

St Wilfrid's, York, Roman Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121648
Local Authority	York
Inspection number	327540
Inspection dates	22–23 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Lesley Clark

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	267
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Eileen Sparks
Headteacher	Mr Colm Flanagan
Date of previous school inspection	13 September 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Monkgate York North Yorkshire YO31 7PB
Telephone number	01904 659726

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	22–23 January 2009
Inspection number	327540

Fax number

01904 673879

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Wilfrid's Roman Catholic Primary School is a little larger than average. Situated in the centre of York it serves Catholic communities to the north of the city. It is a popular school. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision consists of two Reception/Year 1 classes. Children come from many different pre-school providers, few have had Nursery experience. The school's recently opened Nursery (October 2008) is run by a private provider and is not part of this inspection. Most pupils are White British. However, around 15% of pupils are from minority ethnic groups and most of them are at an early stage of learning English. The most common first languages are Malayalam, Polish and Sindi. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slightly below average; currently none has a statement of special educational need. Over half the staff has changed in the last three years.

The school holds the Healthy Schools Award, the Basic Skills Award, the Activemark and the Gold Artsmark Award. The school participates in the Partnership of Education and Theatre with the Theatre Royal, York and pupil's artwork has been displayed in private and public art galleries.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

St Wilfrid's gives pupils an outstanding education. Pupils know, 'You can do it', if 'you keep going!' Personal and academic achievement is first-rate because of exceptionally good teaching, a lively, innovative curriculum and outstanding leadership and management. The school takes extremely good care of all its pupils and as a result they thrive. Many parents wrote to say so, commenting on, 'The school's welcoming, warm atmosphere and nurturing environment,' and, 'Its focus on the whole child.' The school's estimation of its success is over-cautious in many aspects of its work.

Achievement is outstanding. From entering the school with skills below those expected pupils reach above average standards by the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. This is because of outstanding teaching across the school and extremely good assessment procedures to check pupils' progress. A notable feature is the close involvement of pupils in checking their own learning. This means that they know when to ask for help and what to do to improve their work. The trend in the school's results in national tests is upwards. Inconsistencies in pupils' performance in mathematics have been ironed out and science results at the upper level have increased substantially because of the school's successful focus on improving these areas. The school continues to strengthen its well above average reading standards and results in writing improve each year, reflecting the teachers' confidence in teaching literacy skills. In describing the paper dragon mosaics they made, the following extracts give good examples of 8 and 9 year-olds writing for a purpose: 'A veil of comfy wispy mist scurries across the valley'" and 'A vast glossy creature swooped down.' Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who are new to speaking English make outstanding progress because of excellent support for their individual needs.

Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning. An outstanding curriculum underpins their learning and development. Rich provision for the creative arts and sport, validated by external awards, promotes pupils' intense interest in learning. In addition, lots of opportunities to work with specialists give pupils high standards to aim for. Pupils thoroughly enjoy all that the school offers them from art, investigative work and solving mathematical problems to the wide range of extra-curricular activities after school. They work and play happily and energetically, growing increasingly mature, articulate and independent as they grow older. Their behaviour is exemplary. Pupils are not afraid to say what they think but temper their views with respect for others, understanding that sometimes outside factors have an impact on how they and others feel and behave. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. This reflects the school's outward looking nature, which successfully promotes pupils' awareness of the diversity of multicultural Britain. Equal opportunities are promoted extremely well and all pupils are equally valued by the school. While the school makes a very good contribution to community cohesion locally, through its engagement with the city of York and all it has to offer, pupils' understanding of communities across the world is less fully developed. The school has a clear identity with its warm, inclusive and welcoming ethos.

The school takes exceptionally good care of all its pupils, both academically and personally. Safeguarding requirements meet current government guidelines. Personalised learning programmes for pupils who need additional support, together with sophisticated systems to track both individual and different groups of pupils' progress over time, are used extremely well to help pupils to build further on what they know and can do. This is the main tool by which the leadership and management have ensured the school has made outstanding progress

since the last inspection. A close focus on raising standards, together with the continued expansion of curricular provision, has produced a dynamic environment for learning where pupils flourish. Governance is excellent, providing both support and critical expertise. The school already demonstrates an outstanding capacity to continue to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children make rapid progress in a very short time. Their achievement is outstanding. Two-thirds of children have just two terms full-time in the EYFS because of where their fifth birthday falls. From below expected starting points, especially in their communication, language, literacy, social and physical skills, children make rapid gains because of outstanding provision for their learning and development. At the end of Reception over half are at the level expected for their age, with a small proportion exceeding these expectations. Crucially, children's communication skills and readiness to learn have advanced significantly by the end of the year. A quarter of the children are at an early stage of learning English and they make equally rapid gains because of excellent support from bilingual and language support staff. For most of the time children direct their own learning, choosing from a very wide range of exciting and challenging activities which entice them to learn both indoors and outdoors. As a result, they soon gain in confidence and independence and begin to interact positively with each other. Highly effective teaching, together with very clear systems to check on children's progress, ensures that they build on what they learn. This is because the information is used extremely well to plan the next steps in each child's learning. For example, children put on 'hard hats' and used plastic tools to build, 'a big BIG house' out of large cardboard boxes and then tried to blow it down, like the wolf in the Tale of The Three Little Pigs. Welfare requirements are fully met and children are extremely well cared for. They turn into happy, curious young learners who help each other and concentrate well because their provision is extremely well led and managed and exceptionally well organised. Close links with parents further support children's learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop pupil's understanding of other communities across the world.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils make rapid progress in Year 1 because of outstanding provision, based on the EYFS six areas for learning. This means that they learn individually at their own level. They are set increasingly challenging work which is extremely well matched to their age and stage of development. The benefit is seen by the end of Year 2 when pupils reach above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. In Years 3 and 4, the close focus on developing literacy and numeracy skills, and giving pupils many opportunities to use and apply these skills, gives a good grounding to pupils of all abilities. This means that pupils' progress accelerates even more in Years 5 and 6. Pupils' capacity to question, make decisions and think 'outside the box,' prepare them exceptionally well for the next stage in their education. This is why standards are above average and the proportion reaching the higher levels is improving year-on-year. Significantly, the proportion of pupils achieving at the top end of the higher Level 5 has also increased. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who are new to speaking English make exceptionally good progress because of highly effective individual education and language plans, which are used to provide targeted support in lessons.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' huge enjoyment of school is reflected in their bright outlook on life and above average attendance. They bubble with enthusiasm and confidence, excited by their learning and the sense of discovery that each day brings. This is because they have a lot of choice and independence in their learning and in issues that affect them. Pupils agree they are very independent and say that they feel very safe and protected in school. This is shown in their growing confidence to use their skills. They are extremely well prepared for later life. Pupils have an excellent understanding of why it is important to be healthy and physically fit and also have a mature understanding of the vital importance of emotional well-being. They are sure that there is no bullying, saying, 'There is always someone to help.' Pupils have many responsible jobs around school, including updating the school's website and acting as play-leaders. The school council is very effective and clearly represents pupils' views. Their contribution to the community is first-rate.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. High expectations and pupils' willingness to 'have a go' contribute significantly to their excellent achievements. Teachers are knowledgeable and they stimulate pupils who agree that the tasks they are set, 'really test your mind'. Pupils are mentally active because teachers make intellectual demands of them. For example, in a mathematics lesson in Years 5 and 6 the class teacher continually asked, 'Tell me why this is so?' A variety of teaching methods and tasks match pupils' needs very well and are well chosen to, 'bring learning alive'. Pupils' enjoyment in learning and pride in their success shines through many lessons. Excellent relationships lead to a very good working atmosphere. Classrooms are very conducive to learning with helpful aids to literacy and numeracy and excellent displays of pupils' work. Teaching assistants make a very positive contribution in helping lower attainers in particular to fulfil their potential. Marked features of most lessons are the opportunities to collaborate and pupils' confidence and independence in their learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school's dynamic curriculum has a strong creative bias. At the same time, it fosters extremely well the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. The curriculum is very well designed to capture pupils' interests and to encourage them to think for themselves. The art curriculum is a significant strength of the school because it embraces a breadth of styles and gives pupils many opportunities to explore a wide range of media. Purposeful links between subjects, together with an emphasis on problem solving and investigation, promote enjoyment and motivate pupils and staff alike. Literacy and numeracy skills are promoted exceptionally well through other subjects. As a result the curriculum is exceptionally broad and very well suited to the wide range of pupils' needs. A full range of extra-curricular activities, with choice for all age groups, as well as many educational visits and visitors to school, further enrich the provision.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school is a lively and extremely caring place in which pupils feel safe and happy. The way that they are treated as individuals is a notable strength. Underlying this supportive atmosphere are comprehensive systems to minimise risk and to keep a close check on pupils' personal and academic progress. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities learn exceptionally well because the support provided for them is very effective in meeting their needs. New learners of English make rapid progress because of the excellent support they receive. The more able pupils flourish because of the high levels of independence expected of them. Those who find behaving well difficult are managed extremely well and so exclusion is rare. Teachers assess pupils' work extremely rigorously. Pupils are fully involved in checking their own learning and so they are well aware of the next steps they need to take to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Outstanding leadership and management give extremely clear direction. The school evaluates the impact of its actions regularly. This has led to substantial improvement since the last inspection. The newly constituted leadership team uses detailed assessments of pupils' progress to help provide well focussed independent learning. Close checks on the quality of teaching ensure that learning is extremely effective. Middle managers are fully accountable for their subjects. These factors are instrumental in raising standards for all groups of learners. Community cohesion is good overall, with particular strengths in local community involvement. Pupils gain awareness of other religions and ethnic diversity through a range of curricular opportunities which promote equality and celebrate cultural difference. Pupils' satisfactory global awareness is reflected in their charity fund-raising and their links with an Ugandan school. Governors are fully involved, supportive and highly effective. For example, they have set up a private Nursery in order to give the school's changing intake of children a pre-school experience.

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Annex A

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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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 learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for welcoming the other inspectors and me so warmly. We very much enjoyed meeting and talking with so many of you. Your school gives you an outstanding education. Not only does it help you to make rapid progress and reach above average standards in your work but it also helps you to become independent and confident young people with minds of your own. We were very impressed at how often your teachers asked you to work out why something happened and at how good you were at coming up with reasons for what you thought. In assembly, your headteacher said you had, 'talents by the bucketful' and that is what we thought too.

Your school prepares you exceptionally well for the next stage of your education. You are very good at checking your work to see how well you have understood it and what you need to do to improve it. This is because you are extremely well taught and your school is outstandingly well run. Best of all you clearly enjoy school and have lots of fun as well as working hard. Your behaviour is extremely good and you are very friendly and kind to others. Your school gives you lots of opportunities to learn about other people with different religions and from different communities in Britain. You also take full advantage of all that York has to offer. I have asked that your school should now extend your understanding of communities across the world so as to further widen your experience.

I hope that you continue to have fun at St Wilfrid's and that your bright, cheerful outlook stays with you.