

St Aelred's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121646
Local Authority	York
Inspection number	359055
Inspection dates	10–11 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Peter Cox

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	205
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Damien Morrison
Headteacher	Mr David Houghton
Date of previous school inspection	13 September 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. All eight teachers were observed teaching. They were observed further when inspectors spent additional time in classrooms assessing the curriculum and looking at pupils' work books. Meetings were held with pupils and staff, including those with teaching and learning responsibilities and the Vice Chair of the Governing Body. A telephone conversation was held with the School Improvement Partner and his/her reports were analysed. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at minutes of the governing body meetings, a selection of the school's policies and procedures, including those related to safeguarding and responses from 110 parent and carer questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The extent to which teaching and learning has improved since the last inspection and the help teaching assistants give pupils, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities to secure improved attainment.
- Has the improved picture of attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 been carried through into Key Stage 2?
- The extent to which the school leaders and managers, including the governing body, are effective in securing school improvement

Information about the school

St Aelred's is a slightly smaller-than-average primary school. There are similar numbers of boys and girls. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than the national average. Those from minority ethnic groups represent a proportion that is well below that seen nationally, including those who speak English as an additional language. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities represent less than a third seen nationally. The school 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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school that supports its pupils' personal development well in an environment of strong Christian values. Pupils appreciate what their teachers do for them. One older pupil described their time at school being 'like a safe car taking me on my journey of life.' Pupils enjoy coming to school, their attendance is above average and they work and play together enthusiastically. They begin their education with skill levels that are in line with those expected for their age. They settle in well and progress through school satisfactorily, leaving Key Stage 2 with attainment that is average overall. In English they reach above average standards however in mathematics they are less successful.

Improvements have been secured since the last inspection. The school has eradicated inadequate teaching and the majority of lessons seen by the inspectors were at least satisfactory or better. A comprehensive system of tracking pupils' progress helps teachers plan lessons which more effectively match the learning needs of pupils at all levels of ability. The curriculum has an increasing range of additional activities that help keep pupils interested, although the provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is not developed well enough. Many parents appreciate the strong pastoral care of the school and hold teachers and adults in high regard, many of whom 'know the name of every child.'

Staff and other adults, under the caring direction of the headteacher and deputy headteacher, understand what needs to be done to secure further improvement. Appropriate systems and practices are in place and are beginning to have a positive impact. However, although some good systems are in place to support improvement, the monitoring and evaluating by senior leaders is not having enough impact on raising attainment. The governing body are now holding the school to account to ensure a strong focus on improvement. Leaders and managers are aware of the schools strengths and the areas for improvement, they evaluate themselves honestly and are accurate in their shortcomings. The school has rightly identified and embarked on the journey of improvement, as seen by the improving levels of attainment in English, and has demonstrated satisfactory capacity in this area.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise overall achievement, particularly in mathematics by:
 - improving further the quality of teaching and learning so that a higher proportion is at least good

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- applying a robust and systematic approach to assessing basic skills from one year group to the next
- embedding the collegiate approach to sharing good practice between year groups and key stages
- taking a more rigorous approach to the monitoring of teaching and learning to drive improvement across all year groups.
- Ensure the developments seen in the curriculum build on pupils' basic skills, particularly in numeracy and in information and communication technology, as pupils move through the school by:
 - planning for a more effective transfer of basic skills from one class to the next so that learning can be consolidated and improved on.
- Ensure leaders and managers at all levels are more accountable for school improvement by:
 - having a sharper focus on school improvement initiatives
 - securing a formalised approach to monitoring and evaluating and by the impact of individuals' areas of responsibility.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning and enjoy school as seen by their above average attendance. Progress across the key stages has until recently been uneven. The school has successfully addressed this and inspectors saw improved and consistent learning and progress across year groups. In the stronger lessons, skilful teaching and creative use of resources engage the pupils and help them make more rapid progress. This was seen in a Year 4 lesson where pupils were making parachutes and releasing them outside, helping them understand scientific principles. Provisional results for 2010 indicate that pupils achieve satisfactorily and broadly in line with expectations by the end of Year 6. There are some variations, such as boys attaining better than expected in English and girls doing less well in mathematics. The proportion securing the higher levels in English and mathematics is lower than the school anticipated and when compared to similar schools. However, the school have learned from this, and have introduced procedures to ensure that pupils are better prepared for the tests this year. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve in line with their peers because of the targeted support made available to them and the help provided by effective teaching assistants in class and outside when required.

Pupils tell of feeling safe and secure. They have strong social and moral values and, on the rare occasions when behaviour is less than that expected, pupils follow the behaviour code and know who to speak to for resolution. Fresh fruit and vegetables are consumed with vigour at morning playtime and the benefits of leading a healthy lifestyle and taking regular exercise are understood. The school council are active and meet regularly. They make a good contribution to the school community developing their own 'Good Neighbours Scheme' designed to encourage positive relationships between pupils and local residents.

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is satisfactory and improving although some inconsistencies remain. Relationships are very positive throughout the school and clear classroom routines support a calm and orderly working environment. In the best lessons, teachers use a range of activities that engage pupils well in their learning. Careful assessment of pupils' abilities ensures lessons are well planned and provide appropriate challenge and time for pupils to think how to improve, resulting in some rapid learning. However, in too many lessons learning is slow because teachers talk for too long and the activities stifle enjoyment and engagement and are not always well matched to individual needs.

A strength of the curriculum is the increasing range of additional activities that help promote learning. For example, the school's involvement in 'sign to sing' when pupils, along with other school children across the country, undertook a world record attempt to sign and sing a popular song at the same time, helping raise pupils' understanding of what it is like to be deaf. Staff are developing a themed approach to the curriculum and have had some success in this. However, the school is not always consistent in its approach to ensure pupils systematically build on their basic skills when they move from class to class, especially in mathematics and ICT.

Pupils and their parents and carers speak well of the caring and supportive attitude of the school. Transition arrangements at all stages are good and ensure that all pupils move into their next stage of learning with confidence. The breakfast and after-school clubs are

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well supported and often staff open before time to accept children whose parents leave for work early. Parents and carers feel well informed about their child's progress. Support for pupils facing challenging circumstances is well established and valued.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
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 leadership team provides clear direction and support across the school. The headteacher has overseen improvements since the last inspection amidst challenges including falling numbers of pupils. Staff are committed and determined to raise attainment and have the pupils' best interests at heart. However, there are not enough opportunities for staff to share good practice across year groups and key stages. Individual teachers with whole-school responsibilities help drive improvement but do not use formal procedures to monitor their effectiveness. Furthermore, the monitoring and evaluation of teaching is not as effective as it could be in its contribution to improvement. The governing body increasingly challenges the school to improve further. They are provided with, and understand more fully, school performance data so that they can hold the school to account for its performance. Parents and carers have a good level of engagement with the school and consider that it takes good account of their suggestions and listens to their concerns. The improved and accurate use of performance data across the school ensures that pupils are monitored appropriately and where gaps in performance are identified these are addressed. Safeguarding procedures meet requirements. The school makes a strong contribution to community cohesion, including a film making project with the neighbouring special school and evaluates the impact on pupils' understanding of other faiths and cultures well.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
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	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle well and feel safe and secure because of the warm nurturing environment, the positive partnership with parents and carers and the strong Christian values. When they start school, children's skills and levels of development are generally as expected for their age. Children make at least sound progress in all areas of learning. They enjoy the varied range of activities provided both indoors and out. For example, during the inspection children were seen proudly building a ferry-boat together. Adults are supportive and foster children's personal and social skills well. However, although staff are now focusing on improving children's early writing skills, particularly those of boys, this has not been a strong enough focus in the past to ensure a greater rate of progress. The leadership and management is now committed to ensuring children get a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities to foster the learning of basic skills and to help improve the quality of learning.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account: Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

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Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. There was an above average response to the completion of questionnaires. Parents and carers appreciate the care shown by all adults and are happy that their children feel safe and are making sufficient progress. A small minority expressed some concern about the school dealing with unacceptable behaviour. During the inspection, pupils' behaviour was good in lessons and around the school. Furthermore, inspectors looked at the procedures and sanctions adopted by the school regarding any incidence of poor behaviour. These were found to be used appropriately. Other areas of comparative concern expressed in the questionnaire responses have been represented in the report.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Aelred's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided 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 110 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 205 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	69	63	39	35	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	71	65	39	35	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	51	46	51	46	6	5	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	57	52	47	43	4	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	61	55	47	43	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	55	50	49	45	4	4	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	56	51	52	47	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)	52	47	50	45	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	58	53	46	42	5	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	48	44	53	48	8	7	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	48	44	50	45	6	5	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	58	53	45	41	5	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	68	62	37	34	3	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 all 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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



14 February 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Aelred's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School, York, YO31 0QQ

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to inspect your school recently. We enjoyed our visit and it was good to see how much you like coming to school. Thanks to those of you who spoke to us in our meetings and those of you who offered to share your fruit and vegetables with us at morning break time!

We judge your school to be providing you with a satisfactory standard of education. The headteacher and staff look after you well, you told us that you feel safe and secure and enjoy learning. You behave well in lessons and around the school and get along well together.

We have asked the headteacher, governors and other adults to help you further so that you learn even more. We want them to help you do better in English, mathematics and information and communication technology. They can do this by making the lessons more interesting for you, making sure that you build on what you have learned in the previous classes. Also, the topics you study must include working with computers more often and you should use mathematics more. This will help your understanding for when you go on to your next class, then secondary school and eventually when you are working.

And finally, we have asked that teachers talk to one another more regularly and share between them the best ways of helping you learn.

Thanks again for making us so welcome and the best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Cox

Lead Inspector

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