

St Wilfrid's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108400
Local authority	Gateshead
Inspection number	377750
Inspection dates	15–16 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Kate Pringle

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	95
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Phil Cunningham
Headteacher	Mary McMillan
Date of previous school inspection	4 March 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Seven lessons and five teachers were observed. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at pupils' books, assessment information, policies and procedures, school development plans and updates of pupils' progress. Views of stakeholders were also considered through questionnaire responses from 30 parents and carers, 10 staff and 43 pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How well improved provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage has had an impact upon outcomes for children.
- How effectively teaching and learning and the developing curriculum motivate pupils to progress well in all subjects, especially in reading, writing and mathematics.
- How well care, guidance and support engage pupils, parents and carers and other partners to enable best access to learning.
- How successfully all leaders and managers use their developing roles to bring about improved provision and outcomes for pupils.

Information about the school

This is a smaller-than-average primary school. It includes centrally-funded provision for Key Stage 1 pupils with moderate learning difficulties from across the local authority. Therefore, the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who have a statement of special educational needs is higher than average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is higher than the national average. There are few pupils from minority-ethnic groups or who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils joining or leaving the school at other than the usual times is higher than average due to the provision made for Traveller families. No children from Traveller families were in school at the time of inspection. The school holds the Activemark award and Healthy Schools Status.

Since the retirement of the previous headteacher in December 2010, the school was led by an acting headteacher until Easter 2011 when an executive headteacher was appointed until summer 2012.

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

This is a satisfactory school. Over the past year, successive headteachers have effectively put appropriate initiatives in place designed to improve the quality of teaching and the use of information about pupils' progress within a more exciting curriculum. These initiatives are having a positive impact on raising attainment and increasing the rate of pupils' progress. Pupils are enjoying school more and their improved behaviour is now good. Although attendance remains low it is improving rapidly and fewer pupils are persistently absent. Staff know the pupils very well and demonstrate strong partnerships with a range of external providers. These help to secure effective guidance and support for all pupils, but in particular for those whose circumstances make them more likely to be vulnerable. Pupils feel very safe. They know that adults will listen to them and take action if they have concerns. They speak positively about improvements in their own behaviour and that of others. The good quality of support and guidance is recognised by parents and carers who wholeheartedly support the school's good care of their children. Leaders work hard to build positive relationships with parents and carers. However, leaders recognise that there is more to do to help parents and carers to understand and fully support their children's learning.

Young children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage from entry points which, for many, are below and sometimes significantly below expected levels for their age. By the time pupils leave Year 6, attainment is broadly in line with others nationally. Senior leaders monitor teaching and pupils' progress accurately. They recognise that variations in the quality of teaching between classes and across year groups result in pupils' progress, although sometimes good, being satisfactory overall. As a result, achievement is also satisfactory. In better lessons, pupils are well motivated to achieve through independent and practical activities well linked to pupils' individual learning needs. In less effective lessons, the pace of learning slows because pupils are not challenged sufficiently well. The curriculum, while satisfactory overall and containing well-planned enrichment activities, does not provide pupils with enough opportunities to learn independently and through investigation and to use their developing skills creatively in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT).

The headteacher brings a wealth of experience to the school and her clear vision for improvement is shared by staff. The school's evaluation of its performance is accurate. Increased delegation of responsibilities among staff is improving their

understanding of the strengths and areas of improvement for the school. Dedicated actions are in place and are helping to speed up the rate of progress and raise attainment. Improvements made to the outside provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage, to the inclusion of pupils with moderate learning difficulties and to teaching, the curriculum and the learning environment indicate the school's satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

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.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and increase the consistency of progress by:
 - further improving the effectiveness of teaching so that it consistently challenges pupils to learn well and make at least good progress
 - ensuring the pace of learning in lessons supports this high level of challenge
 - ensuring assessment information is used effectively to match activities to the needs of individual pupils
 - using marking more effectively to help pupils understand their successes against their targets and how to improve their work.

- Further develop the curriculum so that pupils have more opportunities to:
 - engage in creative, practical and investigative activities through which they can use their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills
 - be independent learners by being more involved in making decisions for themselves.

- Strengthen partnerships with parents and carers:
 - to enable them to better understand and support their children's learning
 - to enable a wider understanding among parents and carers of the benefits of regular attendance for their children and hence further improve the rate of attendance

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils' achievement and enjoyment in their work are satisfactory. Their enjoyment is higher when they engage in activities which challenge them and enable them to use their developing skills. For example, Year 6 successfully used a range of ICT resources to construct their own version of their class reading book, 'Wolves in the Walls'. Pupils are polite and form positive relationships with each other and with staff. They want to please their teachers by working hard and doing well. In this small school, cohorts differ in ability. From levels of attainment that are lower than average at the start of Year 1, pupils' progress fluctuates over Years 1 to 6 and is satisfactory overall so that pupils reach attainment which is broadly average by the end of Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language make similar progress to other pupils.

Pupils care for each other well and are respectful of adults in the school. They feel very safe and recognise that their good behaviour and a significant reduction in bullying have led to a safer environment. Their increasing understanding of the potential consequences of their actions has had a positive impact on behaviour. A number of opportunities enable pupils to engage in a range of physical activities in sport and dance. The annual residential visit to an outdoor activity centre for older pupils provides individual challenge and team building which have a positive impact upon confidence and self-esteem. Pupils understand the need to eat sensibly and the dangers of substance abuse. They identify ways in which to improve their school and develop links within the local community. They raise money for charities and participate in joint activities with their church and local developments. Although pupils' attendance remains low, there are clear signs of rapid improvement linked to their increased enjoyment in learning and a more exciting curriculum.

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	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
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	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Most teachers use interactive whiteboards successfully to engage pupils and model ideas. However, variations in the quality of teaching are reflected in the progress pupils make in different classes. Pupils engage well in good lessons where they have a clear understanding of what is expected of them and they are encouraged to learn through challenging activities which promote independent learning and the use of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. Progress is less rapid when teachers provide too much information and pupils are not challenged by tasks that encourage independent investigation. Teachers understand the levels at which pupils are learning. However, too few use this information effectively to set targets and plan for learning at individual levels. Similarly, marking of work does not yet indicate how well pupils have achieved against their targets or how they can improve their work.

Developments to the curriculum are extending pupils' first-hand understanding of the world about them. There are improved links between subjects and more opportunities to develop and apply important skills. Well-planned enrichment

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

activities, including visitors, visits to local open-air museums and increased after-school activities extend pupils' knowledge and skills. Such initiatives are successfully engaging pupils in learning and they speak of enjoying school. Pupils talk excitedly about their trips on the Metro and of the links they have with a local store. Opportunities for parents and carers to involve themselves in their children's learning through working together to make a banner for a recent trip out, for instance, are encouraging them to take an interest in what and how their children learn although the school recognises that there is still more to be done in this respect.

Pupils are cared for very well. Their varied social and emotional needs are quickly recognised and addressed. Because of this pupils feel secure. They develop self-esteem, respect for others, and are gaining an increased sense of responsibility. Strategies to support those pupils whose circumstances make them more likely to be vulnerable, those with specific learning needs and the few pupils who speak English as an additional language are successful in promoting satisfactory progress. The work of teaching assistants and specialist teachers is particularly effective in supporting such needs. Work with outside partners is well embedded and has led to improvements, for example, in reducing the proportions of pupils who are persistently absent from school, helping to raise attendance rates rapidly. The school works hard to engage parents and carers and encourage pupils to attend regularly. Despite this, some parents and carers do not yet fully appreciate the benefits of regular attendance in contributing to their children's academic progress and personal development. Well-established practices provide good induction and transition arrangements at all levels.

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?

Leaders and staff are clearly committed to ensuring that pupils are happy and safe in school and that they enjoy their learning. Senior leaders have worked closely, introducing initiatives to improve tracking, assessment and moderation, which have had a positive impact upon progress and attainment. Senior leaders demonstrate clear strengths in the actions they have undertaken to improve attainment, informed by good quality monitoring of teaching and learning and strongly supported by well-focused professional development. This, together with previously mentioned initiatives, is now becoming evident in the improved effectiveness of teaching and the improving progress pupils make in their academic and personal development. However, these initiatives have not yet had time to impact consistently across the school. There are further clear signs of improvement in, for example, the quality of the curriculum and the increase in practical opportunities for pupils. Delegation of further roles and responsibilities to middle leaders is more recent. Although training and support is in place to develop the skills of middle leaders, these are not yet having a full impact to enable them to influence improvements significantly in their

areas of responsibility. The governing body supports the school well and has made a number of decisions about the leadership of the school to assure experience and expertise. Arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements and secure pupils' safety. Leaders and managers understand the strengths and areas of development for the school and are working together to bring about improvement.

The school has good links with a range of outside agencies and partners which support the wide range of individual needs of pupils effectively. Leaders seek to ensure that there is no discrimination against any individual group. They successfully support families in crisis and work hard to better engage parents and carers in their children's learning and to help them understand the benefits of attending school and making the most of learning opportunities. There is a strong sense of unity in the school and the inclusion of all pupils is well promoted. However, variations in pupils' progress across the school mean that the promotion of equality of opportunities is satisfactory overall. The school has an increasingly positive profile in the local community which is central to its future development. Work to extend understanding of different communities nationally and internationally is at an earlier stage of development. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

These are the grades for the 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	2
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	2
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

Children enter a warm, welcoming environment and settle quickly and happily. They learn simple rules to keep them safe and healthy and demonstrate an increasing awareness of the feelings of others. Effective observations identify individual needs and interventions are appropriately directed to develop children's skills in speaking and listening, linking sounds and letters, writing and counting. Skilful teaching, together with recent improvements to the outside learning area, ensures that children make good progress from their starting points. A range of adult-led and child-initiated activities encourage children to learn new skills and become curious and confident individuals. For example, children took great delight in exploring the range of enormous vegetables, extending their vocabulary and understanding of weight and size as they explored marrow, carrot, onion and leek.

Changes to leadership and the team have been very effective. There is clear evidence of improvement to learning areas, transition to Year 1, better recording of observations and assessments, and the integration of children with specific learning needs. Relationships with parents and carers are effective as they are actively encouraged to take an interest in their children’s learning through bright attractive learning journeys. Adults work successfully as a team and, together, they provide a setting in which young children thrive.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation stage	2
Taking into account:	
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 in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire were highly positive about the school. They greatly appreciate the care given to their children and are extremely confident that their children are happy and safe and that teachers meet their children’s needs well. Inspection findings support the views of parents and carers about the quality of care, guidance and support given to their children. Inspectors found that the school gives a satisfactory education to pupils. Few issues were raised by parents and carers and there was no obvious pattern to those raised. All were fully investigated and form part of the evidence base used to arrive at the inspection judgements.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Wilfrid's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided 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 inspector received 30 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 95 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	18	60	11	37	0	0	1	3
The school keeps my child safe	18	60	12	40	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	16	53	13	43	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	16	53	14	47	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	18	60	11	37	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	14	47	16	53	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	14	47	16	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)	15	50	14	47	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	16	53	13	43	1	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	11	37	18	60	1	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	12	40	17	57	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	15	50	14	47	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	18	60	11	37	1	3	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 is for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and 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.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



19 September 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Wilfrid's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School, Gateshead, NE10 0DJ

Thank you for the lovely welcome you gave to inspectors when we visited your school.

You go to a satisfactory school which is improving because your teachers are working hard to make it better. We were impressed by your good behaviour and the care and respect you have for each other. Many of you talked about how much you enjoy the experiences of visits and visitors, which help you to learn. We know that you are enjoying school more and that you feel safe because of the good care and support adults give you. Your parents feel that your school looks after you well. However, some of you do not attend school as regularly as you should and this means that your progress is slower than it could be. We would like your teachers and leaders to give your parents and carers more opportunities to work with you and understand what you are learning, and encourage those of you whose attendance is more infrequent and irregular to attend school more often.

Younger children get off to a good start in Nursery and Reception. There have been a lot of changes to your curriculum and how you learn in main school. We would like your teachers to make sure that your lessons have more creative and practical activities to give you lots of opportunities to use your skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology independently. We would like you to understand your targets better and ask teachers to mark your work giving you clear direction on how well you have done and what you need to learn next.

We hope that you will continue to enjoy learning and that you continue to try your hardest in the future.

Yours sincerely

Kate Pringle
Lead inspector

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