

St Augustine's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118761
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	339297
Inspection dates	24–25 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Jon Carter

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	181
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs E Partridge
Headteacher	Mrs P Parnell
Date of previous school inspection	20 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Meetings were held with school staff, representatives from the governing body and two groups of pupils. Nine lessons were observed and seven teachers were seen. Inspectors observed the school's work, looked at school policies, documentation and systems for tracking pupils' progress and scrutinised 40 questionnaires from parents and questionnaires completed by pupils and staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- how successfully the school is using assessment to raise achievement for all groups of pupils
- how successfully the school works to prepare pupils for their future learning
- the impact of leadership and management at all levels on monitoring progress and securing improvement

Information about the school

St Augustine's is a smaller'than'average primary school with a wide catchment area due to its Catholic nature. Most pupils come from a White British background. Around a fifth of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities, most of whom have specific learning or emotional difficulties. The school holds the Healthy School Award and the Activemark.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

St Augustine's is a good school which has made, and continues to make, steady improvement because leadership is strong. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and this is underpinned by a thorough understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses gained through insightful self-evaluation and high expectations of both staff and pupils. Changes to the school's management system over the past two years have given governors and non-teaching staff, as well as teachers, explicit roles in developing and managing the curriculum. This has led to improved consistency in the use of assessment. Teachers increasingly set work which matches pupils' needs and abilities well, but not all teachers routinely check how well pupils are doing in lessons. Lines of accountability are clear, and staff feel better supported because a team approach allows them to share responsibility for key areas. As a result, they have started to plan more creative and exciting and stimulating learning activities. However, links between subjects are not yet clearly planned to ensure that pupils are able to take advantage of every opportunity to practise their basic skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT).

Pupils make good progress overall but there are some inconsistencies between classes and subjects. For example, pupils do better in writing than other subjects due to the school's recent focus, and mathematics is a particular strength in Year 2. The quality of teaching is good across the school. Improvements in outcomes for children stem from this, as teachers use the information they gather about children's progress, to plan learning experiences which engage all pupils. Improvements are sustainable because senior leaders are identifying underperformance quickly through effective use of data and, as a result, the school has a strong capacity to improve further. However, a few pupils commented, and inspectors observed, that more-able pupils do not always receive sufficient personal attention from their teachers in lessons.

The care provided to pupils is a strength of the school. One parent, commenting upon the transfer of their children to the school, noted that they 'settled straight into the balanced and happy environment' and this describes the school well. Pupils feel very safe and protected within the school because adults are always available for them. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy. Opportunities for developing healthy lifestyles are very well established and there is exceptional take-up in the many and varied sporting activities offered. Pupils participate in excess of the minimum recommended time for physical activity at school. There are insufficient opportunities for them to make purposeful links with children from cultures, backgrounds and lifestyles significantly different to their own. While the school has a satisfactory understanding of its context, senior leaders recognise that this is not based

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upon a rigorous analysis. Therefore, actions have not yet been planned so that pupils can be best prepared for life in a multicultural society.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the consistency of progress across classes and subjects by:
 - ensuring teachers make appropriate developmental comments on pupils' work and that pupils are given time to respond to them in order to secure their learning
 - ensuring all teachers routinely monitor the learning of all groups of pupils, particularly the more able, during lessons.
- Improve the quality of the curriculum so that:
 - links between subjects are explicit and support the purposeful use of English, mathematics and ICT
 - pupils' understanding of the diversity of the world is improved following a thorough analysis of the school's social, religious and cultural context.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils' results in national tests in English, mathematics and science over the last three years have been broadly average, although performance in 2009 improved, particularly in English, as a result of the school's recent focus on improving writing. Achievement is good because pupils enjoy their learning and make good progress in lessons across the school. In Year 3, for example, pupils represented characters from the story of the Last Supper in a 'hot-seating' activity which led to them using their literacy skills to produce a diary. In Reception, children developed good language, problem-solving and creative skills while finding ways of crossing the river as part of the Billy Goat Gruff story. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make good progress, although more-able pupils do not always make the same progress as their peers. Girls and boys make equally good progress.

Pupils behave well in lessons, around the school and on the playground. Occasionally they do not regulate their own behaviour as well as they might and chatter slows the pace of learning in lessons. However, in the corridors and outside, pupils clearly demonstrate strong personal and social development. They play together well and interact sensibly with adults, including visitors to the school. Pupils are extremely keen and enthusiastic about participating in all forms of physical activity, both self-organised at playtime and in clubs and events out of lesson time. This is a major contribution to their outstanding adoption of healthy lifestyles, supplemented by their attitudes towards healthy food and ways of living. The school council has been very much involved in the development of Active Play and Year 6 pupils run the healthy tuck shop at break times.

As a result of a range of successful initiatives, including the focused support of the school's learning mentor, attendance is improving and above average. This is contributing to the development of good habits for pupils' futures in education and

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work.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

All staff at St Augustine's are wholly focused on ensuring that each child is valued and nurtured. This is an outstanding feature of the school. One parent writes of staff going 'above and beyond the scope of normal teaching' to support children and their families. There is a strong sense of inclusion and desire to help those children experiencing difficulties to cope and progress both personally and in their work.

Teachers take increasing account of their assessment of pupils' learning when planning their lessons so that work is set which is appropriately challenging for the range of differing abilities within the class. This ensures that most pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities but not always the more able, make good progress. Teachers have good subject knowledge and they, together with their teaching assistants, usually provide good verbal feedback to pupils, correcting misconceptions as they arise, and using skilful questioning to guide them so that learning proceeds at a suitable pace. However, written feedback and marking inconsistently guides pupils to

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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move forward. Pupils in the focus group are well monitored but some groups, usually the more able, who are expected to work independently, do not benefit as frequently from checks to ensure they fully understand their work and continue to be successful. Learning activities are chosen to be enjoyable and relevant to pupils and there is increasing opportunity (for example through 'contract' work where pupils use their skills to investigate natural phenomena such as volcanoes) for them to influence the content of lessons. Participation in extra-curricular activities, particularly sports, continues to be high and the recent Activemark award reflects the effort put in by staff, and recognised by parents, to provide an extensive range of sporting activities.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Under the clear strategic direction of the headteacher, staff and governors work cohesively to ensure that a good rate of improvement is maintained. There is a clear focus on inclusion and improving outcomes for all pupils, irrespective of need or ability. Despite being a relatively small school, expertise and responsibility for curriculum areas is effectively shared between teachers, teaching assistants and governors and this helps to foster a real sense of ownership. Accountability is appropriately maintained by senior leaders. Staff now have a clear understanding of how to assess work accurately and they use this information to track progress and guide their lesson planning. Senior leaders have appropriately high expectations of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and monitor progress very effectively, identifying relative underachievement quickly and taking appropriate action to address any problems.

In addition to serving on curriculum teams, governors have a strong overview of the work of the school through their involvement with senior leaders in the self-evaluation process. Although there are some very experienced governors, some are relatively new to their role and do not always provide sufficient challenge to the headteacher and her team. Governors do, however, have a good understanding of safeguarding issues and engage the headteacher regularly in discussions about the progress and well-being of pupils who are more vulnerable. Arrangements for the protection of children are good and pervade the ethos of the school. There is a satisfactory understanding of the community the school serves, but this has not been reviewed formally.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

The Reception class at St Augustine's is an inclusive, welcoming and stimulating environment where children can play, learn and develop. Well-planned, purposeful activities engage all children and cover all of the required areas of learning. These activities, together with good teaching, are enabling children to make good progress from their starting points, which are broadly in line with age-related expectations. There are plenty of opportunities for them to develop language skills through role play, puppets and discussions with staff for example, when they explain what they have made. They are confident speakers and are happy to record their own retelling of a story with adult support and share it with their friends. Teachers and teaching assistants model language well and are skilful in their use of questioning to support children's development in this area. Children use their phonic knowledge effectively to make plausible attempts at spelling words and the supportive environment and very positive relationships with adults mean that they are not afraid to 'have a go'. Resources are readily available and children are encouraged to make appropriate choices independently. While children have appropriate access to both indoor and outdoor learning environments, the outdoor provision is less well developed because of the space available, although school leaders have clear plans for the required improvements as part of their vision for the Early Years Foundation Stage. They routinely track and monitor the progress of children in the class so that adaptations can be made to provision to support areas of relative weakness, with writing being a current focus.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Responses to the questionnaire indicated overwhelming support for the school. Parents and carers were especially pleased about the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the support they and their children receive from the 'approachable and caring' staff. Two negative responses about supervision of the after-school club have been resolved by the headteacher.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Augustine's Catholic Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	20	50	20	50	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	23	58	15	38	2	5	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	19	48	20	50	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	17	43	20	50	0	0	1	3
The teaching is good at this school	18	45	19	48	1	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	12	30	26	65	0	0	1	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	16	40	21	53	0	0	1	3
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	13	33	19	48	0	0	1	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	14	35	23	58	2	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	11	28	22	55	2	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	10	25	20	50	5	13	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	13	33	26	65	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	18	45	22	55	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



26 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Augustine's Catholic Primary School, Hythe, CT21 4QE

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we inspected your school recently and for talking to us about your experiences at school.

We think that St Augustine's is a good school, and particularly good at caring for you and helping you make good progress. We were pleased that so many of you get plenty of healthy exercise and that you enjoy the sports activities that your teachers organise for you. We were impressed with how well most of you behave in lessons and around the school.

Your teachers work hard to make sure that the work you get is well matched to your abilities and they have started to give you work that makes you use your English, maths and ICT skills to solve real-life problems, but we would like that to be even better.

Some of you mentioned that you do not get as much attention from your teachers if you have shown that you are able to work independently. I have therefore asked Mrs Parnell to make sure that teachers check everyone's progress regularly during lessons and improve the written comments they make about your work so that everyone can do the best they can. You can help by making sure you read and respond to your teacher's feedback.

I have also asked your teachers to help you improve how well you understand the ways in which people live in other parts of this country and around the world so you are even better prepared for a successful life. I wish you all well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Jon Carter

Lead inspector

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