

St Thomas Garnet's School

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	837/6004
Unique Reference Number	113944
URN for registered childcare	EY285948
Inspection number	332987
Inspection dates	18–19 March 2009
Reporting inspector	John Seal HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended. The inspection of childcare was conducted under Section 49(2) of the Childcare Act 2006.

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The inspection of registered provision¹ was conducted under Section 49(2) of the Childcare Act 2006.

Information about the school

St Thomas Garnet's is an independent, co-educational primary Catholic school. There are 106 full time pupils aged 5 to 11. The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of a Kindergarten for 42 part-time children aged 2 to 4 and the Reception class for 10 children aged 4 to 5 years. Twenty four children receive the nursery education funding. The school is situated in the Boscombe area of Bournemouth and was opened in 1979 by a charitable trust. The school was last inspected in June 2006.

Evaluation of the school

St Thomas Garnet's School provides a good education. Its good curriculum is from the Early Years Foundation Stage to the end of Year 6. The teaching and assessment is good and as a result, pupils make good progress. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is outstanding. The school's development of pupils' welfare, health and safety is good. The school has improved since the last inspection, all regulations are now met. The areas for improvement with regard to more able pupils attaining higher results in mathematics and the school's use of displays to stimulate learning are now well established. The headteacher who has been in post for just over two years has effectively led many improvements including the further development of the curriculum, developing assessment systems and establishing secure systems for supporting pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Quality of education

The curriculum is good. The school has a clear policy and there are well planned schemes of work based on the National Curriculum guidance. Pupils are well supported in their learning of English and mathematics, but there is an equally strong emphasis on a good range of other subjects. Under the well directed guidance and participation of the headteacher, the school is developing an exciting approach

¹ Schools which provide childcare for children from birth until the term in which they reach their third birthday must register this provision separately with Ofsted.

to project work, yet to be fully established across the school, Those projects already in place effectively develop pupils' learning and research skills. A good example is in the 'Tudors' project where pupils had the opportunity to 'meet' Queen Anne Boleyn and ask her questions. There is a wide range of extra curricular activities and clubs both after school and during the school day. A strength of the school is the specialist teaching which takes place in a number of subjects such as drama, information and communication technology (ICT), music and French. Parents rightly praise the very high quality of the school's productions which demonstrate the high standards of pupils' musical and dramatic skills. The school organises interesting visits to support pupils' learning. A visit to the Tower of London based on St Thomas Garnet's imprisonment there four hundred years ago brought the name of the school to life for the pupils. There is a good range of sports on offer including football, netball, touch rugby, badminton and table tennis. The school has developed a secure personal, social and health education policy and programme of study which has addressed the regulation not met at the time of the last inspection.

The teachers at the school are experienced and committed and the quality of teaching is good. They genuinely care about the pupils and foster warm and supportive relationships. Teachers use lesson plans well to support productive learning activities. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and the specialist provision for French, drama and music is a strength of the school. In the best lessons, pupils are well supported and challenged by accurately planned activities which meet their learning needs. In these lessons, pupils work well together and have opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills whilst gaining a deeper understanding of the subject being taught. A good example of this was seen in a mathematics lesson where pupils were working in groups using practical resources to improve their division calculation strategies. Where teaching is less effective, although teachers know pupils well, they do not always use assessment information to inform their planning. As a result, learning intentions are not specific enough to support the different abilities of pupils with activities that match their learning needs. This allied to pupils of different capabilities receiving the same level of work slows their learning down.

Assessment is good because there are regular assessment opportunities which inform the school of what pupils are achieving. This information provides an overall picture of pupils' attainment but is not always used from the early years through to the older pupils to measure progress accurately and inform lesson planning. Although there is work to be done in this area, the school is aware of this and the headteacher is taking effective steps to improve systems. Pupils' annual reports provide parents with detailed information and often suggest areas for improvement. Pupils' progress across the school is good. This can be seen in their work, discussions with them and by the time they leave at the end of Year 6, most pupils are able to start at the selective secondary schools. Most pupils attain above average levels in the Key Stage 2 tests in English and mathematics. This is another area of improvement since the last inspection.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress. This is because of the strong links with outside agencies, timely deployment of the support teacher and effective management by the headteacher as the special educational needs co-ordinator.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is outstanding. Pupils' personal development is outstanding and a key strength of the school. Attendance is good and pupils greatly enjoy coming to school. Behaviour is excellent. Pupils are consistently polite and courteous. They demonstrate commitment to their work and integrity and maturity in their interactions with their fellow pupils. Cultural development has improved since the time of the last inspection and is now good. While pupils' cultural awareness in terms of art and music is a strength, the school has been working to increase pupils' awareness of a range of faiths and cultures and this is now more embedded in the work of the school. However, opportunities to engage directly with the diversity of faiths and cultures in contemporary Britain are more limited. Although the school does not have a formal school council, because of the good relationships throughout the school, pupils feel that they can make their views known through the representations of the house captains, or directly to the headteacher. They feel sure that they are listened to. There are many opportunities to contribute to the community through gaining house points for success in lessons, undertaking many daily duties around the school, or supporting younger pupils. Several pupils show initiative by promoting lunchtime clubs, such as the dance or drama clubs, which other pupils attend. Pupils raise money for a number of causes, including a local children's hospice and for church missionary outreach activities. They take part in many local activities, including music, drama and speech festivals, art competitions and sports competitions. The good progress which pupils make in their basic skills, including ICT, underpinned by their impressive personal qualities, ensures that they are highly prepared for the next stage of education and for their future economic well-being.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

Provision for safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety is good. Pupils are effectively supervised through the school day and they move around the school safely. Child protection procedures are good. All staff have had appropriate training and demonstrate a good level of awareness. Fire risk assessments have been undertaken and all designated exits are appropriately marked. An appropriate range of health and safety assessments have been undertaken. First aid provision is good and appropriate records are maintained. The school has a designated and appropriate space for pupils to lie down when ill. Pupils say that they feel very safe in school. Bullying is not a concern for them and they feel confident that any issues which arise will be dealt with resolutely by staff. They learn about themselves, about healthy lifestyles and relationships in their science and PSHE lessons. School lunches offer healthy options and pupils are encouraged to ensure that their packed lunches

are healthy. There are many opportunities for exercise within the physical education curriculum and through extra-curricular sporting activities.

There is a satisfactory policy and plan to meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2002. The school has planned well to increase accessibility and will be drawing up another plan to review the possibility of further improving access.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school has secure systems to ensure that all staff are appropriately appointed. There are record systems in place to effectively ensure that there is no reason why staff should not be employed to work with children.

School's premises and accommodation

The school is purpose-built and has specialist rooms for ICT, drama and music. It has suitably resourced classrooms. The grounds provide a variety of grassed and hard surfaces for the pupils to play on. There has been a recent new building and updating of some rooms which has further improved the teaching facilities and access for the disabled. The regulation regarding hot water from the last inspection is now met.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school provides information which is clear, up-to-date and available to parents, prospective parents and to inspectors, Ofsted and the DCSF on request. There is a helpful prospectus and very informative website. The school provides informative written reports to parents are available throughout the year. At the time of the last inspection, there were two regulations not met, one was regarding information for parents about discipline and exclusions, and the second was regarding provision for educational and welfare provision for pupils with statements of special educational need and for pupils for whom English is an additional language. Both these regulations are now met.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school has a clear, written and fair complaints procedure.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The stimulating environment both indoor and outdoor in the Nursery builds firm foundations for children's learning. As a result, in relation to their average starting points which vary from year to year, children make good progress and achieve above average standards by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The teaching areas are well defined and resources thoughtfully organised to aid independence and promote children's confidence and self-esteem. Children are busily and purposefully

engaged in the wide range of imaginative activities, well chosen to match their needs and interests. During the inspection, children were seen behaving exceptionally well, feeling secure and fast becoming confident learners. Children were excited by learning, as they worked on being in a circus and also had their faces painted. In the Reception class too, children are very eager to learn and concentrate well. They are given time to explore ideas and interests, for example, when learning about solids and liquids through making jelly. Children's physical, social and emotional needs are well cared for through the well-established routines and procedures that are followed consistently, so that children's safety and well-being is secure. Although Reception children have opportunities to explore the school grounds, there is no provision for planned opportunities for them to have free and regular access to outdoor learning. As a result, their understanding to extend, consolidate and enhance their learning is hindered. Good partnership with parents and external agencies, such as the speech therapist, ensure that any specific needs are effectively met. A good range of resources are accessible to the children and discrete play areas in the rooms make good provision. The children are well cared for; healthy eating is encouraged through the wholesome food provided.

The provision is well led with a clear vision of strengths and areas for development. Teaching is good. Children learn through first hand experiences, in activities they have chosen. The staff have secure understanding of how young children learn. They model language well and actively encourage speaking and listening skills, especially through role-play, for example, dressing up or the class supermarket. Additionally, a skilfully taught language programme is successfully improving children's knowledge of the letter sounds. There is a good balance of teacher directed activities and those that children choose for themselves. Children's learning and development is routinely observed and recorded to show the progress they make towards the early learning goals. Although the teachers know their children well and support them to make good progress, they are not planning in a consistent way across the entire Early Years Foundation Stage to ensure better progress and coverage, given the children's capabilities. The arrangements for liaising between the Kindergarten and Reception are not yet fully in place and the school recognises it now needs to extend this to cover all aspects of the Early Years Foundation Stage planning to ensure clear progression of learning and development across the whole stage.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended ("the Regulations").

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- To ensure that all teachers use assessment information consistently to inform their lesson planning to more accurately meet the needs of all pupils
- To ensure a cohesive system of planning across the whole Early Years Foundation Stage
- To develop the outdoor learning opportunities for the Reception class children

Inspection Judgement Recording Form

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education		✓		
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils		✓		
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		✓		
How well pupils make progress in their learning		✓		

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	✓			
The behaviour of pupils	✓			

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils		✓		
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The quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?		✓		
How well do children achieve in the Early Years Foundation Stage relative to their starting points and capabilities?		✓		
How good are the personal development and well-being of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?		✓		
What is the quality of welfare, health and safety of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?		✓		
How effectively is the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?		✓		
What is the overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage including, where relevant, the quality of childcare?		✓		

School details

Name of school	St Thomas Garnet's School		
DCSF number	837/6004		
Unique reference number	113944		
EY URN (for registered childcare only)	EY285948		
Type of school	Catholic primary		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1979		
Age range of pupils	2 - 10		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 60	Girls: 46	Total: 106
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 23	Girls: 19	Total: 42
Number of pupils aged 0-3 in registered childcare provision	Boys:1	Girls:4	Total:5
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 0	Girls: 1	Total: 1
Annual fees (day pupils)	£4,950 – £6,750		
Address of school	28 Parkwood Road Boscombe Bournemouth Dorset BH5 2BH		
Telephone number	01202420172		
Fax number	01202773060		
Email address	julie-anne.cutler@ntlbusiness.com		
Headteacher	Mrs Julie-Anne Cutler		
Proprietor	Board of Trustees		
Reporting inspector	John Seal HMI		
Dates of inspection	18–19 March 2009		