

All Saints Roman Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121657
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	314073
Inspection date	20 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Lesley Clark

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	5-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	60
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr M Elders
Headteacher	Mr T Starr
Date of previous school inspection	15 September 2003
School address	Green Lane East Thirsk North Yorkshire YO7 1NB
Telephone number	01845 523058
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This small Catholic primary school draws its pupils from Thirsk and the surrounding villages. The school reduced in size from five classes to three when its catchment area contracted following the opening of a new Catholic school in Northallerton. Numbers are now steadily increasing, with younger year groups larger than older ones. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. There are 15 % who come to the school from Poland and are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: achievement and standards, particularly writing; the curriculum, including provision for different groups of pupils; pupils' responsibility for their own learning; and leadership and management. Evidence was gathered from observations of lessons, discussions with pupils and looking at their work with them, discussions with the staff and governors, and a scrutiny of the school's documents and parents' questionnaires. Other aspects were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation form, were not justified, and these have been included, where appropriate, in this report.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

All Saints Roman Catholic Primary School provides an outstanding education for its pupils. Parents hold the school in high regard, delighted with the care and education their children receive. Pupils themselves 'would recommend this school to others', and agree that 'everyone is happy here'. This shows in their consistently high attendance and outstanding behaviour. A notable feature is the high quality care the school provides for all groups of pupils. As a result, pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Older pupils set a fine example to others in their attitudes to work, relationships and care for others. They take turns at being prefects, describing themselves as 'guardians for the younger ones'. It is no wonder that break times and lunchtimes are popular as older pupils organise playground games and equipment, checking 'there is something for everyone to play with so no one is bored'.

Pupils' achievement is outstanding. This is because teaching and learning are good throughout the school; outstanding in the top class and for children in the Foundation Stage. From broadly average starting points, pupils go on to reach high standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. A large proportion exceeds national expectations each year as confirmed in the 2007 national test results for mathematics and science. There are no test results for English in 2007 as the papers were lost through no fault of the school. The school's assessments and samples of work from that year group, however, confirm similarly high standards in English. Lessons are both fun and challenging as pupils strive to beat their targets, which teachers and pupils refer to frequently. They are highly relevant to each individual such as the one 'to use words I have not used before'. Spontaneous improvised role play brings a sparkle to learning new words as when, for example, a teacher and pupil held an imaginary phone conversation to reserve a seat at a restaurant. Because of this playful but methodical approach, pupils concentrate fully and have the confidence to ask questions when they find something hard to understand. Teachers' marking encourages pupils but also makes clear what they need to do to improve their work. This, therefore, sets high standards for pupils to aspire to and, in particular, helps them to write interestingly and accurately.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those new to learning English also achieve outstandingly. They make exceptionally good progress because of the well organised approach to meeting their needs. Those with learning difficulties get additional support at an early stage so they do not slip too far behind. As a result, they gain in confidence and reach close to average standards by the end of Year 6. For the first half hour of each day, new learners of English are given excellent coaching to help them develop into confident speakers, readers and writers. Lessons are active with lots of learning resources and games to give pupils visual clues and the chance to learn and practise new phrases. When they rejoin their classes, teachers ensure that they continue to have the extra support they need. After just seven months in school, younger learners gained Level 1 in English and reached average standards in mathematics in the most recent national tests at the end of Year 2. It is a measure of the school's success that other pupils are proud of this progress, commenting appreciatively that, 'Polish children are learning English well'.

The curriculum is good and provides a good balance of subjects. Its strengths lie in the good provision for physical education, including extra-curricular sports, and in the outstanding provision for learning French and German. Pupils, therefore, keep physically fit and learn to appreciate the benefits of a healthy lifestyle. Learning foreign languages helps them empathise

with other new learners and also gives them an insight into different communities. The curriculum, however, is rather formal in the way it is organised. While pupils' advanced literacy, numeracy and computer skills clearly prepare them extremely well for their future lives, they miss out on opportunities to use and apply these skills in a wide variety of contexts because teachers do not link subjects creatively together.

Leadership and management are outstanding. With quiet efficiency and an unswerving focus on high standards, the headteacher leads by example. His heavy teaching commitment leaves minimal time for managing the school. However, management is excellent because of his ability to prioritise and his outstanding organisation, which ensures that everyone connected with the school, works together. For example, the school set up an early morning English conversation class for parents new to England. Parents are now continuing this on a more informal basis. The school council has responsibility for discussing behaviour at each meeting and believe they 'have definitely improved the school spirit and made school more peaceful'. Monitoring the work of the school is shared by staff and governors. As a result, the school knows itself well and has an objective view of its strengths and what it wants to do next. It is perhaps this that lay behind its reluctance to evaluate any aspect as outstanding. The school successfully creates a happy, family atmosphere in which children feel secure and make progress at a rate which is challenging without being daunting. The school has made good progress since the last inspection and has excellent capacity to improve further. It gives outstanding value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Provision is outstanding as is leadership and management. Children learn very quickly because they are extremely well taught. Most reach or exceed the goals expected at the end of the Reception year as a result. Skilled teaching ensures that children never sit and listen for too long but have numerous activities to busy themselves with. Excellent planning means that each activity develops several skills at once. For example, children put price tags on toy animals, counted out the coins for each shopper, organised the till and had the rain not poured down in torrents would have ridden their bikes to and from the shop! As it was, they practised their new learning in mathematics with maximum enjoyment. Assessment is used extremely well to target support where it is needed and to keep a track of children's progress. The curriculum is outstanding, linking indoor and outdoor learning seamlessly, with outdoor resources organised as efficiently as those indoors for children to access what they need. The result is outstanding achievement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Link subjects creatively together to extend pupils' opportunities to use and apply their literacy, numeracy and computer skills in a wide variety of contexts.

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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?	1
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	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

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?	1
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	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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 your warm welcome to your school and for talking to me so readily. I enjoyed hearing your views and learning from you what it is like to be a pupil at All Saints. As you know, I visited every class and spent a short time in each lesson. Because this was a very short inspection I concentrated on three aspects of the school in particular: achievement and standards, the curriculum, and the leadership and management of the school. These are the conclusions I reached.

Your school gives you an outstanding education. It takes exceptionally good care of all of you. This means that those new to the school or new to learning English quickly feel part of the school and make the same excellent progress that you all do. Standards are high in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6 because you are well taught in every class, with outstanding teaching in the Foundation Stage and in the top class. You understand and use your targets to help you learn and are not afraid to ask questions if you are stuck. You have a good curriculum, especially all the sport you do and learning French and German. I am impressed at your advanced literacy, numeracy and computer skills but I have asked the school to give you more opportunities to use these in different subjects. This could be done if your teachers linked subjects together more creatively. Your school is extremely well led and managed. This is because the adults connected with the school work together to get things done, just in the same way that the school council works with the headteacher. Leadership and management are especially good when you consider that your headteacher is teaching for most of the time.

I hope you continue to have fun and to work hard - a good balance that your school captures exceptionally well.