



St Patrick's Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 107557
Local Authority Calderdale
Inspection number 287853
Inspection dates 27–28 September 2006
Reporting inspector Bernard Jones

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Hullen Edge Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Elland
Age range of pupils	4–11		West Yorkshire HX5 0QY
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01422 373104
Number on roll (school)	100	Fax number	01422 373651
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr M Bowden
		Headteacher	Miss C Wood
Date of previous school inspection	3 March 2003		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a small school serving the local Catholic parish in Elland. Some pupils attend from a wider area and overall there is a wide variety of social circumstances. The large majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds and there is a very small group of pupils from minority ethnic heritages, of whom very few are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average, but there is an above average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Many children arrive in school with little pre-school experience and below average social skills. There have been significant changes to the staff in the past two years, involving the appointment of a new headteacher and deputy headteacher.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school, giving sound value for money. Overall, pupils achieve satisfactorily in the Foundation Stage and often make good progress, for example in their social development. This is because teachers plan well. They take particular account of the lack of pre-school experience of many children. Attainment on entry to Year 1 varies year on year; currently it is broadly average. By the time pupils leave Year 6, most attain the levels expected of them. Achievement is satisfactory. The year groups are small and the spread of attainment is wide. Consequently, different proportions of pupils achieve at the expected or higher level according to the precise make-up of the group. Results in 2005 were above average; however, unconfirmed results in 2006 show a broadly average picture. Both reflect sound achievement for these different groups of pupils. Current standards are average and pupils are achieving satisfactorily.

Individual targets are set for the pupils, but they are not challenging enough to really stretch them to aspire and achieve as well as they could. The school's self-evaluation is satisfactory; it lacks rigour when assessing the achievement of pupils and when judging the impact of teaching on pupils' progress. This is a weakness in otherwise strong and effective leadership. It resulted in over-generosity in the school's assessment of pupils' achievement, and the quality of teaching and leadership and management. The inspection found these areas to be satisfactory rather than good. The positive actions to raise standards in writing generally and tackle successfully past underachievement in some boys' performance are indicative of purposeful leadership and satisfactory capacity to improve further.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, some is good and pupils enjoy their learning. The school is good at identifying and sharing effective teaching practice so that all benefit. Where the teaching is weaker, good support is put in place, for example in tackling weaknesses in the teaching of writing. There is an openness between teachers to share new ideas or proven approaches, for example in using information and communication technology to stimulate pupils' interest and enthusiasm. Teachers make good use of assessment to record pupils' attainment, but do not use this data effectively to track how well pupils progress to raise achievement. Teachers mark work conscientiously and help pupils by being very positive and encouraging, but this does not help pupils enough in terms of identifying how they may improve further. A strength in teaching in this small school is the care that the individual receives and the way teaching focuses well on the needs of all pupils. As a result, pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are interested in their lessons and stimulated by a rich curriculum that meets their needs. Parents and pupils relate how dedicated teachers are and how helpful and approachable they are.

The provision for pupils' all-round development is a strength. It reflects the strong Christian ethos in the school and is seen in the positive and friendly approach taken to visitors. Behaviour is outstanding. The school provides a safe and happy environment where pupils flourish and learn to take responsibility well. Pupils make informed choices about healthy lifestyles and by Year 6 are mature and ready to move on.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise aspirations of pupils and teachers to ensure that pupils can reach more challenging targets.
- Be rigorous in evaluating teaching in terms of how well pupils learn in order to raise achievement.
- Ensure that the marking of work informs pupils what levels they are working at and what they need to do to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

When children start the school, their standards are broadly average. In the Foundation Stage, structured activities are used well to ensure that children develop their basic skills. Good planning and use of assessment ensure their balanced development and sound progress in all the areas of learning. Results in Year 6 tests in 2005 were above average in English, mathematics and science, reflecting satisfactory progress for this high-attaining group. Current standards in Year 6 are broadly average and these reflect satisfactory achievement for this group. Most pupils meet their targets, and there is now no significant difference in the achievement of different groups. This is because the school has successfully identified and tackled underachievement among some boys. Where previously standards were too low in writing, particularly among some boys, this aspect has improved.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress in their personal development. They express themselves confidently and many take special responsibilities in their class and around the school. This gives them a good understanding of contributing to the community. For example, Year 6 pupils help younger children with their reading and act as 'buddies' in the playground; others represent their classes on the very effective school council. Pupils develop a strong sense of their own well-being and know about the best ways to stay healthy and take exercise. They are appropriately prepared for the next stages of their learning. Behaviour is excellent and pupils have positive relationships with each other and with teachers. As a result, classrooms buzz with activity and enjoyment. Pupils are keen to participate in the wide range of clubs and sports. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They gain a good understanding of others, themselves and their place in the wider world.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and some is good. Teachers cope well with the mixed-age classes. Excellent organisation ensures that where part-time teachers share classes, pupils are not disadvantaged. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress because teachers plan to ensure their access to a rich curriculum. In the process, teaching assistants make an effective contribution. The marking of work is a weakness because it does not relate closely enough to how pupils can improve their work. The targets set for pupils do not stretch them enough and progress in some lessons reflects this: pupils are not challenged as much as they could be. Throughout the school, most lessons are active and fun; a strong feature is the way that teachers plan lively lessons so that pupils enjoy learning. The school has correctly judged that in this process, more work needs to be done to improve pupils' writing skills further. Where teaching is weaker, the leadership has identified this and put in measures to share best practice.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and is extended and enriched by visits and visitors and a good range of extra-curricular clubs and activities. A recent performance of a musical Macbeth with a twist was described by parents as outstanding. Pupils' personal development and their enthusiasm for school are stimulated by a good and interesting curriculum, which raises self-esteem and encourages respect for others. The use of themes as a way to give good breadth to the curriculum is successful. Pupils enjoy seeing and making the connections, for example between history and geography when studying the Great Fire of London. It also has interest. For example, all pupils in Years 3 to 6 receive a weekly lesson of French, which they thoroughly enjoy and which adds interest to the Key Stage 2 curriculum. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those at an early stage of learning English make satisfactory progress because the curriculum is planned to meet their particular needs and teaching assistants work very effectively with them. While language and mathematical skills are emphasised in teachers' planning, this is not at the expense of providing a broad and balanced curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Good care and support underpins most of what the school does for its pupils. Child protection procedures and health and safety routines are firmly established. Pupils say that they are taught about dangers that exist in and out of the school, and adults are always there to help them. They also report that they know all about what bullying means and that they are free from bullying and racism. Academic guidance for pupils

is satisfactory. Teachers use assessment well to record pupils' efforts. However, they do not use the information well enough to chart pupils' progress and raise achievement. Targets are in place, but do not challenge pupils to achieve as well as they can. There are good arrangements for transferring to, within and from the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The strong Christian ethos is particularly successful in promoting pupils' personal development. It ensures that pupils are treated equally and that they are prepared well for moving to their next school. Governors fulfil their responsibilities well in this process. The school has developed good partnerships with parents and outside agencies to support its work. The vast majority of parents are very happy with the quality of the school's provision. The headteacher gives clear direction, and has tackled some weaknesses, resulting in raised standards in writing and the successful tackling of past underachievement in some boys' performance. Self-evaluation has insufficient rigour. It does not assess achievement accurately, nor does it give enough emphasis to the progress pupils make when monitoring teaching and learning. This is a weakness in otherwise strong and effective leadership. The headteacher has brought a clear drive to raise standards and is well supported by governors and staff.

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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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
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?	2

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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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 very much for making me so welcome when I visited your school. I really enjoyed my visit and the opportunity it gave me to talk with you and see you working.

These are the things I liked most about your school:

- how the school helps you to develop into responsible and mature young people, for example in the work of the school council and the way older pupils help in the playground
- your excellent behaviour and particularly the way you work so well in pairs and groups while teachers help other pupils
- the way your teachers take good care of you so that you feel safe and enjoy coming to school
- the many activities and clubs that you enjoy and which provide you with the chance to develop your sport and help in your local community
- the careful way the school teaches you to be safe and healthy and to concern yourselves about others.

To make things even better and make your school into a good school, I have asked your headteacher and teachers to:

- set you targets and challenges to bring out the very best in you
- keep a careful eye to make sure you make as much progress as you can in lessons
- help you with your work so that you know how you might improve it more.