



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Harrogate

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 121643
Local Authority North Yorkshire
Inspection number 292188
Inspection dates 8–9 January 2007
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	Coppice Rise
School category	Voluntary aided		Harrogate
Age range of pupils	4–11		North Yorkshire HG1 2DP
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01423 562650
Number on roll (school)	167	Fax number	01423 567545
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Mike Heelan
		Headteacher	Mrs Julie Muddiman
Date of previous school inspection	19 March 2001		

Age group 4–11	Inspection dates 8–9 January 2007	Inspection number 292188
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This smaller than average primary school serves mostly Catholic families in the local and wider community. There has been a decline in pupil numbers in recent years, resulting in mixed age classes in Years 3 to 6. Very few pupils are entitled to free school meals. Almost all children are from White British backgrounds. There are a few pupils of Polish, Indian or Portuguese backgrounds, some of whom do not have English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average overall. The school has both Investors in People and Healthy School awards. The school has emerged from a period of several changes in its leadership with the appointment of a new headteacher in September 2006.

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 with good features in the provision for Foundation Stage children and in pupils' personal development. Overall improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory. The quality of the school's self-evaluation is satisfactory. It provides satisfactory value for money.

The school is making a sound recovery from an unsettled period in its leadership. The recovery started in the previous school year under the leadership of two acting headteachers and since then the appointment of the new headteacher has been pivotal. She has improved staff morale and provides a clear sense of direction while adopting a calm, sensible approach to change. However, the wider impact and consequences of the many changes are still being worked through and partially account for parents' mixed views at present. The senior leadership team has not yet developed the range of skills needed in key areas to drive forward improvement most effectively. The governing body and the local authority have provided an important strategic overview and coherent support throughout the instability in leadership. Overall, leadership and management are satisfactory.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Attendance is excellent and pupils have very good attitudes to learning in lessons. They learn in a calm and supportive environment, centred on good relationships. Their behaviour is good. Younger pupils generally enjoy school but some older ones, especially the more able, say that their enjoyment is limited when lessons do not provide them with sufficient interest and challenge. The small minority of pupils with social and emotional difficulties are effectively supported. An unusually high proportion of pupils are strikingly insightful, articulate and confident when talking to adults. Pupils know about the importance of healthy eating, exercise and staying safe in making them fit, happy and secure. Parents place a high value on education and are particularly keen and clear about the importance of their children doing well in a successful school.

Pupils' achievement overall is satisfactory. Children start in the Reception class with skills and knowledge that are typical for their age. They make good progress in all areas of learning while in Reception. This is because good curriculum provision and teaching focuses on involving children in stimulating activities and promotes their learning well. Pupils' progress in Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory, as both teaching and the curriculum are satisfactory for these pupils. Standards are broadly average overall by the end of Year 6. However, there is considerable variation in the progress made in different subjects. Progress is best in English but much slower in mathematics and science, where teaching fails to provide sufficient challenge for a substantial minority of more able pupils. Teaching in Years 1 to 6 generally does not give enough planned attention and emphasis to the things that are important to ensure that pupils learn well. The care, guidance and support of pupils are satisfactory. While staff take good pastoral care of the pupils, there is not yet enough systematic academic guidance to help pupils improve their work.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching in Years 1 to 6 so that all pupils learn effectively and make better progress.
- Improve the achievement of the more able pupils, particularly in mathematics and science.
- Improve the quality of academic guidance to help pupils improve their work.
- Develop the skills of the senior leadership team so that all key tasks to promote school improvement are carried out effectively.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children enter the Reception class with knowledge and skills that are broadly in line with those expected for their age. They enjoy school and make good gains in all areas of learning. In Years 1 and 2 pupils make satisfactory progress. Standards are usually broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. Overall standards at the end of Year 2 have shown no particular trend in recent years but those in reading tend to be somewhat higher than in writing or mathematics.

In Years 3 to 6, pupils continue to make satisfactory progress. By the end of Year 6, standards are broadly average. Standards and progress are best in English. Too few pupils gain the higher levels, in mathematics and in science especially, because there is not enough planned and consistent challenge in the work they are set. Recent results and the standards seen in Year 6 have recovered to the levels prior to the period of instability. The school broadly meets its appropriately challenging targets at the expected level in English and mathematics but misses its higher-level targets by some margin in mathematics.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils behave well and are keen to come to school. Their attendance is outstanding. Older pupils readily take on responsibilities, making sure that younger ones are well cared for at break times. They are confident that there is no bullying and that if any child felt worried they would always have someone to turn to. Pupils have very good attitudes to work. They are lively and articulate, eager to learn and impatient when they feel they 'learn about the same old things in mathematics'. Their enjoyment of school, therefore, is mixed as several feel that 'those who understand more quickly should do different work'. The school council is effective and pupils believe that they are listened to but that 'changes do not always happen'. Pupils understand why they should lead healthy lives and they participate enthusiastically in a good range of extra-curricular sporting activities. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good with particular strengths in pupils' support for charitable organisations, both in the parish and overseas. Pupils are well placed in terms of their future economic

well-being because of their competent literacy and numeracy skills and because their social development gives them confidence and a strong sense of fair play.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Throughout the school, teachers maintain good relationships with their pupils. As a result, lessons are good-humoured and pupils listen attentively and are willing to learn. Good teaching in the Reception class ensures that children learn well as they busy themselves on well planned activities. Imaginative touches stimulate children's curiosity and thirst for learning. In Years 1 to 6, teaching is predominantly satisfactory but teachers' planning does not pay enough attention to the features that lead to good learning. For example, in some lessons, teachers' demonstrations last rather too long and this cuts down on the time when pupils can learn through using and applying what they have been taught. In too many lessons, the set work does not provide enough challenge, especially for the more able pupils. As a result, they do not do as well as they could. However, when teaching is challenging, these pupils work accurately and at speed, demonstrating a quick understanding and high levels of concentration. Marking is satisfactory with effective comments about how pupils could improve their work, but there are weaknesses in teachers' varied expectations of presentation and in the amount of work pupils are expected to do.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum makes satisfactory provision for all subjects of the National Curriculum with appropriate emphasis on the skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). There are strengths in the provision for personal, social, health and citizenship education and in the good range of extra-curricular activities, including residential visits for older pupils. An outstanding feature is the link with a school in Zambia, which successfully expands pupils' cultural awareness. The curriculum has recently been adapted to suit the needs of mixed age junior classes but this is not yet fully effective. There are plans to link subjects more creatively so as to extend the use of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in other subjects and give the more able pupils more opportunities to learn independently.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Provision for pupils' welfare is good and child protection procedures are robust. Pupils are given good pastoral support and this helps them to feel safe and secure at school. The small number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is catered for satisfactorily and new systems ensure that their needs are identified. The few pupils who do not have English as their first language get suitable extra support to help them

learn. Academic support and guidance is developing but the arrangements are too recently set-up to have an appreciable impact on achievement as yet. The school now has a good overview of pupils' progress. While pupils are aware of their literacy and numeracy targets, they do not use them extensively to check how well they are learning and what they need to do next. Assessment procedures in the Reception class are good. They give a clear indication of progress drawn from detailed observations, showing children's development in all areas of learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The new headteacher has got off to a good start. She has accurately identified the key improvement priorities, raised staff morale and provided a renewed sense of direction. She has adopted a calm, sensible approach to change and has effectively encouraged and challenged staff to take part in this journey. Nevertheless, the several changes in leadership have disrupted or delayed the introduction of many key management systems and processes aimed at improving pupils' progress and sharpening leadership contributions at all levels. Systems for monitoring the performance of the school are in their infancy. The senior leadership does not yet have a sufficient range of skills to manage the main operational tasks effectively while developing the key areas that improve pupils' progress. As a result, the headteacher is having to take on too many roles and responsibilities.

Clear arrangements to track pupils' progress have recently been introduced but the essential learning from this work is not yet refined, owned and acted on by all staff. Performance management has been relaunched effectively. The headteacher has a clear and accurate view of the quality of teaching across the school, but few other staff are skilled in this activity. Subject leaders have made a sound start in developing their roles, though much remains to be done to ensure that all pupils' progress is consistently good across the range of subjects. Given the positive impact of recent changes, and recognising the work still to be done, the school demonstrates satisfactory capacity to improve.

The contribution of the governing body is good. Governors provide a good level of support and challenge for the school, based on a clear and accurate grasp of its performance. They take difficult decisions, make successful appointments and have a good capacity to contribute to the school's longer-term development.

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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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	1
How well learners enjoy their education	3
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?	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?	3

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	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

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 your thoughtful and perceptive views about your school. We really enjoyed our visit and want to share with you what we discovered. Yours is a satisfactory school, with some things that are good about it.

Here are the good things we found about your school.

- Your attendance is excellent.
- You get off to a good start in the Reception class.
- Most of you are keen to learn, behave well, and are confident for your age.
- You are happy and feel safe in school.
- Your new headteacher has got off to a good start in her job of helping your school to improve.
- The governors do a good job (this was especially important during the changes in headteacher).

Here are the things we have asked your school to do now.

- In Years 1 to 6, make sure that your teachers concentrate especially on the things that speed up your learning.
- Make sure that those of you who learn quickly make the progress you are capable of, especially in mathematics and science.
- Provide you with all the guidance you need to improve your work.
- Help senior teachers to develop special skills that will help make your school even better.

You are a credit to your school. Keep working hard and making the most of your time in school. We wish you every success in the future.