



The Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 107343
Local Authority Bradford
Inspection number 287806
Inspection date 23 January 2007
Reporting inspector Ralph Higgs

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary	School address	Valley Drive
School category	Voluntary aided		Ben Rhydding, Ilkley
Age range of pupils	4-11		West Yorkshire LS29 8NL
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01943 609578
Number on roll (school)	205	Fax number	01943 605448
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr N Lambert
		Headteacher	Mrs A Madden
Date of previous school inspection	14 January 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This average size school draws its pupils from market towns and villages in the Wharfe Valley. It is a popular school and has a stable intake. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. Pupils come from a variety of family circumstances, but most are from advantaged homes. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities fluctuates but is below average. The school holds the Healthy Schools Award. It is actively involved in a number of partnerships, including providing support for initial teacher training.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. This judgement is higher than the school's slightly cautious view. Parents report: 'This school is excellent and we are very happy with our children's progress.' The school is highly successful and knows itself very well. The excellent leadership and management of the headteacher are at the core of developments. Recent improvements to assessment and the curriculum have accelerated under the very effective leadership of two new assistant headteachers. Taking account of the significant impact of a relatively new senior management team, the capacity to improve further is excellent. The school provides excellent value for money.

Children enter Reception with above average skills on the whole. They have a wide range of pre-school experience, but rapidly find their feet and make good progress. While the provision in the Foundation Stage is good overall, the limited facilities for outdoor play restrict learning in this area of the curriculum. Nonetheless, by the time they enter Year 1, almost all children reach, and many exceed, the standards expected for their age. This good rate of progress is sustained across Key Stage 1 and 2 by all groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This is due to consistently good, and some outstanding, teaching, and pupils' excellent attitudes towards learning. Consequently, standards are exceptionally and consistently high by the end of Year 6.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy school; this is reflected in their well above average attendance. They concentrate hard in lessons, responding very well indeed when tackling work which tests their capabilities. They have a good understanding of their own learning and know what they need to do to improve. Their behaviour is exemplary, and they are very considerate towards each other. Pupils play energetically and safely, and move sensibly around the school site. They have an excellent grasp of how to lead a healthy lifestyle and how to keep fit. These qualities are very strongly promoted through a good, rich curriculum and excellent systems of care, guidance and support.

The quality of teaching and learning is good, with some that is outstanding. It is underpinned by excellent relationships and effective planning which takes full account of pupils' needs. Teachers use their subject knowledge and interests successfully to help make learning interesting. They are strongly focused on improving learning. For example, teachers are changing the methods they use in response to the views that pupils expressed in the 'Myself as a learner' project. Marking is thorough and helpful. Pupils really appreciate the new system which indicates clearly what they specifically need to do to improve.

The governing body is very effective, and fully involved in establishing the strategic direction of the school. There is an excellent focus on sustaining very high standards and seeking ways to further strengthen achievement. A very positive culture of learning is evident, partly as a result of the school's involvement in training new teachers. Any relative weaknesses identified by a rigorous system of checking performance are dealt with very effectively. However, due to the heavy demands on the school budget to maintain and improve the accommodation, necessary improvements to outdoor play

facilities have not yet occurred. Governors have firm plans to remedy this situation early in the next financial year.

What the school should do to improve further

The school has a very clear understanding of what it needs to do next to refine the high quality of its provision. As it is very well placed to carry out its plans, there is no need to identify any issues for further improvement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good throughout the school. Standards had slipped in Key Stage 1 in the recent past, but due to determined action have recovered well and risen to previous high levels. For example, regular writing workshops have been successfully introduced for pupils in Years 1 and 2 so that they can practise and improve their skills.

Standards have been sustained at exceptionally high levels at the end of Key Stage 2. In 2006, about twice the proportion of pupils reached Level 5 (the highest level) in English, mathematics and science tests compared to the national figures. The school met the high and challenging targets for whole-school performance that it set. Nevertheless, it is continually seeking to raise achievement further. A handful of pupils also successfully entered for the voluntary tests which measure attainment at Level 6. Until recently, additional provision for gifted and talented pupils largely depended on the individual teacher, but the introduction of a gifted and talented register is securing a more systematic approach to extending provision for these pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils develop into mature, confident young citizens during their time in school. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils are respectful of the views and needs of others, and work extremely well together. Their self-esteem blossoms because the school strongly values their opinions. From entry to the school, pupils' social skills come on quickly and they develop an acute sense of right and wrong. The school council is very proud of their involvement in helping to deal with any minor bullying that occurs. Their invention of an 'anti-bullying machine' (a suggestions box, which also encourages pupils to ask for help) shows their commitment to their community.

They say unequivocally that school is a 'really interesting place', and that there is a lot to do. This encourages their well above average rate of attendance and excellent punctuality. Pupils' very good basic skills and excellent attitudes to work prepare them exceedingly well for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers collaborate very effectively on their planning and productively share methods which work well. In these ways, the needs of different ability groups are well catered for and high standards are maintained. For example, the more able pupils are often given work designed for the age group above. This even extends to pupils in Year 6, many of whom are working on aspects of secondary school work. Teaching assistants also contribute well to the quality of pupils' learning, particularly for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Recently improved features of teaching which pupils say are promoting more enjoyable learning include being given more choices, having more time, and 'doing things rather than listening'. However, the school recognises that there is still some room for improvement. In some lessons, opportunities are missed to challenge pupils to take a fuller part in discussions and to be more creative in their responses.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is effectively planned to meet the needs of all learners. Opportunities to enrich pupils' experiences are good. A systematic programme ensures that all year groups enjoy an interesting range of visits and visitors. Occasions when pupils learn outside of normal lessons are also good. The curriculum very successfully promotes health education, and includes a good emphasis on taking exercise. For example, there are extra opportunities to take part in dance and outdoor adventurous activities. Effective use is made of specialist teachers in a number of subjects, including French and music. Good, creative links are being made between subjects, as part of a drive to further tailor the curriculum to pupils' needs and interests. Provision in Key Stage 1 is being further developed to ensure a more effective transition from the Foundation Stage.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school is very successful in making pupils feel valued and safe. The procedures for keeping pupils safe from harm are rigorous.

Staff know the pupils really well because they closely check all aspects of their time at school. Regular assessments are used to carefully track academic progress and the school is very quick to intervene if extra support is needed. Parents receive very good levels of information about their children's education. An excellent feature is that targets for pupils' academic improvement are agreed at the regular meetings between parents, pupils and teachers. Entry to Reception is very effectively managed so that children adjust very well to school. The 'Ambassadors' scheme, which helps pupils successfully make the transfer to high school, is very well conceived. Additional services

are used very effectively to provide for individual needs and for vulnerable children if required.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher sets a very clear direction for the school. While there is a strong emphasis on sustaining high standards, a careful balance is struck with fostering pupils' personal development. Self-evaluation is excellent. All staff are involved in checking the school's, and their own, performance. This provides an excellent evidence base upon which to determine improvements. The school is very effectively managed. Staff at all levels are given a high degree of responsibility to carry out improvements, and they respond with a positive commitment to the success of the school. Improvement since the last inspection is good.

Excellent links with external agencies and wider school networks are used to the school's advantage. For example, opportunities for learning outside of school have been extended. Increasingly, the school is canvassing the views of parents and pupils to determine priorities for improvement. The parents' forum is a bold move which is directly involving parents in looking at the school's plans. This has influenced decisions about reporting to parents and provision for healthy eating and drinking. The quality of teaching and learning has benefited from listening to pupil's views about how they learn best.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave to me when I recently visited your school. I really appreciated the discussions I had with you. Your views helped me a lot to understand your school.

These are the good, and excellent, things I found out about your school, which provides you with an outstanding education:

- you work very hard in your lessons and reach the high targets set for you
- you develop very well indeed into mature young people because of the excellent guidance you receive
- your attendance is very good and your punctuality is excellent
- you are right to say that school is really enjoyable because lessons are good, and sometimes even better
- your behaviour is excellent, and you get on very well with each other and with adults
- you clearly know which foods to eat to stay healthy and that exercise is good for you
- you are keen to help one another; I was impressed by the new 'anti-bullying machine'
- your teachers try hard to help you learn as well as you can
- there are lots of interesting things to do in lessons and after school
- the staff take excellent care of you and keep you safe from harm
- the headteacher, staff and governors do an excellent job and are trying hard to improve your education even more.

As the school provides you with an excellent education, and clearly knows what to do to make it even better for you, I have decided that there are no other areas for improvement.