

St John of Beverley Roman Catholic Primary School, Beverley

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118032
Local Authority	East Riding of Yorkshire
Inspection number	312787
Inspection dates	6–7 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Andrew Saunders

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	149
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Pat DuBoulay
Headteacher	Mrs Theresa Rogerson
Date of previous school inspection	1 June 2004
School address	Wilberforce Crescent Beverley HU17 0BU
Telephone number	01482 882487
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a small Roman Catholic primary school situated in Beverley and serving the wider area of St John Beverley Parish. The vast majority of pupils are of White British origin, and the proportion of pupils entitled to claim a free school meal and with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average. The number of pupils in the school has been growing and few leave before the end of Year 6. In 2005 a new extension was added to provide an office but the school is constrained by the number of classrooms, necessitating a mixed year group class for Year 3 and 4. The school has achieved the Active Mark for sport, the Healthy Schools Award and the Eco-Schools silver award.

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 of Beverley is a good school, where pupils thrive in their learning and personal development. They reach above average standards, making good progress from their starting points. This happens as a result of good teaching and good attitudes to learning, which the leadership have been effective in nurturing. The excellent care, guidance and support pupils receive, along with a positive atmosphere, means that their personal development and well-being are also outstanding. Pupils heartily enjoy learning and the curriculum is carefully adapted to provide good opportunities and ensure they gain useful skills not just in school but for life. Pupils are keen to do well and to achieve their best. Parents and pupils have the highest regard for the school, the headteacher and the teachers. As pupils said, the headteacher 'is Mrs Fixit because she's always fixing things'. Pupils are confident and have high self-esteem because they feel valued. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is exemplary.

The teaching is good. Lessons are interesting, well managed and help each pupil move forward in his or her learning. Written work and other tasks are matched closely to pupils' needs, and questions are used skilfully to probe their understanding. Some marking is very helpful because it refers to individual targets and identifies what to do next. However, this is not always the case, as some pupils do not have the opportunity to respond appropriately. The school does much to tackle the challenge of the variations between year groups, because it knows the circumstances of each pupil and provides carefully targeted and highly effective support to meet their particular needs. An example of this is the advanced work provided for those achieving beyond the higher Level 5 at Key Stage 2, particularly in mathematics. Standards in science are not as high as those in English and mathematics, because until recently, pupils have not had sufficient opportunity to develop their scientific thinking through investigative work.

Pupils are provided with an excellent range of extended opportunities which are both rich and diverse, ranging from community projects, contributing artists and sporting activities to residential visits. The headteacher provides strong leadership which is clearly focused on giving pupils the best possible opportunities for life. She has developed a team approach which encourages all staff to look for ways to improve and this has led to a great learning community. Together, they make a considerable contribution to driving the school forward and have been highly successful in locating extra funding for particular projects. Governors are dedicated and well informed, and provide a good balance of support and challenge. Areas for improvement in the previous report have been successfully addressed.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The Reception class is a stimulating and enjoyable place for young children to learn and develop. This includes an inspiring outdoor area which is used frequently through the day. Adults work well as a team to plan and deliver good teaching. Children arrive in Reception with a wide range of abilities, often slightly below those typical for their age. There is a well-balanced programme of adult-led and child-initiated activities that focus on developing all areas of learning. Children settle quickly and become confident and independent learners who are able to make sensible choices about their learning. For example, they plan their own learning and record it for each session. They make very good progress in relation to their individual starting points, with most reaching the expected standards in all areas of learning, and a good proportion exceeding these,

by the time they enter Year 1. This is because of the good teaching that focuses on their carefully assessed individual needs.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure pupils know how to apply their knowledge in science and raise standards in the subject.
- Ensure that marking is consistently used to help pupils make progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good and standards are above average. Children start school with skills that overall are slightly below those typical of their age; they make good progress to reach or exceed the nationally agreed learning goals set for them. By the end of Key Stage 1, standards are above national figures overall and particularly in writing. Good progress continues in Key Stage 2 so that pupils reach standards that are above national figures in English and mathematics and broadly average for science. Some pupils achieve even better standards, by reaching standards significantly above the highest expected for their age in English and mathematics. Innovative approaches to the curriculum ensure these pupils continue to make good progress. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also make good progress and some, working from very low starting points, are making very good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. They participate reflectively in opportunities for prayer and singing, only one indication of the high value placed on spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Excellent relationships are promoted through the 'buddies', which is considered 'fantastic' by parents and pupils. They are a vibrant part of the local and parish communities.

Behaviour is exemplary and is part of a calm but enthusiastic atmosphere where everyone is highly valued and encouraged to do well. Pupils said, 'If you're not so smart, the school helps you', and they like being challenged. They are seen as partners in the learning process and are given many opportunities to help each other. For example, pupils who are gifted in particular areas might give lessons to other pupils, such as music. Many parents report that their children love coming to school which is reflected in the excellent attendance.

Pupils know how to stay healthy and stay safe and feel that the school does a lot to help them in this. Circle time, the school council and active reflection mean that pupils have lots of opportunities to be part of decision making in the school. They are proud to be part of this learning community and share this with others, for example through their links with schools in Mongolia and Sierra Leone. Their information and communication technology (ICT) skills are good and the themed approach to some work helps them understand how their learning is important in the world around them, such as understanding aspects of businesses. They are a delight to talk to and have well considered opinions to share.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good subject knowledge and a clear view of the needs of the learners mean that lessons are well planned and ensure all pupils can make appropriate progress. Questions are well used to probe thinking and pupils are encouraged to back up a range of opinions. Pupils quickly settle to work on tasks and are encouraged to be self-motivated, independent learners. Assessment analysis leads to the setting of targets for individuals, backed up by appropriate work. Pupils are given many opportunities to assess how they are doing and most do so confidently. Marking of work is generally positive and helpful, although not all teachers use this as well as others towards helping pupils to improve.

Parents say that they feel their children are making good progress as a result of good teaching. Teachers make learning fun and this is appreciated by the pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is carefully planned to ensure pupils can enjoy learning and succeed. Alongside the core subjects, cross-curricular themes provide good opportunities for pupils to develop as learners. This promotes the use of skills such as writing in a wide range of settings and helps pupils 'think outside the box'. As a consequence, literacy and numeracy are seen as being for life, not just for school. In science, recent changes have been made to the curriculum; these have included additional opportunities for pupils to develop their scientific thinking through investigative work. Careful tracking shows how well pupils are making progress and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have good programmes to support them. The school has identified some pupils who are working beyond the higher Level 5 and have adapted the curriculum to allow them to progress beyond this.

Pupils have many opportunities to take on responsibility, such as the school council, the buddies and the 'playtime friends'. Circle time and personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) provide good opportunities for learning about and discussing staying safe and healthy.

The extensive range of extra activities is very popular, sometimes leading to the school having to limit numbers. The school works effectively with a number of partners such as the Education Business Link Organisation. This provides visitors such as a scientist who works with the pupils, and a nutritional therapist who helped the children plan their impressive garden. The school is actively involved in a range of community projects, such as 'Beverley in Bloom' as well as the local parish church.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Dedicated and caring staff means that pupils are exceptionally well cared for. Bullying or incidents are very rare and incidents that do happen are quickly and effectively dealt with. This might be informally, through the 'playtime friends', or through the 'circle of friends' process. Safeguarding arrangements are carefully followed and the environment is kept safe and very pleasant, to promote a positive learning atmosphere.

Pupils are encouraged to reach challenging targets, such as those working at levels above those expected in English and mathematics. Through self-assessment and sharing of data, pupils are kept closely informed about their progress and what they need to do next. Those at risk of making less than good progress are accurately and quickly identified through the rigorous assessment. Parents are also active partners in the pupils' development. The school seeks out and engages with a wide range of partners to help make learning fun and effective and to support those who need it.

Pupils emphasised how well supported they feel and parents appreciate the feedback they get. As they put it, 'The school cares for the whole family'.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher has successfully built a strong team ethos among the staff, by providing a clear vision and effective strategies towards raising standards. Monitoring is highly effective and is a positive influence in identifying issues and improving teaching and learning. Thorough analysis of results leads to specific and challenging targets. The tracking of pupils' progress towards these targets is exemplary and is used to inform further development. The system whereby teachers observe one another's lessons has many benefits in further improving the already good quality of teaching.

Care for pupils is given a very high priority which is acknowledged in the very high regard many parents have for the headteacher in particular, as well as the teachers. The school is highly regarded locally, as demonstrated by the rising number of pupils on the roll. Parents and pupil views are sought on a regular basis although some parents would like even more opportunity for this.

The leadership is working hard to ensure the budget is carefully managed to reduce a historical budget deficit and the school now provides good value for money. The school is creative in finding alternative funding for projects they feel are important. Self-evaluation is rigorous and although the school is modest in its judgements in some aspects, it is accurate in identifying areas for development. The school is well placed to improve further and shows considerable determination to do so.

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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?	1
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	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	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	1

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?	1

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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
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	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	1
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

21 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St John of Beverley Roman Catholic Primary School, Beverley, East Riding of Yorkshire, HU17 0BU

Following my visit to your school, I would like to thank you for how welcome you made me feel. I was very impressed by your excellent behaviour and how polite and helpful you were. I particularly enjoyed chatting to so many of you at break and lunchtime.

Your school is a good school and there are many things to be proud of. I spent a lot of time finding out how well you are learning. In lessons, you listened carefully and enjoyed being challenged to think hard. By the end of Year 6 you get good results in your tests, particularly in English and mathematics, so - well done! Keep trying your best!

You told me that you enjoy coming to school and that the adults take good care of you. You have lots of opportunities to be responsible, such as through the school council, the buddies and playtime friends, and help each other. Your school is a friendly place which shows you how to care for each other and helps you gain confidence. You are cared for very well and set challenging targets which you do your best to achieve.

Although I know you are doing really well, I have asked your school to help you to raise the standards of your work in science in Key Stage 2. I have also asked that your school makes sure you take note of what is said when your books are marked, so that you know exactly what you can do to reach even higher standards.

Most important of all, I agree with you that your school is a good school.

Congratulations on helping to make it such a super place for learning and for helping each other to become the best you can be.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Saunders

Lead inspector