

St Aelred's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School

Fifth Avenue, York, North Yorkshire, YO31 0QQ

Inspection dates 29–30 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress and achieve well. As a result, their attainment in English and mathematics is above average by the end of Year 6.
- Teaching is good and some is outstanding. Classroom management is effective in helping pupils to learn well.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and their attendance above average. They are polite, considerate and keen to get on with their work. Pupils say they feel safe in school.
- The leadership of the headteacher has been the driving force behind the good improvement since the previous inspection. Leaders work well as a team to encourage staff to do their best.
- There are good procedures for checking on how well the school is doing and for prioritising areas for further development. The governing body is ambitious and fully involved in helping the school to move forward.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to practise and improve their writing and mathematical skills in different subjects.
- Pupils are not given enough chances in lessons to work things out for themselves and think about what they have learned.
- Pupils are not always given work that gets the best out of them because it is too easy for some and too hard for others.
- The way in which pupils' progress is checked by senior leaders to set targets for improvement is not as precise as it might be.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 16 lessons or parts of lessons taught by eight teachers.
- Discussions were held with members of the governing body, parents, staff, pupils and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at school documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, records of meetings of the governing body, assessment information and curriculum planning. Work in pupils' books and displays around the school were examined. Inspectors listened to groups of pupils read.
- Account was taken of the 23 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning and carrying out the inspection.

Inspection team

Melvyn Hemmings, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jane Salt

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Aelred's is smaller than the average sized primary school.
- An average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those children from service families.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below average, as is that of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- It has gained a number of national awards, including the Active Mark and holds Healthy School status.

What does the school need to do to improve further

- Raise achievement further by:
 - Increasing opportunities for pupils to practise and improve their writing and mathematical skills in different subjects
 - ensuring senior leaders check the progress of pupils more precisely so that the next small steps in learning can be identified and challenging targets for improvement are set.
- Further improve the quality of teaching by:
 - making sure that pupils are always given work which is set at the right level and that gets the best out of them
 - providing more opportunities in lessons for pupils to work things out for themselves and to think about what they have learned.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils achieve well from their typical skill level on entering school. They make good progress throughout the school and their attainment is above average by the end of Key Stage 2.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage settle in quickly and grow in confidence because they are encouraged to make choices for themselves. They play and work together happily, showing much enjoyment in their activities. This was evident when they were choosing the correct objects to tell the story of the first Christmas.
- Pupils in the rest of the school concentrate for lengthy periods and are eager to learn. They respect the views of others and willingly help each other to complete tasks. Pupils are enthusiastic and carry on when faced with difficulty.
- In Key Stage 1, pupils make good progress in linking letters and sounds to help them read and by the end of Year 2 their attainment in reading is above average. Good progress is maintained in Key Stage 2, with pupils reading widely and often. Consequently, their attainment in reading is above average by the time they leave Year 6.
- Pupils speak clearly and confidently in group and whole-class discussions to express their views. Their writing is imaginative and well presented, capturing and maintaining the reader's interest. In mathematics, pupils have well-developed calculation skills and are able to use these confidently to solve practical number problems.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to further develop their writing and mathematical skills by practising and refining them in different subjects.
- Pupils' skills in information and communication technology (ICT) have been improved since the previous inspection. They are now able to use ICT effectively to support their learning in other subjects. This was evident when pupils in Year 3 were using the internet, as part of their historical studies, to research information about the differences between the mealtime customs of the Romans and ourselves.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. Their individual needs are identified quickly and well-targeted support put into place to meet them.
- The funding for pupils eligible for the pupil premium has been used effectively to provide small group and individual teaching support. This has accelerated these pupils' progress, particularly in mathematics, and has successfully narrowed the gap between their achievement and that of other pupils.

The quality of teaching is good

- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, adults have a good understanding of the needs of children of this age. They work well as a team to provide a variety of stimulating and challenging activities that meet them effectively. There is a good balance between activities led by adults and those chosen by children themselves.
- Through the rest of the school, teachers have good subject knowledge that enables them to explain new ideas confidently. They manage lessons well so that they run smoothly and pupils get on with their work. Teaching assistants are deployed well to support pupils, especially disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and pupils eligible for the pupil premium.
- Teachers use questioning well to find out what pupils know and get them thinking in order to deepen their understanding. They plan lessons well to build upon previous work so pupils can use what they already know to support their current learning. There are times when the work given to pupils does not get the best out of them, as it is not set at the right level being too easy for some and too hard for others.
- Marking and discussion are used effectively to guide pupils to improve. Teachers' high expectation of behaviour and the many opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively promotes

their moral and social development well. There are not enough opportunities in lessons for pupils to work things out for themselves and to reflect upon their learning.

- Outstanding teaching was characterised by highly-motivating activities that very effectively met the needs of all pupils and demanded that they did their very best to achieve success. This was evident in a literacy lesson for pupils in Year 6, in which they made excellent progress in refining their choice of vocabulary to improve a piece of descriptive writing.
- Teachers foster pupils' spiritual and cultural development well by encouraging them to think about the wonder of the world around them and to explore different cultures.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well, being kind and considerate towards others. They support each other in lessons and show enthusiasm in all of their activities. They respond quickly to any additional guidance from staff on how to conduct themselves.
- Parents, staff and pupils say that behaviour has been good over time and this is confirmed by the school's behaviour log. Pupils have a good understanding of the different kinds of bullying, including cyber bullying and name-calling. They say it seldom occurs and are confident it would be dealt with quickly by staff if it did.
- Pupils have a thorough understanding of how to stay safe. They know what to do if approached by a stranger and are aware of the dangers associated with the use of roads, railways and waterways. They say they feel safe in school at all times.
- Attendance is above average and pupils arrive at school on time. This reflects their enjoyment of school and makes a positive contribution to the good progress that they make.
- Pupils happily take on a variety of responsibilities, such as being a member of the school council. In so doing, they add to the life of the school by enabling all pupils to have a say in how it develops. Pupils enhance the wider community well, such as through the school choir and musicians performing in local care homes and a respite centre throughout the year.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has successfully improved the skills of senior leaders in driving forward improvement since the previous inspection. Consequently, pupils' achievement, the quality of teaching and of leadership and management are now good. Leaders and governors are ambitious and the school's ability to carry on making improvements is good.
- The management of staff performance and the training of teachers and other adults are effective in meeting whole-school and individual needs. Any underperformance of staff has been robustly tackled and eradicated. The link between teachers' performance and pay progression is strong.
- There are good procedures for checking the quality of teaching. Leaders regularly observe lessons and provide detailed guidance for improvement. This has resulted in teachers improving their expertise, particularly in the teaching of mathematics.
- Equality of opportunity and the tackling of discrimination are good. Leaders have a clear picture of the performance of different groups that enables them to act quickly if any groups are not doing as well as others. This is exemplified in the way the funding for pupils eligible for the pupil premium has been used effectively to narrow the gap between their achievement and that of other pupils.
- The progress of individual pupils is checked regularly by senior leaders to ensure that it is good. However, the procedures lack the precision to identify the next small steps in learning which would enable challenging targets for improvement to be set so that progress is rapid and outstanding.
- The local authority has confidence in the leadership of the school and provides light touch support.

- Staff model professional standards well, showing respect for pupils and others. There are good links with parents, who are kept well informed about their children's progress and achievement.
- The curriculum has been improved so that pupils' skills are built upon effectively as they pass through the school. It is enhanced by a variety of well-attended, extra-curricular activities and visits, such as a residential stay for pupils in Year 6 at an outdoor adventure centre. The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is involved fully in planning for long-term improvement and takes part in regular training to maintain its effectiveness. Governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses, have a good grasp of performance data and manage its budget effectively. They hold the school to account for the way in which the funding for those pupils eligible for the pupil premium is used to raise their achievement. Governors have an accurate view of the quality of teaching. They know how the management of performance is used to improve staff expertise and reward good teaching. The governing body supports the school well and ensures safeguarding requirements are met so that staff and pupils are safe.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	121646
Local authority	York
Inspection number	406041

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	205
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Father Bill Serplus
Headteacher	David Houghton
Date of previous school inspection	10 February 2011
Telephone number	01904 551885
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