

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Bishop Thornton

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121636
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	327535
Inspection date	25 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Bernard Jones

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	24
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	Fr Patrick Waldron
Headteacher	Miss J Collins
Date of previous school inspection	5 October 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Bishop Thornton Harrogate North Yorkshire HG3 3JR
Telephone number	01423 770 083

Age group	4–11
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Fax number

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: achievement and standards, pupils' personal development, the quality of teaching and learning, leadership and management and provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, the scrutiny of pupils' work, assessment data and school documentation. In addition, interviews were held with pupils, parents, members of the governing body and the headteacher. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but no evidence was found to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a much smaller than average school. There are two children currently in the Reception year. The school has a Catholic foundation and serves three parishes over a wide rural area. Pupils are mainly of White British heritage, but up to a third are children of American parents who have moved to work in the area. There are no pupils entitled to free school meals and the proportion who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. The school has attained the Healthy School's award, the Basic Skills Quality mark, the Inclusion Quality mark 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 and it gives good value for money. Parents are very pleased with the school. They praise the dedication and commitment of the teachers and appreciate their impact upon the children's all-round development. They say that pupils are encouraged to realise their potential and are helped to mature so that they are ready for their secondary education. A typical comment was, 'Through the care and attention of the dedicated and highly proficient staff, our daughter has made excellent progress in all areas of her learning and development'.

The very small numbers in each year group means that pupils' attainment varies considerably year-on-year. Whatever their starting points and backgrounds, pupils make good progress throughout the school and they achieve well. Typically, standards are above average. For example, standards for pupils who are currently in Year 2 have built from levels broadly in line with expectations for their age on entry to the EYFS, to above average. Provisional results for national tests at the end of Year 6 indicate that pupils made good progress from their individual starting points. Pupils currently in Year 6, who are a much higher attaining group, are on track to meet challenging targets and standards that are well above average. Standards in numeracy are not quite as strong in Years 3 and 4 because pupils' skills in using and applying number are less well developed. However, past weaknesses in writing have been successfully tackled and pupils now make good progress in this area.

Pupils' personal development is excellent. Pupils become mature, sensible and thoughtful learners and they are well equipped to make decisions for themselves. They develop above average basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT), which provide a very secure basis for their future economic well-being. Pupils have very positive attitudes as a result of the school's emphasis on the need for every child to be happy and to succeed. Attendance is good. Pupils enjoy school life, revel in their achievement in lessons and are keen to take part in the many activities the school offers. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a real strength because of the school's focus on developing all-round mature individuals. Pupils know right from wrong. Their behaviour is excellent and they make significant contributions in school and to the local community. Pupils gain an outstanding knowledge of how to look after themselves and live healthily and safely. Pupils take very seriously the responsibilities they are given.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Excellent relationships between teachers and pupils help to engender the very positive relationships that exist between pupils. There is usually a buzz of working noise as pupils collaborate in their learning. Teachers use homework effectively, particularly to develop pupils' basic literacy and numeracy skills. They mark work conscientiously, encourage pupils by acknowledging their good efforts and help them to progress further. A feature of the good teaching is the conscientious approach to planning lessons. However, this planning is not precise enough about what teachers expect pupils of different abilities to achieve in lessons. This makes it harder for teachers and leaders to judge how successful teaching and learning have been.

Pupils receive outstanding pastoral care and guidance. Arrangements to safeguard pupils meet requirements. Pupils say that they feel safe and very well cared for. All groups, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive high quality academic guidance that provides a solid platform for their good progress. Systems to check and chart pupils' progress are very thorough. They are used very effectively to inform pupils about how to meet their challenging

individual targets. It also ensures that teachers know whether any pupil needs further help and where this is the case, support mechanisms are very effectively used.

The good curriculum provides a broad range of experiences supported by an effective programme of educational visits and visitors to the school. These are further enhanced by extra activities, for example, in sport and by the residential experience made available to older pupils. The school's partnerships with other local schools and the local community are strong and further extend the opportunities offered. Pupils enjoy these extra activities and the rich curriculum is reflected in the external awards the school has achieved. Much work is effectively undertaken to offset any limitations of small village life and plans are in place to ensure that pupils gain deeper insight into their roles as global citizens.

The good quality leadership and management stems from the clear educational direction and impetus set by the headteacher. Very good links are forged with parents and they appreciate the headteacher's success in firmly establishing the school at the heart of the village community. Self-evaluation is accurate and staff and governors know what they need to do to improve further. The monitoring of standards and the quality of teaching and learning is regular and rigorous. Whole-school planning is undertaken conscientiously and is detailed and appropriate to the school's stage of development. Governors have good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses and effectively challenge, as well as support, the senior leadership. The school's success in maintaining good achievement and its very positive response to the last inspection report demonstrate good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The quality of provision in the EYFS is good. It is well led. Children enter the EYFS with levels of knowledge, skills and understanding that vary each year with the very low numbers. Children settle in very well because of the great efforts undertaken to ensure a smooth transition into school. The school's booklet 'I am special' is completed by the children and their parents and this helps the process along. Children make good progress and their skills are currently above the expectation for their age. Teaching is of good quality based on effective planning to match the curriculum to children's interests and needs. Adults regularly assess children's progress across all six areas of development. Improvements have taken place to the outdoor play area and the school is successfully further developing the use of this space. There is a good balance of activities led by teachers and chosen by children. Children's personal, social and emotional development is advanced significantly by the school's excellent provision for them to learn through play. Children benefit from sharing their day with older pupils. They quickly develop independence and confidence in their learning and are able to negotiate and share with other children. Children's behaviour is excellent.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics in Years 3 and 4, particularly pupils' skills in using and applying numbers.
- Improve teachers' lesson planning to ensure that teachers and leaders are clear about what pupils with different levels of ability are expected to achieve.

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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?	2
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?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
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	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
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?	1

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	2
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?	3
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 all for the welcome you extended to me and to my colleague when we inspected your school. Please thank your parents and carers for all their letters and for taking the time to talk to us.

Yours is a good school. Your personal development is outstanding. Older pupils are very responsible in the way they help younger children in lessons and during play activities. Your school helps you to develop into very mature young people, who are considerate and get on well with each other. You tell us that your teachers take excellent care of you and teach you to be safe and healthy. We enjoyed watching you learn and talking with you during your lessons and looking at your work; your singing in assembly was a pleasure to listen to. You make good progress, in part because your behaviour is excellent. Also, you receive good teaching, have interesting work to do and the school leaders ensure that you can reach your targets.

It is usual after an inspection to ask schools to improve some things. To make things even better, I have asked your teachers to help pupils in Years 3 and 4 to improve their standards in mathematics, particularly in the way they use and apply numbers. I have also asked your teachers to make sure that when they plan your work they show you what they want each of you to learn. You can all help by continuing to work hard.