

St Benedict's Roman Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118780
Local Authority	Medway
Inspection number	339302
Inspection dates	23–24 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Margaret Coussins

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	204
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kieran Magee
Headteacher	Barbara Salamonczyk
Date of previous school inspection	24 June 2010
School address	Lambourn Way Chatham ME5 8PU
Telephone number	01634 669700
Fax number	01634 865570
Email address	office@st-benedicts.medway.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 15 lessons and eight teachers. Meetings were held with the headteacher, other staff with leadership responsibilities, parents, pupils and the vice-chair of governors. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of school documentation including monitoring records, the school's self-evaluation form, the school improvement plan, pupils' progress records and the safeguarding procedures. Questionnaires from 75 parents and carers were received and analysed.

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

- how well pupils know their targets and are making progress towards them
- whether teaching takes sufficient account of all needs and is challenging enough for more able pupils
- how well the school is improving pupils' attainment in mathematics and writing
- the drive and ambition of the leadership and management of the school and its capacity to improve further.

Information about the school

St Benedict's is a smaller-than-average primary school. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average and most of these have moderate learning difficulties. The school makes provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage in a Reception class. The school has National Healthy Schools status and an Artsmark award and has received the Primary Quality Mark for basic skills for the fourth time.

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

The pupils at St Benedict's are great ambassadors for their good school, of which they, their parents, staff and governors are rightly, very proud. At the heart of the school's success is the commitment by all staff to meeting the personal as well as the academic needs of all its pupils. Pupils develop as well-rounded individuals who are happy, confident and excited by all their experiences at school. One parent wrote, 'I feel that a particular strength of St Benedict's is the way they not only educate, but that they develop children socially and morally.'

Pupils have an excellent awareness of how to stay safe and they demonstrate this in lessons and through their outstanding behaviour, care, consideration and respect for others. Their contribution to the school and the wider community is outstanding. Pupils enjoy their responsibilities, such as school council members and playground leaders, and take them very seriously, knowing they have an important contribution to make to the work of the school. Pupils' fundraising ventures for many charities help them develop an understanding of people who are less fortunate than them as well as developing their enterprise skills. They are highly regarded for their work in the local community, such as their fundraising for local groups and their participation in many local events

From starting points that are generally at expected levels, pupils make good progress and, by the time they leave, their attainment is above average. However, while good progress is sustained throughout Key Stage 2 overall, it is more uneven here than in Key Stage 1. On occasion, some pupils in Key Stage 2 do not always make the progress of which they are capable, particularly those who are more able and reached the higher levels of attainment at the end of Year 2. This is because assessment is not always used effectively to inform teachers' expectations and consistently challenge pupils in their learning. An excellent range of extra activities and a wide range of clubs very effectively enrich the curriculum. Art, music, drama and dance are given a high profile, with impressive standards of work seen throughout the inspection; the large and talented school orchestra is very well regarded. However, curriculum planning to link different subjects to make learning more meaningful for pupils is not developed sufficiently.

The headteacher and senior leaders work closely and effectively together to evaluate the strengths and areas for development in the school and drive improvement. The school engages well with parents and carers and this contributes significantly to the school's success. The school has a good capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop links across subjects to make learning more meaningful for pupils while

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maintaining their enjoyment.

- Ensure that all pupils, particularly the more able, consistently make the progress they are capable of by:
 - providing the right level of challenge in all lessons
 - using assessment information more effectively to raise expectations.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils are very happy and settled and relate exceptionally well to adults and to each other. They feel very safe and secure and say they can always talk to an adult if there is anything they are worried about. Pupils have a good understanding of the need for regular exercise and a balanced diet to keep fit and well. Older pupils are good role models for younger children, for example by encouraging and supervising them to use playground equipment safely. Pupils are very aware of issues affecting society as a whole, and eco-school principles are championed very effectively by groups of pupils representing the whole school. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good. Their cultural development is good. Pupils learn about other faiths and cultures in other countries through the curriculum but have less experience of the diversity of their own country. There are partnerships developing with other schools to address this.

Pupils' excellent behaviour and enthusiasm in lessons contribute well to their good learning and progress. Working collaboratively and learning through problem-solving and investigative activities also contribute to their good progress. For example, Year 6 pupils thoroughly enjoyed challenging each other in groups to solve mathematical problems. They showed great determination to succeed and made very good progress, meeting the high expectations and challenges set for them. Pupils share their ideas through 'talk partners' in lessons that demonstrate their good speaking, listening and thinking skills. Pupils enjoy and do well in mathematics; one said, 'Maths is really fun because you really have to use your brains to think things out.' In an English lesson, Year 3 pupils worked very well in pairs, acting out the characters in a story. They met the challenge of the activity, using good reading skills and making good progress in writing dialogue. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to others because their needs are identified at an early stage and effective support is provided.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
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	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
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?

Inspectors agree with a parent who wrote, 'Teachers have a great rapport with the children and really provide a stimulating, fun approach to learning.' All staff have very good relationships with pupils. Teachers plan and prepare lessons very thoroughly and work hard to make them interesting and exciting for pupils, asking good questions to extend their learning. There is a good pace to learning in most lessons and teachers imaginatively bring subjects alive. In these lessons, pupils make good progress because learning is challenging and particularly memorable for them. The same level of learning and progress is not evident in all lessons. Good marking by teachers gives pupils good guidance about the next steps they need to take to improve their work and helps pupils to evaluate their own progress and understanding. Pupils are clearly aware of their individual targets for learning.

The curriculum is enhanced by a wide range of enrichment opportunities, including clubs, visitors to school and trips. These activities effectively broaden pupils' interests and activities. The school has correctly identified, and inspectors agree, that more themed and creative approaches to learning in lessons will provide a more meaningful and purposeful curriculum. Parents and carers and pupils agree that the school looks after pupils very well. One parent wrote, 'A great ethos, a family school.' The needs of vulnerable pupils are well met and enhanced by good links with other agencies to provide well-targeted support.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders and managers are consistently effective in embedding ambition and driving improvement. One parent wrote, 'We feel this is a very well-run, well-organised school and are proud our child attends it.' Monitoring, self-evaluation and the tracking of pupils' progress are effective and lead to a clear identification of what needs to be improved and well-targeted support. For example, the school's focus on mathematics has had a positive impact on pupils' enjoyment and engagement as well as their attainment in the subject, providing pupils with more time for mental mathematics and for applying their mathematical skills through enterprise projects. The governing body knows the school well and provides good support, and the school benefits from the expertise of its members. Governors have still to monitor the impact of their work effectively and plan clearly for the governing body's future development.

The inclusive ethos of the school ensures that all pupils have equal opportunities to learn and develop as well-rounded individuals without fear of discrimination. Community cohesion is good. The school has strong links with the local community and the church and actively encourages an understanding and respect of different cultures and faiths in the international community through its links with schools in Zambia, Latvia and China. Safeguarding procedures are well developed, known by all staff and applied across all aspects of the school's work.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
	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

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	
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They achieve well and exceed the goals for all areas of learning by the time they move into Year 1. There are very positive, trusting relationships with staff and as a result, children are happy, settle contentedly into the routines of the day and are well cared for. Children work and play well together and quickly develop good personal and social skills by sharing well and taking turns. One parent wrote, 'My child has really progressed since she started at school, which has contributed to her developing significantly as an individual.' Behaviour is exemplary and children have a good awareness of how to stay safe and healthy. Adults develop a calm, purposeful learning environment indoors and in the outside area in which the children develop good learning skills. Of particular note is the 'forest school', part of the outside area where children's creativity, knowledge and understanding of the world as well as their language and literacy skills are developed exceptionally well. There is a good balance of well-planned, interesting activities that are directed by adults and those where children increase their independence by making their own choices.

The team of adults is led well and has a good knowledge of how young children develop and the expectations of the curriculum. There are good, positive relationships with parents and carers which ensure a smooth transition into school and effective early interventions if extra support is needed. Regular assessments, including excellent learning journals that are shared with parents and carers, enable staff to keep track of children's progress and plan the next steps in their learning.

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

Most parents and carers who returned the questionnaire were very positive about all aspects of the school's work; the overwhelming majority are happy with their children's experience at school and all agreed that the school keeps their children safe. The main

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concern for a very small minority is that they do not feel that the school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour. The inspection found that the school deals very effectively with any inconsiderate or inappropriate behaviour and ensures it does not disrupt the learning of others. The inspectors fully support parents' and carers' positive views about the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Benedict's Roman 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 75 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 204 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	46	61	22	29	5	7	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	53	71	21	28	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	35	47	33	44	5	7	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	41	55	26	35	5	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	43	57	28	37	2	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	37	49	31	41	4	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	44	59	28	37	1	1	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)	37	49	30	40	2	3	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	40	53	30	40	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	39	52	27	36	4	5	4	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	33	44	30	40	3	4	4	5
The school is led and managed effectively	46	61	24	32	0	0	3	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	49	65	23	31	2	3	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). 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"> ■ 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.



25 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Benedict's Roman Catholic Primary School, Chatham ME5 8PU

I am writing to thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school and for talking to us about your work. You were very polite and friendly. You are right to enjoy coming to St Benedict's because it is a good school.

We agree with you and your parents and carers that your school is a very caring and safe place to be and this, with your excellent behaviour and enthusiasm to learn, helps you make good progress. Everyone in your school works very hard to make your school even better. You work hard too, and by the time you go to your next school, your attainment in English, mathematics and science is above average. We were very impressed with all the things you do for the school and the wider community and particularly by how hard you work and your enthusiasm to make the school and the community a 'greener' place to be. All of you make good progress because you are taught well and teachers plan interesting and exciting things for you to do. Your parents and carers are very pleased that you come to this school.

There are two things that will help the school do even better. We have asked your teachers to:

- develop links across different subjects so you can make connections between the different things you do
- always give you work that is challenging so you all do as well as you possibly can.

I was lucky enough to hear the talented orchestra and see your excellent dancing, which were very impressive. We really enjoyed talking to you and watching you learn. You can help your teachers by continuing to work hard and keeping your enthusiasm for learning.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Coussins

Lead inspector

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