

# St Agatha's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 102597               |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Kingston Upon Thames |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 308062               |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 4 February 2008      |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Madeleine Gerard     |

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                                    | 463  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>              | The governing body                                   |
| <b>Chair</b>                              | Mr Michael Strong                                    |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                        | Mr Patrick Monk                                      |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b> | 12 January 2004                                      |
| <b>School address</b>                     | St Agatha's Drive<br>Kingston Upon Thames<br>KT2 5TY |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                   | 020 8546 3879  |
| <b>Fax number</b>                         | 020 8974 6978  |

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: achievement of the pupils and the standards they reach, the quality of the curriculum, the care, guidance and support given to pupils and the impact of the school's work on their personal development. Evidence was gathered from a range of documents, pupil progress data, school records, lesson observations, pupils' work in their books, discussions with the headteacher, senior managers, staff, pupils and governors, observations around the school and replies to the parents' questionnaire. Some aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

This is a larger than average school with a Nursery. There are relatively few pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities and the proportion of pupils learning English as an additional language is similar to the national average. The school has the Basic Skills Quality Mark, the National PE Active Mark, and in 2007, won first prize for the education category in the Kingston in Bloom competition.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

St Agatha's is an outstanding school where pupils thrive academically and personally. The capacity to make even further improvements is excellent. Leaders and managers at all levels including governors, pupils and parents are involved in evaluation of the school's work in order to identify how the school can become even better. All staff work together as a team. Many parents praise the school and are keen to express their appreciation for the work of all the staff. One parent commented, 'We feel that St Agatha's has given our child the best start in life and in education that he could possibly get.'

Children enter the Nursery with a range of skills but the majority are close to the expected levels for their age. Children make very good progress in the caring atmosphere in the Nursery and Reception classes and almost all reach and many exceed the goals expected of them by the start of Year 1. Pupils continue to progress very well throughout the school. Pupils of all abilities are set challenging targets which they generally achieve or exceed so that by the time they leave the school their achievement in relation to their starting points is outstanding. There is a strong emphasis on ensuring that learning is closely matched to the individual needs of all the pupils. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 have been exceptionally high over recent years, and remain so. Attainment by the end of Year 6 is very high. Pupils reach high standards in mathematics and science, and exceptionally high standards in English. This is largely due to the many and varied opportunities pupils have to develop their reading and writing skills across a wide range of subjects. Pupils' current work, as well as the school's own data, shows that most pupils are working above or well above the expected levels for their age. In 2007, the school exceeded national averages for pupils reaching the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2, as well as in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. They behave extremely well and clearly enjoy their time in school as their consistently above average attendance reflects. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent. Pupils play a large part in helping the school to run smoothly. They feel safe in school and are confident that adults listen and act quickly when there are problems. Links with the local church as well as opportunities to take on responsibility, for example, as junior road safety officers and school councillors, and through raising funds for charity, help pupils to develop very good social skills and grow in confidence. They have an excellent understanding of how to keep fit and healthy. Pupils are proud of their school. One pupil commented, 'We have a better adventure playground than just about any other school.' The Catholic culture permeates the whole school and helps pupils to think carefully about spirituality. They have a secure understanding of other cultures and world religions. Their outstanding achievement, strong social skills and awareness of the needs of others, prepare them very well for their future lives.

Pupils make outstanding progress because teaching and learning are consistently very good. One pupil commented, 'I like the teachers and we do lots of interesting work.' Many practical and motivating activities engage learners and they particularly enjoy talking about their work and discovering new learning for themselves through paired and group discussions. This helps to develop strengths in teamwork and self-confidence. Well trained teaching assistants work closely with teachers and make a very good contribution to pupils' learning. Many parent volunteers give effective additional support to small groups of pupils.

The curriculum ensures pupils have very good opportunities to develop their literacy, numeracy and computing skills. Strong links between literacy and a range of other subjects help pupils to make outstanding progress in reading and writing. These links are not similarly well-developed between numeracy and other subjects. Innovative approaches, such as the 'sounds mat' produced to support the teaching of phonics, are well selected to help pupils to do as well as they can. More able pupils are suitably challenged and opportunities for pupils to attend classes and workshops at local secondary schools ensure that pupils who find learning easy are able to develop their interests and skills. Specialised support is given to those who speak English as an additional language both in class and in small groups. This ensures that they attain exceptionally well compared with their peers by the end of Year 6, particularly in English. Those who find learning difficult are given individualised attention so that they achieve as well as they can. Although good, there are some missed opportunities to practise mathematics through other subjects. There are a variety of popular and interesting clubs including Spanish, gardening and choir. Good opportunities to take part in sporting activities contribute well to pupils' very positive attitudes to keeping fit and healthy.

The care, guidance and support given to the pupils is outstanding. The school has very strong processes for tracking pupils' progress and teachers are quick to identify and address any individual learning needs, with the result that all pupils are helped to do their best. Marking makes clear how pupils can improve their work and individual targets are used very well to make sure they know how to move up to the next level in their work. Pastoral care is very strong. One pupil commented, 'This school is really good because the teachers really do care for us.' Very good communication with parents through newsletters and curriculum information ensures they know what work their children are doing in school and how they can help at home.

The headteacher provides outstanding leadership. He is very well supported by the deputy and other senior leaders and has the confidence of the staff, governors, parents and pupils. One parent commented, 'The headteacher makes a point of getting to know all the children and the parents.' The governing body has a high level of expertise and is strongly involved in helping the school to evaluate its effectiveness and improve further.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 1**

The Foundation Stage is outstanding. Children are quickly and carefully assessed when they start because induction arrangements are very good. This helps the school to meet their needs effectively and as a result children settle well. Parents of a child in the Nursery said, 'Our child has settled in very quickly and loves going to school. He has made many friends and is very fond of his teachers.' Staff provide a stimulating range of learning activities and plan a good balance between free choice and adult-led learning. Personal and social skills are developed very well and consequently children play and work well together.

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

- Increase opportunities for all pupils to develop and apply their numeracy skills in other subjects.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

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

### Overall effectiveness

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 1   |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection  | Yes |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?   | 1   |
| The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage   | 1   |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements   | 1   |

### Achievement and standards

|  |   |
|--|---|
| How well do learners achieve?  | 1 |
| The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners   | 1 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 1 |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress                              | 1 |

### Personal development and well-being

|   |   |
|---|---|
| How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?                                  | 1 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development                                     | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles   | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices   | 1 |
| How well learners enjoy their education   | 1 |
| The attendance of learners  | 1 |
| The behaviour of learners   | 1 |
| 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 | 1 |

### The quality of provision

|  |   |
|--|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?          | 1 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 1 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?   | 1 |

<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>                                       | 1   |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 1   |
| How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards  | 1   |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation  | 1   |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can                     | 1   |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money  | 1   |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities  | 1   |
| 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**

13 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Agatha's Catholic Primary School, Kingston Upon Thames, KT2 5TY

Thank you for your very warm welcome and for helping me when I visited your school recently. You were all very polite and friendly and I appreciated talking to many of you about your school and the help you gave me. I really enjoyed hearing you all singing 'Plant a little seed' so enthusiastically in assembly. In return I would like to tell you what I found out. St Agatha's Catholic Primary is an outstanding school.

- You enjoy being at school and you behave very well.
- The youngest children get off to a very good start in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- The headteacher and the other leaders and managers run the school very well.
- All the staff work hard to check up on how well you are doing as you progress through the school to make sure you are all doing as well as you can.
- Your teachers plan lots of interesting tasks for you to do to make your learning interesting and fun, and to help you to make as much progress as possible.
- Your parents and carers like the school very much too.

I have asked the school to give you even more opportunities to use your numeracy skills when you are learning other subjects.

Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly when I came to see you.

Best wishes for the future and keep on working hard,

Madeleine Gerard

Lead inspector