

St Augustine's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118781
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	339303
Inspection dates	18–19 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Diane Wilkinson

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	308
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Father Peter Stodart
Headteacher	Janette Mann
Date of previous school inspection	1 December 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 15 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and pupils. A small number of parents were also spoken to. They observed the school's work, and looked at analyses of pupils' progress, development planning and monitoring, monitoring of teaching records, a range of policies and procedures including those associated with safeguarding, curriculum planning documents and a sample of pupils' work. They also scrutinised questionnaires returned by 77 parents, 99 pupils and seven staff.

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

- how effectively the school is working to raise standards in mathematics and science
- the success of the school's strategies to ensure that boys and summer-born pupils achieve as well as other groups
- how well leaders and managers are working to address inconsistencies in teaching and assessment
- how successfully senior leaders and managers are creating a shared vision amongst the school community and ensuring that development planning is effectively focused on achieving this.

Information about the school

St Augustine's is large primary school with some mixed-age classes. The school admits pupils from a wide area and a variety of backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average although it is much higher in some year groups. Since the last inspection the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language has risen to over 30%. A third of these pupils are at the early stages of learning English. The school holds the Inclusion Quality Mark, Gold ArtsMark and Active Mark awards and has gained Healthy School status.

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. Reception children get off to an excellent start due to the high quality induction procedures and learning activities. Leadership and management of this phase are outstanding. The school provides especially well for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and also those from different backgrounds or cultures. As a result, these pupils achieve as well as their classmates. The school is justly proud of the award it has gained for inclusion. The progress of pupils who join the school with very little understanding of English is excellent.

Policies and procedures for the safeguarding of pupils are good, as is the pastoral care pupils receive. This helps pupils to enjoy school and make good progress. The progress of different groups is very carefully monitored allowing effective programmes of work to be set up for those identified as needing extra help. As a result, there is little difference in the progress of boys and girls or pupils who have different terms of birth.

Over the past few years the school has worked hard to improve the quality of teaching, with the best practitioners supporting their colleagues well. Teaching is good, and outstanding in Reception, although the quality of marking is still too variable. In addition, on a minority of occasions, teachers do not take sufficient account of previous learning, so tasks are not challenging enough, especially for some higher ability pupils. Progress in English, where standards are significantly above average, is very good. Progress in mathematics has also improved helping to raise standards across the school. Improvement in science, where weaknesses in pupils' investigation skills limit progress, has been slower especially for the more able. New curriculum documents setting out effective guidance on skills development are helping to address this. However, the full impact of recent curriculum developments, including the greater emphasis on providing activities based on pupils' interests, has yet to be seen.

The school has been exceptionally successful in building a warm and welcoming community where all pupils whatever their talents or needs feel valued and develop self-esteem. Pupils' knowledge of and respect for the different cultures represented in the school and local community are very good, but there are too few opportunities for pupils to learn about other communities in this country or overseas. Spiritual development is given high priority and pupils are thoughtful and reflective, with a good awareness of their responsibility towards others. Pupils work well together in lessons and an effective range of strategies help to ensure pupils very nearly always behave well. However, a few pupils and a small minority of parents raised concerns about behaviour, especially at playtimes where occasionally over-boisterous football games and disagreements make some pupils concerned about their safety.

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The headteacher, senior leaders and governors have successfully created a shared vision, good teamwork amongst staff and governors and a coordinated approach to school development. Good self-evaluation means that weaknesses are quickly identified and effective strategies put in place to bring about improvement. The school is well aware of areas where further improvement is needed and is working hard to address these. This, together with past success in improving the quality of provision and raising standards, demonstrates that the school is well placed to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the rate of pupils' progress by ensuring that:
 - lesson activities challenge all groups of pupils, including the more able, to do their best
 - the marking of pupils' work indicates what they have achieved and how they can improve
 - greater emphasis is placed on the development of key skills, especially to support investigative work in science.
- Increase pupils' understanding of and respect for people from different backgrounds, cultures and religions by making links with different groups both in this country and overseas.

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

The number of children entering Reception who speak English as an additional language has increased significantly in the last few years. Overall children's attainment on entry is slightly below that normally found, especially in language and communication skills.

Children's excellent progress means that standards are above average by the time they enter Year 1. It is not possible to make comparisons across year groups as the proportion of pupils with language or learning needs varies, but it is clear that the rate of progress has increasingly risen year on year.

Pupils' good progress is supported well by their enthusiasm for school, commitment to hard work and good attendance. Pupils are well prepared for the future and by the end of Year 2, standards are above average; better in English than in mathematics. Nevertheless, pupils' good progress in the latter is evident, for example, in the competence Year 2 pupils exhibit in mental calculation. The well above average standards in English throughout the school are the result of pupils' enjoyment of reading and writing. This was clear in the way a group of Years 5 and 6 boys proudly showed inspectors the good quality poetry book they had written. Despite strengths in English and some aspects of mathematics, by the end of Year 6, overall standards are average because of pupils' less successful performance in science. Although pupils have a secure knowledge of scientific concepts, such as which changes to different materials are reversible, their skills in carrying out and analysing investigations are less secure. There are positive features in that standards are rising well in mathematics, with pupils

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applying their skills effectively in problem solving and that in both mathematics and science more pupils reach expected and higher levels than in previous years.

During the inspection behaviour was never less than good and sometimes exemplary including at lunch and playtimes. Pupils have a good understanding of how they need to behave and keep themselves safe although a few are concerned about playground behaviour. Pupils are well aware of how to live healthily, enjoying the 'WOW' award they can gain for the class which has most pupils joining the walking bus to get to school. Pupils also enjoy the responsibility they have as school councillors or playground buddies and the opportunities to participate in local events, but their contribution to the wider community, although secure, is limited.

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	3
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
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?

Provision for Reception children is outstanding because of the exceptional expertise of the Early Years Foundation Stage leader. Her understanding of how children learn is being used to very good effect throughout the school, especially in helping staff to develop a curriculum which motivates pupils to learn. This involves focusing much more

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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on the development of important skills, especially those that encourage pupils to plan and discover things for themselves as well as ensuring that activities closely match pupils' interests. This approach is gradually being introduced throughout the school. Although it has helped to raise standards in the younger classes, there has been insufficient time to see its full impact on pupils in Years 3 to 6. Nevertheless, the emphasis on calculation skills has helped current pupils to do much better in mathematics than in the past and is beginning to make a difference in science. The good range of popular extra-curricular activities helps to encourage pupils' commitment to school.

Teaching is good and continually improving because staff plan and deliver activities which engage pupils' interest, especially in subjects where they find work challenging. The very good number of teaching assistants are especially good at helping pupils on these occasions. Resources, such as the interactive whiteboards, help pupils to understand new concepts easily and opportunities for discussion encourage pupils to evaluate their ideas well. However, in a minority of lessons, insufficient account is taken of previous learning, which limits the level of challenge in the tasks set. In addition, the quality of marking varies and occasionally does not give pupils enough guidance about how to improve.

Pupils are well cared for as seen in the good child protection, staff vetting and recruitment procedures and health and safety checks. Pastoral care is good although not all pupils are clear as to how any issues regarding behaviour are resolved. Nevertheless, inspection evidence indicates that unsatisfactory behaviour is dealt with appropriately. New tracking systems introduced over the last year have enabled staff to put in place support groups and to set pupils individual targets which encourage them to do well.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher's good leadership has helped ensure that staff share her vision of a fully inclusive school where all pupils can do their best. This results in no pupil being discriminated against and equality of opportunity is good, especially for pupils with significant learning or language needs.

Staff benefit from well-organised arrangements for professional development and performance management, with senior and subject leaders being increasingly effective in helping the school to improve. There is a culture of sharing expertise and

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responsibility which is having a positive effect on the quality of teaching and learning. The improved tracking systems make it easier for staff to identify pupils' progress and to adapt provision accordingly. For example, staff are now planning activities which help pupils to apply their science investigation skills in a variety of different situations, and to increase their scientific vocabulary. These strengths ensure the school is well placed to improve further.

Effective partnerships with a range of other schools and agencies support pupils well, especially those who have learning or language needs. Parents are involved effectively in helping their children to learn, especially in Reception, although a few feel they would like to know more about their own child's progress.

Governors support the school exceptionally well in financial management, which helps ensure resources are well targeted at improvement priorities; although governors' involvement in monitoring development priorities is not so well established. The school is proud of the cohesive community it has built with regard to its pupils and parents and recognises that more needs to be done to raise pupils' awareness of other communities.

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	3
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 whole environment both indoors and outside invites children to come and explore things for themselves, whether it is in the role-play areas such as 'The Magic Forest' or activity bases where children can use resources to discover new things.

Every opportunity is taken to help children develop important literacy and numeracy skills and those children who speak little English are exceptionally well supported so they

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develop these skills very quickly. Adults are exceptionally good at helping children to sound out the letters in words or count the number of objects they are playing with. Activities are especially well designed around topics which engage and hold children's interest. For example, children loved writing letters to the elves in the 'Elves and the Shoemaker' story and were so excited to receive a letter back which inspired them to 'go hunting for the missing magic powder that helps the elves to fly'. Areas of learning are linked together especially well. For example, in a physical activity, children greatly enjoyed marching to the drum beat as 'Daddy Bear' or tiptoeing to the bell sounds as 'Goldilocks'.

Outstanding induction procedures help children settle into school very quickly. They love coming, behave outstandingly well and exhibit great confidence and self-esteem. The attention to children's welfare and safety is very good. Their progress is assessed and tracked exceptionally well, with excellent use being made of the information in order to improve weaker aspects of learning. The outstanding learning journals, to which parents also contribute, provide an excellent record of children's achievements.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

Most parents are positive about the school's work and feel it is well led and managed. They agree that their children enjoy school and are confident that it keeps them safe and promotes their awareness of a healthy lifestyle. A small minority were concerned about their child's progress including the way they were involved in supporting this and would like more information. Inspectors found progress to be good, that parents are suitably involved in supporting this at home and receive satisfactory information as to how well their child is doing. These aspects are excellent in Reception. A very few parents raised concerns about behaviour. Inspectors judge behaviour to be good but understand that a small minority of pupils have concerns about playground incidents. A thorough investigation into the school's procedures indicates that these are logged and dealt with appropriately although noting that some pupils would feel more secure if they were made aware of how the incidents had been addressed.

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.

The inspection team received 77 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 308 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	53	70	23	30	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	49	64	26	34	1	1	0	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	42	55	26	34	7	9	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	31	41	37	48	8	10	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	40	52	29	38	5	7	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	40	52	26	34	7	9	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	42	55	32	42	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)	31	40	25	33	7	9	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	32	42	36	47	6	8	2	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	34	44	31	40	4	5	2	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	32	42	32	42	8	10	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	34	46	33	43	2	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	45	58	27	35	3	4	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.



20 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Augustine's Catholic Primary School, Tunbridge Wells, TN4 9AL

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. I particularly want to thank the pupils who gave up their lunchtime to talk to us. We think your school is good and are delighted that you and your parents agree.

Here are some of the things that we found out were good about the school.

- You are taught well and make good progress, especially so in English, and standards are rising.
- Reception children get off to an excellent start because staff respond to their needs exceptionally well.
- Adults take good care of you and keep a close check on how well you are doing so they can set targets which help you to improve.
- You enjoy coming to school, behave well, especially in lessons, and work well with each other. Nearly all of you behave well for nearly all of the time.
- Those of you who find learning really difficult or who need extra help to learn English are supported very well.
- Your headteacher, staff and governors recognise where your school still needs to improve and are working together well to help it get even better.

Here are what we have asked the school to improve.

- Plan lesson activities that help all of you to do your best and mark your work so that you know what you have achieved and how you can improve.
- Help you to learn how to carry out different types of science investigations and explain accurately what you have found out.
- Help you to learn more about how other groups of people live both in this country and overseas.

We wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

D Wilkinson

Lead Inspector

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