

St George's Roman Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121659
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	327543
Inspection dates	6–7 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Robert Robinson

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)	96
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 John Loughlin
Headteacher	Mrs Veronica Kennedy
Date of previous school inspection	12 October 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Overdale Eastfield Scarborough North Yorkshire YO11 3RE

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	6–7 November 2008
Inspection number	327543

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a small school, although the number on roll has increased substantially since the last inspection. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) are taught together in a joint Nursery and Reception class. The number of pupils entering or leaving the school at times other than the usual is much higher than normal. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. Very few pupils are at an early stage of learning to speak English as an additional language. Pupils attend from a wide area. Overall this area has higher levels of social and economic disadvantage than is average. An above average proportion of pupils is eligible for a free school meal. The proportion of pupils identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average.

The school has gained Activemark, Basic Skills Quality Mark and the local authority Inclusion Quality Mark awards. The school receives additional funding from the local authority for 'Schools in Challenging Circumstances'.

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 which follows its motto well 'At St George's RC School we learn to care and care to learn.' Increasing numbers of pupils are coming to the school because of its good reputation. Pupils' good personal development and well-being benefit from effective links with the local church and other schools.

Pupils make a good start to the day in the successful breakfast club. Harmonious relationships develop between staff, pupils, parents, grandparents and other carers during this time and pupils gain a good understanding of the need for a healthy start to the day. Pupils appreciate the care provided for them and enjoy the social aspects of school life before starting lessons.

Pupils have a good attitude to learning and behave well. This prepares them well for their future learning. As a result of the school's concerted efforts, attendance has improved since the last inspection and is now about average. Pupils willingly take on responsibilities to help the smooth running of the school.

By the end of Year 6, standards are at the national average. The provisional unvalidated 2008 Year 6 national test results, show that all pupils reached the level expected nationally (Level 4) in reading and writing and most achieved that level in mathematics and science. Other evidence gathered by inspectors showed that all pupils reach the expected standards in reading and writing in lessons and most reach these standards in mathematics and science. The role of subject leaders in monitoring pupils' progress is currently insufficiently developed. Although comprehensive information has been collated recently to analyse pupils' individual progress, this information is not yet used sufficiently by teachers to set targets for pupils or to give them guidance on how to improve their work, in order to further accelerate their progress.

The quality of teaching throughout the school is good and this enables pupils to achieve well. Lessons move at a brisk pace and are well planned to meet the needs of all groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to enable pupils to make good progress. Pupils behave well as a result of good management by teachers and are not distracted from their studies. The school's curriculum is good. Links are made between subjects, providing pupils with different opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills. A greater emphasis on investigative work in mathematics and science is adding to pupils' enjoyment of learning. Visits, visitors and links with other schools and the local church develop pupils' understanding of the local and wider community.

The leadership and management of the school have developed well since the last inspection and are good. The headteacher leads and manages the school successfully and is ably supported by governors and staff. Previous funding difficulties have been resolved: extra finances have been generated by the increased number of pupils attending the school and because the school has been identified as working in challenging circumstances. Governors are effective in supporting and challenging the school to improve further. Most parents are highly delighted with the education provided for their children. A typical comment summed up the feelings of the majority of parents, 'We feel very lucky to have such a lovely school in the heart of our community.'

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children's skills vary considerably on entry within year groups and from year to year. Generally children's skills are lower than those typical for this age, with a significant number having speech and language difficulties. Children settle quickly into school routines because of good teaching and exciting activities. They achieve well and make good progress relative to their starting points. Stimulating experiences indoors are matched to individuals' needs with an appropriate balance of child initiated and teacher directed work. Due to accommodation difficulties it is not possible to link fully learning indoors with outdoors, placing some limits on children's opportunities to practise skills in different contexts. By the end of the EYFS, children's skills are as typically expected in all their areas of learning though particularly good in personal, social and emotional development.

Children are well prepared for their future learning because of their sound acquisition of basic skills and good personal, social and emotional development. Leadership and management are good and have identified areas, including the need for additional outdoor facilities, to improve the present effective provision. Staff know and care for the children and their families well. Thorough assessments of children's academic and personal development help staff to assist them to make good progress. Parents praise the start their children have in the EYFS and the support they receive both before and after admission.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve subject leaders' effectiveness in checking on and improving pupils' learning.
- Make better use of information about pupils' attainment to set targets for individuals and groups and more rigorously check pupils' progress towards these targets.
- Strengthen the links between learning indoors and outdoors in the EYFS, in order to extend children's learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good throughout the school because of effective teaching based on a stimulating curriculum. In Years 1 and 2, pupils build well on their prior attainment in the EYFS and continue to make good progress. Standards by the end of Year 2 vary from year to year due to the movement of pupils to and from the school and the very small numbers of pupils in any year group. Results from national tests indicate that pupils reach broadly average standards overall at this Key Stage in reading, writing and mathematics. However, inspection evidence indicates that current Year 2 pupils are achieving well in their lessons. Pupils maintain good progress in Years 3 to 6. Unvalidated results of the 2008 Year 6 tests indicate particular strengths in English as well as improved standards in mathematics and science. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar good progress to others and many reach national expectations by the end of Year 6.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles. They particularly enjoy the healthy options provided at lunchtimes. Pupils enthuse about growing and eating vegetables they have planted and nurtured in school, such as marrows. A typical comment is: 'I can't wait to grow

my own food.' Pupils feel safe at school and confidently approach an adult if they have any concerns. Bullying rarely happens, but when it does speedy action by staff soon resolves conflicts. Pupils enjoy school and work well with others in groups and practical investigations. They are keen to improve facilities at the school and are actively encouraged to take a role in decision making through the school council. Their ideas resulted in the successful acquisition of funding for grounds improvement and playground equipment. Attendance has improved and is now about average. Behaviour is good overall. It is exemplary in many lessons, although very occasionally the behaviour of a small minority of boys is not as good as this. Aspects of pupils' moral and cultural development are well developed through the strong links the school has with the local community and the church. Their understanding of those less fortunate than themselves is good and enhanced through their fund-raising for both national and international charities. Pupils' understanding of cultures different to their own is less well developed. Pupils are well prepared for future life because of their good attitudes to learning and their sound grasp of basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress in lessons because they are well planned and small group work is linked effectively to pupils' prior attainment. Interactive whiteboards are used well to make learning more accessible. Teachers generally use questions well, although occasionally these are not quite focused enough for teachers to check individual pupils' understanding. Sometimes, teachers spend a little too long giving instructions rather than letting pupils practise their new learning. Pupils present their work neatly because of the high expectations that staff have of them. Teaching assistants play an important part in assisting all pupils to make good progress. Relationships between pupils and staff are positive. Pupils develop a good understanding of their work because they are encouraged to discuss and clarify their views with one another. Displays celebrate pupils' efforts and enjoyment of learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils gain a deepening understanding of the Christian faith as well as other major world faiths. They take an active part in the local community and are proud of their school. Links with another primary school in the local authority assist pupils' learning, particularly about the environment. Fewer opportunities are available for pupils to engage with those of a similar age from different cultural backgrounds. A recent review of the curriculum has successfully developed links between subjects. Already this is improving pupils' progress, particularly in writing and science. French tuition is now provided within lessons and pupils' are gaining in their knowledge of the language. A greater emphasis on experimentation and investigational work has added enjoyment to learning in mathematics and science. Pupils participate readily and successfully in the out-of-school activities, including sports competitions and a residential experience. Visits and visitors to school enrich pupils' learning. Examples include a visit to York when pupils gained opportunities to taste unfamiliar foods and a visiting poet captured pupils' imagination, resulting in them writing creative poetry. Subsequently, a poem written by older pupils about road safety was dramatically performed in assembly.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The pastoral care of pupils is a major strength of the school and is at the forefront of all its work. Child protection procedures and safeguarding requirements are in place and meet government requirements. Health and safety and risk assessments promote a safe environment. The results of a detailed survey, carried out by a nationally recognised external organisation, of pupils' views on health and behaviour are strongly directing the school's work. Girls' confidence is improving because, as a result of this survey, the school better understands and provides for their needs. Substantial improvements have been made through rigorous procedures and by working with parents to improve pupils' attendance. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is better in English than in mathematics. This marking is starting to indicate to pupils how well they are doing in relation to their targets and how to improve their work. However the implementation of this approach is at an early stage of development. The very recent introduction of learning logs for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is helping these pupils and their parents to understand what they have learned and their next steps in learning. As a result these pupils make good progress. These logs include individual education plans and sheets to record the progress towards their targets. A similar approach has not been implemented to benefit other pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school has good capacity to continue to improve. This is because of the positive impact of the improvements made since the last inspection on pupils' progress, the good quality of leadership and the school's accurate understanding of its strengths and of those areas which need to improve. The headteacher leads the school well and she has a thorough understanding of the next steps for development. Together with governors and other staff, much has been achieved since the last inspection. Parents appreciate the good quality of education provided for their children. Through their recommendations to others, the number of pupils on roll has increased. The governors are well informed and take their responsibilities seriously. Through frequent visits to the school they work with the staff to check the accuracy of the school's self-evaluation and to improve the school further. The tracking of pupils' progress and setting of targets are satisfactory as staff know the pupils well. Recent improvements to the systems for checking on pupils' progress over time are now being introduced throughout the school, although the role of subject leaders in this is not yet sufficiently well developed. Teachers are starting to give clearer information to pupils about how to improve their work and to set more challenging targets for pupils, in order to further accelerate their progress. Leaders promote most aspects of community cohesion well, and have identified the next steps in widening pupils' experiences of different cultures.

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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	3
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
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?	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	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**

Inspection of St George's Roman Catholic Primary School, Scarborough, YO11 3RE

Thank you for welcoming me to your school. I enjoyed the days I spent with you. The headteacher, other staff and the governors run the school well. Your parents are pleased that you get on well with your work and that the school provides you with a good education. The school cares for you well and helps you become responsible young people.

I was impressed by your generally good behaviour and interest in lessons. At all times you were polite and courteous. You enjoy learning and appreciate all the school provides, including extra-curricular activities and the breakfast club. I was pleased to notice that your attendance has improved since the last inspection – so keep it up. You are taught well and make good progress in your learning. The Nursery and Reception classes are providing the youngest children with a good start to their education. You progress well in Years 1 to 6 and the standards you reach by the time you leave school are improving and are similar to those of most other children of your age. For example, I was impressed that everyone in Year 6 in 2008 left the school with the expected skills in reading and writing.

To make your school even better, I have asked the governors and your headteacher to help the staff who are in charge of subjects to check more closely on how well you are doing. The headteacher has gathered all the information about your progress together. I want the teachers to use this information to set targets for individuals and groups of pupils so that everyone achieves as well as they can. I have also asked the school to make sure that when Nursery and Reception children take part in activities they can choose whether to do so either indoors or outdoors.

I enjoyed talking to you about your work and watching you learn. I hope you will keep doing your best and I wish you well for the future.