



# St Clare's Catholic Primary School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 107325  
**Local Authority** Bradford  
**Inspection number** 287800  
**Inspection dates** 13–14 December 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Rosemary Rodger

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Fagley Road
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Fagley, Bradford
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–11		West Yorkshire BD2 3JD
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01274 637841
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	154	<b>Fax number</b>	01274 637841
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr Robert Willis
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Susan O'Brien
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	22 May 2001		

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

This is a smaller than average sized school situated on the northern outskirts of Bradford. The area the school serves has some level of disadvantage that is reflected in the above average proportion of pupils having free school meals. There are a below average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. A small number of pupils are learning to speak English and there are several vulnerable pupils attending the school. The movement of pupils to and from the school other than at the usual times is high. The school was recently awarded Investors in Pupils status.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

St Clare's Catholic Primary is a good school with outstanding features in the care, guidance and support pupils receive, and in the dynamic and inspirational leadership of the headteacher who is well supported by the drive and vision of the governors. In the words of the parents, 'St Clare's has an excellent community and family atmosphere.'

Achievement is good. Children start school with levels of attainment well below that typical for their age. Good progress is made in the Reception class, although standards are still below average by the time they start in Year 1. Progress in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory and standards were only slightly below the nationally expected levels in the recent national tests. Good progress is made throughout Key Stage 2, so by the time pupils reach Year 6, standards are generally in line with national expectations. In the most recent tests, standards were slightly below average in English because of weaknesses in writing. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported by skilled teaching assistants and make good progress as a result. Pupils from minority ethnic groups make good progress and achieve well. Rapid improvements in attendance in the past year and systems to track the progress of individual pupils have made a major contribution to improvements in achievement.

Personal development and well-being are good. There are outstanding features in the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils and those new to the school say, 'It's a really friendly school. We all get along and teachers really listen.' Daily 'huff and puff', after school sports clubs and regular physical education ensure pupils keep fit. Behaviour has improved and exclusions reduced because of the introduction of awards and sanctions. Pupils are encouraged to take on responsibility. 'Our responsibilities have made us more mature' and 'we set a good example to the rest of the school', said Year 6 pupils. Learning mentors have made an impressive impact on support and care for vulnerable pupils through the breakfast and after school clubs, and their warm, calm and reassuring presence during the school day. There are considerable improvements in attendance too, following the contacts made to parents to encourage their children to come to school; attendance is now good. Regular sessions to share social and emotional problems by well planned 'circle time' and personal, health and social education lessons have resulted in a palpable air of calm throughout the school. The school council have made good decisions that ensure boys and girls have opportunities to attend school clubs of their choice.

Teaching is good and makes an effective contribution to pupils' enjoyment of school. Pupils rise to the challenges provided in lessons, particularly in Key Stage 2. The needs of all pupils are met effectively. Pupils are confident and speak positively of their targets for improvement and what they need to do. This all contributes exceptionally well to their personal and academic well-being. The curriculum is enriched by well planned visits to places of historical interest and by the information and communication technology (ICT) suite to develop life enriching technological skills. Pupils achieve well in the Foundation Stage because of the vast improvements to the range of learning that takes place. Care, guidance and support are outstanding because of the

considerable improvements to track the individual academic progress of pupils throughout school.

Leadership and management are good with outstanding features in the leadership of the headteacher and the very good support and challenge provided by the governors. Self-evaluation at all levels is accurate, penetrating and insightful, reflecting rigorous monitoring and searching analysis. Actions taken by the school are well targeted and have had a good and, in some respects, outstanding impact in bringing about sustained school improvement. Since the last inspection there have been good improvements in ICT, attendance, support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and assessment procedures. The school provides good value for money and has a good capacity to improve further.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve standards in writing throughout Key Stage 2.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Children's standards when they start school are well below average in all areas of learning. Achievement in the Foundation Stage is good, although standards of attainment remain below the local authority and national averages when pupils enter Year 1. Satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 leads to standards which remain just below national average by the end of Year 2. Good teaching in Key Stage 2 means that pupils make good progress. The results of the most recent national tests for Year 6 pupils were average in mathematics and science, and below average in English because of weaknesses in writing. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well. Pupils with English as an additional language generally achieve the same as their peers.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils' views are heard and acted upon through a lively school council. They speak with excitement about getting different coloured benches for the playground and are eager to take responsibility for many aspects of school life. Older pupils talk keenly about supporting each other and helping the younger children to settle in. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent and well supported by the school's commitment to the Catholic faith. Assemblies offer time for reflection and pupils clearly understand the difference between right and wrong. Pupils behave very well, have positive attitudes to learning and clearly enjoy their lessons. Pupils are encouraged to lead healthy lifestyles through a range of sports activities both in and out of school. At lunchtime many take part in 'Huff and Puff' physical activities which have resulted in improved cooperation and play. As they say, 'You get decent things to play with

outside - it's fun!' Pupils develop good basic skills which support their future education and later lives.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Lessons are well planned and always take account of the wide range of ability in each class so that pupils learn effectively. Explanations are clear, the pace of learning is usually good and relationships between pupils and staff are very effective. This leads to good progress for the majority of pupils. Teaching is usefully aided by the use of whiteboard technology. Assessment procedures are good with outstanding features in the detailed tracking of individual pupils' progress year by year. In lessons, learning objectives are made very clear and, generally, what pupils are expected to learn is reviewed at the end of lessons. This is sometimes recorded on weekly planning sheets, but not consistently so.

Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage are good, particularly in communication, language and literacy, and mathematical development because of the detailed planning and clear expectations. There is a good balance between adult directed activities and free choice activities for the children. However, what could be learned in the sand, water play and role-play areas is less well planned.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good because all pupils are provided with a range of activities that are well matched to their needs. A good range of visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities successfully enriches the curriculum, enhancing learning and promoting pupils' confidence and enjoyment. They have a good recall of the work they have covered and are keen to talk about visits to places of interest and work in lessons. They speak enthusiastically about their recent visit to the theatre and the CD of songs they make together. Provision for ICT is good. Following a visit to the industrial museum nearby, Year 6 wrote stories and illustrated them with digital animations, which brought their learning to life. Activities that promote good personal development have resulted in raising pupils' awareness of healthy eating, the benefits of physical exercise and the need to remain safe and act responsibly. There is a strong focus on helping every child develop into responsible and caring members of the school community. The Foundation Stage curriculum achieves a good balance of free choice and guided learning with adults.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 1**

The school provides an outstanding level of care, guidance and support for its pupils. This is firmly reflected in its positive, caring ethos. Pupils talk proudly of achieving

the 'Investors in Pupils' award and their personal targets are sensitive to the needs of the whole-school community. Pupils say, 'Our targets are to help someone and share things together.' Child protection procedures are in place and arrangements for health and safety are robust. Parents and carers are welcomed into school and overwhelmingly agree that pupils are well cared for and safe. One parent, for example, said, 'My daughter leaves home every day with a smile on her face. The staff really care here!' Parents performed a Christmas show for younger children, who were delighted to see their parents on stage. Pupils feel safe in school and if trouble happens, they go to trusted adults who will deal with the problem effectively. Close working relationships with a range of agencies and the excellent support of two learning mentors provide pupils with the support they need to overcome any barriers to learning. The very high standard of care is a significant factor in pupils' enjoyment of school, their sense of well-being and the good progress they make.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. The outstanding leadership of the headteacher inspires confidence in her staff. As a result, teamwork is strong and all staff are committed and work hard to create a good climate for learning. Self-evaluation is accurate and reflects the high expectations of the headteacher and staff. Recent staffing changes mean that some subject leadership roles have only recently been filled. These staff are clear what is expected of them and as a result the monitoring and evaluation of pupils' work, teaching and learning is systematically carried out by subject leaders.

Governors are fully involved in all aspects of management. Along with the headteacher, they have set a clear direction for the school's development. The chair of governors is setting an excellent pace for development and involvement of the governors in all aspects of the school's work. External support provided by the local authority has been used to good effect to improve provision in the Foundation Stage and in literacy, numeracy, teaching and assessment.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

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

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	2
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	2

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
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	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
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 for the warm welcome given to my colleague and myself when we visited your school. We had a great two days. I especially enjoyed the Nativity play in your beautiful church. The things that are really good are listed below.

- You work hard and achieve well by the time you leave school.
- The oldest children in school take their responsibilities very seriously and have learned that good behaviour is very important.
- You are very lucky to have two excellent learning mentors to help you when you are troubled.
- Your teachers work very hard too, especially your headteacher, who is brilliant.

There is one thing we have asked your school to do and that is to improve your writing. I know this is happening already for some of you, but you can help too by always reading your work and making sure you spell correctly and form really good letters.

Good luck for 2007.