

The Saint Augustine's Catholic Primary School, Stamford

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120610
Local Authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	327323
Inspection dates	9–10 July 2009
Reporting inspector	Ian Jones

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)	134
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	Mr Joe Scott
Headteacher	Mrs Sue Hooley
Date of previous school inspection	21 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Kesteven Road Stamford Lincolnshire PE9 1SR
Telephone number	01780 762094

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	9–10 July 2009
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Fax number

01780 482703

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an additional inspector.

Description of the school

This is a smaller-than-average school in Stamford, Lincolnshire. There are fewer pupils entitled to free school meals than average. Attainment on entry varies from year to year because of the relatively small number of children who join the school. This year, attainment is a little below national expectations but in past years has been typical of the skills, knowledge and understanding expected of four-year-olds. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage in a mixed-age class shared with Year 1 pupils. Very few pupils are from minority ethnic groups. The percentage with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below that found nationally. The school has achieved a number of awards including the Artsmark and Activemark. The school was recently federated with English Martyr's Catholic Primary School in Oakham, with whom it shares a headteacher.

A before- and after-school club operates from the site. This provision is not managed by the governing body and will be subject to a separate inspection.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school with some important good features and other areas for further improvement. Parents are rightly appreciative of the very effective pastoral care their children receive. This comment was typical of many: 'We have always found the school to be a very caring and nurturing environment. The children enjoy coming to school and are enthusiastic at the end of the day to tell us all that they have done.' This view is shared by the pupils. One said, 'As soon as I wake up in the morning I look forward to coming to school, all the teachers are so kind to you.' The new headteacher has gained the confidence of parents and the confidence and commitment of colleagues. She has accurately identified areas for future development and has clear plans to help deliver the improvements required. The welcoming and friendly nature of the school ensures that pupils, including those who join the school in other year groups as well as Reception, settle in quickly.

The high level of pastoral care ensures pupils' good personal development and well-being. Pupils enjoy school, reflected in their above average attendance. They understand about how to keep safe and healthy, and are confident that staff will look after them. Pupils enjoy a range of responsibilities throughout the school. Good personal skills, along with sound basic skills, prepare pupils appropriately for the next stage of their education and their future lives. A new system to check progress and to support those falling behind has been introduced, but it is too soon to see the impact of this work upon standards. Pupils' work is regularly marked, with clear guidance for pupils as to how to improve, especially in writing.

Pupils achieve average standards and make satisfactory progress overall. Standards fluctuate from year to year and between subjects, as does the rate of progress. At the end of Key Stage 1 standards have improved this year although they are below average in mathematics. Unvalidated 2009 national test results for pupils in Year 6 indicate broadly average standards. Progress in mathematics and science is sometimes slowed by limited opportunities for pupils to develop problem-solving and research skills through investigative tasks.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, enabling pupils to make the progress expected of them. Staff develop positive relationships with pupils, who behave well and show good attitudes to learning. Pupils have limited information and communication technology (ICT) skills. This is because they do not have enough regular access to computers, and opportunities to use ICT in other subjects are not regularly taken. The curriculum is satisfactory overall. Strengths such as art and English enable pupils to make good progress in these areas. The curriculum promotes good personal development and the wide range of enrichment activities are enjoyed by pupils.

Leadership and management are satisfactory, including the school's contribution to community cohesion. Good links exist with the church and other local organisations and pupils have a growing awareness of what it means to live in a global community. Subject leaders have a sound understanding of how to further improve provision in their areas. The governing body is enthusiastic in its support of the school, and has managed the transition to a federation successfully. They are developing their role as critical friends and are improving their understanding of pupil progress and other matters through a growing partnership with the new headteacher. Recent improvements demonstrate that the school has satisfactory capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children make satisfactory progress in the Reception class, achieving what is broadly typical for their age by the time they enter Year 1, although some aspects of learning, such as knowledge and understanding of the world, are below average. The setting is managed satisfactorily, with high expectations of good behaviour and cooperation, although a small minority of children find this difficult. Most children settle well into the happy and positive environment. Good support and care, together with the effective support of the team of adults, ensures the welfare of all. Children enjoy a range of activities that have a positive impact on their learning. For example, they were excitedly preparing to sell some of their garden produce to parents and enjoying tasting samples of their work. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Children's learning is monitored and assessments are carried out appropriately, supporting their satisfactory progress. Personal development and well-being are good because children are encouraged to cooperate with peers and work independently. There is a suitable balance of teacher-directed and child-initiated activities. The school has recently developed the quality of information available to parents, who welcome this improvement in communication. Opportunities for outdoor learning are appropriate and there is a small but well-used covered play area to protect children from the elements. The setting works hard to use all the accommodation effectively.

What the school should do to improve further

- Use the information provided by new procedures for assessing and tracking pupil progress to set consistently challenging work and hold class teachers accountable for the progress made by their pupils.
- Accelerate the rate of pupil progress in mathematics and science by providing pupils with increased opportunities to learn through problem-solving and investigative tasks.
- Raise standards in ICT by increasing opportunities for pupils to practise and develop these skills in a range of subjects.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards at the end of Year 2 are broadly average. Following a dip in standards last year there has been some improvement in attainment, particularly in English, as the result of a focus on writing. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are currently making satisfactory progress overall. In Key Stage 2 the standards reached by the end of Year 6 are broadly average in English, mathematics and science. The popular weekly reading mornings help to foster a love of reading and support parents in helping their children to read. Pupils who need additional help with their learning are supported appropriately and make the same satisfactory progress as their peers. Although brisk, for example in English lessons, the rate of progress slows when work is not as well matched to learners needs resulting in less challenge for higher attaining pupils in mathematics and science. Progress in these subjects, whilst satisfactory overall, is limited by inconsistencies in opportunities to explore and investigate through practical approaches to learning.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school successfully fosters happy relationships among its pupils. They demonstrate positive attitudes to learning and enjoy coming to school. Attendance rates are above average. Pupils say that bullying is rare and that they have confidence in the staff to deal with any poor behaviour. Pupils respect and care for each other. They readily take on responsibilities around the school, for example as school councillors, and older pupils act as playground leaders, actively giving support to younger ones. Pupils are polite and considerate and cooperate well with each other in lessons and around the school. A small number who find maintaining standards of good behaviour more difficult are effectively supported. As a result, their behaviour does not impede the learning of others. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Within this, cultural development is satisfactory, reflecting pupils' sound understanding of the multicultural nature of Britain's society. Most pupils adopt habits that contribute to a safe and healthy lifestyle, and they demonstrate positive attitudes to exercise. They enjoy regular opportunities to make good contributions to the school and local community, and successfully support a number of charities and good causes.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning ensure pupils make satisfactory progress. There are some good features to the teaching. Lessons are often planned well around clear objectives that are shared with pupils. Relationships are very good and little time is lost in gaining pupils' attention. Pupils work effectively with 'talk partners', helping them to reflect on ideas and make considered responses. At times, some more able pupils are not as challenged in their learning as they might be, or are required to complete more mundane tasks before they can tackle difficult ones. Pupils' learning in ICT is weakened by the limited access to good quality computers, and because of limited opportunities to practise skills in other curriculum areas. A number of teaching assistants help support those who find learning difficult to make satisfactory progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory, enabling pupils to make sound progress overall. Pupils enjoy most lessons, especially when the emphasis is on practical activities. Art is a strength of provision, and pupils' work contributes to the attractive learning environment. Pupils enjoy themed events, such as the recent task week which focused on Charles Darwin. The curriculum is enriched by the provision of French lessons and pupils have the opportunity to learn a musical instrument. There is a good range of after-school clubs, visitors and visits that helps promote pupils' good personal development. The school recognises the need to improve ICT provision. As part of the headteacher's drive to raise standards, there are well-developed plans to improve the curriculum. This is in order to place a stronger emphasis on developing pupils' skills whilst improving the way learning is matched to their needs.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school robustly meets legal requirements for safeguarding pupils. Secure procedures to ensure health and safety are in place. A good range of risk assessments are carried out and procedures for child protection are thorough. Pastoral support for pupils is very effective and pupils know who to go to if they are worried or upset. They talk about the high level of trust they have in their teachers. Arrangements to prepare pupils for secondary school are appropriately developed, and help to ensure a smooth transition to the next stage of education. Support and guidance for pupils' academic development are sound. The increasing amount of assessment information is beginning to be used to identify those pupils who are falling behind and so put in place extra support. In the best examples marking provides clear and detailed guidance to pupils as to what they need to do to improve, although it is better developed in English than in other subjects. The school works well with a range of external agencies to support pupils' personal and academic development, and enjoys strong links with parents and carers.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The effective leadership of the new headteacher is providing the school with a clear direction and a streamlined process for evaluating the school's success. Together with her colleagues, she ensures that this is an inclusive school with a welcoming and friendly community. The school has a growing understanding of its strengths and where action is required. Useful plans are in place which accurately identifies what needs to be improved and how this is to be achieved. Thanks to the determination of the headteacher, there have been recent improvements such as the use of tracking information to promote pupils' progress. However, it is too early to see the full impact of this work. Governance is satisfactory.

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.

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?	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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
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?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ 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/or disabilities make progress	3

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	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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
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?	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 eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
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**

13 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Saint Augustine's Catholic Primary School, Stamford, PE9 1SR

Thank you for being so helpful and polite when I visited your school. I am writing to let you know what I found out.

It was good to hear how much you like coming to school and enjoy learning. It was also pleasing to hear about how safe you feel in school and that there is always someone to talk to if you have concerns. You behave well and you know about how to keep healthy and safe. Those of you involved in the school council take your duties seriously and many of you take responsibility to look after others.

I found that you go to a satisfactory school. Your teachers and other staff help you to achieve satisfactorily. The school takes good care of you and helps you to get on well together. The curriculum is satisfactory and you have some good opportunities for after-school activities.

The headteacher and governors want the school to become even better and so I have asked them to do several things to help improve the school:

- use assessment information to help your teachers set work which is challenging and interesting for you
- give you regular opportunities to carry out problem solving and investigations in mathematics and science and so help you to make better progress
- help you to improve your ICT skills by giving you lots of opportunities to use computers in a wide range of subjects.

I hope you will play your part by continuing to work hard and do your best.

I wish you every success in the future.

Yours faithfully

Ian Jones

Lead inspector