

St Philip Neri Roman Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108394
Local authority	Gateshead
Inspection number	377748
Inspection dates	26–27 April 2012
Lead 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	127
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Hutchins
Headteacher	Lucie Stephenson
Date of previous school inspection	30 January 2007
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Introduction

Inspection team

Kate Pringle

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Eight lessons and six teachers were observed, of which one was a joint observation with the headteacher. Inspectors also observed shorter sessions of small-group support for pupils and listened to pupils reading. 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. They took account of the responses to the online (Parent View) survey in planning the inspection. The views of pupils and staff were considered, together with those of parents and carers in the 62 questionnaires they returned.

Information about the school

In this smaller than average-sized primary school the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than the national average. There are few pupils from minority ethnic groups or who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is lower than average. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. The school holds awards for Basic Skills, Sing up – gold, Fair Trade and holds Healthy School status. The onsite pre-school and after-school clubs are both run privately and are inspected separately.

The headteacher is presently seconded as a link inspector with the local authority. Her role is covered by the deputy headteacher and another senior member of staff covers the deputy headteacher's role.

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

Key Findings

- This is a good school. It is not outstanding because achievement at Key Stage 1 is variable, particularly in writing and mathematics, and for the more-able pupils. In addition, the quality of teaching is not outstanding across the school. However, the school is improving rapidly. Most parents and carers recognise the care and commitment of staff to pupils’ well-being and academic development.
- Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This good progress continues overall across Key Stage 1, although in this key stage pupils’ achievement in reading is better than that in writing and mathematics. Progress is good across Key Stage 2 and by the end of Year 6 attainment is broadly average. Progress in reading is outstanding, leading to high attainment in this subject by the time pupils leave school.
- Teaching is good overall. Strategies employed by teachers to improve achievement in reading are very successful and more pupils now leave Year 6 attaining at the higher levels. Teaching assistants are well trained and support learning well. Where teaching is satisfactory, teachers’ expectations are not always sufficiently clear or they do not always ensure that tasks are well matched to individual needs. This slows progress.
- Pupils behave well and feel safe in school. They are polite and confident when speaking to adults and show respect towards each other. They say that there is very little bullying and that it is dealt with appropriately by staff when it occurs. Pupils display positive attitudes to learning.
- Leadership and management are good. The school has made good progress since the last inspection. Leaders have a good understanding of where further improvement is needed and can demonstrate successes where actions have been implemented. There is good management of performance. Leadership of teaching has been successful in raising achievement, particularly by Year 6. However, in lesson observations there is too little focus on the impact of teaching on the progress pupils make. Staff work effectively as a team to improve the curriculum in order to further engage and motivate pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve achievement at Key Stage 1, particularly in writing and in mathematics, by:
 - ensuring that activities are consistently well matched to individual abilities
 - increasing challenge for more-able learners so that they are able to achieve higher levels
 - improving the quality of handwriting and presentation.
- Increase the proportion of good and better teaching by:
 - sharing best practice in teaching
 - ensuring that teachers clearly indicate their expectations to pupils
 - indicating in marking how far pupils have been successful in reaching their targets and the next steps in their learning
 - ensuring that the monitoring and evaluation of lessons focuses on the impact of teaching on the progress pupils make.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils achieve well and this outcome accurately reflects the views of pupils, parents and carers. In lessons, pupils demonstrate good attitudes to learning because of the good relationships they have with their teachers. They mostly learn well, and particularly so when engaging in practical investigations. Occasionally, however, a lack of challenge in lessons restricts the pace of learning, particularly for more-able pupils at Key Stage 1.

From starting points well below those expected for their age, children make good progress in the Reception class because staff encourage independence and good attitudes to learning. Effective links with the pre-school ensures a good transition and children quickly settle, become confident learners and enjoy learning. Children leave Reception with skills that are below average.

All groups of pupils make good progress over Key Stage 1. Attainment in reading is broadly average at the end of Year 2. Pupils make quicker progress in reading than in writing and mathematics because in writing and mathematics activities are not always well matched to individual levels of ability. In particular, there is insufficient challenge for more-able pupils in these subjects, which is reflected in fewer pupils attaining the higher levels. Pupils are keen to write but their work shows a lower level of skill in handwriting and presentation. Reading skills develop more rapidly due to successful strategies supporting the learning of letters and sounds (phonics).

In Key Stage 2, pupils' are keen to learn and achieve. They take greater responsibility for their learning, which has a positive impact on their understanding of how to improve further. This factor contributes to accelerated progress especially by older pupils. Attainment is broadly average at the end of Year 6 with high standards in reading. Current data indicate an improving picture for Year 6 for 2012 in all subjects. Good use is made of systems for tracking progress to support successfully individual pupils who are underachieving. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good, and sometimes outstanding, progress.

Quality of teaching

Most teaching is good. This inspection finding reflects the views of parents, carers and pupils. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, a focus on personal and social development supports children's growing confidence in learning. Independence is strongly promoted and children rise to this expectation. For instance, during a phonics lesson a small group of children happily organised themselves in taking turns to read out loud and answering a series of questions relating to their book.

For older pupils, the developing creative curriculum increasingly provides opportunities to engage in practical investigations using their skills in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils delight in engaging in such lessons which is seen in their high motivation and involvement in the tasks set. However, some teachers do not provide suitable levels of challenge for all which means that some pupils, in particular the more-able at Key Stage 1, do not achieve as well as they might. The work of teaching assistants is very successful and contributes well to the good progress made by those pupils who require additional support. Across the school there is very focused attention in lessons to meeting the needs of pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.

Good teaching in a Key Stage 2 lesson enabled pupils to reflect upon clearly-identified outcomes to write their own fable, drawing upon past learning. Pupils focused upon the qualities of what constituted a fable and wrote their introduction using their individual targets to influence the quality of their writing. The teacher and teaching assistant made an excellent team, drawing upon each other's skills to engage pupils and direct their learning. Feedback to pupils drew attention to successes and highlighted areas for development.

In lessons where teaching is less effective, teachers' expectations are not always sufficiently clear and too little attention is sometimes paid to meeting individual needs. The quality of marking across the school is inconsistent because some teachers do not provide feedback to pupils about how well they have succeeded against individual targets or give precise guidance on the next steps needed in their learning.

Teachers' planning reflects greater opportunities for pupils to use their developing skills in reading, writing and mathematics across different subjects. Staff make the most of opportunities to enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development which is a priority of the school. Pupils consider different moral, social and cultural issues as part of their Fair Trade involvement, work to secure and maintain Healthy School status and by respecting the rights of others. They successfully use their individual responsibilities to support other pupils, for example, as buddies and peer mediators. Teachers regularly boost pupils' self-esteem with the use of appropriate praise and encouragement.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils enjoy coming to school and have good attitudes to learning. They are well cared for because their well-being is a high priority for all staff. Pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong and believe behaviour to be good although they recognise that there are some incidents of misbehaviour and bullying by a few individuals. They recognise the different forms that bullying can take and where instances of concern arise, pupils are secure in the view that staff will resolve issues successfully. As a result, they feel safe.

Although the majority of parents and carers feels that behaviour is good and their children are safe in school, a minority have concerns about bullying. Inspection evidence indicates that behaviour is typically good and instances of misbehaviour by a small proportion of pupils are managed well by staff. Attendance is average over time and the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is negligible. Present data indicate improving rates of attendance towards above average levels.

Leadership and management

The delegation of roles and responsibilities underpins the school's good leadership and management. Successful professional development has improved the tracking of pupils' progress, raised standards in writing and improved the quality of the marking of pupils' work. There is a firm commitment to tackling discrimination and ensuring the equality of opportunity. Personalised programmes have a good impact on improving individual achievement and actions to improve reading have been particularly effective. These improvements show the school's good capacity to improve. Better use of assessment information has raised attainment by the end of Year 6, although its impact is less evident at Key Stage 1, where attainment remains more variable. Key leaders regularly monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching, but too few comment sufficiently on how far the teaching has an impact on the progress pupils make during lessons. The sharing of good practice in teaching has had good impact, but the process is not used frequently enough.

The governing body has a good understanding of the school's strengths and the further improvements that are needed. Members of the governing body work successfully with staff to bring about the planned changes. Fully supportive, it challenges and holds the school to account, sharing the ambition of the school. It is successful in ensuring the safeguarding of pupils.

The more creative curriculum takes increasing account of pupils' interests and needs, with a clear focus on progressively improving the essential skills of reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils enjoy the wider opportunities to learn through visits and visitors because they correctly believe these make learning more interesting. Links with other primary schools and a local secondary school extend learning opportunities to further enrich pupils' experiences. Pupils are encouraged to enhance their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through their increasingly independent work in lessons and by taking on individual responsibilities in the school and the local community. There are well-planned opportunities to develop pupils' cultural understanding locally and, for example, through links with a Kenyan school as part of a global partnership.

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 up exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
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.



30 April 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Philip Neri Roman Catholic Primary School, Gateshead, NE8 2QU

Thank you for the lovely welcome you gave me when I inspected your school recently. I enjoyed talking with you and much appreciate the consideration which you gave in thinking about my questions and the answers you gave. This meant that I was able to get a good idea of what you think of your school.

I agree that yours is a good school. I know that you really enjoy school because your attendance is improving and you have positive attitudes to learning. Your teachers provide good experiences to help you to learn and because of this most of you achieve well. Your curriculum is providing more opportunities to investigate and use your skills in reading, writing and mathematics and you really enjoy those lessons which make you think for yourselves. I was very impressed with your reading which is very good. You behave well and because you understand right and wrong, your school is safe and happy.

Most of you make good progress but there are some things that I have asked the school to do to make it even better. First, pupils at Key Stage 1 could make better progress if they were challenged more in their writing, handwriting and mathematics, especially those who are quick learners. Second, teachers need to ensure that the activities they give you are always well matched to your different levels of ability. Third, teachers need to make sure that they let you know in their marking how well you have done and what you need to learn next. Finally, I would like school leaders to make sure that all teaching is good or better and that when they observe lessons, they consider closely how well teaching helps you to make good progress.

You can help by continuing to attend school regularly and by continuing to work hard. I wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Kate Pringle
Lead Inspector

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