

# St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	107116
<b>Local Authority</b>	Sheffield
<b>Inspection number</b>	324530
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24–25 June 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Carmen Markham

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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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 (total)	208
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Fr J Metcalfe
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs A Brighton
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 June 2006
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Chancet Wood Drive Sheffield South Yorkshire S8 7TR
<b>Telephone number</b>	0114 274 5597

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24–25 June 2009
<b>Inspection number</b>	324530

**Fax number**

0114 274 6499

<b>Age group</b>	4-11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24-25 June 2009
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

This smaller than average primary school serves a socially mixed population where the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is very low compared with the national average. Children attend a variety of nursery provisions before entering the school's Early Years Foundation Stage at the age of 4. Most pupils are of White British heritage but 22% are from a variety of minority ethnic groups and 7% speak English as an additional language. The school has an integrated resource for ten pupils with statements of special educational needs relating to physical difficulties and complex medical needs, but currently only three of these places have been taken. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average but the proportion of pupils with statements is well above the national average. The school has been awarded the Healthy Schools Award and the Standard for Financial Management in schools.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good and improving school. It has significant strengths. It gives outstanding care, guidance and support to all its pupils, including those supported by the integrated resource for pupils with physical difficulties and complex medical needs. Also outstanding are the spiritual development of the pupils and their commitment to a healthy lifestyle. Good progress has been made since the previous inspection to tackle some weak teaching and declining standards. Standards are now above average and pupils' achievement is good overall. This demonstrates the school's good capacity to improve. Parents have positive views about the school's provision and typically report that, 'the school has a very caring ethos, developing the whole child, socially and emotionally as well as academically in an inclusive environment'.

The school has effectively and systematically tackled the need to improve standards for all year groups, from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Year 6. Pupils currently at the end of Key Stage 2 have not had the opportunity to benefit from good quality provision for all their time in school. As a result, their writing skills, traditionally weak on entry to the school, are less secure than those in mathematics and science though they are improving. By the end of Year 6 overall standards are above the national average and achievement is good. Standards are higher in mathematics and science than in English largely because a much smaller number of pupils reach the above average levels in writing.

The school is well led and managed and governors are very supportive and well informed. The leadership team and subject managers have grown in strength and confidence as the introduction of team working has become more effective. The monitoring of teaching, the use of data about pupils' progress and effective professional development have significantly improved teaching. The quality of teaching is now good, although in Key Stage 2 pupils are not always sufficiently involved in active and practical tasks in lessons. This means that learning for all groups of pupils is not always as effective as it should be.

The outstanding care, guidance and support provided by the school reflect its aims and provide a strong foundation on which to improve provision. The previous report identified pastoral care as stronger than academic guidance but the development of detailed assessment and tracking systems means that staff now know all pupils very well and can give them the help and academic support that they need. A full range of strategies to meet the specific needs of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language, ensures good progress. The personal development and well-being of pupils is good. Pupils behave well, enjoy school and are enthusiastic about carrying out their various responsibilities. Their extensive work in relation to Fairtrade and ecology gives them a good understanding of communities locally and beyond school. This prepares pupils well for their future economic well-being and makes a good contribution to community cohesion.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children enter the Reception class with skills in line with the expectations for their age in most areas of learning with the exception of writing and linking sounds and letters, which are weaker. Children settle quickly into Reception as transition arrangements are very good and they are very well cared for. They feel safe and confident in school. They achieve well in all areas of learning, including their personal, social and emotional development. Levels of attainment have

improved and most pupils now exceed the expectations for their age by the end of the Reception year because teaching is good. Staff work effectively as a team to deliver a well planned curriculum. They have high expectations of children and set challenging targets.

Leadership and management are good and have identified the correct priorities to ensure progress. Planning is good and meets the needs of all children including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Staff make good use of alternative outdoor areas in the playground and local park to offset the limitations of the Reception outside area. Parents feel welcome in school and workshops help them to learn how to support their children's early literacy and numeracy skills. They are very positive about the provision and typically say, 'Staff take time and care over every child. It is an excellent school that welcomes children and their families. It has created a learning community that is second to none and children really love their school'.

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

- Improve the standard of writing of more able pupils in Key Stage 2 to help them to attain the above average levels in English.
- Ensure teachers in Key Stage 2 involve pupils in active and practical tasks in lessons so they always learn effectively.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Standards are above the national average by the end of Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics and a significant percentage of pupils attain the above average levels in each subject. Pupils in Key Stage 1 have had the benefit of the improved provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Standards in Key Stage 2 have risen in recent years and pupils attain standards above the national average in English, mathematics and science. Achievement overall by the end of Year 6 is good but it is stronger in mathematics and science where the proportion of pupils attaining the above average levels is significantly better than in English, particularly in writing. This is because school initiatives to improve standards in writing have not had time to fully impact on upper Key Stage 2. Challenging targets are met throughout the school except in writing. Although pupils make good progress overall in relation to their average attainment on entry to the school, progress slows a little in a few lessons in Key Stage 2, when there are fewer practical activities provided. Overall boys achieve as well as girls. Those pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those in the resource provision, and those learning English as an additional language also achieve well.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Their spiritual development is outstanding as pupils respond positively to the many opportunities for reflection. They have a strong sense of right and wrong and behave well although a small minority need additional support to manage their feelings. Pupils are considerate of others and older pupils support younger ones through the system of 'pastoral families' where small groups of mixed age pupils have lunch together and befriend each other around the school. Attendance is good and pupils enjoy their learning. Pupils eagerly take responsibility in school and in the wider community. They have a good understanding of what it means to be a global citizen through the work of the eco group and strong links with Cafod and Fairtrade. Pupils fully understand

the democratic process. They believe that they are listened to and can influence change. Pupils feel safe in school, trust adults and say, 'There's always someone to go to, who sorts out any problems'. Pupils participate enthusiastically in physical activity including 'Fit for the world week' and 'Wake up and Shake up.' They have an outstanding understanding of the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle and choose to eat healthy meals in school. Opportunities to manage their own budgets for the healthy tuck shop and fundraising for new playground equipment prepare them well for their future economic well-being.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Pupils achieve well as there are high expectations of learning and relationships are very good throughout the school. In most lessons there is good pace and challenge and questioning is used very effectively to enable pupils to extend their thinking and understanding. Work is effectively marked and clearly indicates how pupils can improve their performance. In most classes there is an emphasis on developing independent learners who can direct their own learning and work very effectively in groups on practical activities. In these lessons pupils enjoy their learning and are well motivated. However, in satisfactory lessons where pupils do not have enough active or practical tasks they are sometimes distracted and make less progress. Teachers make use of the excellent assessment data to enable them to plan lessons to meet the needs of all pupils regardless of ability. Teachers make good use of skilled teaching assistants who are flexible and can support pupils very effectively in a variety of learning situations.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The school uses its staff and specialists from outside school to provide a rich, balanced and inclusive curriculum with a good variety of well attended after-school clubs. Pupils in the integrated resource for pupils with physical difficulties and complex medical needs have full access to all aspects of the curriculum. A new cross-curricular approach is in the process of being developed. Although working well in history and religious education, opportunities to incorporate different forms of writing and information and communication technology (ICT) in other subjects are more limited. Well planned educational visits further support the curriculum. A good range of focus activity days and weeks involving the whole school, for example 'Fit for the world week', contributes effectively to developing pupils' good social and emotional skills. There is a strong focus on outdoor education supported by the work of the eco group that has planted a new orchard and wildlife area.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 1**

The school provides an outstanding level of care, guidance and support, firmly reflected in the school's highly inclusive and very caring ethos. The very high standard of care is a significant factor in pupils' enjoyment of school, their sense of well-being and the good progress they make. Pupils in the integrated resource are a very valued part of the school community and extremely well cared for. Child protection and safeguarding procedures are securely in place and arrangements for health and safety are robust. A strong team of skilled teaching assistants work closely with teachers to help pupils overcome any barriers to learning. Close links with a

wide range of agencies enhance this support further. Teachers know their pupils' needs exceptionally well and their progress is carefully monitored and tracked to ensure successful steps in their learning. Pupils know how well they are progressing and how they can improve their work. Very good arrangements support effective transition to high school. Most parents agree that their children are well cared for and safe in school and appreciate the steps taken to improve communication between home and school.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Good leadership and management have enabled the school to make good progress since the previous inspection when it was judged to be satisfactory. An excellent collaboration with several local schools to share good practice has also made an important contribution to progress. The headteacher and her team, supported by the governors, have tackled unsatisfactory teaching and good appointments have been made to ensure that pupils are able to learn and achieve well. School self-evaluation is well understood and accurate. Managers are accountable for their areas of responsibility, monitor progress and report back to colleagues and governors. This has resulted in good strategies to improve the teaching and effective systems to track and monitor the progress of pupils. The impact of this work is seen in rising standards throughout the school. The development of a new collaborative management structure has supported the improvements well. It has provided a team approach to the curriculum and ensured that new ideas are carefully considered, trialled and understood by all staff who have a shared vision of excellence for all pupils. This includes the high priority given to equality of opportunity and inclusion that is demonstrated throughout the school and in the integrated resource for pupils with physical difficulties and complex medical needs. Provision for community cohesion is good. It is well planned and enables pupils to have experience of a range of different communities. There are excellent links to a local mosque where pupils and their families have been welcomed while work on Fairtrade introduces pupils to communities with very different economies and traditions. Resources are well used to ensure very good support in class, improving accommodation, books and equipment to support the curriculum. The school provides good value for money.



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

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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 learners' needs?</b>	2
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?	1

## 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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	2
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**

On behalf of the inspection team I would like to thank you for making us so welcome in your school. You were all very helpful and polite and showed a lot of enthusiasm for your work. I admired the very interesting displays of your work, particularly the Year 6 work on graffiti and the wonderful corridor story of 'The day the school flooded'. I wonder what will happen next in that story. It really is very exciting!

I think that your headteacher and the staff all work hard to make your school effective. You attend a good school and it is improving. The staff look after you extremely well and you feel safe and happy in school. Your spiritual development is outstanding. You make good progress, standards are above average in English, mathematics and science and you are achieving well. Teachers make sure that they involve you in a lot of interesting activities and visits, including the Year 5 visit to the Victorian hamlet at Abbeydale and the Year 1 visit to 'The Deep'.

Your behaviour is good so you are able to listen and learn. I noticed that you usually take care of each other so that you can all enjoy school. Your attendance is good and your knowledge and understanding of how to stay healthy is outstanding. You make very healthy choices and know how to stay safe. You make the most of all the exciting activities the school provides including all the musical, sport and creative opportunities. I enjoyed listening to the choir at the end of the school day. I was also impressed by how much you know about Fairtrade and your work in the eco group.

One of the reasons for my visit was to see how your school can improve. I have asked teachers to help pupils in Key Stage 2 who are quick learners to improve their writing to help them attain higher levels in English at the end of Year 6. I have also asked the school to ensure that teachers in Key Stage 2 involve pupils in more practical work so they can learn more effectively. You can help by making sure you concentrate well in all lessons.