

St William of York RC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105226
Local Authority	Bolton
Inspection number	324185
Inspection date	11 December 2008
Reporting inspector	Kathryn Dodd

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	248
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	Fr John Mackie
Headteacher	Mrs Gerardine Babb
Date of previous school inspection	21 September 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Nugent Road Bolton Lancashire BL3 3DE

Age group	3–11
Inspection date	11 December 2008
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Telephone number
Fax number

01204 333522
01204 333523

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: pupils' achievement and the standards they reach, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and in Years 1 and 2; the quality of teaching and learning; and the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels, particularly in relation to monitoring the school's performance and self-evaluation. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation, nationally published assessment data, the school's records of pupils' progress, observations of lessons and the school's plans for further improvement. Discussions with pupils, staff and governors were held and questionnaires returned by parents were considered. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified. These have been included, where appropriate, in this report.

Description of the school

This average sized school serves an area of significant social and economic disadvantage. About half the pupils are White British. Recent years have seen population changes in its community that have led to an increase in the number of pupils from European and Asian heritages. The proportion of pupils at an early stage of learning English is well above average. The proportion entitled to free school meals is also well above average. The number of pupils leaving or joining the school part-way through their primary education is much higher than average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also above average. The school makes provision in its EYFS for Nursery and Reception aged children. The school has been accredited with a range of awards including: the Healthy Schools, Activemark, Eco School Silver, Basic Skills Quality Mark and Investors in People.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This good school has an accurate view of its own effectiveness and provides good value for money. Some aspects are outstanding, such as the quality of education provided in the EYFS and the way in which every pupil is cared for, nurtured and included fully in all that is on offer. Pupils' personal development and well-being is outstanding. Relationships between staff and pupils are exceedingly positive. Pupils behave extremely well and are keen to learn. They speak very knowledgeably about how to keep safe and healthy. Pupils are very confident that there is always someone on hand to help if they have any concerns. Pupils say that they thoroughly enjoy school, particularly taking part in the excellent range of additional activities, such as clubs, trips and welcoming visitors. This enjoyment is reflected in their good attendance. They talk sensitively about the plight of others less fortunate than themselves in communities around the world. They are enthusiastic about their fund-raising efforts to support them. Parents are confident that their children receive a good quality of education in a 'particularly warm, caring and family environment'.

Although when children start in the EYFS their skills are well below those found typically, learning gets off to an extremely successful start. Parents say that their children 'come on in leaps and bounds'. Between Years 1 and 6, pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress from their below and, more recently, well below average starting points. In recent years, the standards reached in national tests at the end of Year 6 have been above average. The school's evidence shows that standards by Year 6 in 2008 were average. This reflects the significant proportion of pupils joining the school part-way through their primary education, many with additional language needs. School data and inspection evidence indicate that pupils currently in Year 6 are on track to reach above average standards and the challenging targets set for their learning. Furthermore, pupils of all ages have a keen awareness of what they need to do next in order to reach their learning targets.

Pupils' good progress results from good, and sometimes outstanding, teaching and learning, supported by an effective and enjoyable curriculum. Making sure that all pupils are included in everything on offer has high priority. Provision for learning information and communication technology skills and for music, for example, are notable good features. Consequently, pupils develop the skills they need in order to become confident members of the wider community in the future. In lessons, enthusiastic teaching, extremely positive relationships, effective questioning that keeps pupils on their toes, good quality marking, and the careful and sensitive deployment of skilled support staff all contribute well to pupils' good achievement. Recent changes to procedures for collecting and recording information about what pupils can already do are helping teachers to plan and provide work that better matches pupils' varying abilities. However, teachers do not always make full use of this information to ensure that the changing needs of the school's diverse population are taken fully into account in lesson planning.

Pupils' good academic achievement and outstanding personal development are the result of good quality leadership, management and governance. The headteacher's enthusiasm for ensuring that all pupils achieve equally well in a very safe, warm and inclusive setting is highly evident. Appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place. Staff agree that in this school, 'Every child really does matter'. This is why everyone is working tirelessly to ensure that they respond swiftly and positively to the challenges faced from serving an increasingly diverse social context, including working in close partnership with support agencies and parents.

Effective steps are taken to ensure that pupils have a good understanding of the ethnic diversity of their school, locality and further afield.

There is a clear sense of common purpose among staff. The deputy headteacher has contributed significantly to the introduction of a clear, consistent and effective way of collecting information about pupils' attainment. The newly established senior leadership team, governors and other staff embrace with enthusiasm their opportunities for professional development. At present, however, the skills of new leaders and governors in reviewing the school's performance and monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision are still developing. Consequently, they do not yet make a full contribution to self-evaluation and driving through improvements. Nevertheless, its good progress since the previous inspection confirms the school's good capacity for improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

When children start Nursery, their skills are much lower than typical for their age and have been declining in recent years. Aspects of children's personal, social and emotional development, along with communication, language and literacy skills, are often notably weak. Exceedingly warm and caring relationships between adults and children, along with the bright, lively and well resourced learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, ensure that children quickly develop a hunger for learning. They settle into school routines with ease and feel particularly safe. Staff work together closely to find out how well children are progressing. They use their ongoing records particularly well to ensure that activities and questioning help children build securely on what they can already do. Adults make the most of every opportunity to help children to learn to get along well together, talk about learning, grow in confidence, share, take turns, and behave well. As a result, children's personal, social and emotional development is outstanding. The EYFS leader makes a major contribution to improving the provision, which has strengthened since the previous inspection. Along with a committed and enthusiastic team, she searches continually for new opportunities to boost learning. Consequently, by the time children start Year 1, they have made outstanding progress and most are working at the level expected for their age.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teachers plan work for all pupils that takes full account of their increasingly diverse learning needs.
- Extend the skills of leaders, managers and governors, so that they contribute fully to reviewing the school's performance, self-evaluation and to planning the way forward.

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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?	2
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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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

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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
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	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

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

Inspection of St William of York RC Primary School, Bolton, BL3 3DE

Thank you so much for the extremely warm welcome you gave the inspectors when we inspected your school. We thoroughly enjoyed being part of your school community and you helped us to see why you enjoy school so very much. You were all extremely keen to talk to us and answered all our questions thoughtfully, politely and maturely. I particularly enjoyed watching your Christmas nativity play.

You are so respectful and understanding of all the pupils who attend your school. It was really pleasing to see just how well you all get along together. I was also very impressed with just how much you know about why it is important to help others less fortunate than yourselves in other parts of the world. All the adults care a great deal about you. They give you lots of encouragement to grow in confidence and learn the skills you will need as adults in the future. You are so very kind and caring, and your behaviour is excellent. No wonder you feel so safe and happy at school.

Your parents told me how very pleased they are with your school. I agree with them that you go to a good school. By Year 6, you reach standards that are higher than those found in many other schools. The rate at which you learn is also faster, and it is very fast in the Nursery and Reception class. These high standards and your wonderful attitudes to your learning are the reasons why you are well prepared for secondary school. Even though the adults who work at your school know that you do well in your learning, they still search for ways to improve your school, so that it continues to improve. This is why I have asked the school to make sure that:

- teachers always give you work that is just right for you
- governors and other staff with special responsibilities learn how to check that you are all doing as well as you should be.

You can help your school by making sure that you tell your teachers if your work is too easy or difficult, by making sure that you know how well you are getting on, and by always checking what you still have to do to reach your learning targets. Of course, you should continue to try your best in everything that you do.