

St John The Evangelist Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107333
Local Authority	Bradford
Inspection number	309380
Inspection dates	16–17 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Katrina Gueli 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	
School	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Fr A Jackson
Headteacher	Mrs Spillane
Date of previous school inspection	7 June 2005
School address	Beacon Road Bradford West Yorkshire BD6 3DQ
Telephone number	01274 679030
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

St John the Evangelist Catholic Primary is an average-sized school. A community play group shares the school site and there are links with the local sports college to support physical education provision. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for a free school meal is lower than average. The number of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average but increasing, although very few pupils are at an early stage of learning spoken English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. The school has gained several quality marks including Activemark, Investors in People and Investors in Pupils awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

St John the Evangelist Catholic Primary School is a good and improving school. It provides a happy, caring environment where the inclusion, success and enjoyment of all pupils are at the heart of its work. Leaders and managers have been successful in improving many aspects of the school's work since the last inspection. For example, standards at Key Stage 2 have risen significantly and the curriculum has been extensively re-structured and enhanced across both the core and the foundation subjects. Leaders have an excellent knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for development and activities for improvement have been well chosen and carefully implemented. The successful implementation of these many changes has been achieved because staff work together very well and are highly committed to improving pupils' achievement. Progress since the last inspection and the accurate identification of areas that require further development illustrate that the school has a good capacity to improve further. Governors are very supportive but as yet they are not sufficiently rigorous in their role as a critical friend to the school.

Achievement is good with pupils reaching above average standards in the national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2007. However, pupils' progress is not even. It is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. Pupils make good and in some areas outstanding progress in developing their personal skills and qualities. The majority enjoy school, particularly the excellent range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities. Parents also have a very positive view of the school and many praised the work of the staff in promoting their children's personal development and academic progress.

There is much good teaching in the school, particularly in Key Stage 2 that contributes to pupils' good academic achievement and outstanding personal development. The curriculum is also good with themed work linked across subjects being used to develop successfully pupils' key skills and knowledge in the foundation subjects. Care, guidance and support are good overall. The pastoral care and support that pupils receive is outstanding and they appreciate it. Excellent partnerships with other schools, the parish, the wider community and others such as health and emergency services personnel make a very good contribution to pupils' personal development and well-being.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The provision in the Foundation Stage (Reception) is good and children make good progress, with most reaching standards above the expectation for children of their age. When children start school their knowledge and skills are broadly in line with what would be expected for their age. Children undertake a good range of activities which are carefully planned to enable them to make progress in developing their early skills. Regular, accurate measurement of children's progress is a good feature of the Foundation Stage provision and staff use this information well to plan activities that are closely matched to the children's individual needs. The outdoor provision is shared with the nearby playgroup and it is underdeveloped. As a result the Foundation Stage children are not able to utilise the outside environment to maximum effect in order to regularly supplement their learning. There are close and effective learning and play links with Key Stage 1 pupils and these lead to an eventual seamless transition of Foundation Stage children into Year 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the outdoor environment for children in the Reception Year and provide more frequent opportunities for these children to learn out of doors.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning in Key Stage 1 so that pupils in this key stage make good progress.
- Develop the skills of the governing body so they are able to hold the school to account more effectively.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils typically enter Key Stage 1 having gained the knowledge and skills expected for their age. Progress in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory and, by the end of Year 2, standards are broadly average. Pupils make better progress during Key Stage 2 and standards at the end of Year 6 are above average. This represents good achievement. Progress seen in lessons and data from the school's own tracking records indicate that the present Year 6 pupils have made equally good progress. However, the percentage of pupils who reach an above average standard for their age is expected to be slightly lower than in 2007. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good support and work is well matched to their individual needs so the majority also make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are confident learners and they enjoy coming to school as shown by their attendance which is above the national average. Their enjoyment is further confirmed by the outcomes of regular children's questionnaires which are used effectively to seek pupil views about the school. Pupils' behaviour is mostly good and sometimes outstanding. However, there are a few occasions in lessons when a minority do not listen well enough or concentrate on their work. This slows their progress and, sometimes, that of their peers. Pupils know about the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle and many enjoy a variety of sporting activities during the school day and as part of a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Members of the school council enjoy their proactive role and are particularly proud of their recent work towards the provision of colour-coded trays in the dining hall. Other pupils relish the opportunities to take on roles and responsibilities such as head boy/girl and deputy head boy/girl, prefects and playground friends. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and is fostered through assemblies and their personal, health, social and religious education lessons. This is reflected in pupils' feelings of safety in school and the very positive relationships that exist with their peers and adults. The annual multi-faith week is very much enjoyed by pupils who have a good understanding of the wider world and this provides additional excellent support to their personal development. The personal skills and qualities that pupils develop ensure they are well prepared for life beyond primary school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Professional dialogue, sharing good practice, appropriate training and a rigorous focus on improving areas identified from monitoring have raised the quality of teaching in the school and the majority is now good. This good teaching is based on detailed planning which incorporates a variety of tasks that are well designed to meet the needs of different pupils and incorporates resources and activities which challenge and engage them. Focused short conversations in pairs and group tasks are used effectively to provide opportunities for pupils to discuss their ideas and develop their understanding. The pace of learning in these good lessons is brisk and activities make learning fun. Good use is made of questioning and self-assessment to check how well pupils are making progress in relation to what they are expected to learn. Teaching assistants are skilled and effectively deployed, making a good contribution to pupils' progress. In some lessons, however, the pace of learning is more variable and some pupils go off task and become noisy. This is sometimes because teachers do not direct the learning sufficiently well or they talk or question individuals for too long. In these lessons some pupils are not sufficiently actively engaged in learning and the progress they make is only satisfactory.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum features a well balanced programme of work which meets all statutory requirements and includes very good provision for pupils' personal development. However, the lack of continuous access to outdoor play and learning in the Foundation Stage is a weakness in this otherwise good provision for children in Reception. A strong focus on developing and applying the basic skills of English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) is evident across all curriculum subjects. This approach consolidates learning effectively. The introduction and ongoing development of themed links between subjects has added to pupils' enjoyment and has enriched their learning. For example, in Year 6 a 'discovery' lesson with a focus on the North Yorkshire village of Clapham provided pupils with many cross-curricular opportunities to apply their knowledge of history, geography and English, extending their learning and developing their thinking skills. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive well targeted support through individual learning plans and curriculum adjustments which ensures relevance and promotes enjoyment. The curriculum is strongly enriched by an outstanding range of clubs, visits and visitors, including the much anticipated weekly visit of a music specialist who brings out an excellent quality of musical appreciation and allows many pupils to demonstrate their good singing ability.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school places a high priority on supporting pupils' varying needs and pupils receive outstanding pastoral care and support. Child protection procedures and arrangements to safeguard pupils' welfare are robust and the school complies with all current government requirements for safeguarding.

Staff know the pupils well and pupils confirm that they always respond quickly to any worries that they may have. There is a strong focus on healthy lifestyles and pupils are actively encouraged to make choices in their diet and to take regular exercise. Pupils are aware of what they need to achieve in lessons through the regular sharing of learning objectives and success criteria. Marking helps pupils know what they have achieved but does not always make clear what they need to do to improve. Target books designed to support pupils' understanding of the next steps in their learning have been introduced but it is too soon to judge their impact. Individual progress is monitored throughout the year to identify where additional support or challenge are needed. Regular dialogue regarding the progress of individual pupils between class teachers and senior leaders ensures expectations of progress remain high and any pupils who are underperforming are quickly helped to get back on track.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The very effective leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher have been instrumental in improving the school. They have also successfully developed the leadership skills of other colleagues and empowered them to take responsibility for developing the subjects which they lead. Systems to check how well the school is doing and what it needs to do further are rigorous and well embedded. All leaders are involved in these processes and, as a result, there is a very good shared understanding of strengths and areas for improvement and staff are aware of the contribution they need to make to implementing change and improving pupils' achievement. Governors are very supportive of the school and their skills are utilised to help aspects of the school's work. They are becoming more informed about the life and work of the school through reports from the headteacher and other leaders but governors do not use this information to undertake effectively their role as a 'critical friend' to the school.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

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?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
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?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
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	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

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

Thank you for making me and Mr Anderson welcome when we recently visited your school. It was very helpful that you shared your thoughts and feelings about the school with us and talked to us about your work.

We found that your school is good and is on course to be even better. Teaching and the curriculum are good and this helps you to make good progress especially when lessons have lots of interesting activities. You told us that you value the help and support that you receive and that you feel safe in school. This care and support is an outstanding feature of your school. The school council has done lots of work to improve things and teachers listen to your views and act on your suggestions. You really enjoy the wonderful range of trips, visitors and extra activities that are on offer and, because so many of you get involved, this helps you to keep fit and develop many of the skills you will need for later life.

There are a few things we have asked the school to do to help it to be even better. These are:

- to improve the outdoor area for those of you in the Reception class so you can do more learning outside
- to make teaching better in Years 1 and 2 so that you all make good progress in these years
- for governors to do more to helping your school to be even better.

I am sure you will play your part in helping your school to improve by continuing to work hard and always trying your best.