

St Hilda's Roman Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121658
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	339990
Inspection dates	18–19 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Joy Frost HMI

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	51
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs M Ventress
Headteacher	Miss Pamela Crabtree
Date of previous school inspection	1 May 2007
School address	Waterstead Lane Whitby North Yorkshire YO21 1PZ
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. The inspectors spent the majority of time looking at learning. They visited eight lessons and observed all teachers at least twice. They held meetings with governors, staff and two groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, looked at tracking data and the results of the school's monitoring and other documentation. Inspectors also scrutinised the governing body minutes, the school improvement plan, all pupils' work in mathematics and English books, and analysed the six staff, 14 pupil and 20 parents and carers questionnaires.

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

- the progress of pupils in lessons to assess if teaching is sufficiently challenging for all pupils but especially for the more able pupils and boys
- how well teachers use assessment information to plan lessons which meet the needs of all pupils
- the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage class
- how effectively leaders and managers at all levels, including the governing body, embed ambition and drive improvement leading to sustained improved outcomes for all pupils.

Information about the school

This is a much smaller than average primary school which mainly serves Catholic parishes in Whitby and nearby Sleights. Many pupils travel to school from the surrounding area. There are currently 51 pupils on roll and the school is under-subscribed. The proportion of pupils who are entitled to a free school meal is well below the national average, as is the proportion identified as having a special educational need and/or disability. The vast majority of pupils come from White British heritages.

The pupils are currently taught in three classes: a Reception/Year 1 class, a Year 2/3 class and one class for Year 4/5/6 pupils. The organisation of classes changes annually due to the numbers on roll each year. Since the last inspection, two of the four staff have changed and class 1 and class 3 are taught by two different teachers across the week. The Early Years Foundation Stage provision is within the mixed Reception/Year 1 class. The headteacher has a half time teaching commitment and teaches the second half of the week in class 3.

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

Pupils in this school rightly enjoy their education and achieve well. They are encouraged from day one to be independent learners and to take responsibility for their own actions. There is a calm, tranquil atmosphere in which all pupils are respected and their individual needs are met. Teachers know individual pupils and their families very well. Pupils' attainment in published tests is at least average and often better in English, mathematics and science, but it varies year-on-year. Comparisons to national averages are often unreliable because of the very small numbers of pupils in some cohorts. In the lessons observed during the inspection, all pupils were attaining at least age-related expectations and many pupils were attaining higher. Pupils' writing is a slightly weaker element and is the focus of the school's work this year.

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good. Pupils are articulate, caring individuals who have a good moral code and are able to reflect on current dilemmas. For example, pupils were able to reflect on the occasions when they had been 'tempted', while learning about Lent in a religious education lesson. However, pupils' knowledge of cultural diversity is less well-developed. Pupils' understanding of how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations is excellent; for example, by visits to a local hospital to learn about first aid through the Injury Minimisation Programme, which also allays pupils' fears about visiting hospitals. Opportunities to reinforce these messages are skilfully woven through curriculum topics resulting in pupils feeling very safe in school; a view which was confirmed by parents and carers in the returned inspection questionnaires.

Teachers work effectively to meet the needs of the sometimes vast ranges of ability in one class. They organise learning so that pupils work together in a range of ways. Older pupils often help and support younger ones with reading and in discussions, which enables all pupils to make good progress. During the inspection pupils had many opportunities to work in pairs, groups and independently and feed back their learning to the class at the end of the lesson. In some sessions for the oldest pupils, the more able pupils were not given challenging enough activities to extend their learning even further. All lessons seen during the inspection incorporated good use of information and communication technology (ICT) to improve learning.

Teachers are constantly seeking new ways of assessing how well pupils are learning. They have introduced the national Assessing Pupil Progress materials which are working well, but are not yet fully embedded across the school in all subjects. The data collected is helping teachers know what pupils have attained but is not yet being used effectively alongside the marking of pupils' work to tell pupils what the next steps in their learning are. Pupils do not always have opportunities to respond to the marking comments and

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edit their work.

The headteacher sets a very clear direction for the school. She has high expectations which are understood by pupils, staff and parents. The governing body is committed to supporting the staff and pupils. However, it is not yet fully involved in setting the strategic direction of the school or in fully challenging its work. Most aspects of the school's work are formally monitored, such as pupil progress and teaching and learning. The systems for tracking pupils' progress are cumbersome and do not always show teachers the small steps of progress that some pupils have made. The information is also contained in a range of documents which makes it harder for the school to evaluate the impact some actions are having on pupils' learning.

The improvements the staff have made to the provision and learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage, in maintaining an excellent ethos and pupils' good progress through changes in staffing and organisation, show that they have a good capacity to continue to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards further in writing by 2011, by:
 - improving the use of assessment data to inform lesson planning and providing more challenging activities for the more able pupils in Key Stage 2
 - improving the consistency of teachers' marking comments so that they tell pupils what they specifically need to do to improve their work.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that more formal monitoring takes place and the data collected is recorded in a more systematic way so that the impact of actions can be more easily measured
 - improving the involvement of the governing body in challenging the work of the school.
- Improve the opportunities for pupils to understand what it means to live in a multicultural society.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils' achievement is good and they say that they enjoy school. They start school with varying experience of Nursery provision, with some having had little experience of a formal school setting. They leave as confident young people who are able to work independently, have high levels of concentration and an enthusiasm for learning. In lessons observed during the inspection, pupils' ability to engage with their teachers and each other was a real strength. Work in pupils' books shows a good level of presentation, accurate spelling and punctuation and an ability to show thinking and working out. Pupils have made good progress from their previous starting points and there is little variation in the progress of different groups throughout the school.

Pupils' knowledge and understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle is good and their

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knowledge about keeping themselves safe is outstanding. This can be seen in the playground where all ages play cooperatively and help and support each other. At playtimes, the majority of pupils take part in activities which involve exercise through the wide range of playground equipment chosen by the pupils. All older pupils have received Junior Sports Leaders training and they plan activities for younger pupils at lunchtimes and playtimes. Pupils said that there are no incidents of bullying or harassment.

The school council is active and the whole school is involved in many charity fund-raising events across the year. They raise money for local and international charities, for example, the Air Ambulance and charities to support Aids orphans and baby feeding projects in the Sudan. Pupils regularly take part in music and other local festivals.

Pupils develop good work-place skills. Their ability to work diligently and independently and the above average attendance of the majority of pupils prepare them well for their future economic well-being. Attendance this academic year is satisfactory for the first time, due to an increased amount of families taking holidays in term time because of farming commitments or the seasonal nature of their work. The school has acted promptly to reduce these absences by sending a letter to all families requiring parents and carers to apply formally to the headteacher and chair of governors who then conduct an interview before authorising any holiday requests.

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	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2

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	
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	2

How effective is the provision?

Provision across the school is good. Teachers work well together to ensure seamless transition arrangements across the week for the two classes where teachers' job-share. There were many strengths in the teaching seen during the inspection. The opportunities for pupils to work in different groupings across the week, in different subjects and to use talk partners productively to share their ideas aids their learning. For example, in discussing the salaries of footballers compared to nurses and doctors salaries, pupils were able to offer mature and well thought out reasons for and against the argument. They were then able to investigate a piece of persuasive text to identify the main features of persuasive writing which helped them to write their own argument on a different topic.

Teachers' planning caters for at least three levels of ability in each lesson. However, the data that teachers collect about pupils' attainment is not always used to ensure that the more able pupils of all ages have activities which are sufficiently challenging in writing. In most lessons there were good links made between different subjects. In a very good mathematics lesson, eight- and nine-year-olds were linking work on coordinates, right angles and compass directions well to other work in geography. Information and communication technology was used very well to support and develop learning. Pupils were able to use a programmable toy to find their way around a map using coordinates to find treasure. The more able pupils were able to compare and contrast two different computer programmes to learn the difference between four and eight point compass directions. In this lesson the progress of all groups and ages was good. There is an appropriate range of visits and visitors and good extra-curricular provision to enrich the curriculum. With only three teachers teaching at any one time, good use is made of sports coaches and other professionals.

The care and guidance that pupils receive is tailored to individual needs well. Staff know all pupils and encourage them to be independent, take responsibility and support each other. Pupils' pastoral and spiritual needs are developed well through daily collective worship and opportunities for the older pupils to attend a 'Retreat'. Pupils who need extra help or have a special educational need and/or disability receive good support. They have individual education plans which involve parents and carers, and they make good progress. There are good links with health and other outside agencies to support families and the school is developing good links with local secondary schools.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

<p>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</p>	
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<p>The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning</p>	2
	3
<p>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</p>	2
<p>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</p>	2

How effective are leadership and management?

In the tight-knit leadership team, all staff are involved in accurate self-evaluation and the school improvement plan is detailed and focused on the right issues. However, the monitoring and evaluation that takes place is often informal and incidental through meetings and discussions and not always recorded formally. Nevertheless, the leadership team has made many positive improvements since the last inspection. These include revising and improving provision for the youngest pupils in the Reception/Year 1 class. They have also revised the curriculum and the involvement of subject leaders in self-evaluation. All staff lead several different areas of the curriculum and have taken on new areas recently. They have attended relevant training and work with their colleagues to improve pupils' progress in their subjects further. This is evident in the revised strategy to teach phonics across the school in ability groups, and to involve teaching assistants more fully. Such actions have improved pupils' knowledge and understanding of phonics and have helped to improve pupils' reading and writing.

The governing body has ensured that all statutory duties are met and that procedures to safeguard pupils are robust and consistently applied so that pupils are safe in school. They promote equality and tackle discrimination well and there are no significant differences between the attainment of different groups of pupils. The procedures to promote community cohesion are in place but are not yet fully developed. Pupils are aware of diversity but have an underdeveloped understanding of different faiths and religions and what it means to live in a multicultural society.

There are very good links with parents, carers and outside agencies to support learning. Parents are encouraged to be involved in the life of the school and their views are regularly sought. They support their children with homework and through attending subject workshops. Communication with parents is regular and much appreciated. A range of partnerships with outside agencies, other schools and health agencies provide activities that this small staff cannot, and these contribute to the school's achievement of good value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

<p>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning</p>	2
	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	3
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	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Most children enter the Reception class with skills that are broadly similar to other children of that age. They make good progress from their starting points. Assessment, observation and recording of children's learning are in place and are clearly used to inform the planning of activities to meet the individual needs of all children. Every child has an individual 'learning journey' that records their progress across the six areas of learning; contributions to this are made by staff, children and parents.

Children are provided with a broad range of adult-led and child-initiated learning activities in a well-resourced indoor and outdoor learning environment. Staff organise the daily plan of accessing activities well so that children are able to participate eagerly and enthusiastically in both classroom-based and outdoor activities. Children are clearly encouraged to consider their safety and that of others in their play. They are provided with fruit, which they eat with relish. However, the opportunity to extend children's understanding of a healthy lifestyle is not maximised at snack time.

Staff work very well together as a team and have clear systems in place to ensure children's individual needs are met. They are very good role models to the children and provide a calm, comfortable environment where children behave well and are caring towards each other. Each child has an identified key worker who is known to parents as well as children. This system is built on the individual needs of children and the staff working pattern. Parents are involved in the provision and speak highly of the quality of learning, support and care.

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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

Nearly half of families responded to the parental questionnaires. They were overwhelmingly supportive of the school's work in all areas. They were particularly positive about how safe their children feel, the good levels of care, guidance and support and the communication offered by the school. Parents were most appreciative of the good teaching and how well the school supports their children's learning. Inspection evidence supports these views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Hilda's Roman 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 inspector received 20 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 51 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	20	74	7	26	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	21	78	6	22	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	19	70	8	30	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	19	70	8	30	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	22	81	5	19	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	21	78	5	19	1	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	19	70	8	30	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)	17	63	10	37	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	19	70	8	30	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	15	56	11	41	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	16	59	11	41	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	20	74	7	26	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	20	74	7	26	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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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.



22 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Hilda's Roman Catholic Primary School, Whitby, YO21 1PZ

Thank you for the wonderful reception you gave my colleague and I when we visited your school recently. You were eager to talk to us and tell us how much you enjoy your school and this helped us to reach decisions about how well you are doing. We agree with your views that St Hilda's is a good school and you all achieve well. Some aspects of the school's work are even better than that.

- You are exceedingly knowledgeable about how to keep yourselves safe from harm and how to live a healthy lifestyle.
- Your involvement as junior sports leaders is helping you all stay fit and healthy at lunch and playtimes.
- You are very caring and thoughtful young people.
- You work very hard in lessons and your behaviour is good at all times.

I have asked your teachers and governors to make some changes which I think will make your school even better. These are:

- To improve your writing by making sure that when teachers assess your work they use this information to help them plan more challenging activities for those of you who can do harder work and by improving marking.
- To improve your knowledge and understanding of people from other faiths and cultures so that you have a better understanding of what it means to live in a multicultural society.

I have also asked your teachers and governors to make some improvements to the way they record and check on your progress.

Yours sincerely

Joy Frost

Her Majesty's Inspector

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