

Archbishop Runcie CofE First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108495
Local authority	Newcastle Upon Tyne
Inspection number	377766
Inspection dates	9–10 January 2012
Lead inspector	Moira Fitzpatrick

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	198
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Phil Moorin
Headteacher	Julie Robson
Date of previous school inspection	13 June 2007
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Introduction

Inspection team

Moira Fitzpatrick
Barbara Hudson

Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors visited 18 lessons or parts of lessons, including those where sounds and letters (phonics) were being taught. Six teachers and one teaching assistant were observed and approximately 10 hours were spent in direct observation of teaching and learning. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, parents and carers, members of the governing body and school staff. They observed the school's work in and out of the classroom and looked at documentation relating to safeguarding pupils, school improvement planning and documentation relating to governance. Inspectors took account of the response to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) when planning the inspection. They also took account of parents' and carers' responses expressed in 98 questionnaires returned, and of those completed by staff and pupils.

Information about the school

This school is of average size for its type. Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage and nearly all speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average, so too is the proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or who are disabled. The school has fewer pupils with a statement of special educational needs than is usual. The school holds numerous awards including Healthy Schools status, Investors in People and Activemark and Eco Schools Bronze and Silver Awards.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall Effectiveness	1
Achievement of pupils	1
Quality of teaching	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	1

Key Findings

- This is an outstanding school. Pupils, parents, carers and staff are overwhelmingly positive about all it has to offer. They value the way that the school is constantly improving by responding to pupils' changing needs. Children develop a joy in learning, independence and confidence in the Early Years Foundation Stage that serves them very well for the rest of their time in school. By the time they leave at the end of Year 4, pupils' attainment exceeds the expectation for their age and their achievement is outstanding.
- Teaching is outstanding across the school. Pupils make excellent progress from their differing starting points, because teachers assess their changing needs very well and adapt learning tasks to ensure success. All groups of pupils in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 make similar progress and there are no significant variations in the achievement of different groups. Teachers strive successfully to make learning interesting and fun; pupils confirm these are the hallmarks of their lessons. The excellent curriculum promotes pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well.
- Pupils' behaviour is excellent and makes a very positive contribution to learning. Any rare instances of inappropriate behaviour are dealt with swiftly and effectively by staff, in a caring but firm way, so that all pupils are aware of the school's very high expectations in this regard. Pupils' safety and well-being are paramount. Pupils say they feel very safe and secure.
- The vision and inspirational leadership of the headteacher motivates staff and pupils to give of their best. The drive for excellence is evident throughout the school's work. Incisive and accurate evaluations inform the school of where improvement is needed and underpin well-targeted development plans. For example, the school rightly has improvements to the organisation of teaching groups in the Early Years Foundation Stage as a priority this year.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Extend and develop the successful integration of Nursery and Reception children in direct teaching groups so that children in the Early Years Foundation Stage always make the same rapid progress as other pupils in the school.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

The overall achievement of pupils, regardless of their starting points, is outstanding and this accords accurately with the views of parents and carers. Pupils in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 make rapid and secure gains in their learning because of teachers' excellent use of assessment information to guide lesson planning. Pupils who are disabled and those who have special educational needs are effectively supported by teachers' planning and additional support to make the same rapid progress as others. Pupils' excellent progress in basic skills is matched across the curriculum because pupils are constantly using these skills in other subjects. For example, Year 1/2 pupils used a wide range of skills and knowledge very well during a discussion about removing trees from the rainforests. Here, pupils developed their very good listening and speaking skills and thought about reasons for and against this, making good use of their geographical knowledge and understanding of environmental matters to decide their viewpoint. This type of multi-layered learning, which takes account of pupils' interests, skills and knowledge, and links all areas of learning, is typical of that seen in lessons and explains the high quality work seen in pupils' books during the inspection.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good gains in all areas of learning from broadly typical skills for their age when they join the nursery. They settle quickly into routines and are encouraged to make decisions and choices to direct their own learning. By the end of the Reception Year nearly all children reach the level expected for their age in all areas of learning, and in most years a good number exceed it. At the end of Year 2 and Year 4, pupils' attainment is well-above expectation in all areas of learning, including reading. Teachers' assessments show that high attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 has been maintained since the previous inspection.

Quality of teaching

The excellent quality of teaching is recognised and greatly appreciated by parents and carers. Teachers in all phases of the school are ambitious for each pupil to achieve their best. They demonstrate this with careful lesson planning which is based on very good knowledge of each pupil's learning needs. Pupils say that learning is fun and their work is 'either just right or a little bit hard, but never too easy'. Staff are meticulous in assessing when pupils are making rapid progress or when a pupil needs additional support to overcome some barrier to their progress. Careful monitoring of how well pupils are learning during lessons enables staff to vary the level of support or challenge very quickly, so that every pupil feels proud of their

efforts by the end of the lesson. This acts as a great motivator for pupils who delight in pleasing their teachers with how well they have worked. An excellent example was seen in a Year 1 writing lesson, where all pupils managed to write exceptionally good information about the life of tree frogs. Good questioning and well-managed discussion led by the teacher had ensured that every pupil was very well equipped to write independently and well.

Teachers' planning for promoting pupils' basic skills is meticulous and extends to incorporating opportunities to use and apply reading, writing and mathematical skills across the rich and exciting curriculum. Pupils' high level reading skills make a significant contribution to the pace of their learning. Teachers make good use of varied activities during whole-class teaching so that learning is as active as possible. Excellent reinforcement of number knowledge and tables in a Year 2 mathematics lesson engaged every pupil, kept the pace brisk and generated great concentration and enjoyment. Good quality feedback during lessons and teachers' high quality marking make a significant contribution to pupils' excellent rates of progress. Teachers are careful to check that any advice to improve has been followed up by pupils so they correct errors and misconceptions.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have an excellent range of learning activities from which to choose and are confident and independent enough to direct their own learning. Activities are planned so that there is a good range of challenge when children work independently so their progress is rapid. The organisation of teaching groups according to children's needs rather than their age has been introduced in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This is accelerating progress for these younger children, so that it is now close to that in the rest of the school.

Teaching and the exciting and innovative curriculum have a powerful impact on pupils' enjoyment of learning and on their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They develop pupils' awareness of their responsibilities as good citizens, so that they are tolerant of difference and caring and supportive of each other. It teaches them about risks to their well-being so they are able to keep themselves safe, and provides numerous memorable and inspirational experiences that continually develop their curiosity and love of learning.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils understand that good behaviour and consideration for others is the foundation of their happy and caring community. From the time they join the school in the nursery children learn to adapt themselves to the needs of others. Their behaviour is courteous and thoughtful, showing a real awareness of the need to care for each other and respect each other's rights. A calm and purposeful atmosphere pervades all areas of the school. Behaviour in lessons is exemplary; it supports exceptional learning by creating a positive, supportive environment in which all can thrive and do their best. Pupils and parents and carers confirm that this is the norm. The school's strong ethos contributes much to pupils' understanding of what it is to be a good citizen, with responsibilities to the community and the natural environment. The school council is rightly proud of its work in improving the school, and takes seriously its role in helping the governing body come to decisions about how to improve the school further.

Pupils report that bullying in any form is rare and that when it does occur staff deal with it quickly and effectively. Although a very few parents and carers have concerns about bullying, others compliment the school for the way it takes incidents of bullying seriously and deals with them promptly. Pupils show an excellent understanding of how to keep safe and are aware of the rules they must follow in and out of school to do so. The result is that pupils feel very safe and secure at school, form excellent relationships with each other and their teachers, and thrive in an environment that nurtures and celebrates the individual. Pupils' attendance is well-above average reflecting their enjoyment of the exciting curriculum and excellent teaching.

Leadership and management

Leaders and managers at all levels demonstrate the ambition, determination and expertise to continually improve the school. The headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, shares her clear, ambitious vision by leading through example. Roles and responsibilities are well delegated and teachers' passion for learning is evident in the high quality of their planning and their skilful development of the curriculum. Excellent teamwork, professional dialogue and sharing good practice are the norm in this vibrant environment where all are learners. This has produced significant improvement to all aspects of provision since the previous inspection. Teaching has developed through careful identification of needs, targeted opportunities for professional development and a focus on ensuring consistency of expectation and practice. The excellent curriculum has been radically developed to give pupils the opportunity to choose the direction of their learning, while teachers' careful planning provides challenges that bring together all aspects of pupils' developing skills and knowledge, including their outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. High standards of attainment have been maintained since the previous inspection, gaps in performance between different groups of pupils have closed and overall achievement is now outstanding. Pupils are exceptionally well-prepared for the next stage in their education. The effectiveness of these developments demonstrates the school's excellent capacity for further improvement and its very effective promotion of equal opportunities.

The governing body holds the school to account exceptionally well. Its members bring a wide range of expertise and experience to the service of the school and the community. They ensure that school policies are well understood and implemented by all staff, including those for safeguarding. For example, child-protection procedures are exemplary. The needs of all groups are known and very well met so that every pupil has equal access to all the school has to offer. The governing body and staff make excellent links with parents and carers who are high in their praise of how well their children are taught and cared for in school. Links with other schools and organisations are well developed to extend support and the range of expertise available to the school.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



11 January 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Archbishop Runcie C of E First School, Newcastle-upon-Tyne
NE3 1US**

Thank you all for making our inspection of your school so very enjoyable. We were delighted to see how much you enjoy your learning and think that your teachers do a first class job in making it fun, challenging and very successful. Your behaviour and care for each other are excellent and help everyone to learn exceptionally well and feel happy in school. We were very impressed with how well you look after the school and find ways to improve it through the school council. You make excellent progress during your time at school and reach high standards in all of your learning. This is because you work hard and really enjoy all the fascinating things that teachers plan for you. You are very well cared for by your teachers and told us you feel safe in school and know how to stay safe. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes are also having a lovely time with their learning and have plenty of toys with which they can learn. Some changes that have happened there this year, in the way children are grouped to help them learn at their best rate, are working well. We have suggested to the headteacher and the governing body that this should be developed even further so that children in the Nursery and Reception learn at the same fast rate as everyone else.

Your headteacher, teachers and the governing body are determined to get the best education they can for every one of you. This is why your school is outstanding. Congratulations! You have all helped it to reach that level and can help to keep it up there by doing just as you do now – come to school regularly, work hard and most important of all enjoy it!

Best wishes for a successful year to all at Archbishop Runcie First School.

Yours sincerely

Moira Fitzpatrick
Lead inspector

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