



Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Better
education
and care

Unique Reference Number 108035
Local Authority Leeds
Inspection number 288006
Inspection dates 22–23 November 2006
Reporting inspector Joyce Taylor

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	292 Harrogate Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Leeds
Age range of pupils	5–11		West Yorkshire LS17 6SX
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0113 2930294
Number on roll (school)	401	Fax number	0113 2930294
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Rev Michael Leahy
		Headteacher	Mr Shaun Dudgeon
Date of previous school inspection	20 May 2002		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
5–11	22–23 November 2006	288006

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

About half the pupils from this large school come from the local area, with the rest, a rising proportion, coming from further afield. Overall, pupils come from areas of social and economic advantage. Fewer pupils than average have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the proportion having statements of special educational need is lower than in most schools. All pupils speak English as their first language.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Primary School provides a satisfactory standard of education overall for its pupils. This judgement matches the school's self-evaluation. The school provides satisfactory value for money. It is extremely calm and the pupils' behaviour is exemplary. As a result, pupils feel safe and secure and settle well to their work. Parents are particularly pleased with the way their children are developing as confident and enthusiastic individuals and the pupils say they are very happy in school. Care, guidance and support of the pupils are good and staff know pupils well.

Most children start in Reception with levels of attainment that are better than those expected for their age in aspects of communication, language and literacy. There is no overview of their attainment on arrival in other areas of learning so their progress as a group during the Foundation Stage cannot be tracked. On entry to Year 1, most children reach standards that are above those expected nationally for children this age. Well above average standards are reached at the end of Years 2 and 6 and the earlier, below average, achievement recorded for 2004 and 2005 has now been improved to a satisfactory level. The overall progress of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is not monitored centrally and their learning targets are not always specifically defined or appropriately updated to provide a school overview of their progress. Several parents of these pupils express concern that some senior staff cannot provide helpful responses to their enquiries about their child's progress.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. There is good, lively teaching in some lessons where pupils are involved in their own learning through group work or discussions. New style, recently developed assessments of pupils' work in Years 1 to 6 are beginning to contribute to improvements in their achievement. As yet, this assessment information is not always used well enough to ensure that pupils of different abilities make the best progress. As a result, by the time they leave Year 2 and Year 6, progress has still not been fast enough for some of the more able pupils who are sometimes set work that is too easy for them.

The curriculum is good. The school has worked hard to broaden pupils' learning opportunities through, for example, a wide range of visits and providing good quality learning opportunities which show the links between subjects. This ensures that pupils usually enjoy their lessons and they readily identify practical activities in subjects such as science or information and communication technology (ICT) as being the most fun. This level of enjoyment contributes to their high standards.

Pupils' personal development is good with some outstanding features. Older pupils take responsibility very seriously and appreciate the significance of their roles. One said, 'I think being first aid monitor is very important because I look after anyone who gets hurt at playtime.' The pupils' overall understanding of healthy lifestyles is extremely good and they talk confidently about healthy eating and the need for regular exercise.

The headteacher and senior staff provide satisfactory leadership. They have clear plans for the school's improvement and in anticipation have judged several aspects to be

higher than inspection findings. Their effective influence is already evident in the outstanding aspects of pupils' personal development. Monitoring pupils' achievement is now their focus. Evidence of underachievement became apparent in English, mathematics and science in 2003. Particular concerns over standards in science, which dipped in 2002 to average, led to a strong whole-school focus for improvement in the subject, leading to a rise to well above average standards by 2005. The new assessment strategies were implemented in 2005 to identify the rate of progress in writing and numeracy. Leaders and managers have implemented strategies to ensure that pupils make better progress and these have resulted in improved achievement. Strong teamwork is a significant factor in the school's satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make better use of assessment information to set challenging targets and match work more precisely to pupils' needs in order to raise achievement, particularly for the most able.
- Monitor the overall progress of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to ensure the school has a clear picture of the effectiveness of its provision and is in a position to reassure parents their children are doing as well as they can.
- Assess children's standards of attainment when they arrive in Reception and monitor their progress as they move through the Foundation Stage to ensure they achieve well.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Because test results have traditionally been good the school had initially failed to spot that some pupils, particularly the more able, were not always achieving as well as they should. The recently introduced tracking system is helping to highlight areas of underachievement and the school is beginning to remedy weaknesses. In 2006, Year 6 pupils' well above average standards indicated that their achievement was now satisfactory overall. However, assessment information is not yet used well enough to set challenging targets for all and pupils' ability is still sometimes underestimated. The school has worked hard to improve achievement in science and it is now satisfactory for most pupils. There is no clear picture of achievement and standards during children's time in the Foundation Stage or for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This means that the school cannot easily monitor how well they are doing. One or two pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, who were tracked during the inspection, have made good progress according to the records kept by their individual support assistants.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. They show very good appreciation of the needs and well-being of others, for example, by ensuring everyone has a friend at break time. Very good links with the parish and opportunities for pupils to participate in community activities, such as singing to residents in a hospice, enhance pupils' social awareness. Their generosity in raising substantial funds for charities and finding out about different parts of the world equips them very well to become effective young citizens. Pupils say bullying is rare and they have every confidence that the adults working with them keep them safe. Attendance is good. Pupils appreciate the school's very positive ethos which contributes to their thoughtful and polite responses to each other and the adults with whom they work. Older pupils have a good range of key skills and are well prepared for the next stage in their learning. They contribute to making the school an even better place to be, for example, securing the building of the Trim Trail. Because of a lack of opportunity, pupils do not always sufficiently develop the skills of self-analysis and teamwork required for later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Very good relationships are a feature in all lessons and contribute to pupils' excellent behaviour and a good atmosphere for learning. Classrooms are bright and well organised. The improvements in the teaching of science mean that lessons are now well planned to develop pupils' skills and knowledge effectively. Here pupils are actively involved in their learning and teachers' questions challenge the pupils to think things out for themselves. This sharper focus has already impacted on standards and achievement in the subject. In all classes, teachers share the aims of the lessons with pupils so they know what they will be learning. Although in some lessons the pace of learning is good, it is not consistently so across the school. In some cases pupils' progress, especially of the more able, remains too slow because the work set is not sufficiently matched to their needs. In Reception, teaching and learning is satisfactory. However, the outdoor area is underdeveloped and pupils do not always get full benefit from outdoor learning, particularly in extending their physical skills in a safe environment.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Good links between subjects such as ICT, English and history support learning effectively and ensure pupils know how to use their basic skills to good effect. Learning is extended by a good range of visits to places of interest. A residential visit for Year 5 to Weardale, for example, is a highlight for pupils and enhances their personal development alongside their learning in curricular subjects. Visitors and special events

such as 'Africa week' promote pupils' cultural development well and effectively contribute to the good standards pupils reach. Older pupils learn Spanish and French in preparation for the next phase in their education. A particular strength is in the provision for sport, and pupils achieve good success in competitions against other schools. Good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education and citizenship ensures they are fully aware of health matters, including the dangers of smoking and substance abuse. Curricular planning sometimes reflects a lack of challenge for more able pupils to ensure that they achieve as well as they should.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Many parents report that the school has a lovely caring environment and are overwhelmingly appreciative of the level of care provided for their children. Pupils are happy in school and are confident that an adult would help them if they have any difficulties. Arrangements for child protection are in place and procedures for safeguarding pupils meet current government requirements. Health and safety and risk assessment procedures promote a safe environment. The induction arrangements for children entering the Reception class are good and help them settle quickly into school life. Similarly, pupils are helped to make the transfer to the next stage of their education as smoothly as possible. The good individual support that pupils with very specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive contributes well to their attitudes to learning. However, the monitoring of the progress these pupils make is not sharp enough.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher and senior staff are working hard to improve achievement. They have already begun to improve achievement in science and pupils, who are now working at a higher level than a few years ago, identify this subject as enjoyable. Leaders and managers now recognise the necessity to rigorously monitor pupils' progress in order to improve their achievement. Early indications are that the more rigorous checks on how well pupils are progressing are resulting in improvement in this area. Subject leaders have begun to monitor lessons and to advise teachers about how to accelerate pupils' progress, but the impact of this is, as yet, unclear.

The strong team spirit means most staff are very willing to take on new initiatives and they work hard to secure improvements. Parents are very appreciative of the way the school consults them, for example, when considering changes. The school has strong links with the local community, particularly the church. Governance is satisfactory and governors are beginning to seek the outcomes of the school's spending.

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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	3
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	2
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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?	3
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.

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	3
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 your help when we visited your school. We very much enjoyed watching you work and talking with you in your classes and around school. Your school provides satisfactory opportunities for you to learn and it takes good care of you. You work hard in lessons and reach good standards but some of you could do even better. You have some fun times and you show how much you like each other and take care of your friends. We were particularly impressed with your extremely good behaviour. You told us you are happy and your parents are particularly pleased you come to this school.

We have asked your headteacher and staff to carry on with their hard work and we suggest three ways we think will improve your school even further.

- Make sure teachers know exactly how well you are doing and plan work that ensures you move forward quickly in your learning and that some of you work at more difficult tasks than the rest of the class.
- Make sure that progress reports for those of you who receive extra help are kept up to date.
- Make sure there is a clear record of how well Reception children are doing when they first arrive and during their first year in school.

You are enthusiastic about your school and we hope you carry on enjoying lessons and helping your teachers keep Immaculate Heart of Mary Primary School a happy and successful place to learn.