

# St Swithun's Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	116386
<b>Local Authority</b>	Portsmouth
<b>Inspection number</b>	326379
<b>Inspection date</b>	13 February 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Bernice Magson

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.

---

<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)	312
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>	Mr M Walters
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs A Jones / Mrs E Bradbury (Acting)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 November 2005
<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>	Taswell Road Southsea Hampshire PO5 2RG

---

<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection date</b>	13 February 2009
<b>Inspection number</b>	326379

**Telephone number**  
**Fax number**

02392 829 339  
02392 297 690

<b>Age group</b>	4-11
<b>Inspection date</b>	13 February 2009
<b>Inspection number</b>	326379

---

© Crown copyright 2009

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. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school, including the Early Years Foundation Stage, and investigated the following issues: how well the school is seeking to raise standards in writing; how good is the quality of provision in meeting the needs of pupils; and how effective are current leaders and managers at all levels in maintaining the school's standards and developing the quality of provision further. Evidence was gathered from the school's records, planning and policies; observing teaching and learning; discussions with pupils, staff, governors and parents; and a scrutiny of parents' questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

This is a large primary school serving the Catholic parishes of St Swithun, Our Lady of Lourdes, and St Joseph in the city of Portsmouth. Children are admitted to the Early Years Foundation Stage in the autumn term of the school year in which they are five. Most pupils are of White British origin, and a small number are of Eastern European, Asian or African ethnicity. An above average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is greater than in most schools; these difficulties include physical, behavioural, social and emotional needs, dyslexia, and moderate learning difficulties. There is considerable movement of pupils in and out of school at times other than the normal admission. Some pupils are taught in mixed-age, or mixed-key-stage classes. The school has received several national awards, such as the Gold Artsmark, and also has Fairtrade status. Due to the long-term illness of the headteacher, a temporary acting headteacher has been appointed to a shared leadership role.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

This is a popular school in which pupils achieve extremely well. It provides an outstanding quality of education, enabling pupils to attain high standards by the end of Year 6. Pastoral care and support of pupils are outstanding. Parents are overwhelmingly appreciative of the very good efforts of a dedicated team of staff and governors, who have sustained the school's vision and maintained its high standards during a considerable period of instability in the leadership of the school. They describe St Swithun's as 'a wonderful school which has a real sense of community and shows utmost respect and empathy for each individual.' Indeed, in a vibrant and inclusive learning environment, the needs of each pupil are identified early, and actions taken to promote their personal and academic development.

Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning. In lessons, they strive diligently to gain 'angel cash', which they can exchange for rewards in recognition of good achievement. Behaviour and relationships are outstanding. Pupils are confident, articulate communicators who participate enthusiastically in all the school has to offer. Involvement in the creative arts of music and drama, and in sport, is extremely high, and provision for this includes an extensive range of out-of-school clubs. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding of pupils is outstanding; they share their faith very well in assemblies, and have an excellent understanding of moral and social responsibility, including community and global issues. Their knowledge of healthy lifestyles is high. Pupils have raised funds for various charities, such as the Catholic charity CAFOD, and for the education of children in south-east India. They have a strong voice within the school, influencing its development and organising activities in support of others, most recently at the Christmas Fair. The school council presents its ideas to the governing body and receives funds to bring about improvements.

Teaching and learning and the curriculum are outstanding, meeting the needs of pupils. Staff know pupils well because of the good use of assessment data, and they plan tasks that motivate and challenge. In science and mathematics, high standards are achieved, because staff have excellent subject knowledge and pose questions skilfully, enabling pupils to explore their ideas in depth. In 2008, two thirds of Year 6 attained the higher Level 5 in science. Standards in English are well above average, with strengths in reading, but some weaknesses in writing. The school has introduced strategies to raise writing standards, and there is evidence of good improvement. Professional training has led to improvements in teachers' knowledge. A more rigorous approach is now used in the teaching of letters and sounds in the Reception, and Years 1 and 2. Older pupils have a better understanding of the next steps to take to improve their work because of the introduction of individual writing targets. The school expects that most pupils will attain predicted and challenging targets in the 2009 national tests. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve as well as their peers, as do those speaking English as an additional language and those joining the school at other than the normal time of admission.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The school has an excellent understanding of its strengths and is very effective in addressing perceived weaknesses. For example, additional staff are appointed to enable teaching in mathematics to take place in ability groups in Years 2 to 6. Developments are underway in playground provision to meet pupils' needs better at lunch and break times. Currently, some senior staff and subject leaders have additional leadership responsibilities, which they are still developing. The school has recognised the need to provide more opportunities to undertake these roles.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 1**

Children enjoy school very much and play together very well. Most enter school with the skills expected for their age, although some have weaknesses in early writing. Teachers and support staff work seamlessly together to ensure that activities in each of the learning zones have an appropriate balance between adult-led sessions and independent exploration, and that tasks are well matched to individual needs. Children took great delight in ordering pictures to tell the story of the book 'We're going on a Bear Hunt', while some others dressed up to dramatise further bear stories. Children have high expectations; they are eager to learn, and concentrate extremely well for long periods. As a result, progress is excellent and, by the end of the Reception year, most children achieve nationally expected goals and many go beyond in all areas of learning. Children are very well prepared for beginning the National Curriculum in Year 1. Parents are pleased with how well their children have settled into school and are achieving.

Leadership and management of the key stage are excellent. Staff have a very good understanding of how to improve provision and raise standards further. Recently, good progress has been achieved in developing the outdoor learning environment. The leader is now seeking funds to provide a covered area so that learning can be continuous in all weathers.

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

- Develop the leadership and management roles of senior and middle managers in order to maintain and improve the school's high standards.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**

## 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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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
The extent to which 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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

## 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	2
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 eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

**Annex B**

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

02 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Swithun's Catholic Primary School, Hampshire, PO5 2RG

You may recall that a team of two inspectors visited your school recently. Thank you for being so friendly and welcoming. It was good finding out about all the exciting things you are doing. You have an outstanding school.

Here are the things that are best about your school.

- You enjoy school very much and attend very regularly.
- You work extremely hard in lessons and are keen to succeed.
- You reach high standards in English, mathematics and science by Year 6.
- You participate in a wide range of music, drama and sporting activities.
- You take very good care of each other and give excellent support to those less fortunate than yourselves.
- The school council is very good at suggesting ways to help your school improve.
- Your headteachers, staff, governors and parents are working hard to make your school even better.

We have asked the adults to do one thing to make your school even better, and that is to give those with responsibilities in the school more opportunities to carry them out.

We hope that you continue to enjoy your time at St Swithun's Catholic School. We are sure that your school will continue to improve.

Yours faithfully

Bernice Magson

Lead Inspector