

St Bede's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111688
Local Authority	Stockton-on-Tees
Inspection number	356965
Inspection dates	10–11 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Janet Bennett

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	160
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Joan Edwards
Headteacher	Mrs Elizabeth O'Hehir
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They visited 10 lessons observing eight teachers; held meetings with pupils, members of the governing body and staff. They observed the school's work and looked at documents related to the school's self-evaluation, safeguarding, tracking information, teachers' planning and assessment. They scrutinised pupils' work and analysed 62 parental questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- The extent to which monitoring and support by leaders embeds consistent practice across the school.
- How well assessment is used by teachers in lessons and to what extent the targets set for pupils help them to make progress.
- The extent to which leaders use their tracking of pupils' progress and the monitoring of teaching to improve provision.

Information about the school

St Bede's is smaller-than-average-size for a primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. A small proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, some of whom speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The school has achieved a number of awards, including the Silver Eco Award, Activemark, Investors in People status, and the Healthy School Gold Standard. A daily breakfast club, managed by the governing body, is provided on the school site.

There have been significant staff changes since the time of the last inspection. Staffing has now been largely stabilised and a substantive deputy headteacher will take up post in January 2011.

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: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

The school provides satisfactory education for its pupils. A respectful and caring ethos permeates the school. Parents and carers receive appropriate information about their children's progress but more could be done to involve them in their children's learning, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

There have been recent and significant staff changes which have had a negative impact on rates of progress across the school. Staffing has now been largely stabilised and progress is improving. However, prior weaknesses in teaching have led to some pupils not making as much progress as they should. Pupils requiring support with their learning are now receiving the help they need to accelerate their progress and this is ensuring that the oldest learners are largely on track to achieve the targets set for them by the end of Year 6. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 has improved and is now broadly average. However, outcomes in writing are weaker than in reading and mathematics.

Children make a good start to their learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Working in partnership with the local authority and a neighbouring school is strengthening teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2. Assessment is used more effectively to match work to pupils' prior learning and to set pupils targets to help them to improve. It is not yet evident in all teaching, and pupils are not always given sufficient time to respond to the feedback they receive in order to amend and improve their work. Where teaching is most effective, pupils have access to a range of resources to support their independent learning but this is not happening in all lessons.

The curriculum contributes well to pupils' personal development and effectively promotes their good social, moral, spiritual and cultural development and sensible behaviour. It provides a satisfactory framework for pupils to develop the basic skills. Assessment is now used to accurately identify what it is that pupils need to learn next, but the curriculum is not always planned sufficiently well to give pupils time to practise and fully consolidate new skills so that they are applied confidently.

The school has satisfactory capacity to sustain further improvement. Systems for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school are improving and are used to identify accurately the main priorities for further development. Leaders provide appropriate support for staff but monitoring is not sufficiently rigorous to ensure that staff implement school policies consistently and respond to the advice they receive to improve their practice. Although there have been improvements in the systems for tracking pupils' progress, especially those at risk of underachievement, the information gained is not yet fully utilised to ensure all pupils make better progress to reach higher levels of attainment.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve progress and raise attainment, particularly in writing, by:
 - using tracking information more effectively and consistently to ensure that pupils requiring help with their learning are identified and supported quickly
 - using assessment information to plan the curriculum so that pupils have sufficient opportunities to practise and apply new learning.
- Improve teaching by making greater use of monitoring to ensure that:
 - -activities are matched consistently to the needs of differing learners
 - -pupils have the resources they need to support their independent learning
 - -marking and feedback consistently provides clear guidance about next steps in learning and that pupils have time to act on this advice.
- Increase the opportunities for parents and carers to be involved in their children's learning, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Children enter Nursery with skills that are below those typical for their age. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and enter Year 1 with skills that are broadly typical for their age. In recent years, progress across the school has been variable and for some pupils it has not been good enough. However, staff changes and better teaching are leading to improvement. All pupils, irrespective of their starting points or backgrounds, make satisfactory progress. Well-planned support for those pupils who need it is leading to average attainment and satisfactory achievement by the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress; their learning needs are identified accurately and increasingly this information is used by staff to match work closely to their needs and to ensure they are fully included in lessons.

The majority of pupils say they feel safe in school but in the questionnaire the pupils completed prior to the inspection a small number expressed concerns about parts of the external environment. Inspectors saw no evidence to support this concern. Pupils have clear views about how the school could be improved and are proud of their involvement in a project to develop an area of the school grounds. Pupils enjoy the activities that teachers plan for them and apply themselves diligently in lessons. They are eager to share their ideas and to learn with and from others. Their good behaviour in lessons contributes well to the progress they make.

Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy diet and the contribution exercise makes to a healthy lifestyle. They willingly take responsibility within and beyond the school, for example, as 'buddies' at lunchtime and as members of the Junior Neighbourhood Watch Programme. Pupils have a strong understanding of their own and other cultures, are respectful of the needs and feelings of others, and they take advantage of the many opportunities for quiet reflection and prayer, which are integral to the daily life of the school.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Strong relationships and consistent expectations result in pupils' good behaviour in lessons. Additional adults understand their roles well and make a positive contribution to pupils' learning. Where teaching is most effective, lessons build well on pupils' differing starting points and regular checks are made to ensure pupils' understanding. In these lessons, resources are used well to extend learning and to promote pupils' independence. For example, in a Year 6 literacy lesson, pupils were encouraged to use a thesaurus to improve their use of descriptive language in order to engage the reader. Although these are features of most lessons they are not consistently embedded across the school. Work is marked regularly and, where this is most effective, pupils are given clear guidance to help them to improve. However, too often pupils have insufficient opportunity to use the advice they receive to evaluate and improve their work.

Pupils have good opportunities to develop their personal and social skills and to learn about cultures that differ from their own. Support for those pupils at risk of underachievement is well planned and is contributing to their improving progress. Assessment is used increasingly to identify pupils' next steps in learning but pupils do not always have sufficient opportunity to practise and consolidate new skills across a sequence of lessons.

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Pupils are cared for well by adults that they trust. There is a warm, welcoming and calm atmosphere in school which is conducive to pupils' learning and well-being. Relationships between staff and pupils are strong and staff are committed to fully including every child in the life of the school. Recent changes to the way in which behaviour is managed have led to improvements. Staff have consistently high expectations and pupils understand the consequences of their actions. Potentially vulnerable pupils receive the support they need to ensure that they thrive. Well-planned transition arrangements promote smooth transfer, particularly for those pupils in Year 6.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders are correctly focusing their actions on improving pupils' progress and on raising attainment. The headteacher has an accurate understanding of strengths and weaknesses in the quality of teaching, and well-focused professional development is improving the accuracy and use of teachers' assessments. Leaders are providing appropriate support for individual staff, but monitoring is insufficiently rigorous to ensure that agreed policies are consistently implemented, or that the support and advice teachers receive result in sustained improvements in their practice.

Systems for tracking pupils' progress are now being used to identify those pupils at risk of underachievement. Training for teaching assistants has extended their skills, enabling them to provide well-planned support for those pupils who need additional help. Because of prior weaknesses in teaching, successful, intensive support is being provided for pupils in upper Key Stage 2 in order to accelerate their progress.

Safeguarding arrangements are satisfactory. Staff have the necessary skills to identify those pupils who may be at risk and swift action is taken to secure their safety and well-being. All necessary documents and policies are in place and safe recruitment practices are adopted.

Members of the governing body have a good understanding of the community served by the school and are supportive of its work. They understand the main strengths and priorities for improvement but recognise the need to be more fully involved in monitoring the effectiveness of its work. The views of parents and carers are considered carefully and steps have been taken to improve the information they receive about their children's progress, including the targets they have been set for their next steps in learning. The respect and value that every pupil receives promotes satisfactory equality of opportunity and ensures that any form of discrimination is tackled. Although systems to track the progress that pupils make are improving, they are not yet utilised fully to ensure that all

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pupils progress at the same rate. Community cohesion is promoted actively through close links with the parish and local communities but links with communities further afield are less well developed.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Strong and caring relationships and well-established routines ensure that all children settle quickly into school and become independent learners who involve themselves in a wide range of activities. Adults provide good role models, who effectively promote children's respect for one another, their ability to play productively together and their confidence to apply new skills.

Staff observe children's development carefully and use the information gained to track their progress and to plan activities that build well on their prior learning. Staff seek information from parents and carers so that children's interests at home can be built upon in school. However, systems for involving parents and carers in their children's learning are not yet developed sufficiently.

Staff plan activities that interest and engage children in purposeful play. Daily opportunities for children to work in small groups at activities led by adults contribute well to their learning, particularly their development of language, literacy and mathematical skills. Opportunities for children to practise and apply these skills are well embedded in daily routines. Adults are well deployed, ensuring that activities children choose for themselves are sensitively supported so that children use their time purposefully.

Effective leadership ensures that provision is evaluated continually to make sure that it is well matched to children's needs and interests. Where necessary, improvements are made so that learning and development are promoted well.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	2
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Almost half of parents and carers evaluated the school's performance by completing a questionnaire. Those who did were mainly very positive about the work of the school, in particular the extent to which the school keeps pupils safe, promotes healthy lifestyles and takes account of parents' and carers' suggestions. Inspectors endorse these views. A small but significant proportion of parents and carers, who returned a questionnaire, were less satisfied with some aspects of the school's work. In particular, they expressed some concern about the progress their child is making and the extent to which they are informed about their child's progress. The inspectors' evaluation of these aspects of the school's work, are included in the body of the report. Some parents and carers also felt that the school did not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors followed up these concerns by talking with representatives of the governing body, staff and pupils, and by observing behaviour in and out of lessons. During the inspection, behaviour was good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Bede's Catholic Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 62 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 160 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	32	52	28	45	2	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	37	60	24	39	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	31	50	27	44	4	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	30	48	26	42	6	10	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	30	48	30	48	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	29	47	29	47	4	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	28	45	33	53	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	25	40	33	53	2	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	32	52	28	45	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	23	37	29	47	7	11	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	25	40	35	56	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	25	40	33	53	2	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	34	55	25	40	3	5	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

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.



12 November 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Bede's Catholic Primary School, Stockton-on-Tees, TS19 0DW

Thank you very much for the welcome you gave to me and my colleagues when we inspected your school. We thought you were very polite and respectful, and we found your school a welcoming place to be. We could see that the adults in school care for you well and we were impressed by the way in which you behave well in lessons, take responsibility within school, and how well you contribute to improvements in the school and local community. You have a good understanding of healthy living and we were pleased to see how keen you are to take part in physical activities at playtime.

Your school is satisfactory. We know that you have had lots of changes in your teachers and this has meant that some of you have not made as much progress in your learning as you should. But we can see that things are improving. Most of your teachers are planning lessons that help you to improve your reading and number skills, and to work independently. They are also giving you advice about what it is you need to do to improve. We have asked your headteacher to ensure that these things happen in all classes and that you have time to apply the advice you are given in order to improve your work. Those of you who need extra help are receiving it and so we think that you are now making the progress that you should. We have asked your headteacher to track your progress more carefully to ensure that this continues to happen, so that your progress gets better and better. We think more could be done to help you to improve your writing and so we have asked your teachers to ensure that you have sufficient opportunities to learn and practise your writing skills so that you can apply them confidently. We could see that the youngest children make a good start to their learning in the Nursery and Reception classes, but we think it would be good if their parents and carers could be more involved in helping them to learn.

We hope that you continue to care for one another and to enjoy your learning. We wish you all the greatest success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Janet Bennett

Lead inspector

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