

# Blessed John Duckett Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114283
<b>Local authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	378833
<b>Inspection dates</b>	16–17 May 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Linda Buller

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	88
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	John Flynn
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sharon McQuiggin
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21 November 2007
<b>School address</b>	Smith Street Tow Law Bishop Auckland DL13 4AU
<b>Telephone number</b>	01388 731082
<b>Fax number</b>	01388 731082
<b>Email address</b>	blessedjohnduckett@durhamlearning.net

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## Introduction

Inspection team

Linda Buller

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed 11 lessons taught by four teachers, including one observation carried out jointly with the headteacher. The inspector listened to individual pupils read and talked to different pupils about their learning. She scrutinised work in pupils' books. In addition, there were discussions with pupils, staff, members of the governing body and the School's Development Partner. The inspector observed the school's work and examined a range of documentation, including the school's records relating to pupils' achievement, leaders' monitoring and evaluation evidence, behaviour records and safeguarding. She also took into account the questionnaires returned by pupils, staff and 30 parents and carers.

## Information about the school

This school is a smaller than the average-sized primary school. The numbers in each year group vary from five pupils in the current Year 6 to the school's standard number of 12 in some year groups. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. Most pupils are of White British heritage and none speaks English as an additional language. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs (including those supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs) is above average. The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress. Recent accreditations include Eco Schools Silver Award and designation as a school committed to promoting fair trading abroad.

Since the previous inspection there have been a number of changes in staffing including the appointments of a new headteacher and deputy headteacher.

**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

<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key Findings

- This is a good school. Pupils make good progress within an environment where they are nurtured and encouraged to have positive attitudes to learning and each other. The school is not outstanding yet because although teaching is good overall some inconsistencies remain.
- Pupils achieve well, particularly in English. All groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, make good progress in learning to read. Progress in mathematics has improved strongly during the current school year. However, over time it has not been as strong as that in English.
- Teaching is good; teachers have good subject knowledge and manage behaviour well. Effective questioning and a good balance between teacher input and opportunities for pupils to work independently result in the majority of pupils making good progress. The inconsistent use of the information gained from assessing pupils' prior work prevents the impact of teaching being outstanding.
- Pupils feel safe at school. Pupils' excellent attitudes to work help them to get the most out of lessons. They listen carefully to instructions, collaborate very effectively and persevere at tasks. Behaviour is good. School records and discussions with pupils indicate that this is usually the case. Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes bullying. They explain in detail how the occasional incidents, for example through name calling, are dealt with by the headteacher.
- Good leadership provides a clear sense of purpose. Systems for monitoring are strong and evaluations of performance are accurate. Relative weaknesses are identified and action taken to bring about improvement. However, at times monitoring of the quality of teaching is too general and does not focus closely enough on current priorities. As a result, inconsistencies in practice are not always tackled quickly enough.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the achievement of pupils in mathematics by:
  - developing pupils' confidence further, particularly in solving problems
  - making it explicit to pupils how they can use their prior mathematical knowledge within new learning.
  
- Remove inconsistencies so that good teaching becomes outstanding by:
  - using assessment information in planning tasks for more-able pupils which build effectively on their prior knowledge and skills
  - focusing on current priorities when monitoring the effectiveness of teaching and learning.

## Main Report

### Achievement of pupils

The vast majority of parents and carers agree that achievement is good. A key feature of the best learning is pupils' enjoyment and enthusiasm in their work. From nursery through to Year 6, pupils conscientiously follow instructions, work hard and try their very best to succeed. From low starting points when they enter school, pupils make good progress to reach standards which are overall broadly average. In the Early Years Foundation Stage children settle quickly and make good progress. They develop confidence, independence and enjoyment of learning so that by the time they enter Year 1 many have reached broadly average levels of attainment in most aspects of their learning. Large variations in the nature of each year group, including an often above average percentage of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, together with the small numbers in cohorts, mean attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 fluctuates year-on-year. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are supported well. Detailed analysis of their specific needs, the careful tracking of their achievements and judicious use of external expertise, when it is required, all contribute to their good progress and attainment, which are above that of their peers nationally.

Progress in reading is good throughout the school. Attainment has improved well in recent years and is now average by the end of Year 2 and above average by the end of Year 6. In writing, pupils' keenness to learn results in their good response to marking which indicates precisely what they need to do to improve. As a result, all pupils in the current Year 6 have made good progress to reach above average levels of attainment in English. Attainment in mathematics lags behind that of reading and writing. Increased opportunities for pupils to investigate within practical activities have accelerated the rate of pupils' progress. However, at times pupils lack confidence and do not recognise how they can apply what they already know to new learning. Sometimes they struggle to recognise which operation is needed or to identify which calculation method would be most effective in solving a problem.

## Quality of teaching

Teachers are knowledgeable and often provide exciting activities. Integrated opportunities to learn outside the classroom within the school's inspiring rural setting make learning relevant and stimulating, while powerfully promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils' interest in topics such as the forthcoming Olympic Games are used very effectively to promote cross-curricular learning and a deep understanding of the importance of pride in performance, cooperation, tolerance and cultural differences.

The vast majority of parents and carers agree that their children are well taught. The sounds that letters represent (phonics) are taught systematically in the Early Years Foundation Stage and provide a solid platform for pupils to become confident readers. Teachers ensure that the needs of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are met well by planning activities that are tailored to their individual requirements. In most lessons teachers' explanations and questioning effectively help pupils to understand the focus of their learning and encourage pupils to think for themselves. In a literacy lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4, a range of open questions helped pupils to review the key features of successfully writing a report. The teacher's clear explanation ensured that pupils made good progress in understanding how their writing style could be adapted from that of a report to that of an explanation text. Links between different strands of learning are not always made as explicitly by teachers when teaching mathematics. In a lesson for pupils in Years 1 and 2, a wide range of activities were planned for pupils to engage in practical learning activities. However, each activity took place in isolation and opportunities were missed to promote basic skills by helping pupils to understand how to use their knowledge of number when undertaking activities involving weight and measure.

Teachers know each pupil well and assess and track their progress very carefully. Learning is very well matched to pupils' needs in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Through an effective balance of activities which are led by adults and quality interaction of staff when children are engaged in learning through play, the needs of each child are met. In Key Stages 1 and 2, the use of assessment information is less consistent. In a literacy lesson for pupils in Years 5 and 6, pupils learned very effectively when the teacher listened to and observed pupils carefully as they worked and prompted them with further questions. This good use of ongoing assessment, together with the regular detailed marking of pupils' work, contributed very effectively to pupils' good progress in English. In Years 1 to 4, teachers' planning is generally modified to meet the needs of lower-attaining pupils, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs but not always those of the more able. In some lessons the starting point for all pupils is the same despite the most able having demonstrated secure knowledge and understanding.

## Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour in lessons is mostly good and often exemplary. Pupils demonstrate high levels of respect for staff and an appreciation of the value of learning. They respond extremely positively to opportunities for collaborative working. They willingly share resources and are keen to help each other succeed. This can be clearly seen when

Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 1 pupils engaged in paired reading sessions with even the youngest offering advice and guidance to bring about improvement.

In the mixed-age classes, pupils benefit from the good role-models of those older than themselves. Pupils of different ages and genders generally play happily alongside each other. Over time there have been a few incidents of poor behaviour. These are carefully recorded and monitored with parents and carers informed when appropriate. Pupils are acutely aware of the different types of bullying, such as persistent name calling, and have been taught how to respond and how important it is to report concerns to an adult. As one Year 2 pupil stated, 'We are taught that if we want people to be kind to us then we must be kind to them first.' Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe and know how to avoid unsafe situations. Parents and carers unanimously agree that their children are safe in school. Although a small minority do not believe that behaviour in the school is good, the overwhelming majority believe that their children enjoy school.

Attendance is below average, but the figure is significantly affected by the impact of prolonged absence by a very small number of pupils within small cohorts. Robust measures taken by the school have improved attendance for some of these pupils and this has contributed to a rapid rise in attendance overall. Apart from these exceptional cases, attendance is broadly average and improving rapidly and is above average for the current year so far.

### **Leadership and management**

The headteacher has a clear vision for further school improvement which is focused firmly on raising attainment and accelerating pupils' progress. Members of the governing body are closely involved in the work of the school, know the school's strengths and support what it needs to do to improve further. Safeguarding is robust with clear policies and secure risk assessments. The school is successful in promoting equality and tackling discrimination. This is evident in the school's tracking data, which records any potential barriers to learning for each pupil. Any pupils who are in danger of falling behind are identified and interventions put in place to accelerate progress. As a result, any gaps between the attainment of different groups of pupils, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, boys and girls, and disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, are effectively being tackled.

Accurate self-evaluation stems from this rigorous analysis of pupils' progress and careful tracking of the improvements gained from whole-school curriculum initiatives. As a result, the curriculum is constantly evolving to better meet pupils' needs. For example, increased opportunities for paired reading and lessons focused on the teaching of phonics throughout the school have led to above average attainment in reading by the end of Year 6. This demonstrates the school's strong capacity to improve further.

Teacher performance is managed through regular monitoring of the quality of teaching in lessons and regular updating of subject expertise through continuing professional development. Teachers are provided with clear points for further development. However, at times, these relate more to the specific lesson and miss

the opportunity to identify as a priority which aspects of teaching need to improve in order to address the weaker areas of pupil attainment. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through carefully selected topics for cross-curricular learning, close links with the local church and pupils' increasing awareness of global issues linked to fair trading.



## 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](http://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

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.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
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.**



21 May 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Blessed John Duckett Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary, Bishop Auckland, DL13 4AU**

Thank you so much for a very enjoyable visit to your school. Talking to you about your learning, seeing your lessons, listening to you read and looking at your work and questionnaires helped me to agree that your school provides you with a good quality of education.

You are becoming mature and sociable young people through a better understanding of yourselves and others, for example, by learning about topics such as the history and ethos of the Olympic Games. You are polite, well-behaved, and learning to keep yourselves and others safe. Your enthusiasm for learning is very obvious and contributes to your good progress especially in your reading and writing. I was delighted to see some of you are helping younger children by listening to them read. Although you try equally hard in your mathematics lessons as you do when learning to read and write your attainment is not as strong.

Your headteacher does a good job in checking how well each of you is doing and works with the other teachers to improve what you are taught. To help them make your school even better I have asked the school to do two things. These are to make the quality of teaching consistent for all groups of pupils so that it becomes outstanding. Second, to work with you to improve your attainment in mathematics by increasing your confidence and making it clear to you how to use what you already know when tackling new learning.

I hope that you continue to enjoy school. I wish you all the very best for your future.

Yours sincerely

Linda Buller  
Lead inspector

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