

St. John the Baptist Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108263
Local authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	395492
Inspection dates	28–29 June 2012
Lead inspector	Nigel Cromey-Hawke

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	253
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Carmen Pearce
Headteacher	Lesley Darren
Date of previous school inspection	30 January 2007
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Introduction

Inspection team

Nigel Cromey-Hawke

Pamela Hemphill

David Halford

Additional inspector

Additional inspector

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 20 lessons taught by nine teachers. They also held meetings with members of the governing body, staff, parents and carers and groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation, including development planning, pupils' work, safeguarding arrangements, self-evaluation records, relevant policies and performance data. Inspectors took account of the responses to the online (Parent View) survey in planning the inspection. They also scrutinised questionnaires from 60 parents and carers, 29 staff and 100 pupils.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized primary school. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage, with a very few pupils who speak English as an additional language. The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average. The school meets the government's floor standard; these are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

The school has many awards, including Healthy Schools' status, Investors in People and Investors in Pupils.

There have been significant staffing changes recently, including within the senior leadership team, as well as a major building programme. The school operates its own breakfast club.

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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	3

Key Findings

- This is a satisfactory school. Its main strengths are its very welcoming and caring ethos and the good behaviour of its pupils. St. John the Baptist is not good because pupils' achievement by the end of Year 6 is only satisfactory, due to the amount of satisfactory teaching, and some aspects of leadership and management need improving. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- Achievement is satisfactory. From starting points that are below those typical on entry to the Nursery, children make good progress. Progress slows to satisfactory across Key Stages 1 and 2. Attainment on leaving in Year 6 is average but is improving as a result of new initiatives to improve progress and settled staffing. The progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is satisfactory but also improving.
- Teaching over time is satisfactory although with much of the current teaching good. The best lessons are pacy and challenging and the good use of assessment information ensures that lessons are well matched to pupils' needs. Less effective teaching features insufficient pace to maintain pupils' full interest, activities that are not well matched to pupils' needs, notably for the more able, insufficient promotion of speaking and listening and weak use of questioning by teachers.
- Behaviour and safety are good. Almost all pupils say they feel safe and well looked after. Bullying incidents are rare and dealt with very well. Attendance is average and improving rapidly.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. Senior leaders are managing the school's performance effectively. Leaders have consolidated staffing, identified gaps in pupils' performance are being closed and achievement is improving. Aspects of improvement planning and the monitoring of pupils' progress are underdeveloped.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning to at least good, by:
 - providing more pace in lessons to ensure that pupils are fully engaged in their learning
 - setting more challenging activities within lessons to meet the needs of all pupils, especially the more able
 - improving pupils' speaking and listening skills so that they learn more effectively from adults within lessons and from each other
 - developing teachers' skills in questioning to extend pupils' understanding.

- Improve leadership and management by:
 - simplifying the systems for tracking pupils' progress so that leaders and managers at all levels can more easily monitor the progress of groups of pupils
 - bringing a sharper focus to development planning so that it is clear what exactly needs to be improved.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Children start in the Nursery with a range of skills that are below those typical for their age, notably in language and the understanding of number. They make good progress in all areas of learning so that, by the end of the Reception Year, most are working at age-related expectations. This is because teaching is good, with an appropriate balance of teacher-led and child-initiated activities, within a setting that caters well for their needs.

The school has suffered from significant staffing changes over the last two years that have impacted upon the continuity of teaching within Key Stages 1 and 2 and reduced achievement. Attainment by Year 6 declined in 2010 and 2011 from previously above average to broadly average levels. The school has largely overcome these difficulties, however, and current attainment is rising again. It is now above average in reading at Year 2 and above average overall in Year 6, including in reading. Listening to pupils read showed that they enjoyed their books and could confidently describe the characters, the structure of the story and read new and more complex words. Past weaker performance in mathematics is being overcome as was shown in a lively Year 5 mathematics lesson where the more-able pupils explained how to solve problems to the rest of the class. Gaps in boys' performance in relation to that of girls' have also been significantly reduced.

Most parents and carers who returned the inspection questionnaire believe that their children make good progress throughout the school. Some expressed concern, however, through Parent View over the rates of progress of their children. The inspection found that, over time, pupils' achievement is satisfactory as they are progressing as well as all pupils nationally, given their starting points. This includes disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, as well as those known to be eligible for free school meals. Inspection evidence and the schools detailed assessment programme also shows that rates of progress are improving rapidly, and that the vast majority of pupils are on track again to meet the challenging targets the school has set.

Quality of teaching

The vast majority of parents and carers who returned the inspection questionnaire are happy with the quality of teaching within the school. The inspection found that the quality of teaching in recent times has been satisfactory. Much current teaching, however, is good, reflecting the recent more settled staff team and developments in the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics. Characteristics of the best teaching are good subject knowledge and use of assessment information that enable teachers to devise interesting lessons that meet the needs of pupils well. Relationships are often very good in these lessons, with pupils willingly helping each other out. In one such case, drama was used to good effect in a Year 4 English lesson to convey strong emotions within a story, that were then skilfully shaped by the teacher into an extended writing activity. Pupils clearly enjoyed the lesson and high quality work resulted from all groups involved. All pupils have individual learning targets and these are often used to good effect in the best lessons to help pupils work independently of adult support, as, for example, in an English lesson based upon the Olympics.

Teachers use the curriculum effectively to link subjects together so that learning is more interesting and relevant. Pupils are developing a good understanding of different cultural traditions and showed a high level of awareness of spiritual issues in a thoughtful and well-presented act of worship. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported through both the teaching and the range of subjects provided.

Where teaching is satisfactory, it is because the lessons are often too slow in pace, resulting in some pupils losing interest. Pupils' behaviour in these circumstances remains good, but their progress is satisfactory. In some lessons, the well-established speaking and listening skills demonstrated elsewhere in the school are not promoted. In consequence, pupils do not learn as effectively from each other or adults as they could do. Weaker lessons also feature a limited range of activities that do not sufficiently challenge pupils, especially the more able. In these lessons, teachers' skills in questioning are not effective enough to promote pupils' understanding as far as it could be.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The behaviour and safety of pupils over time within the school is good. It is often exemplary around the school and within large gatherings. An example of this excellent behaviour was observed within the extended assembly attended by a very high number of parents and carers during the inspection. The vast majority of parents and carers who responded through both Parent View and the inspection survey are highly supportive of this aspect of school life. The pupils have very high expectations concerning behaviour. A small minority expressed concern over this within their questionnaire returns. When asked about this by inspectors pupils identified it as very low level off-task behaviour that is dealt with effectively by teachers or teaching assistants. Scrutiny of the school's records shows a very low number of behaviour incidents over time, a very low level of exclusions and extremely low levels of reported incidents of bullying. Pupils have a well-developed understanding of the different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying and bullying related to race, gender or minority groups. They feel that they are well involved in the daily routines of school life, for example, as 'fitbods' to support school behaviour and through the active school council. These reflect the warm, calm and highly inclusive ethos of the school and its awards for staff and pupil involvement. Support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and families who may be vulnerable due to their circumstances is extensive, notably

through the Catholic Care Social Worker. Many pupils take advantage of the breakfast club to get a healthy start to the day in school and are highly involved in the wide range of sporting activities and clubs, again reflecting the school's awards in this area. Attendance over time is average and rising rapidly.

Leadership and management

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The headteacher has had to manage two years of significant levels of temporary staffing, which included staffing within the senior leadership team. This has now been largely resolved and there is clear evidence of a greater consistency in the quality of teaching and in the leadership and management of the school's performance. The governing body has been considerably restructured, with many recent appointments, and supports and challenges the school satisfactorily. Attainment and achievement have been improved after a two year dip and attendance has been significantly improved. These gains demonstrate the school's capacity for sustained improvement. Some aspects of leadership and management are not yet fully developed, however. The school knows its strengths and weaknesses through a comprehensive programme of self-evaluation. This was shown by the close agreement between the school's evaluation of achievement and the inspection findings. The complexity of the pupil performance tracking system makes it difficult for senior leaders to easily monitor the on-going progress of groups of pupils. This means that sometimes interventions to support underachievement have not been as timely as they could have been. Similarly, there is a very comprehensive school development plan, but it lacks a sharp focus in some areas. This means it is not always as clear as it should be in identifying exactly what needs to be improved.

The curriculum has a strong focus upon literacy and numeracy and makes good use of technology to support pupils' learning. Its recent revision has resulted in more practical activities that are of interest to boys which have begun to close the gap in their achievement compared to that of girls. The curriculum supports pupils' behaviour and safety well, through an extensive personal, social and health related programme. Links with America and an inner-city London school of a very different profile help build pupils' understanding of the diversity of the world. As such the curriculum supports satisfactory levels of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The promotion of equal opportunities is effective, with the needs of most groups of learners being met. Instances of discrimination are extremely rare and, if encountered, tackled robustly. Most parents and carers are highly supportive of the work of the school. Some expressed concerns within Parent View on the quality of reporting to them on their children's progress. The inspection found this aspect to be satisfactory. Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements.

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.



2 July 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St. John the Baptist Catholic Primary School, Normanton, WF6 2HZ

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave me and my colleagues when we inspected your school recently. St John Baptist is a satisfactory school. It is improving after a dip in its performance following staffing uncertainties over the last two years. You get a good start to your learning in the Nursery and Reception classes because of the good teaching there. Pupils' progress over Key Stage 1 and 2 over time is satisfactory, but is improving as greater continuity of staffing and new ways of working begin to have an impact. By the time you leave the school in Year 6, the attainment for most of you is broadly average, but again, improving rapidly. Those of you who are disabled or have special educational needs also make satisfactory progress, helped by the additional support you receive. The school looks after you well, you say you feel safe and it is clear that you enjoy your learning. Your behaviour is good in lessons and often exemplary around the school. Your attendance is average but improving fast. Well done! Senior staff, including the many new members of the governing body, lead the school satisfactorily and are increasingly bringing about improvements.

To make your school better, we have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to:

- make sure that all your lessons are at least good
- simplify some aspects of the schools' tracking systems so that it is easier to identify when you are not making enough progress in your learning
- provide more detail within some parts of school planning to help the school improve further.

You can help by telling your teachers how best you learn and if you have any problems. I wish you the best for the future.

Yours sincerely
Nigel Cromey-Hawke
Lead inspector

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