

# St William of Perth Roman Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118775
<b>Local Authority</b>	Medway
<b>Inspection number</b>	291252
<b>Inspection dates</b>	19–20 June 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Carole Skinner

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>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	209
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Felim McCarthy
<b>Headteacher</b>	Deirdre Beven
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 March 2002
<b>School address</b>	Canon Close Maidstone Road Rochester ME1 3EN
<b>Telephone number</b>	01634 404267
<b>Fax number</b>	01634 404267

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Pupils come from a wide variety of social and economic backgrounds and their attainment on entry to the school is broadly in line with expectations for their age. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is above the national average. An extensive building programme is currently causing some disruption to the normal school routines.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is an improving school where pupils receive a satisfactory standard of education. Its greatest strength lies in the pupils' good personal development, which is high amongst the school's priorities and reflects its Catholic ethos and aims. Good provision for reception children helps them to achieve well and reach above average standards. In the rest of the school, standards are beginning to rise again after a period of decline. This was mostly due to staffing and recruitment difficulties which slowed the pace of improvement and led to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning. These resulted in uneven progress as pupils moved through the school. Standards in Year 6 are above average but not as high as they were a few years ago. The school has taken appropriate steps to eliminate pockets of underachievement, especially in writing. Pupils' achievement is now satisfactory, but they make good progress in Reception and in Years 5 and 6, where the teaching is consistently good.

The satisfactory leadership, management and governance are clearly focused on raising standards and have a suitable programme of action to do this. Frequent checks are made on the quality of teaching, but there is not enough emphasis on the quality of pupils' learning or on the impact of strategies to bring about improvement. Within an overall picture of satisfactory teaching, there are good features. Very good relationships and high expectations of behaviour help to create a pleasant atmosphere for learning. However, some lessons are not planned well enough to ensure that the more able pupils are given sufficiently challenging work. In others, the tasks are not matched closely enough to the needs of pupils with learning difficulties. These shortcomings often arise because assessment information is not always accurate or used effectively enough to guide teachers in their planning.

Pupils enjoy school and have very positive attitudes to learning. Their behaviour and attendance are outstanding. Adults care for pupils very well and form supportive and trusting relationships with them. The satisfactory curriculum is enriched by a wide variety of clubs, visits and visitors, often enhanced by the school's good links with other local schools and organisations. These additional activities contribute very well to pupils' personal development. The care, guidance and support given to all pupils are satisfactory. Good arrangements for ensuring pupils' health, safety and well-being help them to feel secure and happy in school. The academic guidance provided through the use of individual targets, assessments and termly tracking of pupils' progress is not yet fully effective. New systems have recently been introduced and these are still being embedded throughout the school.

Difficulties in recruiting staff and governors have left both the leadership team and governing body under strength. This situation is now being remedied and the school has begun to reallocate and develop leadership roles in the light of its current priorities. Self-evaluation is accurate and realistic and there is a shared commitment amongst staff and governors to accelerate the pace of improvement.

Rising standards in writing and the work being done to extend pupils' mathematical skills demonstrate that the school is suitably equipped to improve pupils' learning and their rate of progress.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Match activities in lessons more closely to pupils' differing needs in order to build effectively on their previous learning and raise standards further in English and mathematics.

- Improve the accuracy and consistency of assessment, target setting and tracking arrangements and use the information gained to promote good progress for all pupils.
- Improve teaching by ensuring that senior managers, subject leaders and governors check the quality of pupils' learning more thoroughly and evaluate rigorously the impact of actions taken to raise standards.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next Section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Children get off to a good start and achieve well in Reception because basic skills are taught effectively and pupils' personal and social development is very good. In Years 1 and 2, the marked decline in standards since the last inspection reflects the lack of continuity in teaching caused by recent staffing difficulties. These have now been resolved and pupils are making satisfactory progress once again. Standards in writing are improving in response to new teaching initiatives and, like those in reading, are close to the national average. Standards in mathematics are still a little below average but showing signs of improvement. Higher attaining pupils do not always achieve as well as they could. Pupils' achievement in Years 3 to 6 has been satisfactory for the past few years. Pupils in the current Year 6 have achieved well. However, the good progress seen in Years 5 and 6 is not consistent throughout the key stage. This is because in some lessons pupils of widely differing abilities are given the same work. As a result the more able pupils are sometimes not given enough challenge and pupils with learning difficulties find tasks too demanding.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' very good attitudes to learning and their excellent behaviour show how much they enjoy school, especially the lessons they find interesting and fun. They collaborate well when asked to work with others and show perseverance when they find tasks challenging. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are very considerate towards others and bullying is rare. As a result, pupils feel very safe in school. They know that if they have a problem they can turn to an adult who will always help to sort it out. Since the school council has been revitalised, pupils have a good understanding of their rights and responsibilities and are beginning to contribute effectively to decisions about how to improve the school. For example, they have made suggestions about how the playing field is used and the need for more equipment at playtimes. Pupils support various charities to help those who are less fortunate than themselves. They have a good understanding of the need for exercise and a healthy diet as demonstrated in an assembly led by pupils from Year 5. As one pupil commented, 'Fizzy drinks can make you hyper'. Although some pupils are not always confident in voicing their opinions, by the end of Year 6, pupils develop a good grasp of basic skills to prepare them for the next stage of their education.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Good teaching in the Reception class is founded on an effective combination of learning through play and direct teaching of key skills. In Years 1 to 6, teachers' assessments of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are not always sufficiently accurate and reliable to ensure that the work that is planned for them is at the right level of difficulty for all groups of pupils in every lesson. As a result, some pupils are given activities that do not build effectively on their previous learning. This is the main reason why teaching is judged satisfactory rather than good. The good teaching in Years 5 and 6 meets pupils' differing needs more effectively. It provides good levels of challenge for the more able pupils and good support for the less able. Throughout the school, skilled teaching assistants provide valuable support and encouragement for pupils with learning difficulties. When teachers mark pupils' work, they give praise where it is due but do not always explain what pupils need to do to improve.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The Foundation Stage curriculum provides children with a good range of interesting 'hands-on' activities. In the rest of the school, the curriculum is not planned in a way that makes enough meaningful links between subjects. Nor is it adapted well enough to ensure that it fully meets the needs of the more able pupils and those with learning difficulties, although the school does provide some good additional activities such as the go-kart project for gifted and talented pupils. Pupils enjoy a broad range of experiences which contribute well to their personal development. The textile, mosaic and clay projects gave pupils a valuable opportunity to learn from specialist visitors. Various partnerships have contributed well to developments in sports. Pupils in Year 6 benefit from a residential adventure week which they look forward to with great enthusiasm. Specialist teaching of music and French in Years 3 to 6 provides further enrichment.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 3

Pupils develop trusting relationships with adults in the school and they, in turn, provide good role models for the pupils. Staff follow procedures appropriately to protect children and ensure that they are safeguarded. Pupils who may be vulnerable are carefully identified and monitored and appropriate support is provided for them in liaison with outside agencies. Parents are right to be very pleased with the care the school offers and the way this helps their children to show very good consideration for others. The arrangements for monitoring pupils' progress have been strengthened this year, based on assessments in reading, writing, mathematics and science. However, these assessments are not yet secure and work is ongoing to ensure that they are consistent and accurate. Teachers have set learning targets for pupils in each class. A few pupils are clear about their own targets. For example, one older pupil indicated that her target was to 'use more premiership words in my writing'. But many pupils are not clear about what they need to do to improve further. Pupils with learning difficulties are systematically identified and provided with additional support but individual learning targets to help them to improve are not always sufficiently specific and measurable.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

Parents, pupils, staff and governors describe the school as a caring, welcoming place where pupils are happy and feel safe. This is where the leadership and management have had their greatest impact. They have maintained this ethos during the ups and downs of the past few years and continue to do so despite the disruptions of a major building programme. Their impact on raising standards has been less marked, but there are promising signs of change. The recent appointment of a deputy headteacher has strengthened the leadership team considerably. The headteacher works well in partnership with the deputy, making effective use of her experience and expertise. Subject leaders are taking a greater role in checking how well pupils are performing. Although a considerable number of lessons are observed as part of the school's extensive monitoring programme, there is insufficient focus on pupils' learning, rather than teaching. Consequently, there is not enough guidance for teachers on how to ensure pupils' learning progresses at a good pace. Governors have a good understanding of what the school does well and where its shortcomings lie. However, they do not challenge the school enough or carry out sufficiently rigorous checks on how well it is performing.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>
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### 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>	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	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>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
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	3

### 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	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	1
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

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

<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>	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

21 June 2007

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of St William of Perth Catholic Primary School, Rochester ME1 3EN

Thank you for welcoming us into your school and talking to us about your work. It was a pleasure to meet you all as you were so polite and helpful. Your behaviour is excellent and you are a credit to your school. You have very little time off and you work hard and enjoy learning. The school has had a few ups and downs in the past few years, mostly to do with teachers leaving, and there have been difficulties finding others to replace them. This has meant that the school has not made as much progress as it should and the standards you achieve are not as high as they were five years ago. Nevertheless you are making satisfactory progress and, in some years good progress.

You do best when your teachers plan activities that match your different levels of understanding. Sometimes this does not happen and some of you find the work too easy, others too hard. This happens because of the way teachers assess how well you are doing. Some of the systems they are using are quite new and they are still getting used to them. They do not always give an accurate enough picture of what you need to learn next. We have asked the school to improve these things. You learn about a wide variety of interesting subjects in school but they are not always linked together well enough to make your learning really exciting. However, the school organises many interesting clubs, visits, visitors and special projects that help you to develop lots of new skills and to work together as a team.

One of the best features of the school is the way all of the adults care for you and look after you so that you feel safe and happy. The school helps you to grow into confident and caring young people who show consideration for others. You enjoy taking responsibility, and the school council is doing a good job in suggesting ways to improve the school.

Your school is giving you a satisfactory education at the moment but is getting better. The adults who run the school are keen to keep improving it. In order to do this, we have asked them to look more closely at how well you are learning and check that what they are doing to improve it is successful.

With best wishes for the future,

Carole Skinner Lead inspector