

# St Richard's Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118771
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	339299
<b>Inspection dates</b>	28–29 April 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Margaret Coussins

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

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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 of pupils on the school roll</b>	164
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Phillip Smye-Rumsby
<b>Headteacher</b>	Chris Atkin
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 March 2008
<b>School address</b>	Castle Avenue Dover CT16 1EZ
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<b>Email address</b>	office@st-richards.kent.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 13 lessons and seven teachers. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body, the executive headteacher, the head and deputy head of school, the School Improvement Partner and other staff with leadership and management responsibilities. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of school documentation including the school's improvement plan, monitoring records, the school's self-evaluation document, pupils' progress records and safeguarding procedures. Questionnaires were received and analysed from 47 parents and carers.

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

- how well the school's work is accelerating progress to raise attainment and reduce any gaps in the achievement of different groups
- how effectively teaching and the curriculum are providing sufficient challenge to learners
- the impact of the work of middle managers in driving school improvement.

## Information about the school

St Richard's is a smaller than average primary school. It is federated with St Edmund's Catholic School. The executive headteacher has strategic management responsibility for both schools. In addition, St Richard's has a head of school who was appointed in January 2009, and a deputy head of school, appointed in September 2009. Both of the federated schools share the same governing body. The large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The largest other group are from Eastern Europe and the proportion of pupils from homes where English is not the first language is above that found nationally. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average although the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is below average. The needs of these pupils relate mainly to behavioural, emotional and social, and speech, language and communication difficulties. The school makes provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage in a Reception class. The school has an Activemark award, Safe Schools accreditation and established status for extended services.

**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?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

## Main findings

St Richard's provides its pupils with a satisfactory quality of education. The experienced head of school has moved the school on steadily over the past year after a period of considerable disruption due to staff changes, including in leadership and management, and long-term sickness. Her effective leadership, supported well by the deputy head, has put the school back on track despite some ongoing staff absences.

The school provides good care, guidance and support. Pupils feel safe because they know how to take care of themselves and that any incidents of inconsiderate behaviour will be dealt with effectively. They have a good understanding of how to stay fit and healthy, particularly through the good range of sports and other physical activities that are well attended and recognised by an Activemark award.

The school is beginning to overturn a legacy of underachievement and senior leaders are ambitious for the school and effectively raising expectations. Successful support from senior leaders has eradicated inadequate teaching. There are some examples of good teaching where the progress made by pupils is good. This is particularly evident in Year 6 where pupils' work and the school's data indicate that pupils are on track to sustain the upward trend in attainment in the national tests. The quality of teaching and pupils' progress overall are satisfactory, however, because they are uneven across the school. Events such as literacy week are helping to motivate and engage boys in their learning and as a result the gap between boys' and girls' attainment is narrowing. However, the range of learning opportunities provided to meet the learning needs of all pupils, but particularly boys, is not consistent across the school. Marking sometimes provides pupils with useful pointers about how to improve their work, but this is inconsistent and pupils are not always clear about their targets for learning or how and when they have achieved them. Sometimes pupils are not sufficiently engaged from the start of their lessons and this can slow the pace and progress of teaching and learning. Work is not always accurately matched to pupils' needs. This means that, on occasions, the level of challenge is not high enough or that tasks are not adapted sufficiently to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities or those who are learning English.

School self-evaluation, based on the monitoring of lessons and pupils' work and drawing well on the support provided by the local authority, has given leaders an accurate picture of the school's strengths and areas for development. Together with recently implemented systems for tracking pupils' progress, this shows the school's satisfactory capacity for further improvement. There is, however, insufficient cohesion and rigour in the steps taken by leaders and managers, including the governing body, to measure the impact of the actions taken by the school to improve effectiveness.

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## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching to accelerate pupils' learning and raise attainment by:
  - ensuring that pupils are focused and attentive at the start of lessons to increase the pace of learning so that more is accomplished
  - giving all pupils, but particularly boys, more opportunities to learn in different ways
  - giving pupils clear guidance through marking and feedback that sets out the next steps needed to improve their learning in all subjects
  - using assessment information more effectively to more precisely match work to pupils' needs.
- Ensure that leadership and management, including the governing body, develop more cohesion and rigour in monitoring the impact of the work of the school.
- Provide more guidance to teachers to help them adapt teaching and learning to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are learning English are fully engaged in lessons.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**3**

Pupils make satisfactory progress and their attainment at the end of Year 6 is broadly average. Attainment improved considerably in the national tests for Year 6 pupils in 2009, particularly in science and writing which were the areas of focus for the school. Attainment is on track to improve again this year. The developments in assessing pupils' progress that forged better performance in writing have had a positive impact on attainment in mathematics. School records indicate that many more pupils throughout the school are working at levels appropriate for their age and achievement is satisfactory, although boys do not do as well as girls.

Pupils enjoy their lessons, especially when they have opportunities to discuss and evaluate their learning during lessons. This was evident in a Year 6 English lesson where pupils made good progress because of the opportunities they had to comment constructively on their own and others' work in order to identify the use of specific language features and improve their writing. In a Year 5 English lesson pupils, particularly boys, enjoyed the opportunities to write collaboratively and said that talking together 'helps us organise our ideas and it's more fun'. Introductions to lessons are sometimes started before teachers have the full attention of pupils. As a result, pupils are not always clear about what they should be doing and time is spent repeating instructions, which slows the pace of learning. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and pupils who are learning English make similar satisfactory progress to their peers especially when they receive individual or small group support. However, sometimes tasks are not sufficiently modified to enable them to fully engage in learning in class lessons. The strong Catholic ethos supports pupils' good spiritual, moral and social development. Pupils enjoy the responsibilities they are given such as play leaders

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and peer mentors and their fund-raising ventures for many charities help them develop an understanding of people who are less fortunate than they are.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

### How effective is the provision?

The school works successfully to overcome individual barriers to learning so that pupils, particularly the most vulnerable, are enabled to learn satisfactorily. Staff take good care of pupils, drawing well on partnerships with outside agencies to add to the support provided. Some teachers make increasing use of assessment information to plan lessons that cater for the range of abilities of the pupils in their class. They set out mostly clear lesson objectives and success criteria so that pupils know what they should be learning. Within the picture of satisfactory teaching there are pockets of good practice to share across the school to raise the quality of teaching and rate of pupils' progress. Teaching assistants often provide effective, targeted support for pupils with behaviour difficulties and additional language and learning needs. This helps them to make satisfactory progress relative to their lower starting points. The curriculum makes an effective contribution to pupils' personal skills, especially their understanding of issues connected

<sup>1</sup> 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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with their health and safety, and their spiritual and moral awareness. Some meaningful links are made across subjects to enliven learning, but there are not always enough opportunities in lessons for pupils to use their basic and learning skills across a range of subjects. Pupils benefit from enrichment opportunities afforded by the federation, as they are able to access facilities and experiences, for example in drama, dance, music and French. They also enjoy the activities provided through partnerships with other organisations, extended services and the deanery.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The ambition and drive of senior leaders has enabled considerable improvement to be made over the past year. Comprehensive arrangements for tracking pupils' progress have led to more ambitious, but nonetheless realistic, target setting throughout the school that is helping to drive improvement. Leaders and managers, including governors, are clearly aware the momentum of school improvement needs to be sustained and built upon to raise attainment, further accelerate progress and develop a more strategic overview of the key areas of the school's work. Their track record to date shows that they are satisfactorily placed to do this. Some middle managers are effectively developing their roles and confidence as they feel valued and encouraged to contribute to school improvement. Others have only recently taken on their roles and it is too soon to evaluate the impact of their work. Leaders focus appropriately on equality of opportunity; they are careful to analyse and take action to reduce any differences in the rate of progress between identifiable groups, including boys and girls. The school meets the statutory requirements for safeguarding and has clear procedures that are well known by staff. Parents confirm that the school takes good care of their children and that they feel safe. Community cohesion is good. The school has strong links with the local community. It audits the impact of its contribution to cohesion. It benefits from its partnership with the federated school in developing national and international aspects. The introduction of French has given pupils a taste of another European culture. Partnerships with parents and carers are positive. They are kept well informed about the day to day work of the school, their children's progress and how to support their learning, for example, through a mathematics workshop.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children in the Reception class make steady progress from their starting points, which are generally around the expected level for their age, except in their skills in linking sounds and letters, writing and calculation which are below expectations. There are positive, trusting relationships with the team of adults and, as a result, children are happy, behave appropriately, settle well into the routines of the day and are well cared for. Children understand the need to keep themselves safe and healthy. They explained to an inspector that she could join them in the sandpit but only if shoes and socks were removed so that the sand did not get dirty and that they wash their hands before eating and after they have been to the toilet 'to get rid of the germs so we don't get sick'. The children make a good contribution to the smooth running of the day by, for example, registering their names on arrival, and choosing and tidying away their activities. Children have access to a recently improved safe and secure outdoor area, but it is not used as fully as it might be. Adults do not always pick up on the opportunities presented to extend children's thinking and learning through their play which sometimes limits their exploration, problem-solving and independent learning skills. There is a satisfactory balance of activities led by an adult and those where children can make their own choices. There is good ongoing assessment and milestones in their learning are recorded in their 'Learning Journey' books, which children excitedly and enthusiastically shared with an inspector, remembering and recalling special moments captured in photographs, for example, their role play in anti-bullying week.



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*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

## Views of parents and carers

A large majority of parents and carers who returned the questionnaire agreed that they were happy with their children's experience at school and most said that their children enjoy coming to school. There were mostly positive responses to all of the questions except for a small minority of concerns expressed about how the school deals with unacceptable behaviour. The inspectors found that behaviour is satisfactory and that the school's behaviour policy has successfully reduced the number of incidents concerning unacceptable behaviour.

Shortly before the inspection took place, parents and carers became aware of discussions concerning the possibility of a reduction in the number of classes in the school and many expressed their concerns about this and the future of the school within the federation. This is not a matter for inspectors to investigate but inspectors agree that the governing body should communicate with parents and carers to keep them informed on this issue and address their concerns.

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Richard'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.

The inspection team received 47 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 164 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	22	47	22	47	2	4	1	2
The school keeps my child safe	17	36	29	62	1	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	21	45	21	45	4	9	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	13	28	27	57	6	13	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	17	36	25	53	3	6	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	18	38	21	45	8	17	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	15	31	28	60	2	4	0	0
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)	12	26	28	60	2	4	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	16	34	23	49	6	13	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	8	17	21	45	12	26	2	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	8	17	26	55	7	15	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	11	23	22	47	5	11	3	6
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	15	32	22	47	6	13	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.**



30 April 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Richard's Catholic Primary School, Dover, CT16 1EZ

I am writing to thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We agree with you and your parents and carers that St Richard's is a caring and safe place to be where everyone looks after you well. Your school is satisfactory overall. This means that some things are good and some things need to be better. Well done to you all for working so hard to improve your writing. We enjoyed reading about some of the things you did in literacy week. I know that some of you wrote that you were anxious about behaviour in school. We think your behaviour is mostly satisfactory. It is sometimes good, and the school has done well to help those of you who find it difficult to manage your own behaviour. Well done for understanding how to stay fit and healthy.

We have asked everyone in your school to do the following important things:

- We want all your lessons to be as good as the best ones. To make this happens, we have asked the teachers to make sure you are all listening and ready to learn before they start a lesson and to plan work that is just right for each of you. We also want teachers to tell you clearly how to improve your work and to help you learn in different ways. This will especially help the boys.
- We want all the people who lead and manage your school, including the governors, to keep a very close check on everything the school does so they can make clear plans for improving St Richard's even further.
- We want teachers to quickly find out which of you need support because you find learning difficult or you are learning English as a new language. This will help them give the right type of support to pupils in lessons.

We want you to do better in your English, mathematics and science work by the time you leave school. To do this, you need to work hard and make faster progress in your learning. We think you can do this as many of you are already starting to learn more quickly because teachers are expecting more of you.

Thank you again for being so helpful and interesting to talk to.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Coussins

Lead inspector

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