

Holy Family and St Michael's Catholic Primary School, Pontefract

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108267
Local Authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	356334
Inspection dates	16–17 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Jim Alexander

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	109
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Anne Dyer
Headteacher	Mrs Christine Weir
Date of previous school inspection	12 September 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited six lessons taught by four teachers. They held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation including policies for safeguarding, the school's assessment records and school development plans. The 46 questionnaires returned by parents and carers were also analysed.

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

- Whether the school assessment records indicate that all pupils currently make good progress from their individual starting points, particularly in Key Stage 2.
- Whether the quality of teaching is adjusted to meet the needs and aspirations of the more-able pupils.
- The effectiveness of the school's efforts to raise attendance.
- The impact of leadership at all levels on raising attainment and accelerating progress for all pupils, particularly within the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average-size primary school. The majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds. The proportion from minority ethnic heritage is broadly average. A slightly lower than average proportion of pupils speaks English as an additional language, although this number is growing. The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average, with twice the national average having a statement of special educational needs. A growing number of pupils join the school at differing times during the year. The school has gained a number of awards including the Activemark, Investors in people, The National Association of Professional Teaching Assistants (NAPTA) award as a Centre of Good Practice, Financial Management Standards in Schools (FMSiS) and the Advanced Inclusion Award. It has Healthy Schools 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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school, where pupils feel happy and well provided for. Many aspects of the school have improved since the time of the last inspection. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay fit and well, take plenty of exercise and eat healthily. Pupils' contribution to the school and wider community is also outstanding; they willingly accept extra responsibilities and many have roles that help the smooth running of school life. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. New pupils who join the school comment how this helps them settle very quickly. Pupils also have an excellent knowledge of how to keep themselves safe. Attendance for the majority of pupils is in-line with average and there are growing numbers of pupils who attend well. Overall attendance, however, is broadly average as there are a small number of pupils who are more difficult to engage, their attendance remains low and, consequently, their academic progress is more limited.

Children enter the school with skills that are generally below those typical for their age, although this varies from year to year. Attainment by the end of Key Stage 2 has been on an upward trend in recent years and by the time pupils leave Year 6, the majority attain broadly in-line with the national average. This represents good progress from pupils' individual starting points. Attainment and progress vary across the school, however, and are higher in mathematics than in English, and higher in reading than in writing. Pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress, due to activities that are carefully matched to their individual needs. The majority of lessons are good, providing opportunities for pupils to achieve well. During these well-paced lessons, activities are pitched at just the right level, providing challenge and excitement. Consequently, pupils' enjoyment of learning is good and they challenge and encourage each other to do their best. This practice, however, is not seen across the school and in a minority of lessons, teaching and progress remain satisfactory.

The curriculum is good and many trips and visitors enrich provision well. Senior leaders have developed robust systems to track the progress pupils make. They use this information to establish well thought through plans for improvement. Across the school there is a shared determination to ensure the school goes from strength to strength. This is best illustrated in the significant improvements made to both provision and outcomes within the Early Years Foundation Stage. Senior leaders have also recently implemented a new system to set targets for pupils in Key Stage 2, in order to raise attainment further. The governing body offers both support and challenge, ensuring statutory requirements are met. There is clear evidence to demonstrate that the school's self-evaluation is accurate and capacity for sustained improvement is good.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment by the end of Year 6 by:
 - accelerating progress made in English, particularly in writing, across the school
 - ensuring all lessons are as good as the best
 - ensuring leaders monitor the effectiveness of the new system for target-setting across Key Stage 2.
- In liaison with parents and carers, improve outcomes for the small minority of pupils who remain difficult to engage and fail to attend regularly by emphasising the relationship between attendance and achievement.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The overwhelming majority of pupils enjoy school and are enthusiastic about their learning. Pupils say they particularly enjoy work, 'when it challenges us'. Pupils in a mixed Year 3 and 4 class, for example used their knowledge of number to set challenging tasks for others to complete. Pupils respond well to the high expectations and good routines set for them. Pupils in a mixed Year 5 and 6 English lesson settled quickly, participated well and rose to the challenges provided by the teacher. Pupils take pride in their work. The presentation of their work in books is of a high standard and the quality of display around the school is good.

Children start school with skills that are generally below those expected and the language development for many is often lower. By the time pupils leave Year 6 their attainment is broadly average overall, although higher in mathematics than in English. In a number of older year groups there is still some catch-up required from previous underachievement. School data and work seen in lessons and pupils' books, however, demonstrate the school is moving rapidly in the right direction. This can be seen, for example, by the increasing number of pupils in Year 6 that are now working at the higher levels. The good support offered to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities ensures that they also make good progress as they move through school.

Pupils are helped to become confident in their own abilities and by the time they leave Year 6 they are caring and independent young people. Pupils across the school contribute to school life exceptionally well. The work of the play leaders, for example, ensures break and lunchtimes are happy and structured occasions. A growing number of pupils join the school at various times during the school year, a number of whom speak English as an additional language. Many of them say that 'everyone is really friendly, helpful and behaves wonderfully'. This helps them settle quickly and soon they are making equally good progress as others in the school. Pupils' highly developed sense of justice and fairness is one reason why they feel so safe and well cared for.

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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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
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	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
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	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

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?

Effective teaching enables pupils to make good progress as they move through school. In the best lessons teachers make good use of the time available. They plan a variety of activities to interest and engage the pupils, developing their knowledge and also enabling them to apply the skills they have learnt in a relevant way. In these lessons teaching assistants are deployed well so that not a moment of time is wasted. Lessons move on at a fast pace and pupils confidently use information and communication technology to support their learning appropriately. The level of challenge for all pupils is well matched to their individual ability and teachers make good use of what they know about the pupils to extend their understanding further. In a small minority of lessons, however, teachers sometimes talk for extended periods of time and as a result, some pupils become more passive in their learning. Some teaching assistants also sit more passively during these times. In these lessons, pupils are not always given the opportunity to work problems out for themselves and activities can be over-structured. Overall, the quality of marking is good and pupils are given good guidance about how to improve their work. In a small number of books, however, marking does not offer such clear guidance, which limits the progress these pupils make.

The curriculum is good and is meeting the needs and interests of pupils increasingly well. This contributes to their enjoyment of school and the progress they are making. The Key Stage 2 curriculum has moved to a skills-based approach in recent months and this is

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helping accelerate pupils' progress well. The school also provides a range of clubs and activities, which are well attended by pupils in both key stages.

The good care, guidance and support contribute effectively to pupils' personal development and sense of well-being. Pupils say adults, 'do lots for them'. The school places a strong emphasis on fostering pupils' respect for one other. Each day starts with an assembly that focuses on a particular thought and prayer for the day. Pupils explain this, 'helps us feel good before we start our lessons'. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well through structured individual plans and tailored programmes of work. The school recognises that, although most pupils attend in-line with the average and an increasing number are attending well, it needs to work more effectively with the families of a small minority of pupils who find it difficult to attend regularly enough.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Improvements in provision, attainment and pupils' well-being have been driven by the good leadership of the headteacher, leadership team and the highly committed staff team. There is a strong determination for the school to further improve. The school is inclusive, promoting equality of opportunity and access to educational entitlement. The rising numbers of pupils reaching above average attainment in Key Stage 2 reflects the school's determination to improve pupils' progress. Governors are effective and care about the success of the school and, consequently, support and challenge it well. The school's accurate self-evaluation has enabled leaders to recognise where strengths and weaknesses lie and work well to improve the school further. The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers is good. The overwhelming majority speak exceptionally highly of the school's work. Many share the view that there is, 'a lovely family atmosphere', and say that the school is, 'a positive community where respect, care and understanding of one another are the main drivers'. Safeguarding practices are reviewed regularly by the headteacher and governing body and are good. Designated child protection staff have up-to-date training and arrangements ensure the safety of all who work in the school are good. The school has accurately evaluated its provision for community cohesion and pupils have a good appreciation of the multi-faith and rich cultural society we live in. The school deploys its resources well and provides good value for money.

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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	2
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 in the Early Years Foundation Stage and are well prepared for Year 1. They are helped to settle quickly and confidently use all the indoor and outdoor spaces available. Children talk happily to visitors and explain clearly what they are doing. Relationships between staff and children are strong and children's behaviour is good. The recently appointed teacher ensures this is a very well-organised and attractive learning environment, which provides a wide range of activities. This is meeting the children's learning needs increasingly well. The outdoor area is well developed and leaders have worked hard to ensure constructive learning opportunities are readily available. The assessment of children's progress is good. Adults rarely miss an opportunity to move children's exploration and learning on to a higher level of understanding. Parents and carers appreciate the good communication and efforts made by staff to keep them informed of their children's progress. Many agree that 'we have a fantastic Reception teacher' who 'is always very friendly and approachable'. The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good, reflective and well placed to improve still further.

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	2

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Stage	
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Views of parents and carers

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire expressed very positive views about the school. They, and those spoken to, had much praise for the headteacher and staff. All said their children enjoy school, are kept safe and are helped to have a healthy lifestyle. All say that teaching is good and their children make good progress. A very small minority felt that the school did not listen to their concerns or deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour. The inspection found both the partnership with parents and carers and pupils' behaviour to be good. Parents and carers of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage greatly appreciate the efforts made to help their children settle in school. All parents and carers said they are happy with the overall experience their children have at school. The inspection findings are broadly similar to the views expressed by the vast majority.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Holy Family and St Michael's Catholic Primary School, Pontefract 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 inspector received 46 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 109 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	27	59	18	39	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	33	72	13	28	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	23	50	22	48	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	26	57	19	41	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	27	59	19	41	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	23	50	22	48	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	20	43	25	54	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)	21	46	23	50	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	21	46	24	52	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	22	48	23	50	1	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	16	35	27	59	1	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	23	50	22	48	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	27	59	19	41	0	0	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.



18 May 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Holy Family and St Michael's Catholic Primary School, Pontefract, Pontefract, WF8 2HN

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we inspected your school recently. I would like to let you know our views of your school. Holy Family and St Michael's Catholic Primary is a good school. It is well led and the staff work together well on your behalf. You are well cared for. The teaching is good and you make good progress in your subjects. As a result, attainment by the end of Year 6 is improving and is now broadly average overall. You are, however, doing better in your mathematics than you are in your English, and better in reading than you are in your writing, so there is more to do. I have asked the school to help you reach even higher levels of attainment, and ensure all lessons are as good as the best.

We were impressed with your behaviour and enjoyment in lessons, particularly those that you found challenging and fun. Your appreciation of how to stay fit and healthy is excellent as is the contribution you make to school life. You have an excellent knowledge of how to stay safe and an outstanding appreciation of the feelings of others. Many of you attend school regularly and are never late. I have asked the school to work with those who find it harder to attend. It is a shame to miss out on the many opportunities this good school has to offer.

Thank you for completing the pupil questionnaires and taking time to talk to us. You can also help the school improve still further by working hard and attending well. I wish you every success in your future.

Yours sincerely

Jim Alexander
Lead inspector

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