



St George's Roman Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 121659
LEA North Yorkshire
Inspection number 281072
Inspection dates 12 October 2005 to 13 October 2005
Reporting inspector Mr Anthony Painter CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Overdale
School category	Voluntary aided		Eastfield
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Scarborough, North Yorkshire YO11 3RE
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01723 583535
Number on roll	96	Fax number	01723 586679
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Rev O'Connell
Date of previous inspection	20 September 1999	Headteacher	Mrs Veronica Kennedy

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Introduction

One additional inspector carried out the inspection.

Description of the school

This smaller than average school primarily serves children from the residential area around the school. The neighbourhood has high levels of disadvantage reflected in above average levels of children receiving free school meals. Few children come from minority ethnic groups or are learning English as an additional language. Overall attainment on entry to the nursery is around the level expected nationally although some children have restricted social and language skills. A new headteacher has just been appointed after three years of unsettled leadership.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school that provides sound value for money. The school's own evaluation that it is a good school is generous at the present stage. The new headteacher has introduced a number of effective initiatives. Some are showing the first signs of improvement whilst others have had insufficient time to be effective. Importantly, however, she has introduced a clear sense of vision of where the school needs to be improved and has created a strong sense of teamwork amongst staff. This forms the foundation of good capacity to improve.

The headteacher ensures that teachers set more challenging work that is leading to better learning and higher standards. However, further improvements in lesson planning are needed to challenge children consistently at all levels of ability. Children's overall achievement is satisfactory. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage where good provision helps many to achieve the expected levels, with a significant number achieving well in personal development. Good progress continues in Key Stage 1, where standards are generally above average. The most recent Year 6 results in 2005 show a return to just above average attainment, which is satisfactory achievement. Although children's writing is improving, teachers do not give children enough opportunities to use and improve their writing skills in a wide range of subjects. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified and supported well, and as a result, make good progress.

One of the most effective aspects of the school's provision lies in the strong care and support for children's personal development. Very strong relationships ensure many pupils develop very positive attitudes to school and display excellent behaviour. Overall, however, children's attendance is unsatisfactory, despite the school's good efforts.

What the school should do to improve further

- make better use of information about how well children are doing to plan work that gives good levels of challenge to those of different abilities
- give children more opportunities to use their developing writing skills in a wide range of subjects
- work with parents to improve pupils' attendance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The inspection confirms the school's evaluation that children's overall standards and achievement are satisfactory. Children joining the nursery quickly settle into school routines. Their good personal and social development helps them progress well. By the time they leave the Reception class, many have achieved securely the goals expected of children of this age. In Key Stage 1, good progress continues and results in the Year 2 tests have generally been above the national average.

Although Year 6 test results have varied from year to year, they have been around the national average in the last few years. Results in 2004 were significantly below average, with standards in writing, particular by boys, the greatest concern. A number of successful measures to improve standards were introduced that led to national test results in 2005 that were just above average overall. The school's records show that children make at least satisfactory progress with a good proportion achieving the higher Level 5 in English. Teachers are making better use of assessment and tracking systems to set higher and more challenging targets for 2006. Individual children's records suggest that rates of progress are increasing.

There are no significant differences in the achievement of children with different backgrounds and abilities. The few with English as an additional language quickly gain confidence and progress with the other children. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because their needs are accurately identified and good support is given.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The inspection confirms the school's evaluation that this is good. Children joining the nursery settle quickly because good concentration on their personal and social development means they soon feel part of the school. Children gain confidence as they get older and by Year 6, they are keen to learn, attentive and proud of their school. They show good ability to organise themselves, for example when running the school library. They keep themselves safe and healthy, are polite and their behaviour is excellent. Children know and like the good-behaviour systems and try very hard to gain rewards such as 'Golden Time'. Bullying and racism rarely occur and children are confident that any incidents will be quickly resolved.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, and children express their views and ideas with increasing confidence. They learn to work in teams through opportunities in lessons and in the new school council. They respond positively when given responsibilities. Good opportunities to work for charities help children recognise how they can contribute to the wider community. They develop awareness that everyone is equal regardless of background.

Although children show great enjoyment in school, attendance figures remain below average. Many absences result from parents taking holidays in school time. The school has introduced a broad range of approaches to monitor and encourage better attendance but these have not yet had a substantial impact.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, as evaluated by the school. Teachers establish very good relationships that encourage children to enjoy all aspects of their

learning. As a result, children pay good attention and are keen to contribute. Teachers' well-pitched questions encourage confident answers. Lessons run smoothly and most maintain good pace. Behaviour management is low key but very effective and there are very few times when teachers need to remind children how to behave. Teaching assistants have good understanding of their roles and give good support, particularly to lower-attaining children.

Teachers have recognised the need to make greater use of their knowledge of how well children are doing when setting targets and planning work. This has led to some recent improvements but the process is not yet complete. For example, although good attention has been paid to assessing and tracking children's progress in writing, this is not always applied to tasks in other subjects. Some work in subjects such as history and geography in Key Stage 2 is limited in scope and does not always give brighter children opportunities to perform at the higher levels.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

A good range of after school clubs is the strong element of what is, overall, a satisfactory curriculum. The clubs include games and keep-fit activities targeted at children of all ages. Teachers have worked effectively at improving planning and now make good use of national and other guidance. For example, the range of games taught in physical education has been expanded through local partnerships, although the school still has been unable to organise regular swimming lessons. Earlier weaknesses in provision for information and communication technology have been tackled successfully through new resources and staff training. Many children now show good skills and understanding. An increasing range of visits and visitors extend provision and promote learning. Older children, for example, are preparing for their forthcoming residential visit, while others talk excitedly about the recent work on 'mini-beasts'.

Teachers are beginning to make greater efforts to link children's learning in different subjects. However, there is more to do in giving children opportunities to apply and develop their writing skills across the curriculum to enhance their literacy as well as subject skills. This is why the curriculum is satisfactory rather than the school's view of good.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

This is a very safe and supporting school with a strong family atmosphere. One child explained why she likes the school, 'teachers care for you'. Child protection procedures meet statutory requirements; rigorous risk assessments and appropriate security ensure that children are safe. Teachers and other adults in school know the children very well, sensitively monitoring and supporting their personal development. A good programme for health education enables children to know how to stay fit. They are also taught simple methods of remaining safe and why substances such as tobacco and alcohol are dangerous.

New strategies to monitor academic progress are increasingly aiding teachers' planning although information is not used fully effectively. Children's identified targets are becoming useful in helping them to see what they need to do to improve. There are good procedures to identify children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Parents of these children are fully involved in their child's programme and outside agencies are used well to support the school's work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school judged leadership and management as good but the inspection finds it satisfactory. Although many positive actions have been taken recently, there has been too little opportunity for them to make a significant impact. After a significant period of instability in leadership, the new headteacher has introduced a good vision for improvement. She has established effective working relationships with staff and parents that form a good foundation for further improvements. Already some developments, such a widening the range of clubs and other improvements to the curriculum, are having a positive effect.

The school's self-evaluation generally identifies the right priorities. Development planning is precise and detailed. Subject coordinators' monitoring roles are also being extended, further contributing to stronger awareness and agreement amongst staff of what needs to be improved. Parents and children have had opportunities to contribute their own views of the school. There is a strong commitment to raising standards and ensuring all children make good progress.

Many members of the governing body are also new but show interest and enthusiasm. They have recently improved their roles to include overseeing subjects and observing teaching in order to strengthen their ability to question and support the school. As a result, they have greater understanding of the challenges facing the 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>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	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

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	4	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
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
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
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
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
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
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
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 me when I recently visited your school. I was most impressed with your extremely good behaviour and the way you were all so polite and friendly. I liked the way you all worked and played together well and enjoyed how proudly you showed me your work.

I was particularly pleased with the ways your teachers and other staff have worked together so successfully to make sure that you are safe and well cared for. They work hard and also provide lots of things for you to do after school. Your teachers' very good relationships with you all help lessons to go smoothly and encourage you to pay good attention. You certainly showed great enthusiasm and enjoyment of all your lessons and the many other activities you took part in.

In order to help you do even better, I have asked the teachers to make sure they use all the things they know about you when planning lessons. That way they can make sure that the work each of you is given is not too hard or too easy. I would also like them to make sure that you have lots of chances to write about what you are learning in different subjects. I am sure that they will make a good job of it. You and your parents will need to make sure that you all attend well to make the best use of the opportunities.

I very much enjoyed talking with you and your teachers and wish you and the school the very best for the future.