

St Ethelbert's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118764
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	291248
Inspection dates	11–12 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Denise Morris

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 on roll	
School	220
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael Fisher
Headteacher	John Letts
Date of previous school inspection	11 June 2001
School address	Dane Park Road Ramsgate CT11 7LS
Telephone number	01843 585555
Fax number	01843 570689

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average-size primary school. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average. The deprivation indicators are high. The headteacher is relatively new to the school and has been in post for just under two years.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. It has improved significantly in the past year. There are many strengths in pupils' good personal development, particularly their outstanding awareness of spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues. Pupils enjoy school very much, as shown by their good behaviour, positive attitudes and enthusiasm for learning. They show good awareness of healthy lifestyles and the need to keep fit. They work well with local communities, raising significant funds for charity. They work safely and happily together and are developing some good skills for their futures. Attendance has improved recently and is now just below average.

Attainment on entry to the school is well below what is expected in all aspects of learning, with particular weaknesses in communication, language and literacy. Children achieve well in Reception because of good provision and exciting activities. Although standards are below average at the end of Year 6, achievement is good. Teaching and learning are good. They have improved significantly this year as a result of rigorous monitoring. However, marking is inconsistent and, as a result, some pupils lack awareness of how to improve their work.

There is a good curriculum in place in all areas of the school. Significant enrichment through clubs and visits plays an important role in developing the high quality personal skills of pupils. The school provides exceptional care for all its pupils. Staff know them well and make sure that they are safe and secure. All pupils receive good support, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Although all pupils have literacy and numeracy targets, they are not consistently specific enough to reflect the very individual needs of pupils.

Leadership and management are good. The relatively new headteacher has a clear vision for the future of the school and, together with the very supportive deputy, he is working very hard to improve provision and raise standards. Many good new initiatives have been introduced this year and these are beginning to have an impact. The accommodation has improved, teaching has been rigorously monitored, and the curriculum has been reviewed, leading to good new planning systems. Achievement and standards are improving because of good leadership. Governors are supportive yet critical, fulfilling their roles well.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that literacy and numeracy targets always closely match each pupil's needs, to guide their learning more effectively and enable them to achieve higher standards.
- Ensure that marking of pupils' work is consistent across the school and is directed towards ensuring that pupils know how to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Although standards are below average, achievement is good. Pupils make good gains in learning during their time at the school, with particularly good progress in reading and in developing personal skills that support learning. Standards and achievement are improving across the school because of rigorous monitoring which has helped to improve the quality of teaching and learning in lessons. Strategies introduced have, for example, led to an improvement in boys' achievement. Standards in reading in the current Year 6 are now broadly average. When they enter the Reception class, children's skill levels are well below those expected overall and

very low in communication, language and literacy in particular. Children achieve well in Reception because of good provision and teaching and, although they do not achieve the goals expected for their age, they make good progress in all aspects of learning. Pupils go on to make good gains in relation to their starting points. All groups make equally good progress, including the high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. When starting in the Reception class, the personal development of many children is significantly below expectations for their age. They soon begin to develop the social skills essential for success in later life, as well as relevant academic skills. They enjoy working co-operatively as well as independently, and relationships are very good. Pupils have a keen sense of right and wrong and a good understanding of other cultures. The school council, largely independent of adult supervision, effectively promotes pupils' views, and is involved in many projects to benefit the school environment.

Most pupils attend regularly, although attendance overall is slightly below the national average. They arrive punctually for morning school. They settle quickly to work, and greatly enjoy lessons and other activities. Behaviour is usually good in classrooms and open areas, and is often outstanding. Pupils are confident that peer mediators or adults will quickly help to resolve everyday disagreements, and will act decisively to counter rare incidents of bullying. They understand that a healthy lifestyle includes a balanced diet, participation in regular exercise and sport, and an awareness of personal safety. Many show their good awareness of a healthy lifestyle through their choice of packed lunches, or by selecting healthy options in the dining hall. They are very generous of spirit, readily supporting and complimenting each other, and contributing each year to a variety of local, national and international charities. The school choir regularly performs at community events and competes successfully at music festivals.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching has improved recently following rigorous monitoring and an effective focus on staff development. It is now good in all areas of the school, resulting in good learning in lessons. Planning is good overall in taking into account the range of pupils' abilities, although inconsistencies in whole-school target setting systems mean that planning is not always sharply focused on specific individual needs. The consistently good teaching across the school includes some outstanding teaching in Key Stage 2. Teaching is characterised by good questioning, which ensures that pupils' thinking skills are extended, and by good management and organisation, which ensures that lessons run smoothly. Relationships are exceptionally strong and teaching assistants are well deployed to support those with more challenging difficulties. Homework is set regularly. The marking of pupils' work is inconsistent. It does not always help them to improve their work or to know what they need to do to achieve the next steps in learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It is well planned and meets pupils' needs and abilities well. The use of information and communication technology is improving across the curriculum as staff and pupils develop good skills in using the recently installed interactive whiteboards. A good programme of personal, social and health education contributes significantly to pupils' development as caring and responsible citizens and their understanding of healthy lifestyles. The curriculum includes a good range of after-school clubs and is enriched by numerous visitors from the community, residential experiences and many trips to galleries, museums and other places of interest. The Foundation Stage curriculum has a good balance of teacher-directed and child-selected activities, and children develop early skills through a wide range of discovery and investigative activities. Not enough swimming sessions are planned to provide all Year 6 pupils with the opportunity to leave school as confident swimmers.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good overall. The school successfully places the welfare of every child at the heart of its work and provides outstanding care for all its pupils. Child protection procedures conform to legal requirements. Christian teaching and values guide every aspect of school life and help to develop outstanding relationships. These in turn enhance pupils' self-esteem and regard for others. Playground mediators and Year 6 buddies play a significant role in ensuring that no child is left out of playground games and activities. The school has a good partnership with parents and carers, and invites external agencies to provide specific support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Good systems for classroom and withdrawal support ensure that the achievement of pupils receiving support is equal to that of their peers. The system for assessing pupils' attainment and monitoring their progress is satisfactory. However, target setting is not consistently specific enough to always reflect pupils' very individual needs and fully guide learning. Pupils do not always know how to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The relatively new headteacher has a clear vision for the school and is passionate about providing the best possible education and care for the pupils, ensuring that they stay safe and free from harm. He is ably supported by the deputy headteacher. Together they have created a welcoming and supportive ethos and initiated many new programmes that are helping to raise standards and improve achievement. Recent efforts, for example, to improve the achievement of boys are already showing an impact. They care deeply about each pupil and strive to provide for each pupil's individual needs. They are fully aware of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Recognition of past weak performance has resulted in new, thorough planning systems and rigorous monitoring which have successfully improved the quality of teaching and the curriculum across the school. These new procedures are now having a positive impact on learning. Significant improvements to the accommodation and resources since the last inspection have ensured that the school environment is clearly focused on learning. Middle managers have improved their leadership roles because of good

training opportunities and they are now fully involved in the monitoring process. Links with the community and with parents and carers are good and parents are very supportive of the way the school is led. 'It is a good school,' they say. Governors support the school well and frequently challenge other leaders about decisions. Improvement since the last inspection has been good and there is a good capacity to improve further.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

13 June 2007

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of St Ethelbert's Catholic Primary School, Dane Park Road, Ramsgate, Kent CT11 7LS

Thank you for your help during our recent visit to your school. We enjoyed talking to you and hearing about all the things you do at school. You work well together and are polite and helpful.

We think your school is a good school. You behave well and enjoy all the good activities that the school provides. You told us that you like your teachers and that they take good care of you. We think that teaching is good. You make good progress in your lessons and in your personal development and achieve well. Sometimes your work is not marked as well as it could be and you do not all have your own special targets for literacy and numeracy. The curriculum is good and you told us how much you enjoyed the recent residential trip. We know that many of you attend after- school clubs.

The staff take good care of you. You help with this with your playground buddies. The leaders of your school work hard to help you enjoy school. They make sure that you are safe and secure. They manage the school well. There are two things that we think the school could do to help you achieve better and with your help too:

- Provide all of you with your own special literacy and numeracy targets to help you improve your skills.
- Make sure your work is marked regularly so that it helps you to know what you need to do next to improve your work.

Thank you again and good luck for the future.

Denise Morris Lead Inspector