

St Hilda's Roman Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121658
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	292192
Inspection dates	1–2 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Bernard Jones

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	
School	60
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs M Ventress
Headteacher	Miss Pamela Crabtree
Date of previous school inspection	22 April 2002
School address	Waterstead Lane Whitby North Yorkshire YO21 1PZ
Telephone number	01947 603901
Fax number	01947 605874

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This small school mainly serves Catholic parishes in Whitby and nearby Sleights, but a few pupils attend from elsewhere. Pupils come from a wide variety of social circumstances. Currently, there are 60 pupils on roll and the school is undersubscribed. The proportion of boys to girls varies in each year group and there is no established pattern. The pupils are organised into three class groups, each with two or more year groups and each smaller than average. Pupils are almost exclusively from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils entitled to a free school meal is below average, as are the proportions of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and pupils with statements of Special Educational Need (SEN). The percentage of pupils joining or leaving the school other than at the usual time is above average. The school has no nursery provision and children arrive in school with varied pre-school experience. The headteacher has a significant daily teaching commitment and this reduces the time she has for management tasks.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

St Hilda's is a good school and gives good value for money. Pupils flourish and gain greatly in their personal development in a safe environment where they are happy to come to school and feel safe and secure. Strong values of mutual respect underpin the school's work and lead to excellent behaviour and pupils take on responsibility well. Pupils have a mature and friendly approach to visitors. Adults who work in the school are vetted carefully, indicative of the good care taken of pupils.

Standards are generally above average by the end of Year 6. There was a dip in 2006 because of some underachievement by a very small number who joined the school later than usual. Standards vary from year to year among the very small numbers that make up each year group and there is no obvious trend. However, previous underachievement has been identified and tackled, and progress has improved over the past three years. Achievement is now good. Standards are above average in English and mathematics. In science, standards are average, mainly because not enough time is given to developing pupils' skills in practical investigation work. There are no significant differences in the progress made by different groups.

The leadership is good and there is a clear and well-formulated plan for further development based on raising the achievement of all. Staff and governors have been successful in identifying and tackling past areas of underachievement. The school's self-evaluation is accurate, if modest. The information gathered about pupils' performance is comprehensive and gives a clear picture of the progress they make. These factors and the positive response to the last report reflect good capacity to improve further. The governors make a positive contribution in all the school's affairs and there are good links with parents and the community, who support the school wholeheartedly. Management is largely informal, but satisfactory overall. While most necessary structures are in place to ensure the smooth running of the school, there is room for further improvement. Subject leaders' roles are too restricted. They do not yet have enough responsibility for checking standards and teaching in their subjects.

The overall quality of teaching is good. Teachers' planning is good, lessons are structured well and clear objectives followed to ensure that the differing needs of all are met. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and behaviour is excellent. Pupils work hard in class and share their learning with each other very effectively.

Teachers' overall use of assessment is good and very effective in helping to track pupils' longer term progress. Targets for improvement are used well in this process.

The curriculum is satisfactory overall, but has many good features. There is a weakness in teaching an important strand in science that deals with investigative work. Otherwise, the curriculum is carefully and comprehensively planned and meets the needs of all pupils. Good provision ensures that pupils make informed choices about healthy lifestyles and by Year 6, they are mature and ready to move on to the next stage in their education.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards in science in Years 3 to 6, particularly in the area of developing pupils' skills in scientific enquiry.
- Give subject leaders greater responsibility for monitoring standards and the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 achieve well in all areas of learning as a result of comprehensive and careful planning and good teaching. They make good progress and attain above average standards by the end of Year 2. In Years 3 to 6, numbers of pupils are very small and standards vary with each year group, but pupils achieve well overall in relation to their starting points. In the 2006 national tests, standards were broadly average and reflected satisfactory achievement for the particular group of pupils at that time. Standards are above average in the current Year 5 and 6 in English and mathematics. Weaknesses in data handling in mathematics that affected recent national test results were identified and have been tackled effectively. In science, standards are broadly average, mainly because not enough time is spent developing pupils' investigation skills. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress which reflects the good teaching they receive and the great care that is taken to meet their individual needs. The school sets challenging targets, which it meets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils show good personal and social skills in lessons and when out on the playground. They enjoy coming to school and state that everybody is friendly and the teachers are really nice. Attendance is above average. Relationships are excellent between pupils and are helped by pupils of different age groups being in the same classes. One parent described the mixing of age groups as producing a real family atmosphere and said that her child would 'willingly come to school every day of the year'. Pupils say bullying and racism do not occur, but they are taught what to do should these happen and they feel very safe and secure. Pupils are proud of their school council and feel that it makes a positive contribution. Pupils realise the importance of healthy living because it is very well taught, and reinforced by the promotion of healthy eating and opportunities for purposeful games activities during break times. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They develop high levels of social responsibility and their concern for others is demonstrated by fundraising. They are taught well about other cultures and religions. Behaviour is exemplary because of the clear moral code practiced by all members of the school community and the high expectations of teachers. Pupils acquire good levels of basic skills which prepare them well for the next stage in their schooling.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

As a result of good teaching, pupils make good progress, acquire positive attitudes to learning and enjoy coming to school. Because behaviour is excellent, teachers can use different teaching styles and allow pupils a good deal of independence. Classrooms right across the age range are often characterized by a real buzz of excitement as pairs or small groups of pupils discuss their work, exchange ideas or report their findings. Teachers' questioning ensures all pupils are included and makes pupils think hard and work out problems. Sometimes though, opportunities are missed to use question and answer sessions to promote speaking and listening skills. Teachers plan well with their teaching assistants in order to meet the needs of all pupils. Learning objectives are set each lesson and the sharing of these focuses pupils on what they are expected

to learn. Higher ability pupils as well as those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are challenged well as a result. A growing strength is the way teachers use assessment very effectively to track the progress of all pupils. This enables challenging targets to be set for all individual pupils in English and mathematics. Teachers use homework very effectively and marking is informative in describing how work can be improved further.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is carefully planned and based around topics chosen to cover the National Curriculum and ensure that pupils can make good progress over a wide variety of subjects. The curriculum provides well for all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with particular talents. However, in science, there is not enough emphasis on scientific enquiry and pupils do not develop their investigative work sufficiently. A good range of extra-curricular activities enables pupils to take part in music, art and some sporting activities. Good links with the wider community provide additional experiences, such as visits and visitors that widen pupils' horizons, and promote good learning and personal development. These additional experiences also help to develop healthy and varied lifestyles. Reception children get off to a good start because they have many interesting and exciting things to do. Literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology skills are used effectively to support and extend work in other subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Levels of pastoral care are high and this is a feature that is greatly appreciated by parents. They say that their children enjoy coming to school and feel part of an extended family. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are provided with good levels of care, ably helped by teaching assistants and outside support. Teachers are well trained in child protection issues. Risk assessments are thorough and up to date and the health and safety of children is high on the school's agenda. Pupils receive good guidance which is informed well by the effective use of assessment. Teachers know precisely how well individual pupils are progressing and can, for example, accurately track their progress in reading, writing and mathematics and guide them appropriately.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership is good and the headteacher leads a team of committed staff who enjoy being involved in the school and whose morale is high; teamwork is a real strength. The school has a clear view of what it needs to do to improve further. Supportive and challenging governors make a satisfactory and increasingly effective contribution to the leadership of the school. The result is an inclusive school and an insistence on strong values. The impact is seen in pupils' excellent behaviour and very good attitudes to learning. The headteacher knows the school very well and this is reflected in the school's accurate, if modest, self-evaluation. There is no complacency and the school has good systems for checking how well it is doing. Areas requiring improvement are carefully identified and tackled effectively. Planning for school improvement is good. The school's capacity for further improvement is good. Much of the day-to-day management is undertaken informally and mainly effectively. However, the roles and

responsibilities of subject leaders are not clear enough and are underdeveloped. The budget has higher than average funding per pupil, in common with other small schools, but good value is given. The school makes effective use of its resources and the different skills of teachers.

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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	2
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	2
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?	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.

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	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	2
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

Inspection of St Hilda's Roman Catholic Primary School, Whitby, YO21 1PZ

Thank you very much for making me so welcome when I visited your school. I enjoyed my visit and the opportunity it gave me to talk with you and see you working. Many of you and your parents told me how much you enjoy coming to school and how well the school looks after you.

These are the things that are good about your school:

- you are encouraged to work hard and make good progress
- your excellent behaviour, your general politeness and the warm welcome you give to visitors
- your school is well led: your headteacher and other staff always have your best interests at heart and you and your parents appreciate this
- your willingness to take responsibility, for example, your work on the school council and the way older pupils help and support younger children
- the extra activities you undertake that produce the very good art displays and the high quality singing of the choir
- the school's warm welcome ensures that you enjoy coming to school
- the school really helps you to develop into mature young people.

To make things even better, I have asked your headteacher and teachers to:

- give pupils in Years 3 to 6 more opportunities to do some practical experiments in science
- give staff who are in charge of subjects more chance to see other colleagues teaching those subjects so that you benefit from their sharing the best ways to teach.