

All Saints' Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114255
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	378826
Inspection dates	21–22 June 2012
Lead inspector	Alastair Younger

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	131
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Jackson
Headteacher	Karen McKenna
Date of previous school inspection	20 September 2006
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Introduction

Inspection team

Alastair Younger

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Six lessons were observed, each taught by a different teacher. Meetings were held with senior staff, representatives of the governing body and a group of pupils. Informal discussions were held with many other pupils and staff. The inspector took account of the responses to the 46 parental questionnaires returned and also to responses from staff and pupils. The inspector observed the school's work and looked at documentation, including that relating to the safeguarding of pupils and to their progress.

Information about the school

This primary school is smaller than average. A smaller than average proportion of pupils is known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or those who have a statement of special educational needs is broadly average. Most pupils are of White British origin. The main exception is a small group of Traveller children.

Numbers on roll have risen rapidly since the previous inspection and are due to rise again next year. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have both been appointed since the previous inspection. Both were existing members of staff. Two newly-qualified teachers have been appointed in the last two years.

Amongst many other awards in recent years the school has received the Basic Skills Quality Mark and enhanced Healthy Schools status. It has been appointed a Climate Change Lead School. It has a sister school in Liberia and links with a school in Goa. Links are developing with a school in Venezuela. These have contributed to the school holding International School Award status.

The school exceeds the current floor standards which sets the government's 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	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 yet outstanding because more teaching needs to be elevated from good to outstanding. The school has close ties to the Catholic Church and has a strong ethos. Its promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The school is much admired by the very large majority of parents and carers. Pupils are very happy to attend and are proud of their school.
- Pupils achieve well. Standards of attainment are significantly higher than average in English and mathematics. Reading throughout the school is a particular strength, with many pupils making outstanding progress in this aspect of English. Progress in writing and mathematics is good across the school.
- Teaching is good. The way in which teachers motivate pupils by linking learning to real- life situations and experiences and topical events is outstanding. Pupils are encouraged to make good use of information and communication technology in many lessons. The marking and assessment of pupils' work is usually good. It is stronger in literacy than numeracy. Occasionally, opportunities for pupils to take more responsibility to work with greater independence are missed.
- Behaviour is good and pupils develop a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Pupils get on very well with one another. They work hard in class, have good attitudes and are keen to learn. Instances of serious misbehaviour are very rare and relate to a very small minority. There is no evidence of discrimination amongst different groups of pupils. Attendance is broadly average.
- The headteacher has developed an ambitious and dedicated staff team. Management of staff performance is good, making extensive use of perceptive and accurate monitoring and evaluation. A comprehensive programme of training and development is helping to improve teaching and raise standards.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching to the point where much of it is outstanding by:
 - developing the quality of marking and annotation of pupils' work in mathematics so that it matches the high standard found in English
 - giving pupils, particularly those who are more able, more opportunities to develop the skills to learn for themselves and set themselves appropriate challenges.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Achievement is good. The very large majority of parents and carers feel their children are making good progress. Pupils work hard and enjoy being involved in choosing activities, such as in a design technology lesson where, following on from a visit to a playground, they chose to design and build a swing for themselves. Their enthusiasm was palpable as they worked together, wasting no time, recording their imaginative designs neatly and chattering constructively about the materials they would use. In other lessons, pupils were particularly enthused by regular references to topical issues, such as an Olympic dance they were developing, or the features of a river they had visited on a residential trip the week before.

For a few children, attainment on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage is considerably above average but overall it is broadly average. By the time they leave Year 6, attainment is above average and targets are usually exceeded. A much higher than average proportion of pupils gain the higher than average Level 5 in English and mathematics. Pupils' progress exceeds national expectations.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children make rapid progress in all areas of their learning. By the end of the Reception Year a large majority exceed the goals set for them. Good progress continues throughout Key Stages 1 and 2. Reading, throughout the school, is a strength. Strong foundations are set in place in the Early Years Foundation Stage through the good teaching of phonics (the matching of letters and the sounds they represent), which has been developed well over the past year. By the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, attainment in reading is significantly higher than average. The school has recognised that progress in mathematics, while good, is slightly slower than in English. To this end it has invested prudently in good quality training and resources, and results are improving.

Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress, as does the group of Traveller children. Overall, boys and girls make similar progress.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is good. This is well recognised by parents and carers and the pupils themselves. All of the lessons observed were well taught. Monitoring by senior staff and the local authority suggests that teaching is occasionally outstanding and rarely less than good.

Teachers make sure that all pupils know their individual targets and succeed in motivating them to reach them. All work is marked thoroughly and much of it has helpful comments

added to help pupils recognise what they have achieved and what they need to do to improve further. These comments tend to be more perceptive and useful in English books than in mathematics books, where there is a tendency to comment more on effort and presentation than what has been learned. Expectations are usually high but occasionally more-able pupils can be held back in whole-class activities when they could reasonably be expected to work independently on more challenging tasks. Most lessons are characterised by high quality dialogue, helped by articulate pupils with a good vocabulary and an eagerness to be involved. Astute and perceptive questioning of individual pupils helps teachers to establish whether they understand what is being taught and what they have remembered from previous lessons. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are well taught and frequently well supported by skilled classroom assistants. Reading is well taught across the whole school. Recently-acquired, high-quality resources are being well used to support the teaching of phonics to younger pupils.

Teachers take great care to make the curriculum relevant. There are frequent references to topical events, to experiences gained on school visits and to everyday situations. A good example of the latter was when the teacher explained the importance of being able to add up more than just two numbers because when they visit a takeaway shop they will nearly always order more than two things. Teachers ensure that success is openly celebrated and that pupils understand the importance of courtesy and good behaviour. Vibrant wall displays contribute to the creation of stimulating learning environments and make good reference to people from other cultures and faiths.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour is good. A very large majority of parents report that there is a good standard of behaviour in school and that their children feel safe and well looked after. There are very few instances of serious misbehaviour on record. Most pupils say that behaviour is good, especially so in lessons. A few say that older boys do not always show enough concern for others when they are playing football. During the inspection, behaviour observed during lessons was good. Behaviour in the playground could not be observed because it was raining but the indoor break-times were very settled. Pupils have a good understanding of the different forms that bullying can take. There are no instances of bullying, harassment or racism on record and there is no evidence of repeated name-calling. Pupils are reassured by, and keen to participate in, the 'Buddy' system whereby older pupils help younger or more vulnerable ones. Of particular note is the total lack of discrimination between pupils from different backgrounds. Pupils respect adults around the school but some are also acutely aware of perceived hierarchy and are more inclined to pay attention to teachers rather than other staff. This situation is not tolerated and always dealt with promptly and effectively.

Attendance is average and has improved in recent years. Some absence is unavoidable but there are still too many instances of parents and carers removing pupils for holidays during term time. Traveller children's attendance is well below average. The school works hard to improve attendance, often in association with other agencies. The school council presents regular assemblies on safety, behaviour and bullying. In Year 6, all pupils attend a safety carousel organised by the various emergency services. All pupils and parents and carers sign a responsible internet use agreement at the start of each year.

Leadership and management

In recent years, leaders and managers have worked extremely effectively to create a school with a strong sense of identity and community spirit. There is an ambitious, harmonious staff team. This, coupled with high expectations for achievement and personal development, explains why the school has grown from under 100 pupils five years ago to a projected 147 next year. This growth has allowed the school to provide single year-group classes for the Reception Year, Year 1 and Year 2. As this growth feeds through the school there is an aspiration to see this through Key Stage 2. At the moment, mixed year-groups is the single issue that most concerns parents and carers. The evidence of inspection supports the school's view that these groupings are carefully considered and made in the best interests of pupils. The arrangement functions effectively.

Pupils' achievement keeps improving because there is a strong focus on improving teaching through a comprehensive and effective programme of training and performance management. Newly-qualified teachers have been exceptionally well mentored. High-quality training and guidance frequently extends beyond the classroom. During the inspection, for instance, midday supervisors were being shown a range of playtime activities by specialists from an outside agency.

There is a strong governing body. Individual members bring many skills, including financial management, health, safety and care, which benefit the school. The governing body is proudly supportive of the school. It excels in holding it to account, for instance, by auditing the effectiveness of expenditure on mathematics and canvassing the views of pupils, via the school council, about new resources for English. The combination of a dedicated governing body and good leaders and managers ensures that the school has a strong capacity to improve. The school safeguards pupils well. All staff have been trained in child protection and key staff are trained in the nuances of safe recruitment.

Leaders and managers ensure that the school provides a broad, balanced and highly relevant curriculum which meets pupils' needs and promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well. Not all teachers are equally adept at identifying links between subjects. There are high points, such as when a teacher referred to a recent residential trip to reinforce pupils' understanding of rivers whilst teaching them how to write a Haiku. However, in the same lesson an opportunity was missed to reinforce pupils' understanding of the importance of number patterns, even in poetry.

Equality of opportunity is strongly promoted. This has been helped by a rising roll and astute management of finances. This situation has allowed the school to employ more teachers and classroom assistants in order to provide more effectively for individual needs. There is no evidence of discrimination. Most pupils are completely accepting of each other's backgrounds and social circumstances. This is a very special quality of the school.

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

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.



25 June 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of All Saints' Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School, Durham
DH7 0J**

Thank you for making my visit so enjoyable when I came to inspect your school the other day. Special thanks to those of you who spared a bit of time to chat with me and tell me what you thought of your school. You clearly think it is a good school and I agree. You also say it is a safe and happy school; I agree with that too. You say you are well taught; once again, my findings match your views exactly. You will notice a pattern emerging here; clearly you know your school extremely well.

You behave well and are very polite. I like the way the older pupils act as 'buddies' and help the younger children. In my report I have said that one of the things that makes your school special is the way you all get on well with each other. Teachers are very good at making your lessons interesting and helping you to be enthusiastic learners. This is one of the reasons why you make such good progress and achieve well. Your results in tests and assessments are usually much higher than average. The people who are in charge of your school are doing a good job. What is important is that they recognise the importance of making you good citizens as well as clever ones.

Before I left, I talked to your headteacher about ways the school could become even more effective. We agreed that when teachers mark your mathematics work they could add more helpful comments to show you how to make faster progress and we also thought that some of you, who find learning easier, should be given more opportunities to work independently and set yourself higher challenges.

Once again, thank you for welcoming me and making my visit so pleasant. I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Alastair Younger
Lead inspector

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