

St Michael and All Angels Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106641
Local Authority	Barnsley
Inspection number	287572
Inspection date	3 July 2007
Reporting inspector	Philip Jarrett HMI

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	142
School	
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	Mr Peter Davison
Date of previous school inspection	26 February 2001
School address	Stonyford Road Wombwell Barnsley South Yorkshire S73 8AF
Telephone number	01226 752120
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Michael and All Angels Catholic Primary School is a small school with five mixed-age classes. Around one third of the pupils come from Catholic families. The number of pupils eligible to receive free school meals is average. Most pupils are of White British heritage. However, the school also receives a significant minority of pupils from a local Traveller community as well as a few children recently arrived from Eastern Europe. The proportion of pupils identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average, although four pupils currently have statements of special educational needs. Attainment on entry to the school is below average. The school has received a number of awards including the bronze Healthy Schools Award and the Active Mark for provision in physical education. The school is due to enter a federation with two other local Catholic primaries in September 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

St Michael and All Angels Catholic Primary School is a good school that has improved over recent years. It provides a very caring environment where all pupils are valued. The senior leaders know the school well and have clear plans for further improvement.

When pupils enter the school, many of them have below average attainment, especially in aspects of English. They make good progress in the Reception class and this experience provides a secure foundation for later learning. Good achievement is sustained across the school and this means that standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are roughly average. Pupils do better in mathematics than English. Unlike the national picture, boys frequently make better progress than girls. Most groups of pupils progress well, although the school is right to believe that more pupils should be achieving the higher Level 5 at the age of 11 in the national tests.

This good progress reflects effective teaching. Pupils enjoy lessons and try hard to do their best. Teachers plan well for classes with pupils of more than one age group and work effectively with classroom assistants. They manage learning well and lessons observed were of good quality. Pupils' progress is also the result of high standards of care, guidance and support. This is a happy school. Pupils value the close sense of community which makes them feel safe and secure. They get on well with each other, and minority groups of pupils, such as children from the Traveller community and pupils for whom English is an additional language, are fully integrated within the school. One parent summed up the positive ethos in the school by saying that 'you are made to feel that your child is special'.

The curriculum has improved since the previous inspection. The range of extra-curricular activities has been extended and is now good. The experiences of the Traveller children and pupils who are not Catholic are used well to broaden pupils' understanding of others and their cultural development. As a result, pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They behave very well and show mutual respect and tolerance. Pupils form good relationships and develop self-esteem. Pupils like school although attendance remains below average; the school is working closely with parents in order to improve this.

The school is well led by the headteacher and good team work involving all staff means that there is a clear sense of direction. The school has improved its tracking of pupils' progress and individual pupils are supported well. However, the performance data is not used effectively to review the achievement of groups over time. For instance, does the good performance of boys suggest that more should be done to raise girls' standards? The school's leaders know its strengths and weaknesses well. They have recognised that progress in English should be as good as in mathematics. One sign of the school's good capacity for further improvement lies in the effective way it is tackling this challenge and the evidence that this is already having a positive impact.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English and improve the achievement of the most able pupils.
- Analyse performance data more effectively in order to identify possible trends in achievement over time by particular groups of pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards vary significantly from year to year because of the different abilities of the small numbers of pupils involved. For example, results at the end of Key Stage 1 were above average last year and have improved steadily over the past few years while standards dipped at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2006 to below average. However, results over time show that standards are in line with the national average.

Attainment on entry to the school is below average, especially in reading and writing. Overall, pupils achieve well as they move through the school. They make a good start in the Foundation Stage and, as a result, standards on entry to Year 1 are close to average. In recent years, pupils have achieved particularly well in mathematics. Progress in English has been less marked but remains satisfactory. Boys make particularly good progress and often better than girls; this is different to the national trend. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also do well, as confirmed by several parental comments. However, the school believes that more pupils should achieve the higher levels at the end of Key Stage 2 and current results confirm this to be correct.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils learn a great deal about getting on well with others in school. They behave very well and show tolerance and understanding. Newcomers to the school are quickly and well integrated. Pupils are polite and courteous. Parents confirm that pupils enjoy coming to school and many pupils are keen to join in with activities after school. Despite this, attendance is slightly below average although the school works hard to remind all parents about the importance of their children being in school.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. In particular, pupils have an improved understanding of other cultures, particularly by learning from the experience of Traveller children in school together with pupils from different religions. Pupils take part in a wide range of healthy activities and have a good understanding of the importance of exercise and a healthy diet. They feel safe and secure in school. Pupils make a good contribution to decision making in the school through the school council and feel that their views are taken into account. By the time they reach Year 6, many of the pupils have become confident and developed the skills necessary for the next stage in their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress as a result of effective teaching. In lessons observed, relationships were very good and teachers managed classes well. Pupils are keen to learn. Teaching assistants are used effectively both to support individual pupils and to work with small groups. Planning is thorough and teachers work hard to meet the needs of pupils from the different year groups. The most effective teachers make good use of quality, extended texts and use their own writing as a model for pupils. Discussion with older pupils revealed that they have a good understanding of how to improve their work in English and mathematics as a result of the school's policy on

target setting. However, teachers' marking does not always reflect the targets chosen and there is too little feedback to pupils about the next steps in their learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum emphasises the core subjects and religious education. However, it is not a narrow curriculum. The curriculum successfully promotes the enjoyment of most pupils and enables them to make good progress. The school has identified areas for development, including information and communication technology and a foreign language. The school is also seeking to improve provision for English, for instance through the use of drama and more focus on speaking and listening. Early indications are that this has had a positive impact on pupils' learning. The curriculum has been extended to provide for the increasingly wide range of pupils from other religions and backgrounds. The school runs a Traveller Week in order to develop understanding of their culture and recent visits to the school included one by an African musician and storyteller. Pupils also benefit from links with secondary schools that provide additional support in areas including sport and technology. The school provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities including sport, music, gardening and Spanish; these make a positive contribution to pupils' personal and social development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school is effective in creating a close and caring community where pupils feel valued. Several parents wrote about the good quality individual support provided for their children. Staff know all pupils well as individuals and as a result pupils feel that they can discuss problems with others. The pupils appreciate the close community where they feel safe and well cared for. The school seeks to support both parents and children through measures including a weekly family learning programme and counselling services provided through the diocese. The needs of all groups of learners are well catered for. The school is popular with the local Traveller community and pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good support. Parents feel part of the school and are given opportunities to express their views and to contribute to the school improvement plan. Provision for health and safety is good. For instance, the school has provided a wider range of structured lunchtime activities for pupils, and teachers are increasingly using aerobic exercises to prepare pupils for their work. The appropriate safeguarding procedures are all in place.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school's leadership has successfully overseen improvements since the previous inspection. In this small school, all teachers take responsibility for important areas of school life. Staff work well together and have created a strong and inclusive ethos for learning. The headteacher is well respected, liked by parents and pupils, and provides good leadership. The school's leaders have a good understanding of strengths and weaknesses. The improvement plan accurately identifies current priorities and provides a clear sense of direction, although some of the criteria by which it judges success are too vague. Monitoring and evaluation are good because of the effective team work and systematic reviews of provision through lesson observations and work sampling. Pupils' progress is tracked carefully through regular assessments as well as the use

of national and other tests. This enables the school to identify individual pupils at risk of under-achieving and to take action. The school has access to a wide range of performance data but does not yet use this effectively enough to analyse any possible trends in the achievement of groups over time. The governing body provides good support and has a clear understanding of future priorities. The school provides good value for money.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
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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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Inspection of St Michael and All Angels Catholic Primary School, Barnsley, S73 8AF

Thank you very much for making me so welcome when I visited your school recently. I enjoyed talking to you. I thought you were very well behaved and polite.

I think that your school is a good one. This is also what many of you and your parents said to me. You told me that you like coming to school and enjoy lessons. You feel safe in school and the staff know you and care for you well. This is shown by the fact that newcomers are quickly welcomed into the school and soon make friends. You all get on well together and like being in a small and close community.

Teaching is good and this enables you to make good progress, especially in mathematics. You know the importance of taking regular exercise and eating healthily. The school helps you with this. For instance, you told me how much better the lunch time break is now that you have a number of supervised activities to choose. The school also provides a good number of out-of-lesson clubs including gardening, sport and music.

The headteacher and his staff are doing a good job and they have plans to make things even better. For example, pupils do better in mathematics than English and I have asked the school to try to improve standards in English and to help the most able pupils especially to do as well as they can. The school has also agreed to look more carefully at all the test results in order to see how well different groups of pupils perform over time.