

# St Benet's Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	124778
<b>Local Authority</b>	Suffolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	328211
<b>Inspection date</b>	7 July 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Cheryl Thompson

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)	94
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 David Willis
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Kim Payne
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 May 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>	Ringsfield Road Beccles Suffolk NR34 9PQ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01502 712012
<b>Fax number</b>	01502 710902

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a smaller-than-average primary school serving the local and other nearby parishes. Attainment on entry can vary considerably from year to year from below to above average. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is below average. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds but a very small number speak English as an additional language. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (Reception Year) are taught in the same class as Year 1. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is around average but the school has a significantly higher than average percentage of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs. A high number of pupils leave the school during Year 4 to join the local middle school which results in much smaller numbers of pupils in Years 5 and 6.

Currently, there is an acting headteacher and temporary acting deputy headteacher. The school is preparing for federated status, starting September 2009, with a similar sized Catholic primary school, St Edmund's, in Bungay. This status means that both schools will have the same headteacher but each will have a separate governing body and budget.

The school has been awarded the Activemark for the number of pupils taking part in high quality physical education and sports. It has also attained the Football Association Charter award.

## 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 school. It has particular strengths in its provision of good care, guidance and support which reflects the positive ethos of the school. This successfully underpins pupils' learning and supports their good achievement and personal development. The acting headteacher's outstanding leadership is ensuring a smooth transition to federated status. Staff, pupils and regular volunteers take pride in working at St Benet's and are looking forward very positively to future developments. Parents and the community hold the school in high esteem and value the information they are receiving about its future. There are good management systems in place which are used effectively to ensure pupils' good progress and continued improvement. The school carefully analyses the information it holds on pupils' progress and uses this rigorously to set challenging targets for improvement. The capacity for further improvement is good.

Pupils love coming to school and demonstrate this with their sound attendance and high participation in the good range of extra-curricular activities on offer, especially the sporting activities. As one parent commented, 'My child enjoys school greatly, in and out of the classroom.' Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and achieve well because teaching is good. Standards vary considerably from year to year because year groups are small and there are frequently very small numbers in Year 6. Currently, standards are above average in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 2 and in English, mathematics and science at Year 6. Those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well in relation to their starting points and have good self-esteem because they have appropriate work and good support. However, the curriculum is no more than satisfactory; despite the further developments planned, the school's current level of resources is not sufficient to ensure a rich or theme-based curriculum.

Relationships are good. Pupils know they are valued as individuals and their personal development and well-being are good. In lessons and discussions, they often display a thoughtful maturity. They have no doubt that, should they have any worries, an adult will help them. Behaviour is always good and at playtimes outside on the wide range of play equipment it is excellent. Pupils demonstrate great respect for one another. Community cohesion is satisfactory. The school is at the heart of its community and has a strong link with a school in Congo. However, links with other schools and pupils' knowledge of Britain as a diverse society, though satisfactory, are less well developed. Older pupils, particularly, make a good contribution to school life by taking on responsibilities in the school with great enthusiasm.

Leadership and management, including governance, are good overall. The school has an accurate picture of its strengths and there has been good improvement since the last inspection. The school works effectively in partnership with others to promote learners' well being.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage learn within an exciting and stimulating environment. Provision is carefully planned to meet their needs and interests very effectively. The curriculum is outstanding because the themes for learning arise from children's own ideas and interests. The topic being explored at the time of the inspection, for example, sprang from a child's own photograph of an invertebrate's habitat. Themes are carefully planned to ensure children learn the skills they need across all the areas of learning. There are plans to enhance

the provision even further and it is continuously evolving to meet both curricular and learning needs. Teaching makes very good use of the planning and develops basic skills effectively. Sometimes, however, teaching staff do not make full use of the children's response to their activities to extend learning further. Nonetheless, provision is good overall so that children make good progress and most gain the expected knowledge and skills by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Their personal development is very good.

Children are encouraged to take responsibility for their learning and to work amicably alongside each other. There is a strong sense of mutual respect amongst both children and adults. As a result, children have high self-esteem and socialise well. They know how to keep healthy and use tools safely. Children are cared for well and staff make sure that they are safe in the classroom and the outside area. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or social and emotional challenges have good support and effective individual education plans, helping them make similar progress to their peers. Very effective systems for monitoring children's progress and identifying their next steps ensure their social and educational needs are met. The Early Years Foundation Stage is led and managed well. The leader is very effective in developing the planning, curriculum and assessment, all of which are of high quality.

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

- Provide a good level of resources in all areas of the curriculum to support the planned development and build on the good practice evident in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Develop pupils' knowledge of Britain as a diverse society and of cultures other than their own.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils achieve well from a very wide range of starting points when they enter school. The high proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities have their difficulties identified quickly and receive good support. Consequently, they make good progress and have good self-esteem.

Pupils continue to make good progress as they move through the school so that by the time they leave at Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science reflect the good value the school has added. The numbers of pupils taking the tests are usually less than 10 and often less than five, which means that standards over time fluctuate widely, reflecting the different cohorts. Unvalidated results of 2009 national tests indicate standards are above average this year and demonstrate that pupils in both Year 2 and Year 6 have made good progress, especially the more able.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils are happy in school and enjoy their lessons. They respond well to its strong, caring ethos which is consistently modelled by all staff. They are respectful about a range of cultures and beliefs but their depth of knowledge of these is limited. Their spiritual, moral and social development is good. Pupils have a very well developed sense of right and wrong and very strong sense of spirituality, both of which are evident in their kindness and concern for others and the environment. They are well behaved and courteous to each other and visitors. Pupils

say they really like all the sporting activities. They have an excellent understanding of how to lead healthy lifestyles and a sound understanding of how to keep themselves safe.

Pupils make a good contribution to their own community as play leaders, house captains and buddies for younger pupils. However, in the wider community their contribution is satisfactory. Pupils are well prepared for the future world of work through their good progress in basic skills, good social skills and ability to work together in teams.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

A key strength in the effective teaching and learning is the good relationships established between staff and pupils. Teachers' high expectations ensure classrooms are calm and purposeful where pupils behave well and work together sensibly. This year, teachers have improved the precision with which they assess their pupils' work. As a result, targets for individuals are challenging and teachers' detailed planning for the next steps for each group has ensured even better progress for Years 3 to 6. Higher attaining older pupils have made impressive progress this year, especially in mathematics. Teaching for Year 1 pupils is particularly effective and builds extremely well on the skills and knowledge pupils have developed in the Early Years Foundation Stage (Reception). Teaching assistants are proficient and deployed successfully to support pupils who need extra help.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

Good quality personal, social and health education contributes strongly to pupils' good personal development. Provision for pupils who need extra help with their learning is good because their needs are assessed thoroughly and appropriate work and support are provided. The curriculum has adequate breadth and balance and is enlivened with residential visits and trips. The range of extra-curricular enrichment is good, particularly in sporting activities and the choir. The curriculum is an identified area for improvement. Staff are looking forward to the planned opportunities for professional development within the federated school status and working together with colleagues to develop more relevant and exciting learning opportunities. Curriculum resources within the school are at a basic level however and not sufficient to ensure a rich or theme-based curriculum.

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

#### **Grade: 2**

Pastoral care for pupils is good. All staff and governors have worked hard to create a safe and caring place of learning. Academic guidance is good. Pupils know their targets for improvement and, in the main, marking helps pupils know what they need to do to make their work even better. Policies relating to the care of pupils and safeguarding comply with statutory requirements. Parents speak highly of the care and support provided for their child to help them thrive when they have experienced difficulties elsewhere.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

The school is at a stage of transition which is being managed extremely well by the acting headteacher. She is providing outstanding leadership and has quickly gained the confidence of staff, pupils and parents so that all speak very positively of the new, exciting opportunities for the school to develop further within the federation. The school's management systems are used well to ensure continued improvement. For example, teaching and learning are monitored regularly so that teachers know what they have to do to improve learning for their pupils. The pupil progress tracking system is used efficiently to make sure pupils are making enough progress, and if they are not, to do something about it.

Governors have developed their roles well since the last inspection. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas to improve, although they have yet to make a formal assessment of the school's contribution to community cohesion. Governors have been very effective in managing the process of federation. The school budget is affected by the high number of pupils leaving the school during Year 4, consequently funding is tight. Currently, library resources are inadequate in number, relevance and quality. They will not support the school's plan for a vibrant curriculum. Reading resources for the younger pupils are adequate in number but many are outdated and there are few high-quality story and non-fiction books for pupils to share.

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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

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<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	3
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	3
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?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

## 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?	3
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**

8 July 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of St Benet's Catholic Primary School, Beccles, NR34 9PQ

Thank you so much for welcoming us to your school. Like you, we think it is a very friendly place to be and you get on very well together. Our particular thanks go to those of you who kindly gave up part of your lunchtime to talk to us. We found what you had to say very helpful. In return, I now want to share with you our findings.

This is a good school. Your acting headteacher and senior teachers provide good leadership. You told us that you enjoy school and we could see why, particularly when we heard you singing so beautifully in the choir and saw you enjoying some of the good range of sporting activities. The teachers told us that they are going to work together to make your lessons even more interesting and we thought that was a good idea but we could see that to do this you will need to have more equipment and books. You told us the teachers are nice and everyone is friendly. We agree that teaching is good and all the adults care about you a great deal and work hard on your behalf. We could see that you think hard about how well you have completed your work and try to reach the targets your teachers set for you. We noted that standards are above average this year and you make good progress because teachers keep a close eye on how well you are getting on. We were impressed by your good manners and your ability to discuss things in a very sensible way. We thought that you could learn in more depth about cultures other than your own so that it would help you know more about the diverse nature of the whole population of Britain.

Your school is successful, not only because of what the adults bring to it, but also because of your contributions. You are very positive about learning and we were very impressed with your good manners and how welcoming you are to visitors.

Thank you again for your help.

Yours faithfully

Cheryl Thompson

Lead inspector