

St Joseph's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School, Ushaw Moor

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 114272 |
| Local authority | Durham |
| Inspection number | 378830 |
| Inspection dates | 23–24 April 2012 |
| Lead inspector | Margaret Shepherd |

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

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| 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 | 100 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | M Everett |
| Headteacher | E Smith |
| Date of previous school inspection | 11 June 2009 |
| School address | Durham Road Ushaw Moor Durham DH7 7LF |
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Introduction

Inspection team

Margaret Shepherd

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Four lessons were observed and a further 10 short observations of class lessons or group work were conducted. In addition, all teaching of reading by letter and word recognition was seen. All five teachers were observed. Discussions were held with parents and carers, children, members of the governing body, staff and volunteers working in the school. The inspector observed the school's work, and scrutinised documents relating to self-evaluation, safeguarding, children's capabilities when they join the school, the progress that pupils are making over time, and teachers' planning and assessment. A scrutiny of pupils' work since September was carried out. The 52 parental questionnaires were scrutinised.

Information about the school

The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school and serves the village of Ushaw Moor. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The great majority of pupils are of White British heritage. There is a higher than average proportion of disabled pupils and pupils who are supported at school action plus and more pupils with a statement of special educational needs than usual. The school has Healthy School status, Forest School status and the Activemark.

Since the previous inspection a new headteacher has been appointed. She is also the headteacher of a neighbouring school and spends half of her time every week in each school. The schools are beginning to work more closely together to share expertise. Only one teacher remains in post since the previous inspection. All members of staff took up new areas of responsibility at the beginning of this academic year. The school meets the current floor standards set by the government, which determines the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

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 | 3 |
| Achievement of pupils | 3 |
| Quality of teaching | 3 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | 2 |
| Leadership and management | 3 |

Key Findings

- This is a satisfactory school. It is not yet good because pupils do not make consistently good progress through the school. While there is some good teaching and there are no inadequate features, too much remains only satisfactory. The curriculum provides some stimulating and relevant learning experiences but this is not consistent. The headteacher provides high quality leadership to drive improvement. Many of the other school leaders have just taken up their roles and have yet to develop their skills. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- Pupils' progress is satisfactory. Rates of progress vary as pupils move through the school. Children make a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Progress varies between individuals as they move through the school. There are no trends of underperformance in particular groups of pupils. Progress of the oldest pupils accelerates and is good. Their attainment is broadly average.
- Teaching is satisfactory. The good teaching includes a lively pace, systematic use of questioning and a stimulating curriculum. This is not as effective in weaker teaching. New efficient assessment systems are in place, but not all teachers are using them well enough to plan lessons to match individual pupils' needs.
- Pupils are extremely courteous and respectful to adults. They behave well in lessons and move around the school very sensibly. Younger children play confidently with older pupils. Attitudes towards learning are good. Pupils are proud of their work. They feel safe within the school environment.
- The headteacher has high expectations. Improvement of teaching is a priority. Management of staff's performance is linked closely to continuing professional development. The partnership with the neighbouring school works very well. The curriculum for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Provide a higher level of consistency in the progress of individual pupils by:
 - extending all teachers' skills in analysing the new assessment systems
 - using this analysis more closely in future planning
 - consistently providing more focussed feedback to individual pupils on how to improve their work and how well they are learning
 - linking the progress of individual pupils over time more closely to staff performance management.

- Increase the proportion of good teaching by:
 - sharing the expertise of the best teaching from both of the schools across the staff
 - providing a lively and challenging pace to learning in all whole-class sessions
 - consistently using a range of carefully focussed questions to support individual learning
 - providing a stimulating and relevant curriculum across all lessons with high quality resources.

- Extending the effectiveness of middle managers and subject leaders by:
 - supporting new leaders in developing their roles
 - developing their skills of monitoring, evaluating and leading staff development across the two schools.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

The quality of pupils' learning varies considerably. In the best lessons, pupils play a very active part in lessons whether this is in developing basic skills or extending understanding and knowledge. For example, pupils thoroughly enjoyed writing persuasive letters after taking part in the drama where Goldilocks was accused of burgling the three bears' cottage. Older pupils carry out investigations confidently and record them in imaginative ways. Where learning is satisfactory rather than good, pupils carry out the tasks diligently but are not as stimulated to produce their best work. All pupils produce good quality homework and are delighted to win a headteacher award for their efforts.

Attainment on entry varies from year to year but is below the expected level overall and lower in personal and language development. Children make good progress in the Reception class and pupils in the Year 1 class are confident in their learning. They make good progress whether they are working with an adult to complete a task, such as producing a little book of *The Hungry Caterpillar*, or making their own choices for learning across the many stimulating opportunities indoors or outdoors. For example, children were fascinated to investigate the features of insects in their bug investigation laboratory.

Progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs has the same inconsistencies as other groups of pupils. Some make good progress and play a full part in the learning in lessons but others only make modest improvements to their work. Progress is also inconsistent in group work. In the best groups pupils concentrate hard, do their best to answer questions and enjoy carrying out the tasks. In other groups pupils are not as actively involved and do not find the content of the work as interesting. There is some good progress for more-able pupils, particularly in reading where pupils tackle new texts confidently and discuss their favourite authors in detail. In other lessons more-able pupils do not find the work challenging enough.

Pupils' attainment is moving closer to that of all pupils nationally. The current Year 6 pupils' attainment is on track to sustain the considerable improvements made in 2011 from low standards in 2010. Attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 in reading is broadly average, though fewer pupils reach higher levels than the nationally. Progress in reading in Year 6 accelerates with a higher proportion of pupils reaching a high level (Level 5) than predicted from their Year 2 data. The great majority of parents and carers judge that their children are making good progress at the school. Although the inspection confirms that this is the case for some pupils, it is not consistently good for every individual.

Quality of teaching

In the best teaching, the planning takes careful account of both the half-termly and day-to-day assessment to provide relevant and interesting tasks that match different pupils' needs closely. Whole-class sessions are lively occasions with high expectations that pupils will concentrate hard and contribute to discussion by explaining their thinking. Teachers skilfully use combinations of different levels of questioning to challenge more-able pupils as well as supporting pupils who learn more slowly. They are very clear about exactly what they expect different pupils to learn during the lesson and they communicate this clearly. They provide well-focused feedback to individuals about how well they are progressing and what they need to do next to improve their work. Activities are stimulating and relevant and build carefully on previous learning. For example, Reception class children and Year 1 pupils relished the chance to write sentences or make marks about bugs in huge writing with gigantic pieces of chalk all around the outdoor area.

Where teaching is satisfactory these features are not as effective. The pace sometimes drops in whole-class sessions with too much time spent by adults explaining tasks rather than the teaching of skills or knowledge. Activities can be mundane and not based carefully enough on pupils' needs and interests and resources are not high quality. Planning is not related closely enough to previous learning or assessment data. The great majority of pupils and parents and carers agree that teaching is good. Specific concerns raised by parents and carers related to teaching were not substantiated by the inspection.

In the best teaching for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs there are well-targeted and interesting tasks and additional support from adults who have a very clear understanding of what each pupil needs to do to improve. In the satisfactory teaching there is a slower pace and individual pupils do not receive enough individual support to take the next steps in their learning. Planning for pupils'

personal development is good. A range of interesting activities provide memorable experiences for pupils. For example, during a visit from an ornithologist, pupils were amazed to find out that an owl had been flying so close to them whilst they had their eyes shut.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

School records, parents and carers and pupils' views show that behaviour is typically good over time. Pupils move very sensibly around the school and are proud to receive a certificate from the school council to celebrate how well they are doing this. In lessons, pupils' behaviour is consistently good, even when the activity is very lively. For example, when investigating sound in science with a wide range of very noisy equipment, pupils remained focussed on carrying out their investigation. Even when the pace of lessons is slower, pupils maintain their sensible behaviour. Pupils are very courteous and respectful to adults. For example, older pupils skilfully and politely negotiated with the weekly visiting fruit seller to buy fruit for their healthy tuck shop. Older pupils play sensitively with younger children, boys interact well with girls and pupils from different ethnic groups respond harmoniously with each other. Pupils are respectful of the environment. For example, pupils working in the forest area were careful not to damage the bluebells or the tress. A very small minority of parents and carers raised issues related to bullying and safety, while the very great majority of pupils agreed that the school deals with this well. The inspection found that pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying and are confident that they can go to adults if they have worries. Pupils know the importance of keeping themselves safe across a range of different contexts.

Leadership and management

The headteacher has a clear focus on improving achievement and staff are all committed to playing their part in whole-school changes. As a result of the rigorous school development planning, attainment at the end of Year 6 has been sustained at broadly average for the first time, rather than fluctuating between this level and low attainment. A key initiative has been to produce accurate and efficient assessment systems. The headteacher and assessment leader analyse this new data carefully. Tracking systems now monitor progress more effectively and result in better targeted interventions to increase the progress of individual pupils. The headteacher has an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of teaching. There is a systematic programme of professional development based on performance management and the school is now in a good position to extend this to include use of the assessment data. Although middle managers and subject leaders are new to their roles, they are keen to develop their skills of monitoring, evaluating and leading staff development. The Governing Body has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

The curriculum meets statutory requirements. It is good in the Early Years Foundation Stage, with a thorough coverage of each of the areas of learning and imaginative opportunities for children to engage with their learning, both in the indoor and outdoor contexts. There is a lively and relevant curriculum for the oldest pupils, with some good links across subjects. The provision of a mathematics club for more-able pupils provides a valuable additional challenge for their learning. The good

features of the curriculum are not consistent through the school. The curriculum for pupils' personal development is good with regular opportunities for pupils to develop appropriate skills. Assemblies are spiritual occasions. The school's Friendship Week reinforces its work well in promoting the importance of tackling discrimination. While the promotion of equal opportunity for success is satisfactory, it is no better, as pupils make satisfactory rather than good progress. Arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements.

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 | 54 | 42 | 2 | 2 |
| Primary schools | 14 | 49 | 32 | 6 |
| Secondary schools | 20 | 39 | 34 | 7 |
| Special schools | 33 | 45 | 20 | 3 |
| Pupil referral units | 9 | 55 | 28 | 8 |
| All schools | 16 | 47 | 31 | 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 to 31 December 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

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| 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. |
| 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. |
| Floor standards | the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures |
| 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.



25 April 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Joseph's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School, Ushaw Moor, Durham, DH7 7LF

I would like to thank you very much for giving me such a warm welcome when I came to inspect your school. I really enjoyed talking with you and listening to your views. You helped me to understand what you think about your school. I would like to tell you what I found out.

You go to a satisfactory school. You make at least satisfactory progress as you move through the school but some of you make better progress than others. You make a good start in the Reception class and I could see how much you enjoyed learning whether you were indoors learning about your letter sounds or you were outside in the bug hotel. When you get to Year 6 you make good progress, particularly in reading.

You all told me how much you like showing your work to your headteacher. She has made sure that there are efficient systems for tracking your progress. Some staff use this well and I have asked all of your staff to use it as effectively to plan your lessons and help you understand what you need to do to improve your work. There is some good teaching in your school and the inspection has requested that your staff share the best teaching so that all lessons are good or excellent. Some of your teachers have just taken up responsibilities for leading subjects and I have asked them to check how well you are making progress and to support other staff in teaching the different subjects. You can do your best to let your teachers know what helps you to learn best.

Your school is good at developing your spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It makes sure that you receive interesting opportunities to extend this learning. You told me that you thought that behaviour was good and that you have a good understanding of how to keep safe and I agree with you. I wish you great success in your future learning.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Shepherd
Lead Inspector

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