

St Augustines of Canterbury RC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109268
Local Authority	South Gloucestershire
Inspection number	324937
Inspection dates	28–29 April 2009
Reporting inspector	Chris Grove

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.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	292
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
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Marsh
Headteacher	Pete Upton
Date of previous school inspection	6 November 2000
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Boscombe Crescent Downend Bristol BS16 6QR
Telephone number	01454 866690

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	28–29 April 2009
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Fax number

01454 866694

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is larger than average. Most pupils come from the Catholic community across a wide range of residential areas. The great majority are from White, mainly British, backgrounds. There is a small number of pupils from various ethnic minority groups, for some of whom English is an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is below average. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, principally behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, is below average for a school of this size. About 40% of the pupils are taught in classes with more than one year group. The Early Years Foundation Stage provision consists of a Reception class, and the Reception-aged children in a mixed Reception/Year 1 class. The school has gained the Healthy Schools and Artsmark (Silver) awards. The breakfast club is managed by the governing body.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

St Augustine of Canterbury Primary is a good school. The great majority of parents have a very positive view about its caring Christian ethos. One parent referred to the school's 'warm, nurturing environment'. Another wrote of the 'very caring and loving feel' to the school. The partnership with parents is good. There are good links with other organisations, especially with the local Catholic parish, with other schools, especially the nearby secondary school, and with local authority services.

Pupils' good personal development and well-being are evident in their enthusiasm for school, as respondents to the parental questionnaire overwhelmingly agreed. Their enjoyment of lessons and extra-curricular activities has a strong influence on their learning and personal development. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural, including multi-cultural, development is good, as is shown in the very good relationships between pupils and with staff.

Good teaching and learning lead to pupils' good achievement. Standards are above average overall, but broadly average in writing in Years 1 and 2, and in mathematics in Years 3 to 6. Teachers are skilful at building on their good relationships with pupils to create a good climate for learning. A lively pace to lessons and good use of praise sustain pupils' interest well. This is supported by a good curriculum which successfully meets pupils' needs and provides for clear progression in skills. The school makes excellent provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The support provided by teaching assistants is very well managed and ensures that these pupils make the same good progress as their peers.

The school's good pastoral care enables pupils to thrive. Good behaviour is promoted consistently by all members of staff. Pupils' personal and emotional needs are catered for well. Academic support and guidance are good.

Leadership, management and governance are good. The school's very inclusive ethos is testimony to the impact of the leadership team. The school has an accurate view of strengths and weaknesses in pupils' attainment and in provision, resulting from good self-evaluation. Realistic targets are set for pupils' performance at the end of Year 6. However, current access to data does not enable the school to track the progress of groups of pupils with sufficient precision and thus set more challenging targets.

Effective steps have been taken since the last inspection to implement improvements required, including improving the quality of teaching and strengthening the roles of senior and subject leaders. The school has a good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children's achievement is good in most areas of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage. From starting points that are below those expected for typical four-year-olds, children settle quickly and demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. They do best in their personal and social development, in communication, language and literacy, and in problem solving, reasoning and number, but less well in other aspects.

Children are taught successfully and enjoy the activities that are planned for them. They cope well when making choices and interact very sociably with each other, sometimes singing while they glue and cut out, sharing a joke in the shop or offering to tidy up and do jobs to help each

other. The curriculum provides good opportunities for children's learning, although experiences based on learning at first hand are more limited. During the inspection, there was insufficient use of the outside area. The quality of resources is satisfactory.

The assessment of children is accurate. The learning diaries build up clear pictures of children over the year and are used effectively to help plan the next steps in their learning. The team of adults supports children patiently and fairly, and those with learning difficulties are fully included. The leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage was absent at the time of the inspection, but effective systems are in place to support ongoing management and assessment arrangements.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing in Years 1 and 2 and in mathematics in Years 3 to 6 so that pupils achieve as well as they do in reading and science.
- Improve the tracking system to enable the school to monitor and evaluate pupils' progress more effectively.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Since the last inspection, overall standards at the end of Year 2 have consistently been significantly above average. Improvement has been most evident in mathematics and especially in reading, where all groups of pupils reach above average standards. Above average proportions of pupils attain the higher levels in reading. Standards in writing are broadly average because too few pupils attain the higher Level 3. Inspection evidence shows that pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2 as a result of good teaching.

The school has maintained above average overall standards at Year 6, despite staff illness and absence in recent times leading to some discontinuities in teaching. Standards are above average in science, and especially in English, where above average proportions of pupils attain the expected Level 4 and higher Level 5. However, the staffing issues have impacted particularly on mathematics, where attainment is broadly average. National data show that pupils make good overall progress. However, progress in English is better than that in mathematics.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' smiling faces show their happiness at school. Pupils are reflective and appreciative. As one girl said whilst eating lunch in the courtyard, 'It makes me feel important we can have a quiet chat with our friends'. Their understanding of safe practices is good. For example, pupils do not feel that bullying is an issue and understand the importance of road safety. They have a good awareness of healthy lifestyles and talk knowledgeably about eating vegetables and drinking water. They are appreciative of the physical activities provided, especially morning 'Wake and Shake' sessions. The pupils who attend the breakfast club appreciate the facility. 'It gets us alert for school', said one.

Pupils develop an outstanding sense of good citizenship by contributing to community life, through their active membership of the school council, and by initiating rules, such as 'no crisps at playtime'. The 'Buddy' system, where Year 6 pupils befriend children in Reception, has a significant impact in helping younger ones to settle and older ones to feel a sense of responsibility. Pupils' appreciation of issues, such as homelessness and poverty, and the extent

of their charity fund-raising, are exceptionally good. Their care for the environment within the school grounds is excellent. With good achievement in basic skills, and well-developed personal skills and confidence, pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education and for later life. Attendance rates are broadly average and there are few persistent absentees.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Lessons are characterised by very good relationships so that pupils are well motivated and responsive. Clear learning objectives help to set a purposeful atmosphere. Good use of resources, including the interactive whiteboards, makes work interesting for pupils. Teachers have good skills in classroom management and organisation, and maintain pupils' attention well. Secure subject knowledge results in confident teaching. In one very good lesson, for instance, the teacher first set the scene well, and developed pupils' thinking through skilled questioning, before organising productive investigative work in science. This helped pupils to explore the concept and process of evaporation and to use correct scientific terminology. Such particularly effective teaching leads pupils to develop understanding through reasoning about their observations.

Lesson planning is mostly good. Much work is well matched to pupils' different abilities, providing appropriate challenge. Where teaching is only satisfactory, the levels of challenge are lower and progress is slower, because of the weaker match of work to pupils' ability. Teaching assistants provide very good support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, who therefore make good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school's success in reading is due in part to the close involvement of parents through the 'Hearing Readers Team'. In the case of writing, efforts to improve attainment, for example through the 'Big Write' course, have not had sufficient impact in Years 1 and 2. Staff absence has slowed the introduction of the new strategy for numeracy, particularly in Years 3 to 6, but this is now better established. The good standards in science result from teaching pupils in single year groups. Good resources in information and communication technology (ICT) support well the development of pupils' skills in this subject. Lessons in personal, social and health education have a positive impact on pupils' personal development. There is good provision for physical education. The school staff teach French, and this is supported by a native speaker, shared with other schools. The excellent links with a Polish school and an Indian orphanage have helped to develop pupils' understanding about global issues. The good range of extra-curricular activities, including French and Italian, art and gardening, in addition to a range of sports, opens up good opportunities for pupils to develop skills and interests.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Child protection, health and safety and first aid arrangements are good. Attendance is monitored well, and good steps are taken to impress on parents the importance of regular attendance. Good links with the pre-school and home visits smooth the transition to school. Arrangements

for transfer to secondary schools are very thorough. The breakfast club provides a good start to the day for those who attend it.

The emotional support and personal guidance for vulnerable pupils, and for those with learning difficulties, are outstanding, enabling them to learn well and play a full part in school life. Marking and the use of targets in English and mathematics successfully indicate to pupils how they can improve their work. However, there are inconsistencies in teachers' practice in recording for pupils that particular targets have been reached. Recent initiatives in Years 2 and 3 help pupils to understand better the next steps in their learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Monitoring by school leaders has led to a good awareness of strengths and weaknesses in outcomes and provision. The headteacher checks the quality of teaching and subject leaders check learning through analysing teachers' planning and scrutinising pupils' work. However, the school is aware that it does not hold sufficient information to make judgements about the consistency of pupils' progress across the school. The new assessment co-ordinator is already taking steps to improve the availability of data to inform the analysis of progress and the process of target setting.

The very positive ethos supports the promotion of equal opportunities particularly well. Good contributions to community cohesion are made, particularly at the levels of the school and the local community, and at the international level through links with a school in Poland, and an orphanage and school in India. Cohesion at the national level is less well developed. Governors show a good understanding of their strategic role. They offer strong support and act effectively as 'critical friends' to the school.

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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 ¹ 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

¹Grade 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

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	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?	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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	3
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**

30 April 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Augustine of Canterbury Catholic Primary School, Bristol, BS16 6QR

We would like to thank all of you, and your teachers, for your help during the inspection. We enjoyed seeing you in your classrooms and talking to you. St Augustine's is a good school and a happy place for children. Many of your parents wrote to us about how much you enjoy school, and about its good features. These are the most important and positive things to say about your school.

- The school is a place where everyone is made to feel welcome.
- You have very good relationships with each other and with the adults, who take good care of you.
- Your personal development, including your behaviour, is good. You feel safe in school, practise healthy lifestyles and make outstanding contributions to school and community life.
- You are making good progress in your learning and, by the time that you leave at the end of Year 6, you are doing better than pupils of this age in many other schools.
- The teaching in your school is good.
- The school has a good curriculum and provides you with good extra-curricular activities. Lots of you get involved in these activities.
- The headteacher and the other school leaders do a lot of checking up, so they know what is good about your school and how to improve it.
- The great majority of your parents are very pleased with the school.
- Your school has good relationships with your parents and with other schools.

The headteacher and the other leaders have worked very hard to make the school a good place for you. We have asked them to make things even better by doing the following:

- Raising your standards in writing in Years 1 and 2, and in mathematics in Years 3 to 6, so that you achieve as well as you do in reading and science.
- Improving the way the school checks how much progress you are making.

You can help by continuing to work hard and taking advantage of the improvements that your teachers will be making. We wish you every success in the future.

Yours faithfully

Chris Grove

Lead Inspector