

# St Ethelbert's Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 110039          |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Slough          |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 288570          |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 17–18 July 2007 |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Pritiben Patel  |

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

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|---|----------------------------------|
| <b>Type of school</b>                     | Primary                          |
| <b>School category</b>                    | Voluntary aided                  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                | 3–11                             |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                   | Mixed                            |
| <b>Number on roll</b>                     |                                  |
| School                                    | 436                              |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>              | The governing body               |
| <b>Chair</b>                              | Mrs Anna Cerenzia                |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                        | Mrs Theresa Haggart              |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b> | 29 April 2002                    |
| <b>School address</b>                     | Wexham Road<br>Slough<br>SL2 5QR |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                   | 01753 522048                     |
| <b>Fax number</b>                         | 01753 552613                     |

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

St Ethelbert's is a large school. A well above average percentage of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, and a large proportion are in the early stages of learning English. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational need is double the national average. The percentage of pupils who either join or leave the school at different times is high. The school has the Borough Speech and Language resource. The school has been awarded the Healthy Schools Award. Previously, there have been considerable changes of senior leaders and class teachers.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

St Ethelbert's is a good school where pupils achieve well and reach average standards by the end of Year 2 and 6.

The headteacher provides good leadership and has succeeded in working with the staff to improve standards and the quality of teaching. Staffing is now more stable. As a result there is a real focus on meeting pupils' needs and raising achievement further. The headteacher has successfully addressed areas from the last inspection such as raising standards by the end of Year 2. The curriculum has improved and is more balanced and teachers' use of assessment information to plan lessons, as well as the monitoring of teaching and learning have improved well since the last inspection.

Children currently join the school in the Nursery and Reception years with levels of skills which are lower than those expected for their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good and consequently the children make good progress, although standards remain below those expected by the start of Year 1. Pupils continue to make good progress through school and reach average standards by the end of Years 2 and 6. Although standards in English and science are average, standards in mathematics are below average by the end of Year 6 because pupils find it difficult to apply their skills to problem solving activities. The school's capacity to improve further is good as demonstrated by pupils' good achievement and the progress made by the school since its last inspection.

The Christian values and Catholic ethos of the school have a positive effect on pupils' personal development. Pupils have positive attitudes and behave well, due to the respect and consideration that all staff show towards them. Pupils have a good understanding about how to stay safe and their contribution to the community is outstanding. Pupils help and support others and are involved in a variety of activities such as the school council, playground mentors and supervision of the school office, as well as raising money for charity.

The curriculum is good. Extra-curricular provision is a strength of the school and contributes very well to pupils' outstanding enjoyment. For example, a pupil said, 'I can't wait to come to school'. The curriculum includes interesting topics that link subjects together very well. This helps to extend the pupils' thinking. The staff help pupils to achieve well in basic skills such as language, literacy and mathematics which equips the pupils well for the future.

Teaching and learning are good. Stronger aspects include teachers' questioning skills, clear learning intentions, relationships between pupils and the pupils' active engagement in their own learning. Although, teachers' marking is up to date, it is mainly celebratory in nature and does not inform pupils of the next steps for improvement. Also, work set for more able pupils is sometimes not sufficiently challenging. As a result, the proportion of pupils reaching higher levels in national tests is below that of many schools, particularly in mathematics.

Care, guidance and support provided for pupils are good overall. A parent commented, 'I feel that the care shown to pupils at St Ethelbert's is strong'. Good support is provided for pupils in the early stage of learning English and those with learning difficulties or disabilities. Consequently, they make good progress.

The school has good links with other primary schools, secondary schools and external agencies to meet pupils' additional needs.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve standards in mathematics and provide more opportunities in lessons for pupils to apply their mathematics skills to problem solving.
- Improve teachers' marking so that it helps the pupils to understand the next steps in their learning and provide more challenging tasks for pupils of higher ability.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Standards are average and pupils achieve well. Children's skills on entry to Nursery and Reception are below those expected for their age. Due to good teaching in the Foundation Stage the children make good progress in relation to their starting points. Pupils continue to make good progress as they move through school. Standards by the end of Year 2 are average and have improved well over the last two years. By the end of Year 6, pupils are now attaining the standards expected for their age in English due to the consistent and effective teaching of reading and writing. National test results in previous years have fluctuated, but much improved tracking systems and good teaching have improved standards. The progress made by pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language is good, because the curriculum is adapted well to meet their specific needs. Standards attained in mathematics are below average by the end of Year 6. This issue has been identified by the school and changes have been made that have yet to be realised. The school recognises that few more able pupils currently reach the higher levels in English, mathematics and science and there are good plans in place to address this.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. This is evident from the warm relationships, good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning. Members of the school council take their role seriously and have been instrumental in securing a number of improvements. Pupils feel safe because they know they can easily approach an adult and they are confident that their concerns will be dealt with swiftly. Attendance is satisfactory rather than good, despite the good efforts of the school to increase it. The school's analysis shows that the vast majority of pupils attend school regularly but a small number of parents take their children on extended holidays in term-time.

The school's Catholic ethos is evident in all aspects of school life and contributes strongly to the outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. Pupils have benefited from the schools initiatives on healthy eating and their participation in sports is good.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Teaching varies from satisfactory to outstanding. Many teachers plan stimulating lessons that pupils find interesting and fun, and pupils talk enthusiastically about coming to school. The teachers' good subject knowledge and good relationships with pupils all help them to succeed. Although the pupils have literacy and mathematics targets, this is not consistent across the school. As a result some pupils do not

understand what comes next in their learning. In some lessons more able pupils find the work set too easy, as work is not matched to their abilities. Marking is good when teachers help pupils to know how well they are doing and what they need to do next to improve. However, this is not consistent throughout school. Teaching assistants are very capable and valued members of the team and provide good support to all pupils.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good, including that in the Foundation Stage where the environment is carefully designed to develop key areas of learning for Nursery and Reception children.

The school is working hard to develop links between subjects to extend pupils' thinking and broaden their learning experiences. Creative subjects such as dance, drama and music develop pupils' confidence and self-esteem. The school's focus on improving pupils' reading and writing skills through speaking, listening and drama activities has had a positive impact on pupils' achievements, particularly in English and science.

The curriculum is enhanced by a good range of extra-curricular activities such as rugby, computer club and football. There are special weeks where the main curriculum is suspended so that more creative activities can be introduced such as 'Maths Week', which has helped to raise the status of mathematics in school as a 'fun' subject.

The curriculum is adapted to meet the cultural needs of pupils through topics such as, 'Multicultural Slough', as well as Black History week.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school provides good care, guidance and support for pupils. There are effective systems in place for child protection and health and safety which ensure that pupils work and play in a safe environment. Pupils say that adults are always approachable if they need help. The school has very high expectations of behaviour and has successful policies to promote good relationships. Pupils' emotional well-being is an important aspect of the schools work and this has been recently strengthened by the employment of a learning mentor. There is a comprehensive programme for personal, health and social education. Pupils get satisfactory support and guidance in their work. Progress is regularly monitored but pupils are not given enough advice on how to improve their work and many do not know their targets. Pupils in the Speech and Language unit receive careful and individual support which ensures they make good progress.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher has improved the curriculum which now meets the needs of pupils more closely. She has improved pupils' behaviour so that teachers can focus on teaching and learning. She has also implemented a robust system of monitoring of teaching and learning which is raising standards.

The headteacher's aim is to improve accountability. As a result a new system of monitoring has been introduced where-by all teachers are part of core teams and are involved in the monitoring

of teachers' planning, book scrutinies as well as the monitoring of lessons. This is giving teachers a good overview of pupils' progress throughout the school and not just in their own classrooms.

The school's self-evaluation is good. Leaders at all levels know the school's strengths and areas for development and plan carefully to address any shortcomings.

Governors' contribution is satisfactory. They have a good understanding about the school's strengths and weaknesses. However, they have yet to develop their roles in monitoring and school evaluation.





## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

|   |                       |
|---|-----------------------|
| Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate | <b>School Overall</b> |
|---|-----------------------|

### 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> | 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  | 2   |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements  | 2   |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection   | Yes |

### Achievement and standards

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>How well do learners achieve?</b>   | 2 |
| The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>                           | 2 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development                                     | 1 |
| The behaviour of learners   | 2 |
| The attendance of learners  | 3 |
| How well learners enjoy their education   | 1 |
| 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                                    | 1 |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 2 |

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| <b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>                                       | 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   | 2   |
| 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  | 3   |
| 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  |

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

10 September 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Ethelbert's Catholic Primary School, Slough, SL2 5QR

On behalf of the inspectors I would like to thank you very much for being helpful when we came to visit your school. We really enjoyed meeting you, talking to you and looking at all your work.

You go to a good school and here are the reasons why.

- You make good progress and reach broadly average standards by the end of Years 2 and 6 because you have good teaching and a good curriculum.
- You get on well with each other and your teachers and as a result your behaviour is good.
- You enjoy school very much because of the good range of activities your school offers.
- All of the adults in your school make sure that you are safe, happy and well looked after.
- Those of you who have specific needs or speak English as an additional language make good progress because of the good support you receive.
- The headteacher, governors and staff work hard on your behalf and provide good leadership.

Even in a good school like yours things can be improved. We believe that standards in mathematics by the end of Year 6 can be higher, and some of you should receive more challenging work in lessons. We have also asked your teachers to tell you through their marking what you need to do next to improve. I am sure that you will rise to this challenge and work as hard as you are all doing!

With best wishes for your future success,

Pritiben Patel

Lead inspector