



St Augustine's Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 118761
Local Authority Kent
Inspection number 291247
Inspection dates 20–21 November 2006
Reporting inspector Peter Clifton

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	St Johns Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Hythe
Age range of pupils	4–11		CT21 4QE
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01303 266578
Number on roll (school)	188	Fax number	01303 230679
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	A S McEvoy
		Headteacher	Pamela Parnell
Date of previous school inspection	29 January 2001		

Age group 4–11	Inspection dates 20–21 November 2006	Inspection number 291247
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than average. It is situated near to the centre of Hythe, having moved to a new site in 2004. It draws its pupils from an unusually wide area owing to its Catholic nature, and most are of White British heritage. The school has experienced staffing difficulties over a two-year period, which have now been satisfactorily resolved. The post of chair of governors is unfilled owing to a recent resignation.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

St Augustine's Catholic Primary is a satisfactory school with some good and a few outstanding features. A key strength is in the behaviour and attitudes of the pupils, which are good and sometimes excellent. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Parents strongly support the school and recognise its strengths. Many comment on how happy their children are at school. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is excellent. Their very mature attitudes and strong sense of right and wrong come from an atmosphere of openness and trust. Christian values central to the work of the school are fostered by all staff. There has been a recent and significant improvement in attendance, which is now above average. The quality of care, guidance and support is good.

Pupils' achievement and progress are satisfactory and overall standards are now close to the average. Children come into school with a broad range of abilities across the areas of learning. They settle quickly, growing in confidence because of the good support provided. Over the past two years, pupils' progress in Year 2 has not been good enough. Acute staffing difficulties led to below-average standards, with a particular weakness in writing and too many more-able pupils not reaching higher levels. In Year 6, standards have been average for several years. Although they dipped in 2006 to below average, that group of pupils still made satisfactory progress from their starting point in Year 2. The current picture shows improvement in Key Stages 1 and 2. Improved teaching in Year 2 is ensuring that pupils make satisfactory progress and there is good teaching across Years 3 to 6. Those pupils who did not make sufficient progress in Year 2 have largely made up lost ground. Standards in the current Year 6 are securely on course to be above average in English and mathematics. Standards in reading remain stronger than in writing. Teaching and learning are now satisfactory, with many strengths; pupils are well managed and lessons grab pupils' interest. Across the school, pupils are keen, responsive and hard working. The curriculum is satisfactory and many pupils particularly enjoy the after-school clubs, which are very well attended. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Leaders have a clear and accurate view about the quality of teaching and areas of the school that need to be improved. The school's systems for monitoring and evaluating the progress made by pupils are satisfactory. However, information about progress is not easy to extract. This is particularly the case for younger pupils and has led to lack of progress not being identified quickly enough. Pupils have targets for improvement and, in Years 3 to 6, they know these well. However, there is not enough information available for pupils to identify for themselves how well they are doing or to set their own goals for improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement in writing across Years 1 to 6, making sure that more-able pupils are consistently well challenged.
- Improve the quality and accessibility of assessment information so that action can be taken quickly to remedy any underachievement.

- Develop target-setting so that the pupils gain a better understanding of how they are doing and set themselves goals for improvement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' progress and achievement are satisfactory. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress because of the extra support they receive.

Children come into school with average standards and make good progress through Reception, particularly in developing speaking and listening skills. In Year 2, overall standards in 2005 were below average, with standards in writing being well below average. The 2006 results indicate a broadly similar picture. In both years only a low proportion of pupils reached the higher level in writing. These standards are directly attributable to prolonged staff absences in Year 2. Pupils are now making the expected progress across Years 1 and 2. In Year 6, overall standards in 2005 were average. In 2006, standards in English were below average because of weaknesses in writing, while standards in mathematics and science remained average. Standards in English and mathematics in Year 6 are now better and a much higher proportion of pupils are working at the higher levels. Changes in the way that writing is taught have already improved standards and helped pupils make up lost ground, particularly in Year 3.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school is a friendly, harmonious community where all pupils are valued and feel very safe. Pupils very strongly assert that the school is one where 'everybody cares', and that there is no bullying. Pupils have excellent relationships with staff and with one another. They enjoy learning and work well together. Behaviour in the playground is exemplary and pupils move around the school very sensibly. In a few lessons a small minority of pupils do not always listen carefully enough. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils consider the needs of others, and recognise these through prayer and through practical measures such as raising money for various charities and maintaining contact with a school in Malawi.

Pupils relish opportunities to take on responsibilities and work enthusiastically to improve the school. The school council has an important role and its suggestions are often acted upon. Pupils' understanding of a healthy lifestyle is outstanding. They enjoy the healthy food provided for lunch and in the tuck shop. Their demands for physical activities outside the school day led to additional clubs being formed. They expend much energy at break times, playing together.

The appointment of a learning mentor has significantly improved attendance, which until recently has not been good enough but is now above average. She chases up absence meticulously and is a visible presence outside the school to meet parents at the start of each day. Pupils make satisfactory progress in developing basic skills. They

show very high levels of motivation and enthusiasm for the next stage in their education and are suitably prepared for this.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are improving and are satisfactory with good elements. Good planning in Reception ensures that the needs of all children are met. Teaching skills are good and classes are well managed, particularly in Years 3 to 6. Questioning frequently achieves very high levels of response from pupils. Teachers make some good links between subjects, such as when asking pupils to write instructions in a science lesson explaining how to grow seeds. On occasions, pupils are kept on the carpet for too long and, as a result, a few become restless and lose concentration. There are a few pupils in Years 1 and 2 who interrupt when others are speaking and this delays their learning. Planning for the most able lacks sharpness and these pupils find the work given easy to complete.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Throughout the school, topics are suitably planned and recently introduced initiatives are improving the development of writing skills. Leaders are aware that more-able pupils do not have their needs consistently met. The school makes good provision for those who have learning difficulties and, with the sensitive support provided, these pupils make good progress.

Enrichment of the curriculum through historical and cultural visits is good. The recent theatre visit to see a Shakespearean play was particularly successful and several pupils were keen to study further. The take-up of extra-curricular activities is high, especially in sport. The demand for some clubs has outstripped places available and the school has decided to provide additional sessions.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school's welcoming atmosphere and level of concern for each pupil ensure that they feel very safe and secure. They know that their concerns are listened to by staff and that adults can be approached to sort out any difficulties. Older pupils in the school are very mature and confident because they are trusted. Child protection procedures are secure. Staff run through trips before taking pupils to ensure that their risk assessments cover all likely possibilities.

Pupils know their targets and readily say what these are, sometimes without prompting, particularly in Year 3 onwards. There are some positive initiatives to develop self-assessment, where pupils themselves judge how well they are doing. However,

these are not embedded throughout the school and are limited in their scope. Pupils with learning difficulties have individual plans with targets that are relevant to their needs.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher and deputy have established a good team of staff who work well together and are growing in confidence. Managers, with effective support from outside the school, provide teachers with good feedback about what needs to be improved. This has enabled many weaknesses in teaching to be tackled. However, a few weaknesses, such as the lack of consistent challenge for more-able pupils, remain to be tackled. The school has rightly identified the need to improve monitoring and evaluation of pupils' progress, including more frequent assessment, so that extra help can be provided more quickly where necessary.

The headteacher has reorganised staff into curriculum teams to take on responsibility for different subjects because previous arrangements had not worked well enough. Whilst it is too early to judge the effectiveness of these new arrangements, staff are clear about what needs to be improved. They enjoy working together. A new approach to improving writing, developed with external support, is beginning to raise standards. The school has a new strategic plan for improvement, which is clearly written. This is based on accurate evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses in which all staff and governors are suitably involved. This identifies the most urgent issues that need to be addressed. These factors and the positive developments since the last inspection indicate that the school's capacity to improve further is secure.

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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?	3
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	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
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	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
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	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for our very warm welcome to your school. We enjoyed talking to you in lessons and during your playtimes. We were very impressed with how open and friendly you were. You gave us a lot of valuable information and this was a great help to us. Your school is satisfactory and some aspects are good, and you are making satisfactory progress. The adults are particularly good at caring for you and making sure you are safe.

What we most liked about your school

- Your good and sometimes excellent behaviour and attitudes.
- Your maturity and strong sense of right and wrong.
- The improvement in attendance this term.
- The good start you make in Reception.
- Teaching is getting better.
- The after-school clubs and the interesting visits you make.
- Your understanding about being healthy.
- Your headteacher knows you and your school well and she understands what needs to be improved.

We have asked your headteacher and others to work on

- Helping you improve your writing and making sure that your work is not too easy.
- Improving how the school measures your progress so you can be given extra help quickly if you fall behind.
- Giving you better information about how you are doing and what improvements can be made so that you can set yourselves goals for improvement.

We greatly enjoyed the visit and hope your school continues to improve.