

Barkston Ash Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121635
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	363943
Inspection dates	16–17 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Lesley Clark

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	114
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Karen Howell
Headteacher	Mrs Anne O'Neill
Date of previous school inspection	7 November 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They observed six lessons taught by four teachers. Meetings were held with staff, pupils and the chair of the governing body and the inspectors met parents and carers informally. The inspection team observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including: assessments of pupils' progress; the school's monitoring of teaching and learning; Reception Year children's 'learning journeys' (records of their progress and development); and documentation relating to safeguarding. The team analysed questionnaires returned from staff and pupils, and 62 questionnaires from parents and carers.

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

- The reasons why attainment is high in reading, but lower in mathematics.
- Whether teachers pitch work at a suitable level so as to challenge more-able pupils, especially in mathematics.
- Whether care, support and guidance are highly effective.
- The extent to which children in the Early Years Foundation Stage lead their own learning, both indoors and outdoors, and how effectively this is managed.

Information about the school

This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. It serves an extensive rural area and offers 50% of its places to children from non-Catholic families. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. A below-average proportion is known to be eligible for free school meals. A broadly average proportion has special educational needs and/or disabilities. Currently, none has a statement of special educational needs. Pupils are taught in four mixed-age classes. A new deputy headteacher started in September 2010. The school has Healthy School status and holds the Inclusion Quality Mark and Active Mark.

The Playbase and Breakfast Club were not part of this inspection. They are inspected separately and the report can be found on the Ofsted website.

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

This is a good school. It has five outstanding elements. Pupils' behaviour is first rate and attendance is high, which are key factors in pupils' successful learning. Pupils are given excellent care, support and guidance. As a result, they develop into confident, self-reliant and articulate young people with outstanding safety awareness, well-prepared for their future lives. The school's excellent partnerships with parents and carers make a major contribution to pupils' high attainment in reading.

Pupils make good progress from starting points which are typically as expected for their age because they are well-taught. Their attainment is above average in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6, with almost all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, reaching expected levels. A smaller number of pupils exceed expected levels in mathematics compared to English. This is because the most-able pupils have relatively few opportunities to investigate and solve mathematical problems independently or to challenge themselves. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress. They have good opportunities to lead their own learning, though the outdoor learning environment gives them limited learning opportunities, especially for large-scale, problem-solving and investigative activities.

Leaders, managers and the governing body know the school well. Their self-evaluation is accurate in all major respects. They know where the weaknesses are and have suitable plans to improve provision further. Good assessment procedures give senior leaders a very clear overview of pupils' progress so that support can be targeted where it is needed. The impact of their well-judged actions is seen in pupils' attainment in writing, which is now above average, following a whole-school focus on improving pupils' writing skills. The school demonstrates it has good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate the progress of the more-able pupils in mathematics by:
 - ensuring that introductions to lessons are short, engage pupils of all abilities, and allow more-able pupils to start their tasks and go on to extension activities as soon as they feel they are ready to do so
 - giving pupils more opportunities to use and apply their mathematical skills to investigate and solve mathematical problems independently
 - involving pupils in setting their own mathematical challenges.
- Extend the learning opportunities, especially outdoors, for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:

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- developing the outdoor area to enhance provision for all areas of learning
- providing more large-scale, problem-solving and investigative activities
- ensuring that planning is sufficiently flexible to take into account children's current interests.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils say 'lessons are in the middle, not too easy and not too hard.' They enjoy their learning and achieve well. They agree that adults 'come and help you if you get stuck' and 'they always encourage us.' As a result, pupils make good progress and are keen to do their best. Most pupils exceed expected levels in reading by the end of Year 6 because they read and practise the full range of reading skills every day in small ability groups. Parents and carers are extremely supportive and so pupils read regularly at home as well as borrow books from the school library and discuss what they read in class. Pupils have lots of opportunities to write from an early age in a wide range of formats, from notes, posters and play scripts to writing reports and imaginative poems and stories. Older pupils, especially, enjoy checking their work against helpful checklists offered by diverse creatures such as 'Ricky the Report Reptile' or 'Sammy the Summarising Snake.' Pupils set their own writing targets and this enables more-able pupils to learn speedily. In mathematics, more-able pupils are occasionally held back when introductions to lessons go over points they have grasped instantly. Sometimes they spend too long on preliminary examples instead of moving on to extension activities when they feel they are ready to. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because they receive good support in lessons and extra help when they need it.

Pupils' high attendance and outstanding behaviour are key factors in their good achievement. They say 'the best thing about school is its friendliness'. They feel they are trusted. For example, during a brief downpour at lunchtime, a large group of pupils took part in an animated game indoors – 'We're playing extreme Jenga,' they laughed as the pile of carefully laid bricks reached dizzying heights. Pupils respect the fact that some pupils demonstrate challenging behaviour and agree that if they have concerns 'it gets sorted out straight away.' Older pupils have many responsibilities such as acting as play leaders and road safety officers. The school council represents pupils' views and is beginning to take on more responsibilities such as running the school healthy tuck shop twice a week. Links with other schools give pupils a good understanding of diverse communities and cultural traditions.

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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	2
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	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
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 most effective features in teaching include providing a wide range of interesting and varied activities matched well to pupils' varying needs and questioning pupils during lessons in order to push their learning on. Teachers' imaginative use of interactive technology not only makes demonstrations clear, but also sparks pupils' imaginations and extends their vocabulary. This aids their writing, in particular. Sometimes, introductions to mathematics lessons are too long and not pitched as well as they should be to engage pupils of different abilities. At such times, teachers miss opportunities to accelerate more-able pupils' progress because they do not release them early enough to start on more challenging tasks. Effective marking ensures that pupils know what they need to do to improve their work.

The curriculum makes good provision overall for literacy and numeracy and offers many interesting and relevant experiences. The opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical skills and to set themselves mathematical challenges are less well developed than those to use and apply literacy skills. In part, this is because less curricular time is given to mathematics compared to English. A good range of extra-curricular clubs, educational visits and visitors enrich pupils' cultural awareness. A strength is the provision for music and art.

Pupils thrive because they are known as individuals. They are outstandingly well cared for. Outstanding support for pupils who have behavioural difficulties or who may face

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challenging circumstances contributes to pupils' enjoyment of school and the high levels of confidence they have in the school's capacity to advise them effectively. The impact is seen in pupils' high attendance rates, excellent behaviour and outstanding awareness of safe practices.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The senior leadership team and staff ensure outcomes are good and continually improving because they are ambitious and have the drive to succeed. As a result, the school sets and often exceeds its challenging targets. Actions taken by the school are well thought out and involve the whole staff team. Parents and carers are involved exceptionally well in supporting their children's learning at home. The school promotes equal opportunities and tackles discrimination well. It identifies gaps in pupils' performance and adopts effective measures to reduce these. For example, the school has identified raising attainment in mathematics at the higher levels as its next goal. Senior leaders make good use routinely of a range of procedures to check teaching effectiveness, monitor pupils' progress and suggest points for further improvement. This is why morale is high and teachers are beginning to develop innovative practice.

The governing body has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and relative weaknesses. It is influential in helping to determine the school's strategic direction because it knows the right questions to ask to challenge the school to improve further. It makes sure that staff and pupils are safe. The school adopts good safeguarding procedures across all areas of its work so that pupils feel very secure but not unduly timid. Good partnerships with key agencies underpin safe practices in school further, as well as contributing to pupils' good academic outcomes. The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion and engages well with different communities beyond the immediate locality through its international and diocesan links.

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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	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress because they are well taught. The majority reaches expected levels by the start of Year 1 and a small proportion exceeds these, especially in early reading, language and communication skills. The provision is led and managed well so that children share some of their learning with Year 1 pupils who are in the same class, but spend much of the day pursuing their own interests and activities. They are busy, active, independent learners who play together very well. Those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are fully included and access learning activities at the right level for their needs. Children are extremely well cared for and consequently feel very safe and secure, which aids their good achievement.

Children know the class routines, take turns and share very well. They are full of imaginative ideas and keen to play with each other. Sometimes, adults miss opportunities to extend children's learning to the full, especially outdoors, because they do not provide for the full range of learning activities. In part, this is because planning is not always sufficiently flexible to take into account children's current interests. For example, a group of children set off on a 'magic bed' they had made out of blocks to an imaginary 'waterfall land'. However, because the outdoor resources were limited, children missed the opportunity to turn this into a large-scale, problem-solving and investigative activity to create and explore 'waterfall land' using a wide range of media.

Adults extend children's language through skilful questioning, recording the children's learning carefully through annotated notes and photographs. Children's good-quality 'learning journals' provide parents and carers with a detailed record of their children's learning and development to which they also make a contribution.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The very large majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire expressed positive views about the school. Several commented that it is 'a lovely, caring school' and that it 'definitely has an open-door policy.' Parents and carers of children with special educational needs or whose circumstances may make them vulnerable, also, commented very favourably on the support their children receive. A very small minority expressed concerns about the way the school deals with unacceptable behaviour and whether more-able pupils are challenged sufficiently in mathematics. The inspection team observed pupils at break-times and lunchtimes, both indoors and outside. They spoke to different groups of pupils and checked the school's very detailed records and notes on behaviour-related incidents. The inspection team judges behaviour to be outstanding. Pupils work hard, listen intently and know when to concentrate. Those who have behavioural problems are taught very effective strategies to help them to cope. Other pupils show a great deal of maturity in understanding those with behavioural problems. The inspection team found that more-able pupils make faster progress in English than mathematics and has recommended some strategies to accelerate their progress.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Barkston Ash 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 62 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 114 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	45	73	16	26	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	47	76	12	19	2	3	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	40	65	21	34	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	42	68	18	29	1	2	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	42	68	16	26	2	3	1	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	40	65	19	31	2	3	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	42	68	19	31	0	0	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)	30	48	25	40	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	41	66	19	31	2	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	40	65	15	24	5	8	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	35	56	23	37	2	3	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	47	76	12	19	3	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	48	77	12	19	2	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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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.



19 May 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Barkston Ash Catholic Primary School, Tadcaster, LS24 9PS

Thank you for your warm and friendly welcome. A 'special thank you' goes to the group of pupils from Years 5 and 6, who spent time showing me their work and talking to me about your school. You go to a good school. It has five outstanding areas. Your behaviour, attendance and knowledge of safety are all excellent. Your school takes exceptionally good care of you and has extremely good links with your parents and carers. They support your learning at home exceptionally well.

You told us that lessons are fun and that you learn a lot and we agree with you. However, there are two things which we have asked your school to do to make it better still.

- We have asked your teachers to make sure that those of you who find learning easy in mathematics start on your independent work as soon as you understand what to do and move on to extension activities as soon as you feel you are ready. We have asked that those pupils have more times to solve problems independently and to set their own challenges so as to speed up the rate at which they learn.
- We looked at the way Reception Year children learn and play, especially outdoors, and have suggested that those children have more learning resources so they can make and build on a much bigger scale. Those children have lots of good ideas and we want their teachers to use them when they plan new activities.

We hope you enjoy these new challenges. You can help by continuing to come to school every day and working as hard as you can.

Yours sincerely,

Lesley Clark

Lead Inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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