

# St Benedict's Roman Catholic Primary School, Ampleforth

Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	121650
<b>Local Authority</b>	North Yorkshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	314069
<b>Inspection date</b>	6 February 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Linda Murphy

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	97
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Rev Dominic Milroy
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Michael Gallagher
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 June 2004
<b>School address</b>	Back Lane Ampleforth York North Yorkshire YO62 4DE
<b>Telephone number</b>	01439 788340
<b>Fax number</b>	0

---

<b>Age group</b>	4-11
<b>Inspection date</b>	6 February 2008
<b>Inspection number</b>	314069

---

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: pupils' achievement, the curricular provision in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, and pupils' personal development and its support through the care and guidance the school provides. Evidence was gathered from observing lessons, scrutinising pupils' work, assessment data and school documents. Discussions were held with the headteacher, other staff, representatives of the governing body, and pupils. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included in the report.

## Description of the school

This smaller than average school is oversubscribed and has grown by a third since the last inspection. It serves local villages and outlying farms, which include diverse communities. A high proportion of pupils join the school throughout each year. All pupils are of White British heritage. The proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals and with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are below average overall, although vary considerably year to year. The school holds the local authority's Inclusion Quality Mark, the Basic Skills Quality Mark and the Financial Management Standard. During the inspection building works to extend the number of classrooms were almost completed: because of this the pupils in Years 3 and 4 were working in the church hall.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school where pupils' personal development is outstanding. Parents are particularly pleased with their children's tremendous sense of responsibility and joy in learning, and the excellent care and support pupils receive. One parent explained that, 'The school has a fantastic sense of community where children feel part of a large family.' Leaders of the school give very high priority to pupils' well-being. As a result, pupils' behaviour is impeccable. Pupils are bright and cheerful at school and thrive on excellent relationships. Pupils are always ready to lend a helping hand and have a great deal of respect for themselves and others. They are confident and outgoing and increasingly mature for their age with a very good understanding of how to stay safe. Pupils enjoy school exceptionally well which is reflected in good attendance levels. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. For example, community singing is tuneful, joyous and raises the spirit. Pupils gain much strength of mind through the very positive ethos which pervades their work and play. They learn much about the culture of others through visitors and being involved in a range of performing arts, including theatre visits. The links through modern foreign languages and teacher exchanges abroad further broaden pupils' view of the world.

Pupils' many very positive personal attributes stand them in good stead to apply themselves to their learning and to make rapid progress. As a governor explained 'Learning is a delight for pupils.' Pupils' good progress is aided well by good quality teaching. Strengths in the teaching include excellent relationships and great care given to pupils' individual needs. It is the pace of the learning linked to classroom organisation that differentiates the good from the occasionally not quite so good teaching. Pupils receive good guidance on how to improve - a significant step forward from the last inspection. Their progress is checked regularly and extra support quickly made available to any pupil at risk of falling behind. This helps to ensure that pupils do the best they can and meet their challenging targets.

Fluctuations in standards reflect the ever changing circumstances of the school: the high proportion of pupils who join or leave during each year, the proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the size of the year group. Importantly, most groups make good progress. This means that for the present Year 2 and Year 6 standards are above average and higher than last year. By Year 6 pupils increasingly attain highly for their age in English and mathematics. In science pupils do well overall although relatively fewer pupils attain high levels. This is because, for example, questioning is insufficiently challenging or tailored to their needs. Much reliance on worksheets can be inhibiting for those pupils capable of more independent work. The school's recent focus on writing and mathematics has raised standards well. Science is a subject that is due for review. Pupils' handwriting and presentation is not always neat and at times leads to some careless mistakes.

Pupils thrive on the lively curriculum, which is very practical and mostly meets their needs. It enriches their lives and enables them to be very well prepared for their future. The innovative curriculum for pupils in Year 1 enables them to spend time working between the Reception class and Year 2 depending on their needs. This rapidly accelerates their progress and is helped by parental support and the way that the school keeps parents informed. It is a good example of how the school analyses its strengths and areas for improvement and takes appropriate action to raise standards. The encouragement of healthy lifestyles, the teaching of modern foreign languages and many extra-curricular activities, including residential visits to see the sights of London and outward bound activities in Wensleydale, are all examples of how very

well the curriculum is extended and enriched. Through many links with other schools and external coaches, sporting facilities are good and lead to success as in the recent swimming gala where the pupils not only won but were excellent ambassadors for their school. Parents comment on the 'wonderful learning environment that really draws on the strengths and interests of the children across the whole spectrum'.

Leadership and management, including governance, are good. Decisions are not taken lightly but rather researched and considered carefully to ensure that all the school does meets its aims: the best interests of pupils are at the heart of everything the school does. Governors take timely decisions; for example, to meet the rising roll the accommodation is being extended to better meet the needs of the teaching and learning. A mark of the school's critical self-evaluation and careful planning is the annual 'away day' - time set aside for staff and governors to take on board the views of others, review the school's aims, evaluate progress and set the direction for the following year. Evaluations from external awards aid the process. The headteacher is creative in making really good external links so that the school keeps abreast of change, receives extra support as appropriate and ideas are refreshed. The 'mood' of the school appears very relaxed but is underpinned by very robust management systems and the meeting of health and safety requirements, including child protection. These arrangements, together with overall clear leadership, excellent guidance of pupils' personal development and high expectations, have brought about good progress since the last inspection and set the school up well for further success.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Children enter the Reception class with varying standards, although often with skills below those expected for their age. They achieve well which means that by Year 1 most at least attain the expected levels in all areas of learning. This is because the Foundation Stage is well led and managed and the quality of teaching is good. As a result, children learn at a good rate. They make particularly good strides in their personal, social and emotional development because staff work very well alongside parents to promote children's independence and love of learning. For example, each child has a book which goes between home and school each week to inform the adults about how well children are doing, what they are studying and to record any concerns from home. This builds well on the informal day-to-day contact.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise standards in science for pupils who learn quickly.
- Improve handwriting and presentation so that the good quality stories and reports are easier to read.

**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](http://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
---	----------------

### 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 <sup>1</sup> 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	2
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	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?	1

<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>	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	2
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	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



---

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

Thank you for welcoming my colleague and me to your school. We judge St Benedict's to be a good school with some outstanding features. For example, your behaviour, attitudes to work and play and your understanding of how to stay safe and healthy are excellent. This is because the staff care for you very well indeed. As one of your parents told us St Benedict's is like 'a big family'. You do a great deal in your school, church and village communities and this helps you understand about the lives of others. This, together with your regular attendance and the good progress you make in English and mathematics, means your education is good and helps you prepare for your next school.

All of these attributes mean that you are keen and ready to learn. The teaching is good and you learn rapidly. As a result, you do well in English and mathematics. Your headteacher, other staff and governors do a good job and will help you get even better. To help them and you, we have asked that more is done to help you learn in science and that you improve your handwriting and presentation.

The school provides a lot of activities and helps you develop many interests, such as swimming. Well done in the swimming gala! Everyone was very proud of not only your success but your wonderful behaviour too.

We wish you every success.