



St Alban's Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 102336
Local Authority Havering
Inspection number 286345
Inspection dates 6–7 November 2006
Reporting inspector Gordon Ewing

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Heron Flight Avenue
School category	Voluntary aided		Hornchurch
Age range of pupils	4–11		RM12 5LN
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01708 555644
Number on roll (school)	209	Fax number	01708 555160
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Father Bob Hamill
		Headteacher	Mrs Bridget Ginty
Date of previous school inspection	24 September 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is a smaller than the average primary school. It serves a community with a broad range of social backgrounds. Attainment at entry to the Reception class is average. About three quarters of pupils have White British heritage and almost all have English as their mother tongue. Few pupils are eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average. The school has experienced significant disruption due to considerable staff turnover in the last two years.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

St Alban's Catholic Primary is a school that believes every child matters. The school provides a good education for its pupils. It is improving because good leadership and management by the headteacher and her senior staff, effectively supported by the governors, have enabled the school to make progress following a period of uncertainty caused by high staff turnover.

Effective induction of new staff is now paying dividends and there is a strong sense of teamwork. The school's mission statement 'Be filled with wisdom and grow in God's love' pervades all that the school does. The increased stability is having a positive impact on pupils' achievement as teaching is improving and pupils' progress is being tracked more accurately. Marking is accurate but does not consistently show pupils how to improve their learning. Children in Reception are on course to meet the goals expected of them as a result of the good teaching. Teaching is now good throughout the school and is helping to diminish the negative impact of the high staff turnover. However, this is not, as yet, evident in the standards achieved, which are average. As a result of the current good teaching pupils' achievement is improving and their progress is good.

Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities achieve well because they are well supported by an able team of learning support assistants who work very effectively to complement the teaching.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They like their school very much, work and play happily together and enjoy their lessons. The vast majority of parents judge the school as good. As one parent said, "My son is happy and he thinks a lot of the school." The school has worked hard successfully to discourage family holidays in term time but attendance remains slightly below average, partly due to the poor attendance of a few pupils. Pupils behave well, respect the needs of others and have developed sensible attitudes to safety. Pupils feel safe and are confident that adults care about them and want to help them. This contributes strongly to the positive attitudes they have about school. Bullying is rare and dealt with well.

The curriculum is good and provision for information communication technology (ICT) is outstanding. It is enhanced further by the work done with other schools and through extra curricular activities. These promote pupils' enjoyment and achievement, increase their knowledge of how to stay safe and healthy, help them to make a positive contribution to the community and ensure that they gain skills for the next stage of their education and future life.

The school knows its strengths and weaknesses well and has taken effective action to bring about improvement, for example, in raising the achievement of boys. However, monitoring of the quality of teaching is not rigorous or robust enough. Since the last inspection the school has made significant improvements and is now well placed to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all pupils have a clear understanding of what they need to do next to make better progress.
- Develop rigorous and robust strategies to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and its impact on learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good and standards are average. Children in Reception are now making good progress and are on course to achieve the expected early learning goals. Pupils' performance in 2005 Year 2 national assessments was close to the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. In Year 6 national tests pupils achieved close to the national average in English, mathematics and science and able pupils performed more effectively in English. Provisional analysis of data for Year 6 national tests in 2006, shows that standards in English continue to be maintained alongside improvements in mathematics and science. Achievement is improving because pupils are now making good progress in lessons.

Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, and bilingual pupils receive very effective support from an able team of learning support assistants and all make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. There is a strong focus on keeping healthy, with good opportunities for physical education and a commitment to healthy eating. The school council is respected in the school for identifying ways in which they can help their community. For example, they spoke with pride about devising a rota for playing football that was fair to all classes. The school council also plans and runs charity fund raising events in which all pupils join enthusiastically. Such mature involvement by all pupils helps develop sound economic and social skills for future life.

Through their experiences in school, activities in the community and on visits, pupils have a good understanding of their own culture but their awareness of other cultures is satisfactory. Social and moral development is good. Spiritual development through the faith ethos and strong supportive relationships is outstanding.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are now good and are improving across the school. In most lessons, teaching is well paced, high expectations are set, teachers use questioning well to extend learning, activities are planned that capture pupils' interest and work is matched well to pupils' abilities. Consequently, pupils think more carefully, are focussed in lessons and their learning is advanced effectively. These features reflect the good work undertaken by the leadership to raise the quality of teaching and enhance learning through closer tracking of pupils' progress. However, marking is not rigorous or consistent enough to give pupils a clear idea of what they need to do to improve their learning further. In Reception, the focus on developing good knowledge of letter sounds is giving pupils a good start with their speaking and reading. Weaknesses in the performance of boys have been effectively addressed through an intensive teaching programme so that many make better than expected progress. The school is now focussing its efforts on improving girls' performance in writing and mathematics.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum, including that in Reception, is good. It enables pupils to improve their personal and study skills through various learning experiences. Pupils take part in local festivals, a wide range of extra curricular activities and school performances. Cross-curricular events, for example, Black History Week, engage pupils and encourage their originality. There are some outstanding opportunities that enable pupils to use their information and communication technology (ICT) skills in different subjects. The school nurse and community police officer support teaching in sex education and drugs and alcohol misuse. The school council organises a range of fundraising projects involving pupils and parents, which contribute significantly to pupils' self-esteem, confidence and sense of being good citizens.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Links with outside agencies are very good. Children with learning difficulties and disabilities and those with English as an additional language have good classroom support and make similar progress to their peers. Supervision at playtimes is good and child protection arrangements are well structured.

Recently introduced strategies to track the progress made by pupils are now more effective in improving planning and teachers are better informed of pupils' learning needs. Pupils are involved in setting targets to improve their work, especially in English and mathematics and information communication technology, and parents are kept

well informed. However, pupils do not, as yet, receive clear consistent guidance, through teachers' marking, about how they can advance in their learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The school is emerging eagerly from a period of difficulty particularly related to significant changes in staff. The headteacher has a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development in the school and is well supported by a very committed leadership team. Subject leaders are raising standards of achievement and progress through more effective development planning and closer monitoring of pupils' learning. Inclusion of all learners is central and evident in the daily practices of the school and links with a range of agencies to support all pupils are strong.

Systematic arrangements for monitoring and evaluation, including tracking pupils' progress, are being established but need to be fully integrated and the outcomes rigorously monitored and acted upon. For example, monitoring of teaching and learning is not robust enough to demonstrate effectively the impact of teaching.

The headteacher has been successful in developing a team spirit amongst staff. The development of roles and responsibilities across the new team is appropriately matched to professional training and in-school opportunities to build expertise further. As a result, the quality of teaching is improving and pupils are now making effective progress. The school has recently gained the Investors' in People award.

Governors are well involved in the school and take all opportunities to improve their understanding and skills. They are well prepared to challenge the school in seeking to improve standards of achievement and care.

Since the last inspection the school has made significant improvements, for example, in standards in ICT and geography and in the provision of equal access to the curriculum for all pupils. The school is well placed to improve further.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

You will remember that we visited your school recently for two days. I am writing on behalf of the inspectors, to tell you what we found out about your school. We would like to thank you for making us feel welcome and for talking to us about your school. It was very helpful to listen to what you had to say about what you enjoy and how well you are learning.

The things we think are good about your school are:

- The school is well led by Mrs Ginty and her staff and they work hard to make it even better for you.
- You have some outstanding opportunities in ICT.
- Your school provides you with lots of very interesting things to do, including after-school clubs, festivals and visits.
- Your school council plays an important part in improving your school.
- Your learning support assistants are skilful in helping you to make even better progress.
- The adults in school look after you and help and support you as you grow. You told us that you feel safe and happy in school and that you know the adults will always help you if you are upset or worried.
- This is a happy school and your parents and carers speak very well of it.

We think your school could be even better if your teachers:

- Gave you more advice on how you could improve your learning.
- Look more closely at their teaching in order to improve the learning opportunities for you.

We are confident that you will continue to enjoy your school and that you will help your teachers as much as you can.

Yours sincerely

Gordon Ewing

Lead Inspector