

St Columba's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107326
Local Authority	Bradford
Inspection number	336870
Inspection dates	13–14 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Terry McDermott

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	318
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Bob Burton
Headteacher	Mr Peter Spillane
Date of previous school inspection	15 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 24 lessons. All 14 teachers were observed teaching, the majority of them twice. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, staff and members of the governing body. Telephone conversations were held with a small number of parents and carers. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at work in pupils' books, the school development plan, minutes of governing body meetings, and reports from the School Improvement Partner. Responses from 66 parents and carers to the Ofsted questionnaire were analysed and considered, along with questionnaires completed by pupils in Key Stage 2, and staff.

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

- the consistency and effectiveness of teaching throughout the school, since this had been identified as an area for improvement at the previous inspection
- the effectiveness of leadership and management in taking measures to raise standards, which had been similarly identified at the previous inspection
- the use teachers make of assessment information to set challenging work that meets the learning needs of all pupils.

Information about the school

This larger- than- average school serves the parish of St Mary. Girls outnumber boys more than in most schools. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average, as is the proportion of those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with statements of special educational needs. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average but rising, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language. Currently, this is broadly average, with a growing number of pupils coming from Eastern Europe. The school has Healthy School's status and holds Sports Activemark. The school operates a daily breakfast club, and an after-school care club for pupils.

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. It has made solid improvements to almost all aspects of its work over the last three years. Children join the Nursery with skills that are much lower than those expected nationally, especially in communication. Pupils make good and sometimes outstanding progress through the school. Their attainment when they leave school at the end of Year 6 is broadly average.

Pupils say they enjoy coming to school because they feel safe, well looked after, and because, 'We get to do exciting stuff.' This is reflected in their attendance which, not least because of the relentless work of the school in following up absence, is now above average. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good because of their constant exposure to the school's strongly held values of respect and forgiveness. It is shown in their reverent participation in reflective prayer. Though the ageing building is complex and in places worn, the school provides a welcoming, very harmonious, calm and colourful environment for learning.

Teaching is good overall, though there are inconsistencies in the pace and independence of learning in some lessons. Classrooms usually have a buzz of practical activities where pupils are beginning to take the skills learned in one subject and apply them across a range of other subjects. The marking of pupils' work is good and helps them to understand what they need to do next to improve.

The curriculum is good. An impressive variety of sporting, artistic, creative and enterprise activities, developed in collaboration with a wide range of partners, adds reality to learning in lessons. These are successfully raising pupils' aspirations and widening their horizons. Good care, guidance and support for all pupils helps them to manage their difficulties well. Well planned and delivered support for those pupils who need most assistance is instrumental in ensuring they make good progress.

The issues identified for improvement at the last inspection have been dealt with successfully. The school is accurate in its self-evaluation and has a very clear picture of where it could be even more effective. Governors meet their statutory responsibilities fully. Leadership and management at all levels throughout the school are good. Each adult has clearly defined roles and responsibilities, and can see where his or her work fits within 'the big picture'. Staff morale is good. Though the full impact of recent developments has yet to be seen on older pupils' attainment, the school has good capacity to make further improvements.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science by:
 - ensuring that all lessons move forward smartly from one challenging learning task to another
 - ensuring that every opportunity is taken to get pupils fully involved in active independent learning

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

Pupils' learning in lessons is good. They have good attitudes to work, listen carefully to instructions from the teacher, and to each other, and are keen to be fully involved in practical learning activities. They collaborate enthusiastically because they get on so well together, and because they understand what they are trying to learn. This was demonstrated clearly in an outstanding Year 4 lesson on fractions where energetic discussion ensured that all pupils understood the equivalence of halves, quarters and eighths. Reliable information in the school's accurate monitoring and tracking system, indicates that pupils are now making consistently good progress throughout the school. There is no evidence of underachievement by any group of pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, about one third of the school's population, achieve as well as other pupils.

Pupils' overall personal outcomes are good, because adults in school constantly role model calmness and tolerance. From an early age, pupils are friendly, well mannered and get on together. They are proud to be members of St Columba's school. Around 50 pupils attend the daily breakfast club, supervised by school staff, which gets the day off to good start. Pupils say that they feel safe and know they can get help should the need arise from adults, who they say they trust. Their behaviour is good, especially in lessons where they show positive attitudes to learning. They speak with certainty that bullying does not occur, but they know what to do if it does happen. They are equally sure about avoiding the dangers they may encounter because, 'Our teachers have told us to be sensible and good.' They know that, 'When you run it makes your heart stronger.' and they eat their fruits and salads with gusto. Pupils are willing to take on responsibility, either specifically as school councillors, or playground buddies, or more generally in and around classrooms. Their understanding of the world around them is strengthened through very generous charitable fund-raising for the Padre Pio Centre for homeless people in Bradford, and further afield, supporting Water Aid in Africa. The impressive positive personal attributes of respect and forgiveness that pupils adopt, and their good attendance in school, indicate that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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

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	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
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	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is good. Examples of outstanding lessons were seen in all three key stages. All lessons are typified by the excellent relationships between pupils and adults. Teachers create a very positive and supportive climate for learning by the way they communicate and interact with pupils. The very best lessons move forward at a fast pace, and pupils become engrossed in the challenging work they have been set. They become oblivious to distractions and interventions by teachers are minimal. In a small number of lessons, learning slows when teachers spend too long talking about what pupils are going to learn, instead of letting them get on with work and with making decisions independently. Teachers complete regular and accurate assessments of the progress pupils make. This usually results in work being set that matches pupils' learning needs well. Consistently good marking provides helpful guidance for pupils on how to get better.

Effective efforts have been made to widen the curriculum by providing a range of stimulating activities which link subjects together and make learning real. Pupils find those generated by 'Enterprise Angels' particularly exciting, with, for example, Healthy Jelly and Photo Fantasies encouraging collaboration as well as making a healthy profit! Visits to museums, such as Bagshaw Hall, and residential stays to Robin Wood outdoor education centre are valuable contributors to pupils' independence and personal development. A small number of pupils also attend a well run after school club where they are able to participate in sporting and other activities, or complete homework if they so wish.

The quality of care, guidance and support is good. Every pupil truly matters at this

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school, and it is shown in the well-placed support that they receive. Staff know pupils and families well, and this enables prompt, effective and well understood interventions to be made as and when issues arise. The work undertaken by adults to develop confidence and raise pupils' self-esteem, including follow-up work on irregular attendance, is consistent and successful. This impacts well on pupils' personal development and fosters a keen desire to learn.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The well balanced senior leadership team sets the tone of shared responsibility. Staff morale is high and all staff have a clear understanding of their roles. School self-evaluation is accurate because of regular monitoring of the quality of learning taking place in lessons, though this mainly still rests with senior leaders. All teachers are fully involved in accurately assessing and evaluating the progress pupils are making. Governance is good. Governors are knowledgeable, active and give good support to the school. They are keen to help the school move forward and are holding the school to account for its performance with increasing rigour. These very positive developments have taken place in the last two years and their full impact has yet to be seen in the attainment of older pupils.

Provision for the promotion of community cohesion is good. The school is at the centre of the community it serves and has improving links further afield which help pupils to recognise and value diversity. The effective partnership the school has with parents underpins this. In this harmonious and happy school, adults work successfully and relentlessly to ensure that all forms of inequality are addressed. There is no discrimination here. Because promoting pupils' individual interests is at the core of all its work, the school takes its responsibilities for child protection and safeguarding very seriously. Current requirements for safeguarding are met well. The school gives good value for money.

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

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

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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

When children join the Nursery their skills and understanding are well below those normally expected for their age, particularly in language and communication, and in their personal, social and emotional development. Because links between the school and parents and carers are good, children adapt to school routines very quickly, and learn to play and work together effectively. Teaching is good, and this enables children to make good progress in all areas of learning, although most do not reach the expected levels for their age when they move into Year 1. Warm and positive relationships ensure that children are safe, happy and ready to learn. Behaviour is consistently good as children share and play together well. There is a good balance between activities led by adults and those that the children choose for themselves, both indoors and outside. The good provision is generally attractive, though some of the resources are showing signs of age and wear.

Leadership and management are good. Adults provide good role models for the children who, as a result, quickly develop good social and emotional skills. The cooperation and teamwork of adults is a strong feature which ensures children's welfare and safety, for example, when they are free to explore their environment. Adults monitor children's progress carefully, and use the information well to plan the next steps they need to take to move on. Arrangements for transition from Reception class to Year 1 are good, and the children currently in Reception are confidently and eagerly looking forward to their move into Year 1 in September.

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

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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

Parents and carers have overwhelmingly positive views about the school. They were unanimous that their children enjoy school and are safe there. Inspectors agree with these views. A very small minority of parents and carers expressed concerns about the progress their children make, how well their children are prepared for the future, their behaviour, the consideration of parents' and carers' views, and how well the school is led and managed. Inspectors looked specifically at these, especially the first, speaking with several pupils at different times. They could find no significant evidence to substantiate these views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Columba's 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 66 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 318 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	46	70	20	30	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	40	61	26	39	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	39	59	24	36	3	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	39	59	23	35	3	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	41	62	24	36	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	37	56	25	38	2	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	30	45	33	50	1	2	1	2
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)	27	41	29	44	4	6	2	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	34	52	30	45	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	26	39	33	50	4	6	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	26	39	32	48	4	6	2	3
The school is led and managed effectively	26	39	31	47	6	9	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	39	59	26	39	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.



15 July 2010.

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Columba's Catholic Primary School, Bradford, BD4 9PY

Thank you very much for being so polite and helpful to us when we inspected your school recently. It was really nice to be with friendly and confident young people, who always said hello very politely, who are proud of being part of their school community, and who enjoy learning.

We found that St Columba's is a good school, which has steadily improved almost every part of its work since it was last inspected. Those adults who lead the school have worked hard pulling everything together to ensure that you learn a lot in lessons and make good progress over time. Every adult in the school strives, successfully, to make sure you are safe, happy and well looked after from the time you join Nursery to the time you leave Year 6.

We also found some things the school could do even better, and which would ensure that you reach higher standards in English, mathematics and science than you do now. So I want the teachers in school to:

- ensure that all lessons move forward quickly from one interesting and challenging piece of work to another
- ensure that every opportunity is taken to get each of you to work independently and think things through for yourselves.

You can help the school to get even better by keeping your attendance as high as it already is, and by continuing to work as hard in lessons as you do now.

Good luck to you all for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mr Terry McDermott

Lead inspector

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