



St Columba's Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 107326
Local Authority Bradford
Inspection number 287801
Inspection dates 15–16 November 2006
Reporting inspector Jim Griffin

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Tong Street
School category	Voluntary aided		Dudley Hill, Bradford
Age range of pupils	3–11		West Yorkshire BD4 9PY
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01274 681961
Number on roll (school)	318	Fax number	01274 688880
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Bob Burton
		Headteacher	Mr P Spillane
Date of previous school inspection	30 April 2001		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3–11	15–16 November 2006	287801

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This large school is situated in an area with high levels of social and economic deprivation. Around two fifths of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is over twice the national average. Most pupils are of White British heritage. A few are of African, Indian, Pakistani or mixed backgrounds. A few pupils of East European backgrounds do not have English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is around twice the national average. The school takes in a higher than average proportion of pupils entering the school other than at the usual time, mainly between Years 3 and 6.

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, which provides good care for its pupils. While the inspectors agree with the school's judgement of its effectiveness as satisfactory, the school has been too generous in its judgement of pupils' personal development and the capacity for improvement. Inconsistencies in the school's approach to leadership and management and to teaching and learning affect pupils' progress and are currently the major barrier to further improvement.

Pupils learn in a calm, supportive and encouraging environment, centred on good relationships between adults and pupils. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. The pupils are confident and courteous when talking to adults. They have good attitudes to work, and most behave well. A small minority with behaviour difficulties are effectively supported. The pupils know about the importance of healthy eating, exercise and staying safe to make them fit and happy. However, attendance is below average. Parents are positive about what the school provides and report that staff are approachable and helpful when difficulties arise. As a result, the sizeable numbers of pupils who join at other than the beginning of the year settle quickly.

Children start Nursery with skills and knowledge that are exceptionally low. They make good progress throughout the Foundation Stage due to good curriculum provision and teaching which involves children in stimulating activities and promotes their learning well in readiness for Key Stage 1. The curriculum for Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory with strong teaching of early reading skills. However, pupils' personal, social and health education and citizenship are not consistently well provided for in all classes. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Despite a sizeable amount of good teaching, progress in later years is satisfactory rather than good. Consequently, pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall and standards are below average in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. The care, guidance and support of pupils is good. The quality of pastoral care is good. However, there is insufficient academic guidance to help a small proportion of pupils improve their work.

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. There are able managers at all levels but there has been a lack of clear leadership at a strategic level. Managers work within their own area and, although some good practice has been shared, significant work still needs to be done to ensure its consistent application. Managers see the headteacher as having the prime responsibility for raising pupils' achievement, while they concentrate on matters such as the introduction of curriculum changes. Pupils' progress is being tracked but the information is not used consistently to help plan the next learning steps. There is a substantial amount of monitoring of lessons; however, insufficient attention is paid to pupils' learning and progress. The budget is carefully managed, but given that most key aspects of the school are satisfactory, the value for money provided by the school is currently satisfactory. Governance is adequate. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the senior leadership team's effectiveness in raising standards.
- Ensure that there is consistently good provision in leadership and management, and teaching and learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children enter Nursery with knowledge and skills that are extremely low, particularly in their communication, language, social and mathematical skills. They achieve well and, by the time they leave Reception, most reach, or are very near the early learning goals. In Years 1 and 2 pupils make satisfactory progress although standards are well below the national expectation in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. In Years 3 to 6, pupils continue to make satisfactory progress. There has been some small improvement in 2006 from the 2005 national test results, although by the end of Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science are below average. The school generally meets its appropriately challenging Year 6 targets in English and mathematics.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are satisfactory. Their spiritual and moral development is good because the staff and pupils live the Catholic Mission Statement. Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Most pupils enjoy school and have good attitudes to learning in lessons. They listen well, work calmly in pairs from a young age and are keen to complete set work. Pupils behave well in class and teachers deal well with the few instances of misbehaviour. Pupils know how to eat healthily and to stay safe. Pupils have a few responsibilities in school and make a satisfactory contribution to the school and wider communities. They are keen to start the planned school council which they feel will enable them to have a greater say in school life. Pupils make satisfactory progress in developing skills that will help them in later life. Pupils' attendance is below the national average as a minority have a significant level of absence. The school systematically applies the full range of measures to promote attendance and address absence, and where needed draws on support from the Education Welfare Service. In spite of this, a minority of parents do not make sure that their children come to school regularly.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good and children make good progress. However, although there are a number of good features in the teaching across the rest of the school, there is too much which is inconsistent. For example, in some lessons teachers make sure that pupils know what it is they are going to learn, but in others this is less clear. In many lessons, teachers plan work that builds on what the pupils know, but in others pupils are insufficiently challenged and do not make sufficient progress. Less able pupils receive good quality help from the learning support assistants. Teachers often make good use of time at the end of lessons to help pupils to sum up what they have learned and to prepare them for the next steps in their learning. In a few cases, this part of the lesson is too short and little is achieved. The quality of marking of pupils' work is similarly inconsistent. Some helps the pupil know what to do to improve, but some lacks constructive comment.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum that strikes an appropriate balance between the provision of basic skills and more creative and imaginative work. The introduction of early phonics is a good example of modifying the curriculum to meet the needs of pupils. Specialist staff visit the school to teach music and physical education and make a good contribution to pupils' personal development. The school provides an adequate number of out-of-school activities, including a thriving breakfast club. Residential and local visits are an additional dimension that is highly valued by pupils. For example, the local visits have included a Sikh temple and the local synagogue, widening pupils' appreciation of other faiths and cultures. The school has close links with its nearby church and the local services. There is satisfactory provision for pupils' personal, social, and health education and citizenship, but this provision is not consistently well developed across the school. The pupil voice is less developed than normal as the school council is not yet fully operational. The school provides a satisfactory curriculum for pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, providing individual work programmes that are regularly reviewed and adjusted.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of care, guidance and support is good, particularly the pastoral care of pupils. Relationships between staff and pupils are good, creating a secure and positive learning atmosphere. The personal, social and health education programme supports pupils in understanding how to be healthy and to avoid potential hazards. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is generally good in classes. The

school is effectively supporting the growing number of pupils of East European origins. Pupils that join during term times tend to settle quickly. Statutory requirements for child protection and safeguarding are in place. While the school effectively gauges pupils' progress on a regular basis, there is some variance between classes in how this information is shared with pupils to help them improve their work. As a result, not all pupils have a good understanding for their age of what they are learning and what they need to do to improve, particularly in English and mathematics.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. There are some good elements such as the care provided for pupils and some important changes have been made to the curriculum, such as introducing a phonics scheme to promote successful early reading and access to computers is greatly improved since the previous inspection. There are many pockets of good practice but leaders have not focused enough on ensuring that this is drawn together and spread across the school.

Following a recent period of significant change in staffing, a new leadership team is now in place. Team leaders provide good role models for their teams on a daily basis. However, their job descriptions are essentially a list of tasks without sufficient reference to strategies to raise pupils' achievement and promote consistency in practice and good teamwork across the school. The school improvement plan, while identifying most of the right priorities, does not clearly make the raising of pupils' progress its central thrust.

There are clear arrangements to track pupils' progress but this information is not yet used as effectively as it could be to assess the overall progress of cohorts and groups, to recognise and spread good practice or to predict future performance. There is a significant amount of lesson observation but this does not yet concentrate consistently enough on the learning and progress of pupils. Governors have a good knowledge of the school's strengths and most of the areas for improvement. They provide a good level of support for leaders but have not been insistent enough on making the raising of pupils' progress the school's key priority.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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?	3
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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
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.

Leadership and management

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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and for being so friendly and helpful. It was very useful to hear how much you like your school. We really enjoyed our visit and want to share with you what we discovered. We think you go to a satisfactory school, with some things that are good about it.

What we liked most about your school.

- You get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage.
- The school cares well for you, based on treating all of you as individuals.
- You are happy and feel safe in school.
- Most of you behave well and enjoy lessons, trips, visits and clubs.
- Your parents and carers are pleased that you come to this school.

What we have asked your school to do now.

- Make senior staff clearer about how their jobs can best help to improve your learning.
- Get everybody across the school to improve your learning based on sharing agreed good practice.

Keep working hard and making the most of your time in school. We wish you every success in the future.