

St Philip's Catholic Primary and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108033
Local Authority	Leeds
Inspection number	324691
Inspection dates	2–3 July 2009
Reporting inspector	Derek Pattinson

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	181
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Barbara Muhl
Headteacher	Mrs Elizabeth Taylor
Date of previous school inspection	12 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	St Philips Avenue Leeds West Yorkshire LS10 3SL
Telephone number	0113 2716763

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average Catholic primary school situated a few miles to the south of Leeds city centre. It serves an area of relatively high disadvantage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is close to the national average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above what is typical. Most pupils are White British. However, numbers from other ethnic groups, including the number of pupils for whom English is a second language, have risen sharply recently to levels close to national averages. Since the last inspection, a new headteacher and several new staff have been appointed. Children start school in the Early Years Foundation Stage in the term following their third birthday in the nursery. The school has achieved Healthy Schools' status and the Activemark.

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 with particular strengths in the high quality of its pastoral care and pupils' outstanding personal development. It is very well regarded by parents who comment on 'the friendly atmosphere', the 'supportive and caring ethos', and 'the genuine interest shown in pupils' development'. Good leadership, effective teamwork, and good and sometimes outstanding teaching, in which secure relationships and effective classroom management are very strong features, are other positive features leading to pupils' good achievement. 'Teachers make lessons fun', is a typical pupil comment. However, occasionally pupils' progress in lessons slows because time is not used to best effect. Pupils' needs are well met and those who find learning difficult and those for whom English is a second language make good progress as a result. There is a strong ethos for improvement, shown, for example, through the success of initiatives such as pupil progress meetings, which have led to improved performance, especially for more able pupils. As a result, the school has a good capacity to improve further. The school provides good value for money.

Children enter the Nursery with levels of knowledge, skills and understanding that are usually below those typical for their age. Pupils make better progress than pupils in most other schools do because of good teaching, high quality support and a strong focus on ensuring that pupils know what they have learnt and what they must do to improve. As a result, pupils reach standards which are a little above what is typical by the end of Year 6.

Leadership and management are good and the school is well led. As a result, priorities are the right ones to secure further improvement. There is a very supportive atmosphere and everyone 'pulls together'. Senior and subject leaders increasingly monitor the school's work effectively. However, senior leaders are not yet skilled enough in analysing data to help them check accurately how well pupils are doing. As a result, targets are not always at the right levels of challenge to help pupils improve. The governing body is supportive and increasingly challenging, but does not, as yet, have enough information about pupils' progress to enable it to fully hold the school to account. The checking of teaching is regular, and helpful pointers for improvement are shared with teachers, which contributes to the drive to secure further improvement.

Pupils are developing very well their awareness of different faiths, traditions and cultures which help them understand the diverse nature of modern society. The school is very successful in promoting the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and pupils feel very safe in school. Excellent links with many different organisations help pupils develop important skills and enhance learning. As a result, they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Pupils enjoy school, behave very well and have mature attitudes which help them develop responsibility and independence. The good curriculum is currently undergoing changes to link subjects together in meaningful ways to add excitement and greater relevance. Important skills, such as literacy and numeracy are given strong emphasis. There are strengths too in information and communication technology (ICT), which prepare pupils well for their future lives. Attendance is above average because the school does much to promote it.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision for children in both Nursery and Reception is good with some outstanding features. Children get off to a flying start because they have a wide variety of exciting and challenging

activities both indoors and outdoors to choose from. Children delight in the opportunity to dress up as pirates, build ships and dig for buried treasures. They play happily together, are enthusiastic about their learning and behave very well. As a result, children soon gain in confidence and independence, learn to think for themselves and make their own decisions. These factors, together with outstanding levels of care mean they make excellent progress in their personal, social and emotional development. From below average starting points, especially in their communication and language skills, many children are working within the level expected of their age by the start of Year 1. Relationships with parents are good. They are keen to support children with their learning at home and enjoy sharing their child's 'Learning Log'. An example of the good leadership can be seen in the clear systems to check on children's progress, which ensures that learning activities meet the needs and interests of children well and that children build well on what they learn.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make better use of tracking information and data analysis to help drive up standards further, ensure all targets are challenging and enable the governing body to have a clearer picture of pupils' progress and performance.
- Improve all teaching to that of the best practice in school to help ensure that pupils always make the best possible progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good overall, including for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for the increasing number for whom English is a second language. From broadly average starting points when they start in Year 1, they make good progress overall in English, mathematics and science as they move through the school. As a result, they reach standards, which are a little above what is typical by the time they leave. In Key Stage 1, the percentage of pupils reaching the expected level in 2008 was similar to the national picture. However, very few pupils reached the higher level in reading and mathematics, and none in writing. However the school's own tracking information for the current Year 2 pupils reveals that more are reaching the higher level this year because of the targeted support given to those who were falling behind. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 improved in 2008 when compared with 2007. In 2008, they were above national levels in English and mathematics and close to national standards in science. Provisional test results this year show that these standards have improved further, with more pupils reaching the higher level in English and mathematics compared with the previous year.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development, including their moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Strong links with the church support pupils' excellent spiritual development. Pupils enjoy their learning. This results in good attendance and exemplary behaviour. Pupils are polite, well mannered and courteous. They have an excellent understanding of why it is important to be healthy and physically fit and say they feel safe. 'There is zero tolerance of bullying at this school', is a typical pupil comment. They are sure that if bullying did occur, it would be dealt with quickly. Pupils benefit from the strong links with the local schools' sports partnership. They appreciate the good range of sporting opportunities available, such as cricket, football

and rugby. Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities, and the school council is proud of its contribution towards improving their school. For example, councillors talk enthusiastically about the improvements they have helped to make to the school lunches and to the car parking. Pupils enjoy their work towards recycling and enjoyed taking part in a 'Green Fashion Show,' when they modelled clothes using materials that had been recycled. They demonstrate their awareness of the needs of others by fundraising for a wide range of local and national charities, and through the work of the Playground Squad, who take their responsibilities very seriously. Their positive attitudes, together with good basic skills and opportunities to learn about different cultures, prepare them well for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good, with some outstanding practice. Trusting and respectful relationships, the effective management of pupils and the regular use of praise and encouragement are very strong features of all lessons. Teachers are skilled at sharing with pupils what they will be learning and in helping them to assess their own work. Most have high expectations and plan and organise their lessons carefully to enable pupils to make good progress. In the best lessons, classrooms are often lively and exciting places where pupils are eager to learn, such as when Year 6 pupils were engrossed in producing their very own animation. Teachers use questions well to develop and check pupils' understanding and provoke thought. All pupils, particularly those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, benefit from good quality support provided by committed teaching assistants. Occasionally, activities undertaken by more able pupils are not challenging enough. Sometimes, time is not used to best effect and pupils spend too much time on the carpet and, as a result, progress slows.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The creative, diverse and inclusive curriculum meets the needs of all pupils. It is currently being redesigned to make more meaningful links between different subjects to make learning even more enjoyable for pupils. ICT is a strong feature and enhances learning in many subjects. The curriculum gives much emphasis to the development of pupils' personal, social and health education. As a result, it successfully promotes excellent understanding of how to stay safe, keep healthy and become good citizens. Visits, visitors and themed events, such as in science and mathematics, are high profile, helping to enrich their experiences. Popular and well-attended clubs, such as, football, drama and ICT, broaden their horizons. Additional 'Arts, Culture and Enjoyment' afternoons, and opportunities to learn to play a musical instrument, provide further opportunities for pupils to enhance their French, music and art skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school's outstanding level of pastoral care enables pupils, including those who find learning difficult and those for whom English is a second language, to achieve well. Pupils benefit from close and very effective links with other agencies that provide specialist support, such as, the speech and language service. Arrangements to safeguard pupils meet current government requirements. The school does a great deal to promote good attendance. Almost all parents

are pleased with the way the school cares for their children and appreciate the hard work of all staff. Good links with local secondary schools ensure that pupils transfer smoothly to the next stage of their education. Academic guidance is good. Pupils have targets in reading, writing and mathematics to help them learn more quickly. Teachers ensure that marking often helps pupils to reach the next step in their learning. Pupils increasingly discuss their work with one another and with their teachers, and act upon the advice they receive.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The senior leadership team, led effectively by the headteacher, strongly promotes a caring ethos in which all are valued. Senior leaders have an accurate view of the school's performance. As a result, improvement planning focuses on the right priorities. All staff and pupils have ownership of the school's vision and a strong sense of team spirit pervades the school. Subject leaders, some of whom are new to their roles, are playing a developing role in monitoring the school's work and performance. However, senior leaders are not yet as skilled as they could be at analysing and using data and tracking pupils' performance to help drive up standards, ensure all targets are challenging and provide the supportive governing body with high quality information to help them understand fully where improvements are most needed. Teaching is regularly monitored with helpful hints for improvement always shared with teachers to help accelerate pupils' learning. The school makes a strong contribution to community cohesion and is constantly seeking new ways to deepen pupils understanding of the diverse nature of society. Pupils from a wide range of different backgrounds work and play happily together. Equal opportunities are promoted well because leaders ensure that pupils get the help they need.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
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 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

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	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	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 being so friendly and talking to the inspectors when we visited your school recently to find out how well you are learning. We very much enjoyed being in your school, visiting your lessons and listening to what you had to say. Many of you told us that you believe that you go to a good school. We agree with you. There are lots of things that are good about your school.

- We especially like the friendly atmosphere and the way in which your teachers and other adults take very good care of you so that you feel safe and happy.
- The staff organise lots of visits, visitors, different clubs and exciting events to help make learning more interesting for you.
- We saw that you work hard and behave very well.
- You have an excellent understanding of the importance of staying healthy and keeping safe.
- We are especially pleased that so many of you come to school regularly.
- We like the fact that many of you know what you need to do to improve.
- Most of you make better progress as you move through school in English, mathematics and science than pupils in many other schools do.

There are two things that your headteacher and teachers need to do to make your school even better than it is now.

- I've asked them to look more carefully at the progress you are making as you move through school so that they know exactly how well you are doing. They can give this important information to the governors, too, so that they know how you are getting on. They can then make sure that your targets are always at the right level for you to help you make even better progress.
- Your teachers should make all lessons good or better so that you can all make the best possible progress at all times.

I was pleased by the way your headteacher and all school staff work hard to give you a good education. It was really good to find that you are happy and doing well.