

St Ethelbert's Catholic Primary School

Dane Park Road, Ramsgate, Kent, CT11 7LS

Inspection dates 9–10 July 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils are great ambassadors for their good school, of which they, staff, governors and parents are, rightly, very proud.
- The headteacher provides excellent leadership for the school and is very effectively supported by the deputy headteacher. Together they provide strong, caring leadership that puts pupils' welfare, personal and academic achievement at the forefront of everything they do.
- Strong teamwork of all staff, together with robust support and challenge from governors, has resulted in good quality teaching. Pupils' achievement is good and improving, as a result.
- All groups, including the most able pupils, disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and disadvantaged pupils make good progress from their starting points and achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards are above average by the time pupils leave at the end of Year 6.
- Teaching is good. Teachers engage pupils well. Pupils are motivated to learn because teachers make lessons interesting. They value and celebrate pupils' achievements. As a result, pupils thrive and achieve well in the school's calm and positive atmosphere.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding and this contributes to their good progress. Excellent relationships support pupils' very positive attitudes to learning. Their high attendance reflects their love of school.
- Excellent safety arrangements ensure that pupils feel very safe, and are happy and well looked after. Pupils are fully confident of adult support should they need it.
- Children get a good start to school in the early years because of good teaching and leadership.
- Parents are very positive about all aspects of the school's work.
- Governors challenge and support the school well and hold leaders to account effectively for their work.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching and achievement are not yet typically outstanding. Achievement in writing is not as good as it is in reading and mathematics.
- Marking and feedback are not consistently at the same high quality as seen in some classes.
- Pupils' spelling skills are not good enough.
- The most able pupils are not always given time to complete more demanding work and make more rapid progress.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning in 17 lessons. In addition, inspectors talked to pupils about their work, looked at their workbooks, listened to some pupils read and observed pupils at playtimes and lunchtimes.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and deputy headteacher and other staff with key leadership responsibilities. Discussions were held with pupils, governors and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documents including: the school's own check on its performance and the quality of teaching; the school improvement plan; information on pupils' progress; and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- Inspectors looked at the 88 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, a written response and spoke to some parents at the start of the school day. Inspectors also took into account 33 questionnaires returned by staff.

Inspection team

Margaret Coussins, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Barbara Saltmarsh

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The next largest group are from other White backgrounds, mainly of Polish heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are supported by the pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium is additional government funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and for children who are looked after.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Provision is made for the early years in a Nursery class, which children attend for morning or afternoon sessions, and a Reception class, which children attend full time.
- The school provides a daily breakfast club.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve teaching so that it is outstanding in order to raise achievement, especially in writing, by ensuring that:
 - all pupils are challenged sufficiently in their learning, particularly at the higher levels, and have time to complete more demanding work
 - marking and feedback is of a consistently high quality across the school and gives pupils clear pointers to improve and time to respond
 - pupils' spelling skills improve.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, senior leaders, staff and governors share a vision and commitment to provide the best possible learning and experiences for pupils. They all work tirelessly to ensure pupils achieve well both academically and pastorally. As a result, the school has maintained its good position reported at the previous inspection. Leaders have improved achievement to 'good' and behaviour to 'outstanding'. There is clear capacity for further improvement.
- The school is a calm, friendly and caring community. Staff morale is high and there is a strong sense of teamwork. Several staff echoed the view of one who commented, 'During my teaching career, this is the happiest school I have worked in, due to the children, staff, parents, parish and community.'
- Middle leaders are becoming increasingly effective. They regularly check on the quality of teaching and learning to monitor pupils' progress. They know the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects and areas of responsibility and provide good guidance and support to colleagues.
- Arrangements for managing teachers' performance are well established and effective. Where any weaknesses are identified, leaders take rapid and effective action and improvement is expected. Teachers know they are accountable for pupils' progress. Those spoken to about the procedures for managing their performance were very positive about the impact on their work.
- There are good professional development opportunities for middle leaders and teachers. This helps them meet school priorities and develop individual skills. Teachers new to their careers were unanimous in their praise for the very effective support that leaders and all staff provide for them. One new teacher commented, 'I have had fantastic support throughout my first year from senior management and the school team.'
- Leaders' evaluation of the school is accurate. Information from frequent checks on the school's performance and pupils' progress inform the plan for improvement. This gives a clear steer for further development. Leaders are fully aware that there is more to do to further raise achievement, particularly in writing, and to ensure that teaching improves to 'outstanding'.
- Staff and governors have a strong commitment to equal opportunities and check that all groups are making good progress. They ensure that pupils learn without any type of discrimination and foster good relationships throughout the school community and beyond.
- Additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is used effectively to ensure that all eligible pupils achieve well. Their progress is tracked carefully and support is given to help them catch up if they are at risk of falling behind.
- The school uses the primary physical education and sport premium well in a range of ways to enhance the existing good provision. For example, the school buys in to the Thanet Super Passport package, which has increased pupils' participation in a range of sports and competitive opportunities. Staff training has increased teachers' skills so they are more confident in teaching physical education and sport. The effective use of the funding makes a considerable contribution to pupils' health and well-being.
- The school provides a broad range of subjects and covers all aspects, with a good balance that enables pupils to achieve well in literacy and numeracy. The requirements of the new National Curriculum have been implemented and leaders are correctly reviewing its impact. Pupils have the opportunity to take part in a wide range of activities, both in lessons and after school. This makes learning exciting and interesting. Dance and drama have a particularly high focus in the school. Trips and extra activities, including clubs, add to pupils' experiences and enrich their learning.
- The school caters exceptionally well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. These aspects are promoted through all of the school's work and particularly through its well-known values. Pupils get on very well together. They are clear about the school's values and promote them very well through their conduct, respect for each other and caring attitudes. They learn about differences in faiths, cultures and backgrounds. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain, as the school's values foster a culture of tolerance and respect. Pupils spoke with great enthusiasm about the recent Polish Day. Pupils from Polish backgrounds and members of the school's Polish community celebrated their culture and customs with the whole school and provided pupils with memorable experiences.
- Parents are very positive about all that the school offers their children. Almost all parents who completed Parent View and those who spoke with inspectors are very happy with the school and supportive of its work and leadership.
- Leaders ensure that safeguarding requirements are fully met. Policies and procedures are robust and well established, and there is a high level of care for the safety and well-being of pupils.
- The school works well with the local authority, which has offered 'light touch' support to this good school.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors use their broad range of expertise well to support the school effectively while also providing challenge to senior leaders. They know the school well. They have high expectations for all pupils and check on the progress data for all classes and groups of pupils. They are well informed by the headteacher and visit the school regularly. This helps them to have a good understanding of how well the school is performing compared to other schools nationally. Governors have a good understanding of the quality of teaching and fully support the headteacher in expecting nothing less than good or better teaching. They know what the school is doing to tackle any underperformance and ensure that pay progression is linked to pupils' good progress. Governors have a very clear understanding of how the pupil premium and sports funding are spent and the impact they have on pupils' achievement and well-being. They are committed to training to ensure that they continue to effectively hold the school to account for its performance.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils behave equally well in and out of lessons, including at break and lunchtimes and when working with adults.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy all that is on offer in the school and consequently have excellent attitudes to their learning. This helps them make good progress.
- Pupils are very proud of their school and conduct themselves exceptionally well. They are a credit to their school and their community. They are very friendly and well mannered.
- Pupils enjoy their responsibilities, such as being members of the school council, eco council and sports council. They take their responsibilities seriously and feel they have a real voice in the school.
- Pupils who attend the breakfast club benefit from a safe, healthy and social start to the school day.
- Most parents who responded to Parent View and those who spoke with inspectors agree with pupils and staff that pupils behave very well.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils say they feel very safe in school. Older pupils are excellent role models and promote keeping safe and anti-bullying messages throughout the school. Almost all parents agree that their children feel safe, are happy and well looked after.
- Pupils are adamant that bullying does not occur. They have an excellent awareness, however, that bullying can take different forms, including cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying. They are completely confident that should any issues arise in school, staff would deal with them quickly.
- The school has a very clear policy for e-safety, and pupils are very aware of the need to be safe when using the internet. They help to promote this by giving presentations to parents about e-safety.
- Pupils say the school helps them to learn how to stay safe out of school through, for example, staying safe in the sun, adopting healthy lifestyles and understanding about road safety.
- The school takes excellent care of its vulnerable pupils and ensures that their needs are very well met. All pupils feel that if they have any worries at all, they will be listened to and taken seriously and that 'anyone in the school will help you'.
- Leaders are vigilant about securing the safety of the large site. There are rigorous systems for ensuring that checks are made on all adults who enter the site.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good and pupils learn well and make good progress as a result.
- Teachers plan and organise lessons carefully to meet the needs and interests of pupils. Pupils say that lessons are fun and teachers make sure they are clear about what they have to learn. Pupils work very hard and always want to do well.
- Teachers use questioning very effectively to check pupils' understanding and make them think more deeply. Pupils are used to evaluating how well they have understood a task and are not afraid to ask for extra help if they need it.
- There are very positive and trusting relationships between pupils and adults in all classes. As a result, pupils are confident to take risks with their learning and are prepared to 'have a go'. They know their views, opinions and efforts will be valued.

- Teachers make good use of displays and work in progress (working walls) to support teaching and learning. Teachers are good role models for pupils. There is a strong work ethic and a calm, purposeful learning atmosphere in all classrooms.
- There is a strong focus on developing speaking and language skills. This benefits all pupils, and especially those who are learning English as an additional language, and helps them make good progress.
- Strong and well-planned teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants ensures that additional help given to pupils supports their learning well and promotes good progress.
- There are some very good examples of teachers' marking and feedback that give pupils clear pointers about how to improve their work. In these cases, teachers give pupils time to respond to their comments, which helps correct any misconceptions and moves learning forward. This quality, however, is not yet consistent across the school.
- Teaching places an appropriate emphasis on developing pupils' skills in reading, writing and mathematics. Small group guided reading sessions help to develop good reading skills. One pupil commented that he had, 'got so much better at reading because teachers really encourage me and help me'. Reading for enjoyment is promoted well across the school.
- Improved reading skills have helped pupils to do well in mathematics, as they are better able to read and understand problem-solving activities.
- Teachers have done much to improve pupils' writing by setting targets and using talk to stimulate writing. However, writing, particularly for the most able pupils, is not as strong as reading. Teachers know there is still more work to do to improve pupils' spelling.
- On occasion, teaching does not sufficiently challenge the most able pupils in particular. They often start work at the same point as others in the class and then do not have the time to work on the challenges and harder work that teachers have planned for them. As a result, they do not always make the rapid progress of which they are capable.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start in the early years with skills and knowledge that are often well below those typical for their ages, particularly in their speaking skills and aspects of their personal and social development. They make good progress in the Nursery and the Reception class because of the good quality of what is offered to them and good leadership.
- In 2014, pupils' attainment was broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils made good progress overall and particularly rapid progress in mathematics. Achievement in writing was the weakest area.
- There is an improving picture this year. Pupils' work and the school's checks on progress show that the proportion on track to achieve the expected level by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 has increased in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils make good and sometimes outstanding progress from their starting points to achieve these standards.
- Currently, in Key Stage 1, the most able pupils are challenged sufficiently well and make good and often outstanding progress. The proportion reaching the higher level at the end of Year 2 is on track to improve, particularly in mathematics, to above last year's national average.
- By the end of Year 6, the proportion on track to reach the higher level in reading has improved from last year. However, the proportion in mathematics has dipped a little from last year but remains above average. The proportion on track to reach the higher level in writing has dipped and remains below average.
- Leaders have correctly identified that often it is pupils' spelling skills that are holding them back. They are taking action to improve this. Too many spellings are inaccurate and errors are often repeated over time.
- In 2014, the proportion of pupils who reached the required level in the Year 1 phonics check (the sounds that letters make) was broadly average and this is on track to be above average this year. Pupils use phonics skills well to read unfamiliar words but are not quite as competent in using them to help with spelling. Pupils' achievement in reading is a strength. Many pupils read with fluency, expression and understanding. They know a range of authors and can express their preferences.
- An increased focus over time on mental mathematics and more opportunities for pupils to use a range of resources support their good achievement in mathematics.
- All groups make similar progress. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs receive effective well-targeted help. Their needs are identified precisely and appropriate support is provided. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make equally good progress to others and achieve

well.

- In 2014, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 was around eight months behind that of others in the school in writing, mathematics and reading. Compared to other pupils nationally, their attainment was around six months behind in mathematics, eight months behind in reading and nearly 12 months behind in writing. Leaders have focused intently on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and monitored the impact of additional support. As a consequence, they are making more rapid progress and the gaps in their attainment are narrowing.

The early years provision

is good

- Children in the early years are given a good start to school. By the end of the Reception Year, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development is above the national average. As a result, children are well prepared to continue their education in Year 1.
- The early years provision is well resourced, with high levels of adult support. Staff work well in teams. Adults know the children very well and have a good understanding of the needs of young children. Through their effective conversations and questioning, they challenge the children and move their learning on quickly.
- Teaching is good. Children are given stimulating experiences so they are motivated and develop curious and enquiring minds and a love of learning.
- Children behave well and are eager to learn. They are encouraged to develop a love of books and stories and use their increasing phonic skills to help them read and write.
- There are good links with parents before children start at school in the Nursery or the Reception class, which helps children to settle quickly and happily into the routines and expectations of school life. On-going good relationships with parents ensure they are well informed about their children's progress throughout their time in the early years. Parents said they welcome the fact that they can talk to the staff at any time if they have any concerns.
- Good leadership of the early years ensures that welfare requirements are met well. Assessments of achievements in learning are used well to help plan the next steps. Children are kept safe and secure, both indoors and outdoors, at all times.
- This has been the first year that there has been a dedicated outdoor area for the early years and it is used well to provide many opportunities for children's learning and play. Leaders are fully aware, however, of the need to further develop the use of this area to increase its effectiveness in promoting all areas of children's learning.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	118764
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	449757

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	239
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Claire Turner
Headteacher	John Letts
Date of previous school inspection	25–26 January 2010
Telephone number	01843 585555
Fax number	n/a
Email address	headteacher@st-ethelberts.kent.sch.uk

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