

# St Aelred's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	121646
<b>Local Authority</b>	York
<b>Inspection number</b>	314068
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 September 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Ross Parker

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	241
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr I Brindle
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr David Houghton
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 October 2003
<b>School address</b>	Fifth Avenue York North Yorkshire YO31 0QQ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01904 422800
<b>Fax number</b>	01904 415234

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This average sized school serves a mixed area of private and rented property over a large parish. Although the number of pupils entitled to free school meals is lower than average, a significant proportion of pupils come from disadvantaged neighbourhoods. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. A small number of pupils use English as an additional language.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

St Aelred's Roman Catholic Primary School provides a satisfactory education. This is highly valued by parents because its ethos to treat others kindly permeates the whole school and is reflected in the warmth and respect seen in relationships, regardless of background. Pupils' personal development is good. Their developing social skills, combined with satisfactory achievement in basic skills, provide a sound platform for future learning and subsequent employment. Their enjoyment shows in their above average attendance and their generally good behaviour.

Achievement is satisfactory, based on satisfactory teaching and a sound curriculum which have contributed to above average standards by the end of Year 6 over recent years. Progress is inconsistent as pupils move through the years because the quality of teaching varies significantly.

The quality of personal care is good, and makes a strong contribution to pupils' confidence and security. Academic care and guidance is not effective enough. This is because individual pupils' progress is only tracked to ensure that they will meet national expectations. There is no coherent system to ensure that pupils are making as much progress as they can or that they get consistent guidance on how to improve.

The headteacher has been effective in maintaining the clear direction and well established ethos of the school. His evaluation gives an accurate picture of the school but governors and middle leaders have not been fully part of this process. Consequently, the work of the school is not scrutinised carefully enough to identify areas for further improvement. Governors are supportive as far as they are able. The school gives satisfactory value for money and has made satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection. There is adequate capacity for further improvement.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

Over recent years children have come into the nursery with skills which match, and sometimes slightly exceed national expectations. Children make satisfactory progress and move into Year 1 with average or just above average skills. Leadership of the Foundation Stage has been reorganised very recently. Systems to gather data to track progress more effectively have already been introduced. Observations during the inspection show that everything is now in place to enable children to make good progress. Attention to children's welfare is good. Children are stimulated, attentive, and already making good progress in areas of personal, social and emotional development.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching to make progress consistently good across the school.
- Improve the tracking of pupils' progress so that teachers can match work more exactly to different learning needs and provide appropriate challenge.
- Widen the process of self-evaluation so that governors and middle leaders make a greater contribution to holding the school to account.

A small proportion of the schools where overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Pupils start Year 1 with broadly average standards, though in some years standards are slightly above average. Pupils make satisfactory progress to reach slightly above average standards by the end of Year 6, though results in science are weaker than in English and mathematics. Standards were lower in 2007 because a number of pupils joined the class during the year. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress. This is because their progress is carefully tracked and their needs are well understood by teachers and support staff. The school is also creative in the way it applies available support materials to meet a wide range of needs. Variations in the quality of teaching mean that pupils make better progress in Years 1, 2, 5 and 6.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development is good. The strong support from the church and other faith-linked organisations help pupils to think carefully about spiritual issues. Pupils have a good understanding of expectations around school, though a minority do not behave as well when the teaching is less than good.

Pupils show a good understanding of how to keep safe, and know why it is important to stay healthy and fit. Their contribution to the community is positive as they participate in a range of church-based activities. Pupils contribute as class and school councillors and buddies help younger children to read. There is scope to extend the contribution the school council makes to decision making, and to provide more structured opportunities for pupils to take responsibility within school.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Inspectors agree with the school's evaluation of teaching and learning. Where teaching is strongest teachers make good use of electronic whiteboards to engage and excite pupils and speed up the pace of learning. In one Year 6 lesson pupils rapidly gained confidence handling decimals because of the quality of the whiteboard presentation. Teachers use praise effectively to encourage positive attitudes and good behaviour. Above all, they infect pupils with their own enthusiasm in lessons. Teaching assistants are very well informed about the lesson content and individual pupils' needs. As a result they make a good contribution to supporting pupils with learning difficulties. Although significant numbers of pupils reach above average levels in national tests the most able pupils are not given enough challenge.

Effective assessment procedures are in place in mathematics and English, but these need to be developed in science. Day-to-day marking is regular and conscientious but does not give pupils clear enough information about what they need to do to move up to the next level of success.

In some lessons in lower Key Stage 2 the pace is too slow to enable pupils to make gains at a good rate. Too much time is wasted managing the poorer behaviour of some pupils who become intolerant of the less exciting and stimulating activities that are on offer.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum places a strong emphasis on developing basic skills and offers opportunities for pupils to develop enterprise skills for later life. The school adapts the provision to meet additional identified needs. For example, additional support was given for older pupils' social and emotional development after minor squabbles were seen to disrupt learning in one year group. There is a suitable range of extra-curricular activities. Older pupils say that they enjoy these and they are well supported. The curriculum is adapted well to meet the needs of pupils with learning difficulties, which enables them to make good progress. Deficiencies in information and communications technology (ICT) identified in the previous report have been put right. There are now good opportunities for teachers and pupils to exploit ICT to boost achievement and enjoyment. The school has now developed a suitable programme of experimental work in science and this was seen in a busy exploration of the links between sound and vibration. This improvement has not yet supported higher standards in science.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

The school's arrangements to ensure pupils' safety meet requirements. Day-to-day supervision and security arrangements are good. Relationships between adults and children are very good and pupils say that they feel that they can go to an adult if they are worried about anything. Pupils feel that bullying is not a problem in school. They are confident that they can report any concerns to a teacher and they will be dealt with effectively.

Academic monitoring and the guidance following on from this are less well developed. They are not sufficiently rigorous to enable pupils to make good rather than satisfactory progress. Though teachers set targets, the targets are not challenging enough. Pupils are not sufficiently involved to know where they are in their learning and what the next steps are to improve. Assessment approaches do not enable teachers to identify quickly enough where pupils' progress has not been as good as it could be.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The headteacher provides caring and sensitive leadership with the support of an effective deputy headteacher, and some committed and hard-working middle leaders. The school runs smoothly and is well thought of by parents and the local community. The school's self-evaluation has accurately identified the school's strengths in nurturing and valuing pupils and their contributions but its view on achievement is too generous. There is not enough awareness among the leadership team and governors that the rate at which pupils make progress could be improved. Monitoring the quality of the curriculum and teaching does not currently involve all the school managers and this means that their contribution to school self-evaluation is limited.

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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?	3
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?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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	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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
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	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

### 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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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 all for the very friendly welcome you gave us when we came to visit your school recently. We really enjoyed meeting you and having the chance to talk to you.

The school gives you a satisfactory education.

Here are some of the good things about your school.

We were impressed by your considerate behaviour and by the friendly atmosphere in the school. You made it clear that the way you are looked after gives you lots of confidence. Pupils who find learning more difficult at times are well cared for and make good progress. The adults look after you well and make a great effort to help you to grow into confident and caring young people.

I have asked the school to do some things which will make it even better.

The school now needs to make all the teaching as good as it is in the very best lessons. Teachers need to make sure that each one of you has really challenging work to do all of the time. This is so that you can make even faster progress and reach standards that are better than anyone expected when you first came to the school.

They are also going to keep a closer eye on how much you are improving, and make sure that you understand what you need to do next to make your work better.

You can help by asking your teachers how you can improve and letting your teachers know if you could manage some more challenging work.