

St Benedict's Roman Catholic Primary School, Ampleforth

Back Lane, Ampleforth, York, North Yorkshire YO62 4DE

Inspection dates

19–20 June 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher has quickly earned the respect and support of the school and the wider community. He leads by example and sets high expectations for staff and pupils alike.
- Leaders, together with effective support from governors, the local authority and the diocese, have successfully improved the quality of education since the previous inspection. The added capacity of middle leaders is increasing the pace of improvement.
- As a result of careful recruitment and highly effective professional development, the quality of teaching, previously inconsistent, is now at least good.
- The well-designed 'big ideas' curriculum provides pupils with a wide range of interesting learning activities. It contributes strongly to pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.
- Children in the early years make good progress, particularly in their reading. Staff provide a vibrant and stimulating learning environment. Children settle well and are happy, confident learners.
- The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) demonstrates strong leadership. The small number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and disadvantaged pupils receive effective support to make good progress from their starting points.
- Support for pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. The school's warm and nurturing environment encourages pupils to be respectful of others and to become resilient, responsible learners. Pupils enjoy school and attendance is high. Behaviour is good and pupils feel safe.
- Although there are close checks on the progress pupils make in English and mathematics, subject leaders pay less attention to the quality of learning in other subjects, where standards are more variable.
- Most teachers provide work which meets the needs of pupils. However, on occasion the most able pupils are not able to move on to challenging activities quickly enough. This slows their progress, including in the early years.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop the influence of subject leaders further in evaluating more closely the quality of pupils' learning across a range of subjects beyond English and mathematics.
- Provide pupils with more challenging tasks as soon as they are ready for these, to ensure that a greater proportion of pupils reach the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of each key stage, including early years.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since September 2018, the school has been led and managed by a new headteacher. He shows integrity and has a clear vision for the school. Together with the executive headteacher and senior leader, the leadership team leads by example, modelling the behaviour and attitudes they wish to see. Consequently, staff and pupils replicate the school's values, resulting in a shared, positive ethos across the school. There is a strong sense of family.
- Effective collaboration between senior leaders, including governors, the local authority and the diocese has brought about significant change since the last inspection. Many changes in staffing have taken place as a result of the headteacher's immediate and effective focus on improving the quality of teaching across classes. Consequently, all teachers and a number of support staff are relatively new to the school.
- Staff morale is high. All staff in this small school are empowered to make the changes required to improve standards. They value the many opportunities they have to work collaboratively with one another and more widely with partner schools, to share and implement effective practice. As a result of this and of their structured training and development work, they have formed a very effective team.
- Teachers are extremely well motivated and keen to become strong leaders. They are given high-quality support to equip them with the specialist knowledge and skills they need to be effective in their roles. Consequently, they have a positive impact on the standards pupils reach. Teachers who are new to the profession speak of being able to thrive as a result of their bespoke training and opportunities to work alongside specialists.
- The design and development of the innovative curriculum are being further strengthened and refined. Pupils' understanding of British values is successfully promoted, preparing them well for life in modern Britain. Interesting links between subjects, including visits, visitors and 'big questions' are combined well to enhance pupils' learning. The curriculum inspires pupils to debate and challenge one another.
- The leaders for English and mathematics undertake systematic monitoring of their subjects and provide high-quality support and mentoring to staff through well-designed specialist training. Consequently, strong teaching is evident across the school. Pupils' outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics are now good and improving.
- There are many opportunities for pupils to apply their reading, writing and numeracy skills across the curriculum. However, the evaluation of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding in all subjects is not as well developed as in English and mathematics. The checks that leaders make do not give them a precise indication of pupils' progress and attainment to ensure that they reach their full potential in all subjects.
- The leadership of provision for the small number of pupils with SEND is very effective. The new SENCo ensures that pupils with SEND are quickly identified, supported and monitored closely. Skilled teachers and teaching assistants provide this group of pupils with a range of carefully planned and sensitive additional support. This helps these pupils to make strong progress from their starting points, particularly in their personal,

social and behavioural development. Those in Year 6 have gained in self-confidence and are well prepared for their move to secondary school.

- The use of the primary physical education (PE) and sport premium is effective. The leader for PE ensures that pupils receive a rich and varied programme of sports, including those included in the Ryedale School sporting events. Recent successes in inter-school competitions have enthused pupils and given sport a high priority, which has resulted in high rates of activity and fitness.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively to provide support for the small number of disadvantaged pupils. Teachers know which pupils are entitled to support through this funding and are held accountable for their pupils' progress. As a result of more precise monitoring, these pupils are currently making the strong progress expected of them.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the changes made by the headteacher. Nearly half of the 18 free-text responses to Ofsted's online Parent View questionnaire refer to the improvements made. One parent wrote, 'The leadership of the school is very positive and proactive. Staff and pupils have been pushed to show their best in all aspects of school life without detriment to mental or social well-being.' Another parent stated, 'The way the leadership team and governors have led and transformed the school is outstanding.'

Governance of the school

- Governance has been strengthened over the last two years as new governors have brought additional expertise to the governing body. As a result, governors are providing a clear strategic direction for the development of the school.
- Governors have worked well with the local authority and leaders in moving the school forward. As a result, they know the school well. Governors adopt an effective approach to tackling shortcomings and they are not afraid to ask challenging questions which lead to difficult decisions. This underpins recent improvements in the quality of education for pupils.
- Governors are suitably trained in safeguarding and in safer recruitment. All processes and procedures are well established and adhered to closely. Individual governors are also assigned to specific subjects in school and they closely monitor and support the work of subject leaders.
- Governors are prudent in their evaluation of the impact of additional funding and they are particularly proud of the many sporting achievements of this small school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have established secure policies and procedures for keeping pupils safe. Safeguarding is a high priority and consequently staff are vigilant. Thorough checks are made on all staff and visitors. Staff are well trained and knowledgeable in all aspects of safeguarding.
- Well-organised training records ensure that staff are trained promptly on induction and

are kept up to date regularly. Thorough and detailed risk assessments are completed and shared with staff so that pupils are kept as safe as possible at all times.

- Staff use their skills and expertise to good effect. Leaders access the right support at the right time and are proactive and determined in ensuring that the needs of families and their children are met. A shared understanding, strong communication, joined-up thinking and a holistic approach ensure that everyone takes responsibility for the welfare of children.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Turbulence in staffing and some ineffective teaching practice led to a further decline in the quality of teaching following the school's last inspection. This had a particularly negative impact on the progress made by former pupils and that of pupils who are currently in Years 5 and 6. The immediate intervention of new leaders has led to significant improvements. These are evident in the quality of teaching across the school and in the progress made by all pupils, particularly in mathematics.
- Teachers are adept at teaching mixed-aged classes. They are increasingly using information on pupils' prior performance to plan interesting activities to ensure that pupils enjoy learning, make strong progress and attain well. Teachers are proud of their classrooms, which are stimulating places to learn. Displays are used effectively to prompt pupils in their learning and to encourage them to be proud of their achievements.
- Teachers often use effective questioning to check what pupils know and to clarify any misunderstanding, particularly in mathematics. Staff benefit from specialist training which has improved their skills to enable pupils to learn and apply calculation and problem-solving skills well. Pupils are encouraged to accept that mistakes are an essential part of learning and developing their confidence and expertise in mathematics. The emphasis on teaching times tables is having a positive impact and is improving pupils' fluency in this area. This was evident in a key stage 2 class as pupils demonstrated their understanding of factors and the correct order of operations, when solving complex problems.
- Phonics teaching is strong. As a result, a higher-than-average proportion of pupils were secure in their phonics skills and knowledge at the national phonics screening check in 2018. There is a systematic and consistent approach to teaching pupils to incorporate new sounds into words and sentences across key stage 1.
- Teachers develop pupils' reading skills exceptionally well. Many pupils are avid readers who regularly challenge themselves to read difficult books across a range of genres. Teachers ensure that pupils understand what they have read and so pupils' comprehension skills are strong. The less able pupils benefit from effective support that focuses on developing their ability to understand text. In key stage 2, the teacher's strong subject knowledge and well-designed tasks enabled pupils to strengthen their ability to infer and then justify their opinions about advertisements using thoughtful vocabulary.
- Writing is improving across the school. Teachers and their assistants are supportive and encouraging of pupils. Their effective teaching enhances pupils' understanding of

grammar and different literary techniques. This was evident in key stage 1 when pupils demonstrated their understanding of adverbs to write complex sentences. The teaching assistant sensitively supported low-ability pupils to complete the task accurately by using a pictorial representation of the adverbs. Pupils applied their phonics skills well by reading the sentences aloud before completing the writing.

- Teachers motivate pupils to try their hardest and believe in their own abilities. Older pupils who spoke with the inspector indicated that they had not always enjoyed learning. They recognise many improvements in the way they are now taught and they know that, despite some gaps in their earlier learning, they are now making much stronger progress.
- All teachers and their assistants give feedback to pupils in line with the school's assessment policy. Pupils' books indicate that most pupils take note of the advice, which they use to improve their work. Occasionally, the most able pupils, particularly in key stage 1, do not always have opportunities to move on quickly enough to complete more-challenging tasks. This slows their progress in a range of different subjects.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Leaders have ensured that a calm, nurturing environment exists which enables pupils to be successful in their learning.
- Pupils are exceptionally well cared for and are at the heart of all that the school does. The school's values underpin its ethos and aims to ensure that pupils are 'members of an extraordinary family'.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is an integral part of the ambitious curriculum. It is well designed to teach pupils about democracy and encourages pupil voice. For example, pupils in key stage 2 were keen to tell the inspector how much they enjoyed the debates, presentations, food-tasting and role-play when answering the big question, 'Was it better to live in the Roman era or the Greek era?'
- Pupils are encouraged to be aspirational, compassionate, enlightened, entrepreneurial and individual. They are motivated by the numerous displays of their work across the school. Examples of their 'wonderful writing' mounted in high-quality frames are given pride of place in the school hall. Pupils are proud of their new school uniform and they are keen to take on roles and responsibilities such as being digital leaders, mini-Vinnies or buddies for younger children, including helping them to improve their early reading skills.
- Pupils are rightly proud of their school's achievements in the wider community. For example, during the inspection pupils celebrated winning an inter-school tennis tournament and a local creative art competition. These awards now sit alongside numerous others which the school has won, including for football, cross-country, swimming and tag rugby.

- Pupils are happy. They told the inspector that they feel safe in the school. Staff and parents share this view and are confident that pupils are safe. Pupils learn about internet safety and have a thorough understanding of what to do if they see anything that concerns them online. Parents are provided with informative guidance to enable them to understand the dangers of social media and online activities. In addition to online safety, pupils learn about stranger danger and personal safety through the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children workshops, and about road safety.
- Forest-school and after-school activities complement pupils' learning across a broad range of skills. Pupils have opportunities to develop cultural interests through the study of music, art and performing arts. Pupils are developing a good understanding of different faiths and beliefs such as Hinduism, Christianity and Islam, through the curriculum and assemblies. Pupils value differences and demonstrate tolerance well. This is reflected in the very few incidents of racist or derogatory language. One pupil commented, 'Being different is not an issue here.'

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The school is a welcoming environment, where pupils are friendly, caring and polite. They have very positive attitudes towards their learning. Pupils behave well at playtimes and lunchtime. Pupils of all ages play together and there is a friendly atmosphere in the playground. Relationships and interactions between adults and pupils are overwhelmingly positive.
- An effective behaviour policy is used consistently across the school and by all staff. Behaviour records show that the number of recorded behaviour incidents has fallen dramatically since the last inspection. Pupils' and parents' views of behaviour are mostly positive.
- Pupils' attendance is above the national average. This demonstrates pupils' enjoyment of school. Leaders' actions to improve attendance further are comprehensive.
- In a small number of lessons some pupils lose concentration when teaching is not well matched to their needs. This slows down their progress.
- Pupils demonstrate respect towards each other and adults. Pupils have a mature understanding of what bullying is. They say that bullying rarely occurs but is dealt with quickly if it does. The school's information and the views of parents confirm this.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The variation in the number of pupils in each year group year on year and the high mobility of pupils in some classes make statistical patterns of pupils' outcomes fluctuate over time.
- The proportion of pupils who meet the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check is consistently above the national average. Those pupils who join the school during key stage 1 and/or who speak English as an additional language are

provided with the support they need to catch up with their peers by the end of Year 2.

- Pupils' outcomes in reading and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 were above age-related expectations in 2018. Almost half of these pupils reached the higher standards. In writing, however, a smaller-than-average number of pupils, particularly boys, attained well.
- The shortcomings in teaching over time left a legacy of underachievement for former pupils at the end of Year 6. Pupils' progress in mathematics in 2018 was well below that in other schools nationally. Pupils' attainment in writing was also low and had been so since the last inspection. Although leaders and teachers had quickly identified significant gaps in pupils' prior learning in English and mathematics, there was insufficient time to address all of these issues for pupils at the end of Year 6 in 2018.
- Pupils' current progress is improving significantly, as a result of highly effective teaching. More pupils than in the past are reaching the high standards in Year 6. Although some gaps in pupils' learning remain, most pupils have caught up and are much more confident in applying the fundamental aspects of spelling, grammar, punctuation and mathematics. This is even more evident and consistent across the rest of the school.
- Strong leadership of English and mathematics, combined with effective guidance and regular professional development, have advanced the expertise of staff. This has led to pupils' work being of a much higher standard than in the past. This was confirmed by the joint activities conducted by the inspector and the headteacher during the inspection. Work in pupils' books and that displayed throughout the school demonstrates that pupils are now making at least good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The small number of disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND make strong progress because staff provide effective interventions. Leaders identify clear starting points and track interventions closely so that they can measure small steps of progress and the impact of additional support.
- Although the proportion of pupils reaching the higher standards in English and mathematics is improving, this is not as evident across other subjects. There are still opportunities for the most able pupils to be provided with more suitably challenging tasks as soon as they are ready, in all subjects.

Early years provision

Good

- Children join Reception with knowledge, skills and understanding that are broadly typical for their age. This varies for the very small number of children who join the new Nursery provision. Outcomes for these small cohorts of children vary year on year, according to their needs. Consequently, there is variation in the proportion of children achieving a good level of development over time.
- Despite being new to teaching, the early years leader is making a very positive contribution to the middle leadership of the school. She has benefited greatly from the valuable specialist support provided by the local authority and leaders in other early years settings. The early years leader has quickly established effective policies,

procedures and protocols which have led to many improvements for children. The highly effective practice of the teaching assistant enhances provision further and ensures high-quality teaching and learning in the Nursery and Reception class.

- Children are happy and they show good concentration. They follow instructions and respond well to adult questions and when interacting with each other. Adults intervene appropriately and model language effectively to extend children's speaking skills. Children learn to take risks safely and adults encourage independence. Children are well prepared to make the transition into Year 1.
- Phonics is taught well in early years. Children show good concentration during the phonics session and when identifying 'tricky words'. Children are keen to learn through well-established and enjoyable routines which further their progress in early reading and writing.
- The stimulating environment is used well to encourage children to take part in a wide range of activities indoors and outside. Children were observed engaging in stimulating tasks linked to the story of 'The Sly Fox'. They were mesmerised when the teacher read letters from the fox informing them of what he had taken from their classroom. Skilful design of a range of tasks enthused children and captured their imagination in planning how to capture the fox. They were challenged well to develop their dexterity and early literacy and numeracy skills.
- The early years leader constantly audits and evaluates the impact of different areas on children's learning and development. For example, she recorded that the kitchen role-play area was not being used very often. She relocated it to provide more opportunities for children to use it when completing well-designed and imaginative tasks to further their development.
- High-quality resources are used well to support children's learning. For example, the teaching assistant made effective use of coloured blocks and number lines to enable children who find subtraction difficult to calculate carefully. She enabled children to persevere in mastering their recording of single digits. In another group, one child was very competent and encouraged to tackle more-challenging number problems much sooner than others. She asked the teacher for 'a really tricky one – the hardest one in the world!'
- The early years leader ensures that a range of assessment evidence is gathered, enabling her to have a clear understanding of the needs of individual children. Assessments are used to plan children's next steps in their learning. Thorough moderation activities through the local authority and external advisers ensure that assessments are accurate. The early years leader is keen for the most-able children to be identified sooner in order to ensure that they are challenged constantly. This would help them to exceed the good level of development of which they are clearly capable.
- Online 'learning journeys', which are unique to each child, demonstrate high-quality examples of their learning. Parents are provided with regular opportunities to display their children's learning from home. Parents value the strong partnership between home and school.
- Safeguarding is effective and arrangements for children's welfare are stringent.

School details

Unique reference number	121650
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	10087540

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	67
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Lovett
Headteacher	Gerard Eddy
Executive Headteacher	David Harrison
Telephone number	01439 788340
Website	http://www.st-benedicts.n-yorks.sch.uk/
Email address	headteacher@st-benedicts.n-yorks.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	29–30 March 2017

Information about this school

- St Benedict's Roman Catholic Primary School is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The number of pupils on roll has decreased since the last inspection.
- There are four mixed-age classes, catering for pupils from Nursery to Year 6.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is below that found nationally.
- An increasing proportion of pupils enter or leave the school at times other than those expected. A high proportion of these incoming pupils speak English as an additional

language.

- The headteacher joined the school in September 2018. He is also headteacher at St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School, Pickering.
- There are two recently qualified teachers who joined the school in September 2017.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in all classes. Most observations were undertaken jointly with the headteacher. The inspector also observed the pupils' conduct at playtimes.
- The inspector reviewed an extensive range of pupils' work in books and on display. She also listened to pupils read.
- The inspector reviewed a range of the school's documentation, including leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness and their plans for improvement. The inspector examined information about safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- The inspector held meetings with the executive headteacher, headteacher, senior and middle leaders, the leader responsible for pupils with SEND and the early years leader.
- The inspector met with five governors, including the chair of the governing body. Meetings were also held with a representative from the local authority and a representative of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Middlesbrough.
- The inspector met with a group of pupils from key stage 2 to discuss their opinions about the school and their learning. She also considered the 36 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.
- The inspector spoke to parents during the inspection. She also considered the 29 responses to the Ofsted online parent questionnaire, Parent View.
- The inspector spoke to members of staff and considered the seven responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- The inspector considered the range and quality of information provided on the school's website.

Inspection team

Cathy Morgan, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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