

St Michael and All Angels Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106641
Local Authority	Barnsley
Inspection number	336712
Inspection dates	25–26 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Rosemary Eaton

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	142
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Eddie Godard
Headteacher	Mr Peter Davison
Date of previous school inspection	3 July 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors observed five lessons, each taught by a different teacher, and held meetings with staff, pupils and the Chair of the Governing Body. They observed the school's work, and looked at policies, including those related to safeguarding, assessment and other records and displays of pupils' work. The 28 questionnaires returned by parents and carers were analysed in addition to those from staff and pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- how effectively teaching and the curriculum meet the needs of girls
- the degree of challenge lessons pose to more-able pupils, to confirm that they are working at high enough levels
- the school's arrangements for promoting regular attendance and their effectiveness in meeting the school's targets
- the rigour with which leaders analyse and use assessment information, including that for the Early Years Foundation Stage, in order to drive improvement.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average primary school. The large majority of pupils are White British, but the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups has increased since the last inspection and is now above average. A very small minority are of Gypsy, Roma or Traveller heritage and a similar proportion, mostly of Polish heritage, speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average, as is the proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities. A higher than average proportion of pupils joins the school at other than the usual time of admission. The school has gained a range of accreditation including the Healthy Schools and Bronze Eco Schools Awards and the Activemark. The deputy headteacher joined the school at the start of the current academic year. In September 2007, the school became part of a federation with two other local Catholic primary schools. Each of the three schools has its own headteacher but they share a governing body. The school's breakfast club is managed by the governing body.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. 'Everyone is treated the same, but as their own person.' This pupil's observation highlights one of the school's outstanding features; the consideration given to making sure that all groups and individuals have equally good opportunities for success, tailored to their particular needs. Since the previous inspection, determined and reflective leadership has led to improvements in many aspects of the school's work, more of which are now outstanding. For example, pupils feel entirely safe, because they are cared for exceptionally well, with excellent attention paid to safeguarding them. A range of monitoring activities and thorough analysis of assessment information provide leaders with an accurate evaluation of the school's performance. Areas of relative weakness are being tackled systematically. As a result, attainment in English, especially writing, has risen significantly in recent years, helping to confirm the school's good capacity to continue to improve.

Attainment is broadly average. However, the levels pupils typically reach in mathematics are lower than those in English. Despite this discrepancy, all groups of pupils make good progress overall from starting points that are nearly always below the expectations for their age. Although teaching in mathematics is good, there is not the same consistency of approach that the school has established so firmly in English. Additionally, pupils do not have such extensive opportunities to apply their mathematical skills in other subjects.

The curriculum is currently being overhauled to inject more frequent memorable experiences and to fully meet the needs of learners in the 21st century. The impact of the work undertaken so far has not all been evaluated formally, although there has been very positive feedback from pupils. 'Trips are really interesting', one remarked, 'and we use lots of technology.' Nevertheless, the school has already identified where there is scope for further development, such as the need to provide more activities that enable pupils to be enterprising.

The school works extremely successfully to promote community cohesion, including the forging of highly constructive links with all groups of parents and carers. As a result, its diverse population comes together to create an exceptionally harmonious community. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. It leads to extremely good behaviour, because pupils consider how their actions affect other people. They form friendships across cultural boundaries and all groups are free to be proud of their own heritage.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Raise attainment in mathematics to the same level as that in English, by:
 - ensuring that teaching in mathematics is as focused and fluent as in English
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills to their work in other subjects.
- Build on recent developments in the curriculum, by:
 - evaluating their impact and using particularly good practice to plan next steps forward
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to take part in enterprise activities.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils arrive at lessons with very positive attitudes to learning and they apply themselves diligently to their tasks. They try to be as independent as possible, continuing to work hard when adults are concentrating on other groups in the class. Pupils cooperate well with each other, for example, when asked to talk to a partner about their ideas. Their keenness to answer questions is plain to see and pupils support each other by listening attentively when others are contributing to discussions. Just occasionally, the pace of learning slows when the flow of pupils' thoughts is interrupted by adults intervening too often or introducing a new activity too quickly.

Boys' attainment is often higher than that of girls. The school's analysis of its assessment information indicates that this anomaly is linked to the starting points of individual pupils. In this school, each pupil has a greater than usual impact on overall data, because the number of pupils in each year group is small. Nevertheless, it is clear that all groups, including the most able and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make equally good progress and achieve well. The school's highest attainers include pupils of Gypsy, Roma or Traveller heritage and others who speak English as an additional language. In the past, attainment in English was lower than that in mathematics. Performance in writing has improved so much that by the end of Year 6, nearly all pupils write with enthusiasm and fluency. Mathematics has now emerged as a somewhat weaker subject.

Pupils are adamant that bullying or racist behaviour is not a problem in their school and are very clear about how to respond should they have any concerns. They are well informed about how to be healthy and each day, pupils in Key Stage 2 take turns to lead whole-school sessions of aerobic activity. This is just one way in which pupils contribute to improving the school. Year 6 pupils have buddies in the Reception Year, and are able and willing to offer a helping hand whenever needed. Pupils take part in events in the wider community, such as clearing litter or entertaining elderly residents and they also raise significant amounts for charity. The school does not meet its challenging attendance targets. Most absences are an outcome of either pupils' lifestyle or holidays during term-time. Pupils are prepared well for the next stage in their education, for example, by their ability to apply their writing and information and communication technology (ICT) skills and personal qualities such as their appreciation of cultural

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diversity.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Teachers use assessment information to good effect in order to make sure that all groups, including the more-able boys and girls, are set work that poses the right amount of challenge. Teachers and teaching assistants provide effective support for individuals, and constantly check that no-one is struggling. Teachers have adopted agreed strategies for teaching writing and they use these consistently. For example, ICT in such forms as video clips or audio recordings of pupils reading their work, are frequently employed to stimulate learning. Teachers repeat mantras, for instance, 'What comes to mind goes to paper', to remind pupils about helpful advice, in this case, that they should write at once and edit later. In mathematics lessons, teachers do not always display the same confidence and clarity of purpose. This occasionally means that some pupils are presented with more ways to solve problems than they can cope with and too many different ideas and activities are packed into the lesson.

The curriculum is enriched well through a wide range of visits, visitors, and days during

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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which a particular theme is pursued and the highly popular clubs. Partnerships, for example, with sports coaches, enable the school to offer activities such as a martial arts club which would otherwise be unavailable to pupils. The views of parents, carers and pupils are increasingly taken into account when plans are drawn up. For example, girls asked to learn more about animals. As a result, teachers recently designed a topic entitled 'Rumble in the Jungle'. Great care is taken to ensure that themes are interpreted differently in each class, so pupils learn the skills and knowledge appropriate for their age. Pupils have plenty of good quality opportunities to use their writing and ICT skills during work linked to topics. There are fewer planned occasions for them to apply what they have learned in mathematics, such as organising profit-making activities.

Pupils and their families are all known extremely well by the school and are in turn entirely confident about the quality of care provided. A close eye is kept on pupils whose circumstances have made them potentially vulnerable. If they or any other pupils need additional support, such as bereavement counselling or an extra boost to their learning, they are quickly offered the help they need, often by involving outside agencies. Good behaviour is promoted at all times. For example, when playing at lunchtime, pupils have plenty of constructive activities, are supervised attentively. The fun of aerobics before they return to lessons means that any disagreements are left behind. Approaches to encouraging regular attendance are wide-ranging and are reviewed and refined regularly. The school has gone so far as to change the pattern of its holidays, to provide parents with opportunities to take advantage of off-peak holiday prices without their children being absent from school. Arrangements to welcome new pupils and to prepare those who are leaving are thorough and responsive to individual needs.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

All staff with leadership responsibilities fulfil their roles conscientiously and contribute well to monitoring the quality of teaching. Teachers reflect on their own performance and readily share particularly successful approaches. In the same way as pupils, teachers are encouraged to 'magpie' good ideas. The headteacher strikes a very effective balance between giving staff opportunities to use their initiative whilst he maintains a close overview of developments and their impact. An evaluation of changes to the curriculum is planned in order to check that it is having the effects intended.

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Equality of opportunity is pursued vigorously. For instance, an audit was recently carried out to confirm that teachers ask for both girls' and boys' responses to their questions. Pupils from particular groups or with gifts and talents are steered towards clubs and activities that help them to make the most of their time in school. Community cohesion is promoted extensively and imaginatively. Members of the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities visit the school to provide first-hand insights into their culture and lifestyle. The school has begun to share its expertise in teaching writing with other schools nationally, having been identified for the excellence of its practice. Safeguarding is given the highest possible priority by leaders, governors and staff. Their work is enhanced by open and highly positive relationships with parents and carers including those whose circumstances may traditionally act as barriers to involvement with schools. Through the federation, the governing body is able to provide a wider perspective on planned developments. It deploys funds flexibly so that, for example, extensions to classrooms are to take place sooner than would otherwise be possible.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

When they join the Reception Year, children's skills are typically below or well below age-related expectations. Sensitive and skilful teaching, with expectations of children's behaviour made very clear, mean that children quickly begin to develop skills, such as listening carefully and following instructions. As they start to learn to take turns, explore their environment, and communicate with other children and adults, they begin to make good progress in all areas of their learning. Nevertheless, at the end of the year, many

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children have still not reached the expected levels. A good range of interesting activities encourages children to make choices and be independent. These are balanced with others led by adults, for example, to develop their knowledge of number. Assessments of children's learning, which include contributions from parents and carers, are used well to make sure that different groups of children have work which meets their particular needs. The provision is well led and managed with clear plans to keep it improving. Currently, a focus is to find ways of enlarging the discrete outdoor accommodation so that, for example, children can choose freely to play with resources, such as wheeled vehicles rather than needing staff to arrange for this. Children enjoy the warm welcome, good food and time to play with their friends, offered by the breakfast club.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The proportion of questionnaires returned was smaller than usual. The parents and carers who did respond were unanimous that the school keeps their child safe, provides good teaching, encourages a healthy lifestyle and is well led and managed. They are all happy with their child's experience of the school. The inspection endorses these positive opinions. A very small minority of parents and carers expressed a concern about issues related to their own experience of the school. No evidence to endorse these views was found during the inspection.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Michael and All Angels Catholic Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 28 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 142 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	19	68	8	29	1	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	18	64	9	32	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	13	46	13	46	1	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	17	61	9	32	1	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	19	68	8	29	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	15	54	10	36	2	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	11	39	16	57	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	10	36	13	46	1	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	13	46	13	46	1	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	10	36	16	57	1	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	9	32	17	61	1	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	16	57	11	39	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	19	68	7	25	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



27 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Michael and All Angels Catholic Primary School, Barnsley, S73 8AF

Thank you for being so friendly and welcoming to the inspection team when we visited your school. It was a real pleasure to meet you and see you working and playing. I would particularly like to thank the pupils who met me to talk about the school. They helped a great deal and are a credit to the school. At the end of the inspection, I judged that yours is a good school. I know that you agree with me.

Here are some of the school's best features:

- you behave extremely well and try hard to consider other people
- you feel completely safe in school, because the adults take such excellent care of you
- the school makes sure you each have the same opportunities to be successful
- you learn a great deal about children whose backgrounds are different from your own and you all get on together exceptionally well
- you make good progress because you have good teaching
- you become confident and expressive writers and the displays of your work are very impressive
- your headteacher and all the adults in school make sure that the school is improving all the time.

To help them in this work, I have asked them to do two things:

- to make sure that you reach the same levels in mathematics as you do in English: at present, you do not do quite as well
- to check that the new curriculum is working well and provide you with some opportunities to plan and organise activities that give you practise at budgeting and handling money.

You can help by continuing to be keen and hard-working learners. I want to send each one of you and all the adults in school my very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Rosemary Eaton

Lead inspector

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