisfactory progress. The achievement of the small numbers of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds with English as a second language is broadly in line with the rest of the pupils. However, this is an area in which teachers lack a degree of expertise.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Inspectors share the school's own judgement that the quality of pupils' personal development and well-being has improved since the last inspection and is satisfactory overall. There have been good improvements in pupils' behaviour and the school makes effective use of a behaviour support assistant. Younger pupils clearly enjoy their lessons, because they find teaching interesting and motivating. Attitudes of pupils in junior classes are less good. These pupils say that they like school, but that some lessons are more enjoyable than others. They feel that teachers sometimes talk for too long or that subject matter is a little dull.

The developments in ICT are contributing to raising pupils' self-esteem. Pupils' participation in the school council is enabling them to contribute more fully to the school community as well as further develop their social and communication skills. The progress in developing good manners, team work as well as basic skills in English, mathematics, science and ICT all contribute to helping pupils to achieve future economic well-being.

Attendance is broadly in line with national averages, but levels of authorised absences are high. This is because of a continuing problem with parents taking pupils on holiday during term time. The school works hard to maintain levels of attendance and punctuality.

Pupils' spiritual development is good. Assemblies promote the school's ethos and Christian values very effectively. There is also good attention to moral, social and cultural education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Teaching in the Foundation Stage and infant classes is consistently good. It is improving in junior classes but is still mostly satisfactory.

Behaviour management is good and pupils are polite and considerate at play, in lessons and around the school. However, some of the older pupils find it hard to concentrate when lesson content does not engage their interest and when the introductions are too lengthy. All teachers are more confident and capable at using ICT and this is contributing well to enhancing the quality of teaching and learning.

In the best lessons, pupils are engaged as active learners soon after lessons begin. Teaching makes effective use of role play or provides pupils with good opportunities to talk, share ideas or take notes. These lessons progress at a good pace and pupils are encouraged to reflect on what they are learning. Additional adults are clear about what questions to ask pupils to help prompt them and ensure that all participate successfully. Pupils benefit enormously from working in pairs or in a group and particularly enjoyed doing practical activities. In one lesson, a group of lower attaining pupils enjoyed directing each other in order to plot a route as part of their mathematics lesson.

Some weaknesses in teaching are found in junior classes. In these lessons the content is, at times, taught out of context with no links to real life experiences or other areas of learning. A minority of pupils are unclear about what is expected of them and unsure of the point of the learning. In these lessons steps in learning are not small or clear enough and the strategies to support lower attaining pupils and challenge higher attainers are limited.

Day-to-day assessment to inform future planning is still too cursory. Where pupils make the most progress, teachers evaluate pupils' learning on a daily basis and amend their planning for subsequent lessons as needed. The school recognises that assessment is an area in need of development.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory overall. The provision for Foundation Stage children is now good. The provision for the rest of the school is adequate and there is good provision for after school activities. The school makes good use of the local community to enhance the curriculum. Pupils with learning difficulties are appropriately catered for. Planning in some of the foundation subjects, particularly in history, geography and PSHE, is very variable. Units of work in these subject areas do not promote good levels of progression. This is better for art, music and design and technology mainly because these subjects are taught by specialists who work with all pupils. Although

some teachers are beginning to make cross-curricular links there is no overall curriculum map to highlight these links. This sometimes results in missed opportunities for lessons to be taught within a wider and more meaningful context.

Provision for ICT has significantly improved and standards are rising as a result. Pupils respond very well to the visual impact of this resource. They are developing their skills and also learning to make good use of ICT across the curriculum to undertake research, to edit and modify their writing and to improve the presentation of their work. Pupils with learning difficulties, including those who are at risk of displaying poor attitudes to learning, respond very well to this medium of learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support for pupils are satisfactory. The staff are committed to the school and want to help pupils to do their best; however, they are not always as successful as they would hope. The school ensures the suitability of all staff to work with pupils and undertakes relevant checks. Staff complete risk assessments to ensure that all activities are conducted as safely as possible. The extent to which pupils adopt safe practices is good. They know how to keep themselves safe and feel well cared for by the vast majority of staff. However, some pupils do not believe that all mealtime supervisors apply the school rules consistently.

Pupils with learning difficulties are well supported by staff who work at the school. There is improving support for pupils who are learning to speak English as an additional language. However, there is not yet a consistent approach to ensuring these pupils fully understand what is expected of them during lessons.

The school actively promotes healthy eating and many pupils now eat more fruit on a daily basis as a result. Pupils know the importance of exercise and that it is good to drink water. The school has provided water coolers at pupils' request and this has increased pupils access to drinking water during the course of the school day.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The overall quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. This has recently been strengthened by the federation and the formation of a new governing body. Leaders and managers now all share a sense of collective responsibility in promoting whole school improvement and demonstrate a good understanding of their respective roles and responsibilities. This is leading to the school having a satisfactory capacity to improve.

The senior management and some of the subject leaders are providing the school with good leadership. This is leading to improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. Good examples include the more consistent approach to teaching phonics and improved use of ICT including its application as a teaching and learning tool. These developments are contributing significantly to raising standards across the curriculum as well as

improving pupils' self-esteem and confidence. However, not all leaders and manager have had the opportunity to direct improvements beyond their own year groups and some lack the confidence to influence whole school practice.

The quality of the school's self-evaluation is satisfactory and developing well. Leaders and managers are all beginning to contribute more rigorously to the school's self-evaluation process. This is helping key leaders to judge accurately the strengths and weaknesses of the school and plan appropriate actions for improvement. The views of parents and pupils are sought and confirm that overall they are supportive of the school. Examples of how the school has responded to the views of stakeholders include providing a wider range of extra curricular activities. Effective links with parents, the local parish and the local community have a positive impact on the progress made by most learners.

The newly formed governing body are already providing the school with a good level of challenge and support. Governors are now more focussed on raising standards for all pupils and monitoring the progress of the school against agreed points for action.

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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	2	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	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	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	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

Children

I am writing to thank you for your help during the inspection and to share our findings with you. We enjoyed talking to some of you about your work and what you think about your school. You may be aware that your school has recently been taken out of special measures. This means that your school is now doing better.

Younger pupils are improving more quickly than older pupils, though some could be doing even better in maths. However, some of the lessons in the juniors need to be made more interesting to help older pupils make even better progress. We are pleased with how well many of you are using your phonics to help you with reading and writing and are impressed with your work in ICT. However, we noticed that you could not remember as much about your work in PSHE and some other subjects as we would have expected. Your school needs to think of ways of helping you in these areas so that you learn and remember more. We think that you are all polite and well behaved and that your school teaches you well about Christian values. You know how to keep yourselves safe and you have been learning about the importance of drinking water, eating fruit and vegetables and exercising. You are well looked after and cared for by the adults in the school. However, a few of you would like some of the mealtime supervisors to be more helpful at lunch times. The school works well with parents and local people. This is helping with your education. An example was when one of the grandmothers came to talk about going to the seaside when she was a girl.

The people who are in charge of running the school are working better as a team. This is helping the school to improve. However some still need a little help and more opportunities to be in charge. We enjoyed our visit to your school and wish you every happiness and success.

Yours sincerely

Gehane Gordelier

H M Inspector