



St Robert's Catholic Primary School, Harrogate

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 121642
LEA North Yorkshire
Inspection number 281067
Inspection dates 13 March 2006 to 14 March 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Keith Bardon CfBT Lead Inspector

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

| | | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| Type of school | Primary | School address | Ainsty Road |
| School category | Voluntary aided | | Harrogate |
| Age range of pupils | 5 to 11 | | North Yorkshire HG1 4AP |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 01423 504730 |
| Number on roll | 274 | Fax number | 01423 701104 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair of governors | Mrs E Toop |
| Date of previous inspection | 25 September 2000 | Headteacher | Mrs M Benson |

| | | |
|-----------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| Age group 5 to 11 | Inspection dates 13 March 2006 - 14 March 2006 | Inspection number 281067 |
|-----------------------------|---|------------------------------------|

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

An average sized, voluntary aided primary school serving a wide geographical area with diverse social and economic characteristics. Almost one in ten pupils is from a minority ethnic background and a small number are at an early stage in learning English. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties is below average but the number with a statement of special educational needs is higher than normal.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with the school's own evaluation that St Robert's is a good school. Pupils' achievement is good and they reach above average standards. Pupils' reading is very good and they write well. Progress is good in mathematics but slower in science because too little attention is paid to developing pupils' enquiry skills. The overall quality of teaching is good. Lessons are lively and interesting. Learning is good because pupils concentrate hard and are keen to do well. On occasions, pupils are not given enough time to think for themselves. Provision in the Reception classes is good and children achieve well. By the end of their time in Reception most children are working securely at the level expected for their age in all the areas of learning. Pupils make rapid progress in their personal development. They attend regularly, behave well and enjoy learning new things. The curriculum is interesting and closely matches the needs of the pupils. The school provides a good quality of care, guidance and support for its pupils and makes good use of its links with other organisations. However, many pupils lack an understanding of how to evaluate how well they are doing. Parents and pupils hold very positive views of the school, which are fully justified. The school is led and managed well. Managers and governors monitor the work of the school carefully and have a very clear picture of how well it is performing. Since it was last inspected the school has successfully built upon its strengths and continued to improve. Its capacity for further improvement is good and plans for development accurately reflect future needs. The school provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of learning by:
- increasing pupils' ability to assess and evaluate their own work;
- giving them more time in lessons to formulate their thoughts and ideas.
- Increase achievement and raise standards in science by improving pupils' skills in enquiry and investigation.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good and throughout the school standards are above average. The attainment of the children when they first start school is typical of the age group. Children achieve well in the reception classes and by the time they move into Year 1 they are working securely within the levels expected for their age. Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 1 and 2 and standards continue to rise. Pupils of all ages read with skill and understanding and this aids their learning in many subjects. Pupils' writing is good and continuing to improve. The quality of speaking and listening is satisfactory but pupils are not always given enough time to put their thoughts together. By Year 6, many pupils are competent mathematicians with the ability to make accurate mental calculations. In 2005, Year 6 pupils performed well in the national tests for English and mathematics and the school exceeded its performance targets. The school

has set challenging targets for 2006 to help raise standards further and there is every indication they will be met. Pupils' achievement in science was a little disappointing in 2005 and while standards in this subject are broadly average there is scope for improvement, particularly in pupils' enquiry skills. Boys and girls, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language achieve equally well, gaining skills, knowledge and understanding at a good pace.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good. As one girl said of the school, 'it helps you grow up'. Pupils behave well and enjoy good relationships with each other and with staff. They are happy at school and attendance rates are good. The school places due emphasis on pupils' welfare and they develop an extremely good understanding of how to stay safe and healthy. Pupils regularly organise fund raising events and take all the responsibilities they are given very seriously. Members of the school council meet frequently and make carefully considered decisions, such as what equipment to buy to help make playtimes more enjoyable. Pupils acquire a good range of key literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills which prepares them well for the future. However, many pupils are not yet fully aware of the need to assess the work they have done for themselves. The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, at the heart of which is the caring church ethos. Regular discussions of right and wrong and a wide range of rewards promote pupils' moral development well. They mature into reflective young people, with a marked appreciation of how their behaviour and attitudes affect those around them.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff work closely together, which provides consistency and cohesion to the provision for learning, the benefits of which are reflected fully in the good progress pupils make. Teachers share expertise and plan stimulating lessons, which meet the needs of all pupils, including those in the mixed age classes. Relationships between pupils and staff are very good, making for a pleasant working atmosphere and a supportive classroom environment. In most lessons, teachers set clear objectives and provide activities that encourage pupils' involvement and participation. Pupils enjoy this approach often describing their lessons as 'fun'. This was seen to best effect in an outstanding lesson, which was driven at pace and provided pupils with a variety of challenging, imaginative activities. However, on occasions, teachers do not provide pupils with enough opportunities to reflect upon their own learning or time to think for themselves. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are taught well. They are involved fully in lessons and given sensitive, well judged support by the teaching

assistants. Teaching in the Reception classes is good because it is based on a secure understanding of how young children learn.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The quality of the curriculum and other activities is good. The school meets all statutory requirements and there is particularly strong provision for English and mathematics. The curriculum is constantly under review and care is being taken to ensure pupils acquire a balance of skills, knowledge and understanding in all subjects. However, the science curriculum offers too few opportunities for pupils to engage in challenging enquiries and investigation. The teaching of French and German makes a very valuable contribution to the learning of the older pupils. The curriculum for Reception children is effective and achieves a good balance between pupil initiated and teacher led activities. Good links with a local secondary school enhance the school's work in physical education and the performing arts. The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of additional features, including regular visitors to school, visits to the theatre and a residential trip. There is a good range of extra curricular activities, which involve a high proportion of older pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school takes good care of all its pupils. Pupils have confidence in staff and know help is always available if needed. Older pupils take pride in the opportunities they have to support younger ones. Child protection and health and safety procedures are effective in identifying and dealing with any concerns. The school knows its pupils well. Systems for tracking pupils' progress are satisfactory and well considered improvements are being made to the way in which information is used, but pupils are not shown clearly enough how to assess their own work. The school is meticulous in its support for pupils who are particularly vulnerable. The special educational needs coordinator works closely with these pupils, their carers, parents and outside agencies to ensure pupils are learning as well as they can. There is good provision in place to boost pupils' social skills and emotional development. The school works well with parents and receives very strong support from them. During the inspection, one commented, 'The school concentrates on producing well rounded, confident pupils and does not focus solely on academic success.'

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher gives the school a strong sense of purpose and clear direction. Staff work closely as a team and the school runs smoothly. Senior staff and governors monitor the work of the school closely and have a clear and accurate picture of how well it is performing. The information the school accumulates is analysed carefully, but, at times, better use could be made of the data

to keep teachers informed of how well pupils are achieving. The school has successfully built on the strengths identified in the last inspection report and moved forward on a broad front. Several well considered initiatives are currently being introduced and the school is well placed to continue to improve. The school has clear aims and a strong and positive ethos. One parent summarised the views of the majority, describing St Robert's as a 'warm caring, inclusive school which lives up to its ethos' and inspectors agree. Subject managers maintain a good overview of the curriculum. The provision for special educational needs and for minority ethnic pupils is managed well. New initiatives are evaluated carefully and utilised well to strengthen the school's practices. Responsibility for science has recently been reallocated and subject leadership has improved. However, development in science has been slower than in English and mathematics because, over time, the management has been less effective and a detailed plan to raise standards has yet to be fully implemented. Governance is good. Governors monitor the work of the school closely and support its development well. Parents and pupils are consulted regularly and close attention is paid to their views when decisions are taken.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

| | | |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|
| <i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i> | School Overall | 16-19 |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|

Overall effectiveness

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

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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

Leadership and management

| | | |
|--|-----|----|
| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 2 | NA |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 2 | NA |
| How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review | 2 | NA |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can | 2 | NA |
| How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money | 2 | NA |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 2 | NA |
| The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected | Yes | NA |

| | |
|---|-----|
| The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy | |
| Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily | Yes |
| Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise | Yes |
| Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse | Yes |
| Learners are educated about sexual health | Yes |
| The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe | |
| Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements | Yes |
| Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place | Yes |
| Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism | Yes |
| Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them | Yes |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution | |
| Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships | Yes |
| Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them | Yes |
| Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community | Yes |
| The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being | |
| There is provision to promote learners' basic skills | Yes |
| Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams | Yes |
| Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form | NA |
| Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy | NA |

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you very much for the very friendly welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. Although we were with you for only two days, we thoroughly enjoyed finding out about the work you do, and a special thanks to those who talked with us about the school. St Robert's is a good school and we can understand why you enjoy it so much.

These are the things we particularly liked about the school:

- you are happy at school and everyone gets on well
- you make good progress
- teachers make lessons fun and you enjoy learning new things
- adults take good care of you and are always there to help
- you behave well and try hard in class
- you willingly help each other and the staff, and older children take very good care of the younger ones
- you have an excellent understanding of how to do things in safe and healthy ways
- there are lots of interesting things for you to do both in school and after lessons.

We also looked at what the school might do next. Here are some of the things we suggested:

- provide you with more opportunities to investigate and experiment in science
- encourage you to always consider how well you have done and what you could have done better
- make sure that you are given enough time to think during lessons.