



# St Nicholas Catholic Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 108029  
**LEA** Leeds  
**Inspection number** 277884  
**Inspection dates** 21 June 2006 to 22 June 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Mr Peter Howard CfBT Lead Inspector

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Oakwood Lane
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Leeds
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11		West Yorkshire LS9 6QY
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0113 2930318
<b>Number on roll</b>	270	<b>Fax number</b>	0113 2930828
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr M Gunby
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	9 October 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr P Lawson

<b>Age group</b> 4 to 11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 21 June 2006 - 22 June 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 277884
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

This above average sized Catholic primary school serves a socially and economically disadvantaged inner city area of Leeds. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is low and very few pupils are learning English as a second language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average.

## **Key for inspection grades**

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 1**

The school judges its effectiveness to be outstanding and inspectors agree. From their first days in school, expectations of children are high, and the quality and standards in the Foundation Stage are outstanding. Starting with attainment that is well below average, pupils make excellent progress throughout school to achieve standards that are in line with national expectations by the end of Year 6. The school is extremely successful at promoting pupils' personal development and well-being. They are helped to develop into mature and confident individuals, with a good understanding of right and wrong. Pupils are taught to understand the value of learning and education as a powerful aid to their development as individuals. Teaching is well planned and organised, and makes very effective use of a wide range of teaching strategies to develop confident and effective learners. The curriculum offers pupils a wealth of experiences and is very successful at developing their basic skills and extending their knowledge and understanding of the world. Pupils benefit from very high levels of care and they receive excellent guidance from staff, which ensures that they can take advantage of the rich provision made by the school. The leadership team works very effectively to keep the school moving forward and ensures standards are maintained and improved. School leaders could sharpen the impact of strategies for improvement by making more effective use of data about attainment. Improvement since the last inspection and the school's capacity to improve further are outstanding. The school gives outstanding value for money.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Make more effective use of performance data when planning and evaluating the impact of strategies adopted to promote improvement.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

Most children enter the Foundation Stage with levels of attainment that are well below average. Children's skills in literacy and numeracy are particularly weak. They make strong progress throughout school and, by the end of Year 6, attain average standards. Inspectors agree with the school that this represents outstanding progress.

Children are given an excellent start in Reception, where teachers plan a wide range of

imaginative work which extends children's experience of the world and begins to develop their basic skills. This good provision helps children achieve well, although standards remain below average when they begin Year 1. This good progress is continued and, by the end of Year 2, pupils attain standards in reading, writing and

mathematics that are broadly average.

By the end of Year 6, overall standards in English, mathematics and science are securely in line with national expectations. This reflects consistently effective teaching and a positive school ethos, which supports and encourages learning. Pupils are set and achieve challenging targets throughout school. All groups of pupils, including those

with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who receive excellent support, make outstanding progress.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

The school promotes pupils' personal development and well-being very successfully. As a result, relationships in school are excellent and pupils develop into caring, mature and confident members of the school community. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Strong church links help pupils to understand the difference between right and wrong and develop respect and tolerance for others. The many opportunities offered by the school to experience other cultures help pupils to appreciate and value the differences between themselves and others. Pupils are very aware of the benefits of healthy eating and successfully take part in a wide variety of physical activities and competitive sport. They enjoy school greatly, particularly the wide range of enrichment activities that make school so interesting. Pupils are able to talk maturely about the value of a residential visit, reflecting on its impact in developing friendships, understanding and independence. They are well mannered and their behaviour is excellent. They work harmoniously in groups, sharing ideas and showing respect for the opinions of others. Pupils feel safe and valued and show high levels of care and consideration towards others. An enthusiastic and knowledgeable school council gives pupils an effective voice in school affairs. They are rightly proud of the many opportunities to contribute to the community, including raising funds for a range of good causes. The school's high expectations in regard to behaviour, teamwork and the value of learning prepare pupils well for the world of work. Attendance is satisfactory.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 1**

Teaching is outstanding. As a result, pupils work effectively in class and make very good progress. Excellent relationships between pupils and staff help pupils to feel happy and secure, and create a very positive climate for learning. Lessons are very well planned so that they are interesting, enjoyable, challenging and meet the pupils' learning needs. Teachers have good subject knowledge and make useful links between

subjects in their teaching. Many valuable opportunities are created for independent and investigative learning and this supports the pupils' development as confident and adventurous learners. Teachers use information and communication technology (ICT) confidently and this adds a further dimension to the effectiveness of their work and to the pupils' interest and enjoyment. Teachers know the pupils well and assess their progress regularly. They use this information accurately to plan the next steps in learning. Very effective grouping strategies for English and mathematics make a significant contribution to the success pupils achieve throughout school. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively and work in close partnership with the teachers during lessons. They display initiative and demonstrate a wide range of skills, giving all pupils, but particularly those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, excellent support.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 1**

The Foundation Stage curriculum is very well designed to meet the needs of children in their first year of formal education. A rich curriculum is provided throughout school, underpinned by first rate provision in English and mathematics. ICT is used to good effect to enhance learning across the subjects. The curriculum extends pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world, often through work which brings subjects together. For example, the recent and successful India topic week in Years 3 and 4 integrated art, geography, music and literature to create a vibrant programme of study. The personal, social, health and cultural educational programme is a major strength of the school. Excellent after-school activities, visits out of school, residential trips and visitors who come into school, increase pupils' enjoyment and provides extra opportunities for success in drama, music and sports. The Active Mark Gold accreditation reflects the school's commitment to promoting physical education. The school makes very good use of homework to extend pupils' learning beyond the school day.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The school cares extremely well for its pupils and this is an enabling force in their lives. Pupils have confidence in the adults in school. A parent remarked, 'all my child's needs are met, because the staff care'. The breakfast club provides a nurturing start to the school day. The curriculum teaches pupils about positive lifestyle choices and hazards. Systems for tracking pupils' progress are thorough and result in excellent academic guidance and support. As a result, pupils achieve very well. Their efforts are celebrated and rewarded through the school's positive approach to behaviour management, including the 'good work' assembly. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive very good support. Individual education plans, for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are very well designed and the school works in close partnership with parents. Vulnerable pupils are well cared for and the school works

actively with a range of outside agencies to ensure this. Procedures for child protection and health and safety are all in place.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

The headteacher has the confidence of staff, governors and parents, and sets out a clear path for continuing improvement through his imaginative vision of the school as a learning community. He has created a strong leadership team, which contributes to a powerful sense of shared purpose amongst the staff. They feel strongly the responsibility they have to the pupils in their care, and are fully focused on maintaining the very high quality evident in all aspects of the school's work. The school is aware of the importance of promoting pupils' personal development and with regards this, the school enjoys notable success. As a result, pupils who enter school with skills that are well below average make outstanding progress. The school has continued to make progress on a broad front since the last inspection, subjecting itself to outside scrutiny; for example, in the achievement of the Advanced Healthy Schools and Active Mark Gold awards. Performance is monitored carefully and leaders judge the school's strengths and areas for development successfully. However, the school does not make fully effective use of performance data when considering its strategies to promote improvement. Governance of the school is good. Governors are supportive, well informed, committed to and are effective in helping the school to move forward. Within this positive picture, better understanding of school performance data by governors is necessary to ensure they can play their part to the full. Parents and pupils are consulted about aspects of school life and feel that their views are listened to and acted upon. The school has overwhelmingly strong support from parents, who appreciate the many successes their children achieve in school.

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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	1	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	1	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	1	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	1	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	1	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1	NA

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

### **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you very much for welcoming us so warmly into your school. We appreciated your politeness and enjoyed your enthusiasm when you spoke about your teachers and the work you do.

What we liked most about your school:

- the excellent progress you make in your work and the way you so clearly enjoy learning
- your very good behaviour and the way in which everyone in your school is so kind and helpful
- how hard all the staff in school work, how well they look after you and keep you safe and how well they teach you so that you succeed in school
- your really good school council which helps the school to run well
- the part you take in a wide range of activities
- how very well your school is run; Mr Lawson and the staff know what to do to make sure that it is such a good school.

In fact, St. Nicholas is an outstanding school. To make it even better, we have asked your teachers to make more use of your test results when they plan improvements, so that they can go on helping you to learn even more.