

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Bishop Thornton

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121636
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	380289
Inspection dates	16–17 May 2012
Lead 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	19
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Helen Jordan
Headteacher	Simon Stockdale
Date of previous school inspection	25 November 2008
School address	Colber Lane Bishop Thornton Harrogate HG3 3JR
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Introduction

Inspection team

Lesley Clark

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Ten lessons or part-lessons were observed, taught by three teachers. The inspector held meetings with groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and staff, and heard almost all pupils read. She took account of the responses to the on-line Parent View survey in planning the inspection. The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including a selection of 'learning journals' (assessments and examples of children's learning and development in Reception), the school improvement plan and self-evaluation, and documentation relating to safeguarding. Questionnaires returned from staff and pupils, and seven questionnaires from parents and carers were analysed.

Information about the school

This school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school. The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. A small minority are from other White backgrounds. None is learning English as an additional language. A larger than average proportion of pupils join or leave the school at times other than the usual. No pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of disabled pupils or those with special educational needs is low. No pupils are currently supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs. The school meets the current floor standards which are the minimum standards for attainment and progress expected by the government.

The school was undergoing extensive building works during the inspection which restricted Reception children's outdoor learning. The school has Healthy School status. It holds the Eco Bronze Award and the Inclusion 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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school. It has two outstanding elements: the way it promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their behaviour and safety. These underpin pupils' productive learning and immense enjoyment of school life. The school is not yet outstanding because attainment in writing is not as high as in reading and mathematics and pupils in Key Stage 1 have limited opportunities to learn independently.
- Achievement is good. Pupils make good progress to reach standards of attainment that are significantly above average. Pupils read exceptionally well for their age. Current progress in mathematics in Key Stage 2 is excellent because this subject is extremely well taught. However, pupils use a limited range of vocabulary in their writing and their handwriting and presentation are untidy.
- Pupils are well taught. Reception children learn well and spend much of their time leading their own learning. Teachers are well organised and cater well for the different age and ability range in their classes. Teaching assistants provide effective support to individual pupils who need extra help.
- Pupils are extremely attentive in lessons. They are keen to learn and work very hard. Lunchtimes and break times are happy occasions because different-aged pupils play exceptionally well together. They have very good safety awareness.
- The school is well led and managed. Members of the governing body are knowledgeable and supportive. The leadership of teaching is effective, resulting in accelerated rates of progress for all groups of learners, especially in mathematics. Self-evaluation is accurate and provides an effective tool for managing improvement. As a result, the school is improving rapidly. Parents and carers agree that their children are 'nurtured, engaged and encouraged' in a 'very effective learning environment where it is clear that children matter.'

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in writing by:
 - giving younger pupils more opportunities to write freely and independently
 - improving pupils' letter formation at an early stage so that pupils write in a neat, fluent, joined handwriting
 - extending and enriching pupils' vocabulary through purposeful talk, discussions and role-play across the school.
- Increase the opportunities for pupils in Key Stage 1 to work without adult support for a sustained period of time and give them more extended tasks so they become independent learners who make their own decisions.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils achieve well from starting points that are generally above those expected and they reach significantly above average levels of attainment at the end of Years 2 and 6 in reading and mathematics. Parents and carers say that their children make good progress. Reception children make good progress in all areas of learning. Typically, in lessons, children listen to a short introduction and then pursue self-led activities that are well resourced so they complement the taught focus. For example, children made, drew and wrote picture postcards using their imaginations to devise 'secret writing.'

Pupils read extremely well by the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. They have many opportunities to read throughout the day and to discuss in depth what they read. As a result, by the end of Year 6, pupils read with a high level of understanding and talk enthusiastically about favourite books and authors. Pupils are less skilled writers, despite having frequent opportunities to write in lessons. Attainment in writing, while above average, is consistently lower than in reading. In Key Stage 1, pupils do not learn to write freely and independently on their own because adults oversee each sentence they write. In Key Stage 2, pupils use paragraphs and varied punctuation well. However, their vocabulary tends to be unambitious. Pupils' handwriting is untidy because they do not form or join letters sufficiently well. By contrast, in mathematics, pupils set out their work neatly and clearly which aids accurate calculation. In mathematics lessons, in Key Stage 2, pupils make excellent progress because they work methodically and know their times tables. As they rightly say, 'We've got used to having five seconds to work things out. Our mental maths has speeded up!'

The school can demonstrate that it is successfully closing the gaps between different groups of learners. Pupils of all abilities, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, receive extra help as required so that adult support is fine-tuned to pupils' needs. The impact is seen in pupils' accelerated progress and in the equally good progress made by pupils who join the school outside the usual times.

Quality of teaching

Parents and carers say that their children are well taught. Pupils know their individual targets and say that it helps them to know their levels of attainment so they know what to aim for. Their work has improved over the course of the year because of clear and helpful marking, well-organised teaching and helpful, individual support. In all lessons, teachers make clear what pupils are to learn and involve pupils in reviewing what they have learnt. Opportunities for pupils to enrich and extend their vocabulary through purposeful discussion and role-play are, however, more limited. Pupils are fully involved in assessing their own and each other's learning and making helpful suggestions to each other for improvement. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are well taught. Teaching assistants give them extra support in lessons as well as individual help as required.

In outstanding lessons, learning is fast-paced and the work challenges the pupils to think. Teachers have high expectations, matching work to pupils' different abilities with extra challenges for each group. For example, in a mathematics lesson, average-attaining pupils rapidly learnt how to use fractions to calculate percentage amounts. They were able to explain their methods and to complete further challenges because they had been taught to work methodically. More-able pupils worked confidently with large numbers and made rapid progress because each calculation was more challenging than the previous one. In lessons that are not so strong, tasks and activities are sometimes too short. This limits the time that pupils have to work on their own and to learn through making their own decisions. The pace of learning slows because pupils in Key Stage 1 in particular are used to showing their teachers each little bit of work as they do it and so they are slow to become resilient learners. Good teaching ensures that Reception children can access resources as and when they need them. For example, they quickly changed the 'shop', which was a teaching activity involving calculating with small coins, into a wet fish shop, thus continuing their previous game in the water tray in a new but equally productive context.

Pupils are taught to read fluently and to tackle difficult texts, taking turns, for instance to read the daily psalm or extract from the Bible. Teachers encourage pupils to reflect on what they read and to apply these precepts to their daily life. Lessons encourage pupils to be receptive to new ideas and different cultures and to understand and apply democratic principles and values. Many opportunities for pupils to work productively with pupils from different schools and backgrounds extend pupils' learning experiences. Pupils commented, for example, on 'how different learning in the countryside is to a big city school with touch screen computers.' These factors, together with a rich provision for the creative arts, make an outstanding contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils behave exceptionally well. They are extremely keen to come to school as shown by the large proportion who have 100% attendance and the high attendance at after-school clubs such as chess. Attendance is consistently above average and punctuality is exceptionally good. Pupils play well together, with older pupils taking care of younger ones. As a result, there are very few bumps and bruises because pupils respect each other. At lunchtime, for example, younger and older pupils played an imaginary game they had developed from reading a picture story book, using natural materials to create a small-scale town. Parents and carers and pupils themselves say that behaviour is extremely good, and also believe that pupils are kept safe at school.

Pupils are adamant that there is no bullying. They are well aware of the different types of bullying and say quite frankly, 'It's fine to be gay. Everyone is different. If everyone was the same the world would be boring.' They show respect when referring to minority ethnic groups and have an advanced understanding of spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues. Their links with an inner-city school give them a culturally broad perspective, strengthened by the pupils from other White heritages who join the school outside usual times. Pupils agree that the best thing about this school is, 'It's small; it's like a family. We get lots of attention.' Pupils know that if they 'upset someone else then it's important to say sorry and make them happy again.'

Pupils set themselves high standards. This is seen in their advanced safety awareness. They understand the potential dangers of internet usage, why it is important to have fire practices and to take extra care round the building site. An example of the effectiveness of the school's safety instruction was evident in the mechanics workshop which Reception children set up. They made a reversible sign, giving safety instructions for when the shop was open: 'Sharp things. Be careful. Do not jump or run.'

Leadership and management

Leaders and managers set high expectations for what every teacher and pupil can achieve. Performance management and professional development are used very effectively to ensure good teaching across the school. As a result, the school is improving rapidly. Mathematics, for example, an area for improvement in the last inspection, is becoming one of the school's strengths. This has been achieved through checking rigorously pupils' progress, targeting where support is most needed and monitoring carefully pupils' progress in lessons. Teaching, leadership and management are shared between the staff team. Shared leadership of subjects has strengthened the curriculum which is well planned to meet the needs of pupils and to extend their learning beyond the confines of a very small school. The outstanding promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development lies at the heart of the curriculum. Its impact is evident in pupils' excellent attitudes to learning; their tolerance, respect and keen interest in the world and its diverse cultures and people; and their excellent behaviour.

Leaders, managers and members of the governing body promote equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination successfully. Very good links with other schools, including the high school, successfully broaden pupils' learning opportunities, offering further challenges to more-able and talented pupils, for instance. The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Child protection is of high quality, reflected in staff vigilance and pupils' complete confidence that adults in school will help them sort out any problems and take notice of their concerns. The school has a strong capacity to sustain this good rate of improvement.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Bishop Thornton, Harrogate, HG3 3JR

Thank you for your very friendly welcome. I really enjoyed meeting you all, hearing almost all of you read and talking to the older pupils who spent time showing me their writing and their work in mathematics.

You go to a good school. It helps you to make good progress and to achieve well. Your attainment is significantly above average in reading and mathematics because you are well taught. You clearly enjoy school. Your attendance is really good and everyone is on time almost every single day. Your behaviour and safety are outstanding and the school promotes your spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well. Your headteacher knows just what to do to make your school even better. This is why you are making excellent progress in mathematics in Years 3 to 6. You read much better than you write. Although you write every day, use paragraphs and use varied punctuation, your vocabulary is not as good as it should be. This is what I have asked your school to do next.

- I have asked your teachers to give younger pupils more opportunities to write on their own and help you to form your letters properly so you write in joined-up handwriting. This will help you to write as neatly as you do in your mathematics books. I have also asked your teachers to give you more times to talk, discuss and use role-play to help you learn to use new and more interesting words in your writing.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 do not work for very long on their own without an adult helping them. So I have asked the adults to give them a bit more time to work on their own and on longer tasks.

You can help by continuing to come to school eager to learn, asking lots of questions and noting down all the interesting words you find so you can use them in your writing.

Yours sincerely

Lesley Clark
Lead inspector

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