

St Hedda's Roman Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121651
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	359056
Inspection dates	22–23 September 2010
Reporting inspector	Clive Petts

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	26
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	V McLaughlin
Headteacher	Mrs Palmer
Date of previous school inspection	25 April 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. The inspector visited six lessons and observed three class teachers. He held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils, analysed 18 questionnaire responses from parents and carers and looked at questionnaires from staff and pupils. The inspector also looked at development plans, pupils' progress data, documents relating to the safeguarding of pupils, school policies and procedures, scrutinised pupils' current and past work and spoke to the School Improvement Partner.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work and looked in detail at the following:

- The impact of teaching and learning on current achievement, rates and patterns of progress and the attainment of pupils.
- The success of the Early Years Foundation Stage in exploiting the available provision, both indoors and outdoors.
- The extent to which senior leaders are developing the capacity to further improve pupils' attainment and progress.

Information about the school

St Hedda's is a smaller-than-average village primary school serving the surrounding villages and farms. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage and none speaks English as an additional language. A very small minority is known to be eligible for free school meals. One third of the pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities, which is above average. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs. The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of a very small group of Reception Year children in one of two mixed-age classes. A significant proportion of Reception children have limited pre-school experience. The school has been awarded the Dyslexia Friendly Quality Mark.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is an outstanding school in which pupils are exceptionally well cared for and supported. Their excellent achievement and enjoyment are the result of some inspiring and energetic teaching. At the heart of the school's continual progress since the last inspection, is the impressive vision and drive of the headteacher. All staff are totally committed to her ambition. Parents and carers are totally satisfied. Two comments sum up their views: 'We consider ourselves extremely privileged to have a school with such outstanding qualities' and 'my child has an excellent outlook on life and learning'.

Attainment at the end of Year 6 varies year-on-year due to small numbers in each year. Pupils typically reach above average standards but in 2010, for example, attainment was exceptionally high. Overall, this represents excellent progress from the pupils' well below average starting points. Rates of progress vary, however. Pupils in Reception and Key Stage 1, whilst making good progress, do not progress as rapidly as those in Key Stage 2, when pupils use their language skills, including their speaking skills, with greater confidence, frequency and accuracy. Inspiring teaching challenges pupils' thinking and expects pupils to explain and justify their ideas and solutions. This prepares them extremely well for secondary school. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make excellent progress because action taken ensures that individual needs are identified quickly and interventions are targeted precisely then checked closely. Assessment practice is incisive and target setting supportive.

At the hub of all the school's work is a total commitment to providing pupils with memorable learning experiences in a vibrant and nurturing atmosphere. This is why all pupils progress equally well, including those from challenging circumstances and the potentially vulnerable. Pupils' personal development is exceptional. Pupils are taught to respect and value each other's differences from the instant they start school. This is reflected in their excellent behaviour, above average attendance and responsible, caring attitudes. They appreciate the benefits of keeping fit and eating healthily. Excellent teaching exploits the interesting and developing range of first-hand experiences well, for example, the visiting Sri Lankan teachers gave pupils the chance to ask about the tropical wildlife in their village school near Colombo.

Self-critical and reflective senior leaders accurately identify school strengths and key areas for further development. The headteacher is deftly supported by a committed governing body. Excellent collaborative working with partners greatly enhances provision. As a result, there is a good and continually strengthening capacity to sustain all improvements made.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of pupils' use of language sounds and letters in Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 to quicken early progress in reading and writing by ensuring that:
- - fun, active approaches provide seamless progression from hearing and seeing, to saying, reading then writing
- - all pupils apply their language skills continuously in all learning activities.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Thought provoking and resourceful approaches ensure that from their relatively low starting points, all pupils become confident learners and achieve highly in lessons. Despite the high expectations, there remains scope for younger pupils to become even more-able, confident readers and writers with more regular use of their sounds and letter skills. The school's progress information, confirmed by inspection evidence, shows that pupils needing extra help or additional challenge are provided with activities which are effectively matched to their age, ability and interests. This results in their outstanding overall progress and achievement to reach above average attainment. Most children start school with skills well below those expected for their age, frequently with weaknesses in their speech and language. Close scrutiny of progress data shows that pupils' rates of progress accelerate as they move through school because fun approaches constantly challenge the pupils' thinking. The proportion of pupils on target to reach higher levels exceeds the national average. The pattern of attainment is being strengthened with improving provision for the youngest children.

Excellent spiritual, moral and social development and a widening range of experiences of the diverse world around them effectively support the pupils' exceptional personal development. This is apparent in the quality of their friendships and relationships with staff. Behaviour is excellent in lessons and around the building. All feel safe and this is summed up in a pupil's comment, 'Nobody bullies'. They understand the benefits of keeping active, eating sensibly and being safety conscious. They thrive on the many opportunities to take responsibility and show initiative which helps prepare them extremely well for the future, for example, organising work in the allotment. Older pupils display exemplary attitudes when listening to each other's ideas.

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.

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

How effective is the provision?

Teaching and learning is outstanding because active, innovative approaches capture pupils' interest and ensure their understanding and thinking is enhanced. Staff's skilful use of new technology adds to the appeal and variety in lessons. Good use is made of assessment to check for any slips in progress, although occasionally opportunities are missed to reinforce self- and peer-assessment skills. Staff inspire pupils to have the confidence to practise new skills, which boosts their rate of progress. Effective use is made of probing, open-ended questions to firm up pupils' understanding.

Themes linking subjects together and an increasing range of experiences are providing relevance, such as visiting the nearby Ryedale Folk Museum to learn first-hand about Victorian life. Good opportunities are provided to practise literacy and numeracy skills, although there is room for younger pupils to apply their language skills in all activities. Information and communication technology skills are successfully used by pupils to improve and enhance the quality of their work, for example, creating lively presentations about the natural environment. The strong focus on personal development is reflected in the varied range of visits and visitors.

Outstanding care, guidance and support make certain that all pupils can achieve success. Effective support staff ensure that all pupils join in and take full advantage of all activities. Outstanding links with a wide range of agencies enable all pupils to get the best out of what is provided, for example, using the speech therapist to provide specialist support. School information reveals striking examples of where skilled support and personalised approaches enable pupils to continuously improve. This is evident in their improved attendance, attainment and achievement over the last two years.

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These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
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?

The highly successful leadership of the headteacher has played a fundamental part in the school's improvement. She is capably supported by a committed team of staff whose skills blossom in the nurturing and encouraging atmosphere. The school exudes an ethos of friendliness, purpose and calm. The curriculum is being adapted to provide even more enjoyable and relevant experiences. As a result, rates of progress have risen, although the full impact on attainment has yet to be seen. Assessment systems are robust and enable staff to personalise pupils' learning. This underpins the school's accurate judgement of strengths and areas for development. Despite the constraints of an old building, the school provides stimulating areas in which to learn.

Excellent relationships with local villages, schools and support agencies add to the school's drive for improvement. The governing body makes an outstanding contribution to the strategic direction of the school. They shrewdly hold the school to account in positive ways. The school has good procedures to keep pupils safe. They meet current requirements and are especially robust in relation to child protection. The promotion of community cohesion is good with a widening range of experiences to broaden understanding of other beliefs and cultures. The excellent relationships with parents and carers add the strong sense of belonging. The school has effective procedures for dealing with discrimination and the sensitivity to equal opportunities is reflected in the fact that pupils perform equally well and share the same happy, friendly experiences. Consequently, the school provides excellent value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1

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 with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
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	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

All children thoroughly enjoy their time in school and settle very quickly and confidently into their mixed-age classes. Most enter Reception class with skills well below those expected for their age, especially in their speech and language development. All make good progress in working towards the goals expected of them by the time they enter Year 1. Children respond positively to the encouragement they receive. They flourish whether working alongside older pupils in the lively classroom atmosphere or in discrete sessions in the recently converted indoor and outdoor areas. Children are happy to lead their own learning. Good and often thought provoking staff interventions boost the pace of learning, for example, when children were asked to count out and then deliver a load of blocks on their tractor. Systematic observations and accurate assessment ensure needs are identified quickly and activities matched to needs and interests. Children's thinking is frequently challenged, although opportunities are sometimes missed to improve their understanding and use of sounds and letters to speed up their early reading and writing. Parents and carers are given excellent information to help them encourage their children's learning. The ongoing improvements in provision, such as the creation of separate indoor and outdoor accommodation, and the effective partnerships established between families, pre-school providers and support agencies, reflect the high aspirations and drive of leadership and management.

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	1

Views of parents and carers

Nearly all parents and carers returned the questionnaire which expressed their views of the school. These views were totally supportive and extremely positive about all aspects of its work and all felt that their children are safe and happy in school. The inspection

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fully endorses the positive views expressed.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Hedda'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 18 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 26 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	15	83	3	17	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	16	89	2	11	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	17	94	1	6	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	15	83	3	17	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	16	89	2	11	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	16	89	2	11	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	17	94	1	6	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)	14	78	4	22	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	16	89	2	11	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	14	78	4	22	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	18	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	18	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	17	94	1	6	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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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 pupils' 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 September 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Hedda's Roman Catholic Primary School, Whitby, YO21 1UX

I want to thank all of you for the extremely friendly welcome that you gave me when I visited your school. I found the time I spent talking to you, your teachers and other adults very enjoyable and rewarding.

I was impressed by your excellent behaviour and your enthusiasm to learn. The school provides an outstanding quality of education because you have a talented headteacher and staff and an excellent group of governors who know exactly what to do to make your school even better. They all take exceptional care of you. As a result, you clearly feel safe and enjoy very friendly relationships with your staff. It was clear you understand how to stay safe and healthy. You can be proud of your excellent progress and achievements.

It was evident from your comments that you appreciate the way your staff make your learning so much fun, thought-provoking and interesting. Some excellent use is made of the many links your school has with the local villages, support agencies and local network of schools. Your parents and carers told me just how highly they value the enjoyment you get from school and the commitment and hard work of your staff.

I have asked senior leaders to look at ways of speeding up the progress of younger pupils in their early reading and writing. This will help them make even faster progress as they grow and develop.

You can play your part by continuing to work as hard as you can. Thank you for helping with this inspection. I hope your school will continue to improve.

I wish you all a bright future.

Yours sincerely

Mr Clive Petts

Lead inspector

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