

St Malachy's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|----------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 107545 |
| Local Authority | Calderdale |
| Inspection number | 363724 |
| Inspection dates | 9–10 June 2011 |
| Reporting inspector | James Kidd |

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 | 182 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Rev Fr Peter Nealon |
| Headteacher | Mrs Christine Russell |
| Date of previous school inspection | 14 December 2007 |
| School address | Furness Place Illingworth, Halifax West Yorkshire HX2 8JY |
| Telephone number | 01422 244628 |
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed ten lessons or part lessons, taught by seven teachers. They held meetings with pupils, staff, members of the governing body and the School Improvement Partner. They observed the school's work, and looked at school development planning, internal progress monitoring files, reports written on behalf of the local authority and pupils' workbooks. Inspectors also analysed 28 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, 14 completed by staff and 77 returned by pupils in Key Stage 2.

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

- The accuracy and consistency of assessment, including the quality of feedback pupils receive on how they can improve their work.
- How effectively teaching promotes learning across the school.
- Whether the International Primary Curriculum has a positive impact on pupils' progress in both their personal and academic development.
- The impact of the school's work to engage with parents and carers, particularly in relation to pupils' attendance.
- Whether outdoor provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved since the previous inspection.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average-sized primary school. It is part of the North Halifax Federation, which includes both primary and secondary schools. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above that usually found. There are below-average proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups and who speak English as an additional language, but these proportions have doubled since the previous inspection. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. St Malachy's is an accredited Healthy School and an Investor in Pupils. It also holds the Activemark and the Basic Skills Quality Mark.

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 and improving school. Through their sterling work as school councillors, junior wardens, members of the 'lunch bunch' and also gardening club, pupils contribute outstandingly well to the school community and to the local environs. Pupils are proud of their school, feel safe within it and have the highest regard for the adults who work with them, commenting, 'They are always there when we need them!'

Children generally enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are below the expectations for their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy. All groups of pupils make good progress and achieve well across the school to reach broadly average attainment by the time they leave. Indeed, standards have risen year-on-year, and in both key stages, since the previous inspection. Outstanding pastoral care and increasingly effective small-group and individual support by teaching assistants and learning mentors, ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and also those at early stages of learning English make the same good progress as their peers.

Pupils behave well and have good relationships with their classmates, their teachers and support staff. Attendance is broadly average but improving. There are, however, too many pupils who do not attend regularly and the school recognises that it needs to inform parents and carers more effectively about the negative impact poor attendance has on their children's progress.

Teaching is good across the school and pupils are engaged in their learning. Assessment has improved since the previous inspection but its quality remains inconsistent, particularly in relation to the advice pupils receive on their performance and how they can improve it. The relatively new International Primary Curriculum is already having a positive impact on pupils' motivation and there is an excellent range of well-attended enrichment activities.

The school is well aware of its strengths and areas for development and staff at all levels of experience and responsibility evaluate performance systematically. Members of the school council, too, have an input into the school improvement plan. On-going improvements in attainment and continued good progress in pupils' personal and academic development demonstrate that the school has a good capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality and consistency of assessment practice by:
 - sharing good practice in the feedback teachers give to pupils about how well they are doing and how they can improve their work

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- developing procedures within the International Primary Curriculum to identify pupils' progress in subjects other than literacy and numeracy.
- Improve the attendance of those pupils who do not come to school as regularly as they should by:
 - engaging more with parents and carers to emphasise the vital importance of regular attendance on pupils' progress
 - continuously analysing the impact of strategies to promote good attendance and refining approaches accordingly.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils enjoy their lessons and are generally keen to learn. They value the opportunities they have to work in pairs and groups and to act as extra learning resources for each other. They enjoy finding things out for themselves and are keen to show their work to visitors. From their individual starting points, pupils make good progress in all Key Stages and reach average standards by the end of Year 6. There has been an improvement in attainment in literacy and numeracy across the school since the previous inspection and, as early as Year 3, pupils compose their own poems and also read increasingly difficult text aloud with confidence. Inspection evidence demonstrates that pupils in the current Year 6 class are on target to reach and, in some cases, exceed their challenging targets, thus continuing the school's track record of on-going improvement in attainment. Pupils in Year 6, for example, write their own playlets based on modern interpretations of Macbeth, and often deliver them in convincing Scottish accents!

Pupils' behaviour is good in lessons and around school at breaks and lunchtimes. They feel safe in school, have a keen understanding of what constitutes unsafe situations and are well aware of the dangers of using the Internet and of the impact of cyber bullying'. They are more than willing to give visitors information on the value of a balanced diet and they take part in a wide range of sporting activities to keep themselves fit. They make an outstanding contribution to both the school and the local communities. For example, they take on a variety of responsibilities to support their younger counterparts, contribute to the production of the school improvement plan and, as members of the gardening club, involve local residents in their activities and grow food for the school kitchen. Most pupils attend well, but attendance is only average because there are too many pupils who do not come to school as regularly as they could. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good: pupils have a good awareness of right and wrong and their extensive work for a variety of charities is well-known.

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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 | 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 | 1 |
| 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 | 3 |
| 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?

Teaching is good, promoting learning well and there are examples of outstanding practice in both Key Stages. Detailed planning, good use of the electronic whiteboard as a tool for learning and many opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively, are the key features of teaching across the school. In the best lessons, pace is rapid and sophisticated questioning challenges pupils to think deeply about the subject-matter. For example, when pupils in Years 2 and 3 identified features a writer uses to provoke a reaction in the reader. Teaching assistants, including those with the higher-level qualification, are used well to support individual pupils and also in small-group situations. As a result, pupils who often find the work difficult and those new to learning English access everything the lessons have to offer and are encouraged to make contributions to whole-class discussion. Assessment has improved since the previous inspection, is now generally accurate, and there are examples of detailed feedback given to pupils on their performance and how they can improve their work. This quality of feedback is, however, inconsistent across the school and pupils are not always fully aware of how well they are doing and of how they can reach their targets.

The International Primary Curriculum is already having a positive impact on pupils' enjoyment of learning, on their academic progress and also on their personal development. It is under continuous review and the school recognises that accurate assessment of subjects other than literacy and numeracy is an area for further

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development. As a result of the way in which the school organises what is taught, pupils see the links between subjects, reinforce their literacy and numeracy skills in a range of contexts and are becoming more creative in their work, when they make actors' masks and decorative picture frames for example. Indeed, the quality of display of pupils' work in classrooms and on corridors is most impressive. There is an outstanding and well-attended range of enrichment activities, including visits and visitors. For example, pupils' involvement in the 'Pakistani Elders' initiative, including the 'river dance' and a live radio programme gave them an insight into Pakistani culture and, in their words, 'Inspired us to want to learn more about this country'.

Care, guidance and support are good overall, but pastoral care is exceptional. Pupils speak in glowing terms of the learning mentors who work closely with pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Parents and carers pay tribute to the ways in which staff promote confidence and self-esteem in their children and comment that effective mentoring enhances pupils' belief in what they can achieve. Induction and transition arrangements are good and pupils settle down quickly into their new surroundings and are prepared well for entry to high school. The school is aware that it needs to revisit its strategies to promote better attendance and that closer engagement with parents and carers is of the essence if the attendance of persistent absentees is to improve.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

| | |
|--|----------|
| The quality of teaching | 2 |
| 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 | 2 |
| The effectiveness of care, guidance and support | 2 |

How effective are leadership and management?

St Malachy's is a 'thinking school', one in which the perceptive headteacher and committed leadership team lead by example and engender good levels of teamwork, accountability and high aspirations among all staff. Middle leaders, for example, are actively involved in developing plans to raise attainment and achievement in their individual classes and they monitor and evaluate progress towards targets regularly. The governing body meets its statutory responsibilities and members are now becoming more involved in the work of the school and are beginning to challenge the leadership with the required rigour.

Links with parents and carers are satisfactory overall and increasing numbers are volunteering to work more closely with the school. The school recognises, however, that it needs to engage more effectively with them in relation to the importance of regular attendance, particularly of those pupils who miss school too often.

Pupils benefit from good partnerships with a range of outside agencies through cluster and federation activities. Links with the local high school provide specialist teaching in modern languages, science, design and technology, and mathematics. Safeguarding and child protection procedures and practice are good and meet current requirements. A

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particular strength in this area is the emphasis the school places on ensuring that pupils use the internet and other new technologies safely. The school is justifiably proud of its inclusive ethos, promotes equality of opportunity well and tackles discrimination whenever and wherever it occurs.

The school is a racially harmonious community and pupils get on well with each other. The promotion of community cohesion is, however, only satisfactory because global links and links with schools from different socio-economic contexts are at an early stage of development.

The school provides good value for money and prudent financial management has enabled it to prepare for the re-introduction of single-age classes.

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 | 3 |
| The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers | 3 |
| 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 | 3 |
| The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money | 2 |

Early Years Foundation Stage

This is a good Early Years Foundation Stage, in which children progress and achieve well in all areas of learning. They enter the nursery with skills which are below age-related expectations and which are sometimes well below expectations in communication, language and literacy. As a result of good teaching and a curriculum which provides a balance between activities chosen by children and those led by adults, children make good progress in all areas of learning and are very happy in the setting. They are encouraged to use their own initiative and improvements in both the indoor and outdoor areas since the previous inspection encourage and enable children to find things out for themselves. They enjoy exploring the environment and showing visitors and the adults who work with them what they have found.

Leadership and management are good and promote effective teamwork at all levels. Staff have a secure knowledge of Early Years practice. They use their skills well to plan for the

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learning needs of individual children, following accurate on-going assessment of how well children are doing. The profiles of children's progress are detailed and inform the development of the curriculum well. Children are safe in the setting and their welfare is given high priority. Staff work hard to engage parents and carers more in the learning of their children. As a result, an increasing number of families are beginning to become more involved in the work of the unit.

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

There was a 20% return of questionnaires, which is smaller than average. All parents and carers who returned the questionnaires believe their children enjoy school, that the school keeps them safe and that teaching is good. An overwhelming majority are happy with their children's experiences at St Malachy's, expressing the view that the school meets their children's particular needs. A small minority of parents and carers are of the opinion that the school does not deal effectively with inappropriate behaviour. Inspectors examined this concern and found no evidence to endorse this view; inspectors judge both behaviour and behaviour management to be good. A very small minority of parents and carers do not believe the school takes account of their suggestions and concerns. Again, the inspection team considered this view and judges that, although engagement with parents is improving, this area of the school's work is satisfactory rather than good or better.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Malachy's 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 28 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 182 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|----|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 14 | 50 | 14 | 50 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 17 | 61 | 11 | 39 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| My school informs me about my child's progress | 12 | 43 | 15 | 54 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 12 | 43 | 14 | 50 | 2 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 14 | 50 | 14 | 50 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 10 | 36 | 15 | 54 | 3 | 11 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 8 | 29 | 18 | 64 | 2 | 7 | 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) | 7 | 25 | 18 | 64 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 10 | 36 | 17 | 61 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 9 | 32 | 12 | 43 | 2 | 7 | 2 | 7 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 6 | 21 | 17 | 61 | 3 | 11 | 0 | 0 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 6 | 21 | 17 | 61 | 2 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 15 | 54 | 12 | 43 | 1 | 4 | 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.



13 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Malachy's Catholic Primary School, Halifax, HX2 8JY

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we came to inspect your school recently. A particular 'thank you' goes to those who came to talk to us on Thursday and Friday. We enjoyed our conversations with you.

St Malachy's is a good and improving school and we know you are very proud of it. You make good progress in your studies and also in your personal development. You behave well in lessons and around school and make an outstanding contribution to your own community and to the community surrounding the school. For example, you enjoy looking after younger children at breaks and lunchtimes and the gardening club donates fruit and vegetables to the school kitchen so that the staff can prepare healthy food for you.

Teaching is good at St Malachy's and the grown-ups look after you exceptionally well. You enjoy the new curriculum, speak highly of the many trips and visits you have and you use the internet safely.

Your headteacher and all the other staff are always looking for ways to make your school even better. I have asked them, therefore, to make sure that you all receive good advice on how to improve your work and also to work out accurately how well you are doing in other subjects, not just in literacy and numeracy. In addition, I have asked your teachers to talk to your parents and carers more about how important good attendance is and to have another look at the ways they encourage you to attend regularly. Those of you who do not come to school as often as you should have a big part to play in this. Please remember, if you don't attend school well, you will not make the progress that you should.

Thank you again for your contribution to the inspection. You were very polite and kind to us and we enjoyed watching you learn.

Yours sincerely

James Kidd

Lead inspector

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