

# St Nicholas of Tolentine Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	109248
<b>Local Authority</b>	Bristol, City of
<b>Inspection number</b>	309941
<b>Inspection dates</b>	25–26 June 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Alison Cartlidge

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

---

<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	162
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Robert Muston
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jacqueline McCarthy
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 November 2003
<b>School address</b>	Pennywell Road Bristol BS5 0TJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01173 772260
<b>Fax number</b>	01173 772260

---

<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	25–26 June 2008
<b>Inspection number</b>	309941

---

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The pupils come to this smaller than average-sized primary school from Easton and the surrounding area of Bristol. A high proportion of pupils are entitled to free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is well above average. There is a varied ethnic mix at the school and an above average proportion of pupils are learning to speak English as an additional language. There have been eight new teachers within the last three years.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This satisfactory school provides a calm haven for pupils from a wide range of cultures. Children settle quickly into the welcoming Reception class and good teaching enables them to make a good start to their education. Teaching between Years 1 and 6 is satisfactory, enabling pupils, including those with learning difficulties, to make satisfactory progress. Pupils who are learning to speak English as an additional language do so quickly because members of staff and pupils are supportive and speaking and listening skills form an important and prominent part of the curriculum. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory, although by the end of Year 6, standards are below average. Standards are higher in reading than in writing. In writing, pupils do not always learn as quickly as they could because teachers do not ensure that they consistently provide challenging guidance on how to improve.

The stimulating and relevant curriculum helps pupils to enjoy school thoroughly. Their cultural and spiritual development is exemplary because many topics relate closely to the lives of people from a variety of cultures and draw from experiences gained in the local area. This does much to ensure that all pupils work and play together harmoniously and respect each other's differences. For example, in a literacy lesson, pupils showed a very good awareness of how refugees might feel when in a new country. Close links with the church and meaningful opportunities for worship enable pupils to have an excellent awareness of the importance of times to reflect and rejoice. Most pupils behave well and, when behaviour falls below the school's high expectations, members of staff usually take swift steps to ensure that pupils' learning is not adversely affected. Pupils are polite and friendly and they get on with each other sensibly. They contribute to the community well through the school council. For example, they recently designed and set up allotments to grow their own vegetables. There are good features to teaching across the school. Teachers and teaching assistants are caring and use a variety of successful strategies to make learning fun. They teach a wide range of personal and social skills so that pupils know how to stay safe and healthy. Academic guidance and support are satisfactory. There is a wealth of assessment information but teachers do not always use this information well enough to ensure that pupils' work consistently matches their needs.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher is determined to provide the pupils with the best possible opportunities at the school. The good improvement to the curriculum is helping to make learning purposeful and meaningful. She has a clear vision for the next stage of the school's development and shares this vision with other members of staff and governors. Following a time when there were many changes in teachers, the school has had a more settled year and middle managers are poised to expand their leadership roles. They are enthusiastic and committed to improving provision. However, they do not have a clear overview of pupils' progress because tracking data is incomplete and not in a format that they can easily evaluate. This hinders their ability to tackle dips in progress swiftly.

There are excellent links with outside agencies to support the well-being of pupils and their families. The school is gaining in popularity and most parents are pleased that their children come here. They make positive comments such as 'The staff are very understanding and will do anything to help you' and 'The teachers respond very quickly.' These comments reflect what the school is doing really well.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Provision for children in the Reception Year is good. The majority of children start school with skills lower than those expected for their age. Good teaching enables them to make good progress, although standards remain below average when they start in Year 1. Children do especially well in developing positive attitudes towards learning and in speaking and listening, because these skills are emphasised especially well in the good curriculum. Members of staff are calm and caring and help children to understand class routines and to become inquisitive and friendly. There is a happy, purposeful atmosphere in lessons, with children developing good independence by choosing where they are going to work and learning how to get on with each other. Children are already benefiting from the wider range of choices available in the new larger classroom. Leaders know that provision for writing remains an area for development and are keen to evaluate information on how well children are doing more fully.

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

- Increase pupils' progress, especially in writing, by ensuring that pupils receive challenging guidance on how to improve.
- Consistently provide work that meets the needs of all pupils so that they are all fully engaged in their learning and suitably challenged.
- Improve systems for monitoring pupils' progress so that subject leaders can identify and rectify dips in progress as soon as they arise.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Children make good progress in the Reception class, although standards are below average when they start in Year 1. Most pupils make satisfactory progress between Years 1 and 6. Standards by the end of Year 6 are below average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils do better in reading than in writing because teachers support the acquisition of reading skills especially well. Pupils' writing is comparatively weak because teachers do not always expect pupils to do their best or to check their work for mistakes. Pupils with learning difficulties make similar progress to other pupils, although recent strategies to increase their rate of progress are starting to have a positive impact. The school sets realistically challenging targets and has started to use these to help tackle underachievement. Pupils who are learning to speak English as an additional language make good progress in speaking and listening because teachers promote these skills well throughout the school day and other pupils are friendly and supportive.

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

### **Grade: 2**

A key strength in the pupils' personal development is their excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils' sensitivity towards people from cultures other than their own and their understanding of life in multicultural Britain is outstanding. As one pupil put it, 'We learn about lots of different countries and faiths.' In addition, pupils respond very positively to the excellent opportunities they have to reflect on spiritual matters. Pupils have a good understanding about how to keep themselves safe and healthy. For example, they understand

the dangers of abusing drugs and know how to use the Internet safely. They take an active and successful part in many sporting activities.

Most pupils thoroughly enjoy their time at school both in and out of the classroom. Rates of attendance are below average because some parents choose to take their children on extended term time holidays. The school is doing all the right things to reduce these absences.

Whilst behaviour is impeccable on the playground and when pupils are moving around the school, there are occasions in lessons when a few pupils show a lack of self-control and misbehave. This tends to happen when their interest is not fully engaged in the lesson. Teachers usually deal with these situations swiftly and fairly. Good relationships ensure that pupils are confident in approaching teachers and other adults at school if they have any worries. They make good progress in developing good attitudes towards learning during their time in the Reception Year and are keen to try out new things.

From starting school in the Reception class, pupils learn to care for each other and are friendly and considerate. Pupils in all classes show good concern for the needs of others by raising funds for charities. They enjoy the opportunities for taking responsibility and they do this well, ensuring that they make a good contribution to the community. The school council is working hard to improve facilities and resources. These activities, along with pupils' sound progress in developing basic skills, prepare them satisfactorily for the next stage of their education and later life.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Throughout the school, teachers form good relationships with their pupils and manage behaviour effectively. They have good subject knowledge and share this with the pupils. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution towards supporting groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties. The enthusiasm of members of staff helps pupils to concentrate and enjoy school. Teachers do not always ensure that work matches the needs of all pupils. When this happens, some pupils come off task and do not learn quickly enough. Teachers often provide detailed comments on pupils' work, although these tend to be overly positive and do not always provide enough guidance to help pupils to improve swiftly. In addition, when writing, pupils do not always take note of the teachers' advice and continue to make similar errors in subsequent pieces of work. Children learn quickly in the Reception class because adults support them well by asking probing questions and provide engaging tasks appropriate to their levels of ability.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

An interesting and varied curriculum is an important factor in pupils' enjoyment of school. Additional activities, such as clubs, visits and visitors, help to make learning meaningful, and excellent links with the business community are used to enhance provision. Members of staff have been especially successful in planning work that reflects the pupils' varied heritages and life in the local area. This provision helps to build pupils' self-esteem and confidence. The school promotes the creative arts strongly and, as a result, pupils produce high quality artwork and sing in harmony especially well. There is a thorough programme for personal, social and health education to help pupils develop good social skills enabling them to know how to stay

safe and healthy. The recent decision to teach pupils in smaller groups for literacy and numeracy is helping teachers to match work more closely to pupils' differing needs. The school is extending the satisfactory range of opportunities for pupils to use their literacy, numeracy and information and communication skills to support learning in other subjects. Speaking and listening are promoted strongly, benefiting all pupils, including those who are learning to speak English as an additional language.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

The school supports the personal needs of pupils and their families very well. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are very thorough and there are excellent links with external agencies and parents to help support vulnerable pupils. As one parent rightly said, 'If we have any problems with the children or concerns, the teacher and headteacher sort it all out very quickly.' Pupils feel safe at school and report that members of staff deal with most instances of bullying to their satisfaction. Pupils who join the school in the Reception Year and other year groups are helped to settle quickly. All members of staff use praise well to help pupils take a pride in their achievements.

There are satisfactory procedures for assessing pupils' progress. Teachers are starting to use these more effectively to plan suitable work for pupils of differing abilities. However, not all pupils are clear about how they can improve their work because teachers' written comments are too positive and pupils are not always expected to read and act upon written advice quickly enough.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The headteacher is a strong driving force in developing the school and, together with other senior leaders, has a clear understanding of what needs to be done next to improve the school further. All members of staff help to ensure that pupils receive good pastoral care. The school works well to tackle discrimination and promote equal opportunities. This is especially evident in the curriculum, where work relevant to pupils' various cultural backgrounds strengthens their attitudes towards learning. The school's systems for self-evaluation are satisfactory, although information to track pupils' progress is not complete. As a result, this prevents subject leaders from gaining a clear enough overview of patterns in progress so that they can tackle any dips in attainment as soon as they arise. The school has thorough systems for monitoring teaching and learning, and consequently, teaching is continuing to improve. The school shows that it has a sound capacity to improve further because work on developing the curriculum has increased pupils' enjoyment of learning and strategies to improve reading are bearing fruit. Leaders know that they need to do more to increase pupils' progress in writing.

Governance is satisfactory. The enthusiastic governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses. New fully trained governors are ready to extend their roles by becoming more proactive in monitoring the pupils' progress.





## 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?	3
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	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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	3

### 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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
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?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	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

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

27 June 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of St Nicholas of Tolentine Catholic Primary School, Bristol BS5 0TJ

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and for sharing your work with us. Your school provides you with a satisfactory education.

Here are some points about your school:

- You make satisfactory progress and do best in reading.
- Children in the Reception class make good progress, especially in their personal development.
- You have an excellent knowledge of various cultures and know how to stay safe and healthy.
- You take responsibility well. The school council is doing a good job in helping to make the school even better. We liked your new allotments.
- Teaching is satisfactory. Teachers work hard to make learning fun so that you thoroughly enjoy coming to school.
- You study a good range of topics, and benefit from interesting visits, visitors and clubs.
- The adults in the school care for you and help you when you are finding your work hard.
- Your headteacher and other leaders know how to make your school even better.

What we have asked your school to do now:

- Make sure that you all learn quickly and get challenging advice to help you improve your writing.
- Always provide you with work that is neither too hard nor too easy so that you all want to get on with your work quickly.
- Make sure that teachers who look after subjects check that you are all learning fast enough and take action when you are not.

What you can do to help your teachers:

- Make sure that you take notice of teachers' marking, write carefully and check to see how you can make your work better.

We thoroughly enjoyed talking with you about your work and watching you learn. We are glad that you enjoy coming to this happy school and wish you well for the future.

- Yours sincerely
- Alison Cartlidge Lead Inspector