

St Wilfrids Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121638
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	327537
Inspection date	30 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Roger Gill

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)	184
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	Mr Jim Spencer
Headteacher	Mr Peter Burdekin
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	Church Lane Ripon North Yorkshire HG4 2ES
Telephone number	01765 603232
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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:

- the degree of progress made by pupils from their individual starting points
- the school's self-evaluation relating to mathematics and science
- children's achievements in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Evidence was collected from the school's judgements about attainment on entry, test results, teachers' records, observations of teaching, scrutiny of pupils' current work and discussions with the headteacher, staff, pupils and governors. 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 where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a small primary school situated near the centre of Ripon. About a third of pupils live close to the school but most come from further afield. Pupils are from relatively advantaged social and economic backgrounds. The vast majority of pupils are of a White British heritage. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds who are learning English as an additional language has doubled over the last three years. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average as is that of pupils eligible for free school meals. The school's provision within the Early Years Foundation Stage comprises a unit for Nursery and Reception children. This unit, which before September 2007 was just for Nursery children, is situated 0.2 miles away from the main building. The school holds the following awards: Healthy Schools, Activemark and Eco Schools.

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 that helps pupils to achieve an outstanding level of personal development and well-being. This is because, as many parents believe, it 'excels at promoting morals, values and ethos.' Pupils agree with the view expressed in Year 6 that, 'our school is good because we are a close community'.

The positive way in which equality and diversity are promoted makes community cohesion good. The work of the school council, older pupils looking after younger ones and fundraising for Barnardo's, for example, all contribute to a sense of working together for the benefit of others. A sense of community is celebrated well within the curriculum, particularly through visits to centres of faith in Bradford and e-twinning online conferences with pupils in France, Belgium and Germany. Day visits, for example, to enact Tudor drama in full costume at Fountains Abbey, and outward bound residential weekends play a strong role in developing self-esteem and involvement beyond the school. Moreover, the school's well designed environmental area affords very good opportunities to learn about sustainability and other globally important issues.

Standards are above average by the end of Year 6 and achievement is good. Owing to the relatively small year groups, standards in Year 2 and 6 can vary from year-to-year depending on the make-up of the cohort. For example, pupils who arrive from Eastern Europe with little or no English make good and sometimes excellent progress, but have not always spent long enough in school to attain more than average standards.

Despite these factors, there is a pattern for standards in English to be better than those in mathematics and science. Pupils make good progress in these subjects but, by comparison, small groups of more able pupils sometimes just miss reaching above average levels. This is because the progress of the more able has not been rigorously reviewed and evaluated throughout the school. The school possesses lots of information about their progress, but it is not used with enough precision to ensure that they all reach the higher levels by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. For example, in 2008, a few pupils just missed gaining a higher level in science at Year 6. Had they achieved this, the school's standards in science would have been well above average instead of average. By contrast, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make consistently good progress. This is because the work is broken down into small steps and teaching, ably supported by teaching assistants, is successful in helping them to achieve well. The senior management team has begun to implement plans to tackle these relative differences in progress, but it is too soon to see their full effect.

The care and support for pupils is a strong feature of provision and the school meets current government requirements for safeguarding. Academic guidance is generally good. Pupils are given targets to achieve and teachers' very good marking of their work points out aspects for improvement. There is the beginnings of some excellent guidance whereby pupils are encouraged to evaluate what they already know at the beginning of a topic, in mathematics, for example, and then to assess what progress they have made at the end.

Teaching has a generally positive effect on learning, partly because the curriculum engages pupils' interest. 'I like history the best' is a common view among pupils. Many pupils state that they, 'love writing', which is a powerful indication of how well lessons motivate them and make learning fun. It also shows how well the school has concentrated on the development of literacy skills, particularly since the number of pupils learning English as an additional language began

to rise. Teachers use electronic whiteboards well to promote learning, together with many prompts to extend pupils' vocabulary. Clear indications are given about what lessons are designed to achieve. Inspectors agree with parents who praise the, 'very positive learning environment' that the headteacher and staff have created.

The headteacher, assistant headteacher and governing body lead with conviction and enthusiasm. They are committed to high levels of care for pupils, which have a very good effect on their personal development. First-rate partnerships beyond the school have a very powerful influence on pupils' sporting, musical, artistic and spiritual development. Methods of school self-evaluation, such as the tracking of pupils' progress and monitoring of teaching have improved since the last inspection. However, not enough use is made of the findings from these activities to guide lesson planning to enable pupils to make faster progress. Governors visit the school regularly, which allows them to gain a good appreciation of its ethos and areas for improvement. The progress made since the last inspection, including the maintenance of outstanding features, demonstrates a good capacity to continue moving forward and good value for money.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

The Early Years Foundation Stage gives children a sound start to their education. Parents greatly approve of the unit despite the drawbacks in terms of access for children to the outside area. They are justified in praising its homely and inclusive atmosphere in which children achieve well in their personal development. This is because provision for their welfare is good. Levels of ability on entry are generally above those expected for children starting Nursery. However, children's knowledge of letter sounds, and the early stages of writing and mathematical calculation, is more typical in terms of national expectations. By the end of Reception, the vast majority of children reach expected levels for their age and several go beyond them. This represents sound progress. Children have the capacity to do even better than this but the physical environment limits their progress. They cannot easily move in and out of doors to develop their play and extend their learning because they need to be closely supervised on the steps. Moreover, the outside area cannot be viewed from inside, which restricts its use. Leadership of the unit is satisfactory. Despite great efforts, leadership cannot gain a close knowledge of daily practice because the unit is too far away from the main building. Governors are very knowledgeable about issues relating to the unit and are trying hard to find solutions, which are currently at an early stage of development.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the use made of the information gained from assessments and observations of teaching to speed up the progress made by more able pupils, particularly in mathematics and science.
- Ensure that children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have easy and independent access to a high quality outside play space so that their achievement is at least good in all areas of learning.

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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?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
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?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

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	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	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
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	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 help when we inspected your school. We thoroughly enjoyed our visit because everyone was so friendly. You go to a good school, in which you develop into first-rate young people, who are concerned about those around you and the world at large.

Those of you that spoke to us during the day were very convinced about the special aspects of school life. Basically, you all feel very happy and safe at St Wilfrid's because all the adults take good care of you. I am pleased to report that you continue to reach above average standards by the end of Year 6, which represents good achievement. You do this because, as you told us, teaching is good and the curriculum is full of interesting things to do. I was enthralled with, among other things, tales of the Tudor drama and the two-mile walk back from Fountains Abbey in full costume and your e-twinning adventures with primary aged pupils in three other European countries.

Your parents are fully supportive of the school. Many of them wrote to us thankful for how you are educated. These letters include several from Polish families who applaud the way in which their children have been included and are making good progress.

I am asking the school to do two things to make it an even better place to learn. Your headteacher and senior leaders should make better use of the information collected from assessments of your work and observations in lessons. This is to help them identify where those of you who can manage even harder work, particularly in mathematics and science, can make faster progress. Secondly, children in the Early Years Foundation Stage need more regular opportunities to chose when they play outside to help them learn at a quicker rate.

You can help by responding positively to any additional challenges in mathematics and science. I know you can do it.