

Our Lady and St Joseph's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School, Brooms

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114253
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	378825
Inspection dates	15–16 November 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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	118
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr T Clark
Headteacher	Mrs S M Fenwick
Date of previous school inspection	4 June 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Five lessons involving four 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 44 parents and carers, 10 staff and 61 pupils.

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

- How effectively does provision in the Reception class enable all children to make good progress?
- How effectively do teachers challenge the needs of pupils of differing abilities in order to secure good progress for all groups across the school, particularly in mathematics and for more-able pupils?
- How successful is the curriculum in providing opportunities for pupils to use their basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) across all subjects?
- How successfully do all leaders and managers use high-quality monitoring and evaluation to increase challenge and improve outcomes for pupils?

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average size primary school. It draws pupils from the local parish, from neighbouring villages and from the town of Consett. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is higher than found nationally. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language is lower than that found nationally. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than average, as is the proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs. Over recent months there have been some changes in staffing, in particular in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The school holds Healthy School status.

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. It demonstrates particular strengths in the care, guidance and support given to pupils, and this is greatly appreciated by parents and carers, with whom the school engages well. One parent's comment summed up the views of many, '...the school plays a vital role in caring for the well-being and happiness of all children.' They also comment on the good relationships between staff and pupils which enable their children to feel safe and secure. Where personal outcomes for pupils are good they relate directly to this quality of care. Pupils know well how to stay safe and healthy. Their behaviour is good because the school sets clear boundaries and enables pupils to reflect on the consequences of their actions. Pupils contribute successfully to the life of the school and the local community. Their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development contributes well to their positive attitudes, good relationships and sense of fair play.

Most children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills well below those expected for their age. Children settle quickly and happily, and most make good progress. Within Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils' progress and achievement are satisfactory over most year groups, although progress accelerates in Years 5 and 6. Staff make regular assessments of pupils' work but this information is not used by all teachers to ensure that pupils progress consistently well across different stages in learning. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make satisfactory progress. Teaching is satisfactory. Although there is an increasing focus for pupils to work together through practical, creative and investigative activities, such opportunities are still too few. The use of assessment data is not yet embedded consistently well across all classes. Hence, too many lessons do not have sufficient challenge where activities are not closely matched to the individual needs of pupils, particularly for more-able pupils.

Self-evaluation is generally accurate. Although improvement plans show that leaders and managers know what needs to improve, there is some lack of urgency in translating plans into effective action. Leaders and managers understand the importance of monitoring different aspects of the school's work but they are somewhat slow to use the outcomes to drive the school forward more rapidly. For example, the moderation of pupils' work between schools has only very recently begun to help to raise subject leaders' understanding. Since the last inspection, the school demonstrates positive progress on two of the areas for improvement, as evidenced in pupils' rising attainment in writing across the school and in mathematics

at Key Stage 2. Positive engagement with parents and carers has led to pupils' increased attendance. Effective partnerships with outside agencies contribute well to pupils' learning and well-being and a developing curriculum mean that the school has satisfactory capacity to improve further.

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?

- Promote consistently good progress and raise attainment, especially for more-able pupils, by:
 - improving the use teachers make of monitoring and assessment data
 - ensuring that planned work is well matched to challenge the differing needs and abilities of pupils
 - using marking more effectively to help pupils understand how well they have done and what they need to do to improve their work.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that it is consistently good or better by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to work together through practical, creative and investigative activities
 - encouraging pupils to take more responsibility for their learning.
- Sharpen the monitoring and evaluation of the school's work to quicken the rate of improvement by:
 - further developing the skills of all leaders and managers in judging the quality of all aspects of the school's work
 - improving the quality of documentation to best support systems and procedures, including that of safeguarding.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils say that they enjoy school. Their enjoyment is greater in lessons where they engage in activities which challenge them and enable them to be creative and investigate using their developing skills in literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT). For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 concentrated very well in a mathematics lesson to investigate a range of problems about the probability of events. Pupils demonstrate highly positive relationships with each other and staff. They want to please their teachers and most work hard to achieve their best.

Most progress is made in the upper years of Key Stage 2. Pupils' satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 and in lower Key Stage 2, means that pupils' attainment remains below expectation in these year groups. Pupils in Year 6 reach broadly average attainment by the time they leave. However, fewer achieve at the higher

Level 5 than nationally and pupils' progress is patchy through the school. This means that overall, their progress and achievement are satisfactory.

Pupils feel very safe and recognise that their good behaviour contributes to a safe environment in which they learn and work. They care for each other well and recognise that their understanding of the potential consequences of their actions has a positive impact upon their generally good behaviour. There is good take-up of additional physical activities. Pupils understand the need for a healthy diet and are beginning to use this understanding to promote, for example, healthy food in lunch boxes. Pupils contribute well to the life of the school through their roles as buddies, mediators and school councillors. They raise money for a number of charities and participate in joint activities within their local community and church. Pupils' attendance is average and improving, which is linked to their increased enjoyment of learning, as the school moves towards 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	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

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is satisfactory and this is reflected in the progress most pupils make across the school. The use of electronic whiteboards to engage pupils in learning new strategies and to model ideas is developing. Where teaching is good, teachers understand well the levels at which different pupils are learning and set activities that are well-matched to their abilities. Pupils make best progress during these sessions because they understand what is expected of them. They engage well in activities that challenge them and promote their independent learning, using their acquired literacy and numeracy skills. However, too few teachers use assessment information effectively to set targets and plan for learning at individual levels. Similarly, the marking of pupils' work is inconsistent in quality and rarely indicates how well pupils achieve against their individual targets or how they can improve their work. Where pupils are encouraged to work together there are good opportunities for pupils to discuss how best to use their learnt skills. In too many lessons, however, pupils are

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

given set pieces of work and are not encouraged to take responsibility for their learning.

The school is developing the curriculum to give pupils greater access to a wider range of experiences and to extend their understanding of the world about them. Additional experiences, including visitors, visits and enrichment activities, extend pupils' skills and knowledge. There are increasing links between subjects and some opportunities to develop and apply skills in reading and writing. However, these are not yet fully extended and there are limited opportunities to use their skills in ICT and mathematics across subjects. Pupils talked excitedly of their trip to a Second World War camp museum and have used their writing skills to describe what life was like during the war years. Pupils' personal and social development is a strength of the curriculum, effectively underpinning all aspects of school life. Its success supports pupils' good behaviour and relationships well, enabling them to learn with greater assurance.

This is an inclusive school and teachers quickly identify individual concerns and use their good links with other agencies and partners to address individual needs effectively. Because of this, pupils who may be vulnerable because of their circumstances are quickly identified and supported in their learning. Attendance is average and the need to attend regularly is given a constantly high profile by the school. Good links with parents and carers enable a smooth transition for children when they join reception. Good and active links with the high school ensure that pupils move confidently to their next stage in education. Although the day-to-day provision for pupils is good, the quality of supporting documentation is less so.

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?

All staff are deeply committed to providing a happy, safe and inclusive environment. A more interesting curriculum is providing a wider range of experiences and learning opportunities for pupils. The monitoring of teaching and the evaluation of the work of the school are satisfactory overall, but lack the necessary sharpness and rigour in order to move the school forward more quickly. Leaders evaluate their own areas accurately and contribute to plans for development. They are becoming increasingly aware of how effective the school is, compared to other schools nationally, in the various aspects of its provision and in raising achievement.

A strong supporter of the school, the governing body has a regular visible presence around school. The governing body understands the strengths of the school and engages well with parents and carers. However, it does not fully challenge the school to improve areas of weakness. School development plans identify clear areas of action but lack the sharpness to improve pupils' achievement quickly, especially that

of those pupils who progress less quickly or who are more-able. The governing body ensures that pupils and staff are safe and understands its safeguarding responsibilities. Safeguarding requirements meet current requirements and the school is now looking to sharpen the relevant documentation and monitor requirements even more closely. Partnerships with most parents and carers are strong, and the school is developing links to improve communication and to increase parents' and carers' engagement in their children's learning. Links with other partners, including the local high school are good and support individual needs effectively. There is a strong sense of unity in the school. Although the inclusion of all pupils is promoted well, variations in the progress of different groups of pupils, for example, the more able and the less able and between year groups, means that equality of opportunity is no better than satisfactory overall. There are a number of opportunities that promote pupils' effective engagement with, and good understanding of, the local community. However, plans to extend their understanding of different communities nationally and internationally are at an earlier stage of development. Overall, 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	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	2
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

In this warm and secure environment, children settle quickly and happily. Concerted efforts to promote children's personal, social and emotional development and communication and listening skills are effective. They behave well, happily share resources and cooperate well with each other, for example, by taking turns. Children progress well overall from levels on entry that were well below those expected, especially in communication, language and literacy. By the time they start Year 1, their attainment is below average. Provision for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities enables them to make similar progress to other children.

Although planned opportunities for learning result in overall good outcomes for children, especially in promoting their personal development and well-being, present levels of provision are only satisfactory. The proportion of adult-led, activities considerably outweigh the proportion of challenging activities in which children are encouraged to make individual choices about how and where they learn. Staff

observe children constantly and the use of this knowledge shows some impact in planning the next steps in children's learning.

Children's achievement is recorded but the celebration of children's development is not shared sufficiently well on a regular basis with parents and carers. Additionally, there are few opportunities for parents and carers to contribute to their children's learning. The Early Years Foundation Stage team works closely together and is seeking to involve parents and carers more in their children's learning. Activities to improve children's knowledge and blending of letter sounds at the early stages of reading are showing some success. The staff's understanding of how to analyse data is satisfactory but improving. Identified actions for further improvement include the extended use of the outdoor area and further links with external nurseries.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

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. 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 Our Lady and St Joseph's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School, Brooms 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 44 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 118 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	25	57	19	43	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	30	68	14	32	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	20	45	23	52	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	18	41	23	52	2	5	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	25	57	18	41	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	20	45	23	52	0	0	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	22	50	21	48	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)	18	41	21	48	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	23	52	19	43	1	2	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	22	50	22	50	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	18	41	23	52	1	2	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	20	45	21	48	2	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	30	68	11	25	3	7	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.



17 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Our Lady and St Joseph's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School, Brooms, Consett, DH8 7SN

Thank you for the lovely welcome you gave to the inspectors when we visited your school. We found that this is a satisfactory school, where your teachers work hard to help you feel safe and secure. We were very impressed by your good behaviour and the care and respect you show to each other. We know that you enjoy school more when the experiences of visits and visitors help you to learn. Your parents and carers feel that the school looks after you well and that you know how to keep safe and healthy. You help your teachers by taking on responsibilities, such as becoming buddies, mediators and school councillors, and you play an active role in the local community and with your church.

We believe that you could achieve higher standards if your teachers could help you more. So, we would like them to make sure that your lessons have more creative and practical activities to give you lots of opportunities to use your literacy, numeracy and ICT skills independently. We would like teachers to make sure that these activities challenge each one of you and for them to give you good feedback about how well you have met your targets and what you need to do next.

We have also asked leaders and managers to make sure that they know how well the school is doing in comparison with other schools. We need them to improve the quality of the documents about how the school systems work and for managers to monitor all of this more effectively.

We hope that you continue to enjoy learning and to continue to try your very best in the future.

Yours sincerely

Kate Pringle
Lead inspector

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