

St Bede's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108852
Local authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	395324
Inspection dates	26–27 June 2012
Lead inspector	Susan Waugh

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	214
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steven Hill
Headteacher	Dominic Curran
Date of previous school inspection	30 November 2006
School address	Hampshire Place Usworth Washington NE37 2NP
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Introduction

Inspection team

Susan Waugh
Christine Cottam

Additional Inspector
Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 19 lessons taught by nine teachers, one of which was a joint observation alongside the headteacher. They observed sessions promoting pupils' understanding of the links between letters and sounds and a small group session to accelerate children's ability in writing. Inspectors listened to individual pupils read and talked to different pupils about their learning. They scrutinised work in pupils' books alongside subject leaders. In addition, there were discussions with pupils, members of the governing body, the attached School Improvement Officer and staff. Inspectors 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. They also took into account the questionnaires returned by 68 parents and carers, 94 pupils and 14 staff.

Information about the school

St Bede's is a smaller than average-sized primary school serving the local area in Washington. Nearly all pupils are from a White British heritage with very few at an early stage of acquiring English. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is less than the national average. The school meets the current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

The school has 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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	3

Key Findings

- St Bede's is a satisfactory school. Although improving, it is not yet good because the quality of teaching varies and, as a result, pupils do not make consistently good progress across year groups. The systems now in place to improve teaching and learning have not yet had a significant impact across the school. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- Standards are broadly average in Year 6 although slightly lower in mathematics. Progress is good in the Early Years Foundation Stage. It is satisfactory across Key Stages 1 and 2, although this is accelerating and has resulted in an increased proportion of pupils attaining higher levels in Year 6.
- Although teaching is satisfactory overall, there is an increasing proportion of good teaching, where pupils are actively engaged and are clear about what they are learning. This good practice is not consistent. Additionally, pupils are unclear about the next steps they need to take to improve and more-able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged. Recent professional development has improved the quality of teaching of reading and writing but the teaching of mathematics is weaker.
- Pupils usually behave well in lessons and are polite and courteous. They have a positive attitude to learning. The vast majority of pupils say they enjoy coming to school and feel safe. Pupils' behaviour at lunchtime is more boisterous and less orderly, and this occasionally leads to conflict, which is not always dealt with as expertly as at other times of the day.
- All staff, led by the headteacher and governing body, are committed to raising standards and improving teaching. Data are used well to track pupils' progress and identify where extra support is required. However, systems to monitor the quality of teaching require a sharper focus, and the involvement of leaders at all levels so that all contribute fully to school improvement. The curriculum is

satisfactory but progression and continuity are not consistent enough, and opportunities to develop basic skills are too piecemeal.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards, and by April 2013 ensure teaching is consistently good by:
 - ensuring pupils always have enough opportunity to practise skills independently
 - setting out clearly what is being learned in each lesson and the steps needed to meet that objective
 - providing pupils with targets and feedback in marking which are matched precisely to their capabilities so that they are clear what they need to do to make progress
 - always having high expectations and providing challenge for the most able pupils
 - ensuring teachers have a better understanding of progression in mathematics.

- By July 2013 improve the quality of the curriculum by:
 - ensuring that the allocation of time to subjects is more consistent across the school
 - explicitly planning for continuity and progression in all subjects from year to year, particularly in mathematics
 - providing sufficient opportunities to practise basic skills across all subjects in the curriculum.

- By November 2012 strengthen leadership and management further by:
 - refining the school improvement plan to ensure each goal has clear measurable steps in order that it can be achieved
 - more frequently review the quality of provision and use the information to support the management of teachers' performance
 - systematically involving leaders at all levels in checking the work of the school.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Children enter the school with skills, knowledge and understanding which are broadly typical for their age. As a result of skilled questioning and interesting, engaging activities, such as den building for a teddy, they make good progress within the Early Years Foundation Stage. By the time they begin Year 1 they are now reaching standards which are above expectations of their age. Across the rest of the school, pupils' work and lessons observed confirm that progress is satisfactory overall. In some lessons progress is more rapid for all groups of pupils, but this is inconsistent across the school. Nearly all parents and carers are satisfied with the progress their child makes at school.

Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 to reach standards which are now slightly above average in reading and are broadly average in writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils attaining higher levels is lower than the national average. As a result of improving, though still inconsistent progress across Key Stage 2, pupils reach standards which are broadly in line with expectations in reading and writing but are slightly lower in mathematics. More pupils are now attaining at a higher level in all subjects, as a result of appropriate challenge in Year 6.

Standards in reading are higher than in other subjects as a result of consistently good progress across Key Stages 1 and 2. This is because teaching of reading is more systematic and is targeted well. Pupils are encouraged to read for pleasure and enjoyment. While pupils make good progress in mathematics in some lessons, they slip back in others, because planning does not ensure skills in mathematics are built upon systematically. When given the opportunity, pupils cooperate well with each other. For example, in a science lesson they willingly worked together as a team to investigate water resistance. Because of good relationships with teachers, pupils generally respond positively to the work they are given and work diligently and when they are given the opportunity to work independently, they make good progress. Progress slows when pupils have fewer such opportunities.

As a result of the improvements in rates of progress, pupils eligible for free school meals are now reaching standards in line with their peers nationally as are disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. This is because the school now identifies pupils who require additional help and provide well-targeted support to help them make the progress of which they are capable.

Quality of teaching

The great majority of parents and carers say their child is taught well and they are helped to develop skills in communication, reading, writing and mathematics. Inspectors found that teaching is satisfactory overall but good in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Well-focused, short teaching sessions successfully help children to develop their knowledge of reading, writing and mathematics which is then consolidated by adults skilfully supporting them as they play in the well-resourced classroom and outdoor learning area. For example, the children enjoyed setting up and participating in their own Olympics, which promoted their physical skills and their ability to work together, while adults also helped them consolidate their understanding of number.

Teaching is inconsistent across the rest of the school. In effective lessons, teachers convey very clearly what is being learned, model new learning well and offer ample opportunities for pupils to practise independently the new skills being taught. They have high expectations of all pupils, and pitch work at the right level to offer appropriate challenge. For example, in a well-structured and organised lesson where children were extending their communication skills, the teacher encouraged pupils to work in pairs to select appropriate information and consider how best to join the sentences to make sense. The work was suitably challenging for all groups of pupils and the teacher made frequent checks to probe pupils' understanding.

Where learning progresses at a slower rate, teachers are not clear about the focus of the learning, and therefore do not explain new learning clearly enough. Although different work is given to pupils of different abilities it is often not challenging enough, particularly for more-able pupils and there are fewer opportunities for pupils to practice their skills independently.

Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, but rarely is sufficient guidance given to pupils to inform improvements. Targets which are set for pupils are ineffective because pupils are not clear what the targets are, or what steps are required to meet them. Recent developments and training to support the teaching of reading and writing mean that these subjects are generally taught more effectively. For example, in the teaching of letters and the sounds they make, all staff are more confident about the next steps in learning and offer more appropriate challenge. However, curriculum planning does not provide enough opportunities for pupils to practice their skills in reading, writing and mathematics in other subjects.

Targeted support work is also effective in supporting disabled pupils and those with special educational needs to make accelerated progress because staff are well trained to deliver specific programmes. This is less so in mathematics, where lessons are generally not taught as well.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The vast majority of parents and carers believe that lessons proceed without disruption and inspection findings confirm this. Pupils behave well in lessons and are polite and courteous. Incidents of poor behaviour and racism over time have been rare and are dealt with appropriately. Older pupils enjoy the opportunity to care for younger pupils at lunchtime.

Occasionally, some pupils' behaviour at lunchtime is less good and disputes are not as effectively resolved as at other times of the day, because the school behaviour policy is not closely adhered to. Pupils confirm that behaviour at lunchtime is not as good as behaviour in lessons. Leaders and managers are aware of this issue and have good plans in place to address it.

Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe and have an appropriate awareness of risk, as a result of planned opportunities such as a visit from the police community bus. The vast majority of pupils enjoy coming to school and attend regularly. They understand the different forms bullying can take and state that they do not have concerns about bullying at their school. Attendance is broadly average and the number of pupils who have poor attendance is decreasing.

Leadership and management

Leaders and managers have a clear and explicit vision for the school, and they are determined that it should be realised. They have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and areas which need to be developed, although steps to achieve required results are not always fully mapped out. As a result, they have begun to implement systems that will ensure that the work of the school is checked more regularly and

that there is a consistency of approach to improving the quality of teaching and learning. These systems, however, require further sharpening, including the more frequent involvement of middle leaders, if they are to have a rapid impact on improving the school. Nevertheless, improvements have already been made to rates of progress, to increase the proportion of good teaching and to improve rates of attendance. This demonstrates that the school has sufficient capacity to improve further.

The governing body is equally determined to move the school forward. It fulfils its statutory duties and is now more involved in checking the work of the school first hand. Safeguarding procedures meet requirements. Discrimination is not tolerated, and the school strives to promote equality, for example by reducing the gap between some groups of pupils and their peers nationally. However, pupils do not yet make consistent progress in all lessons or activities.

The curriculum is broad and balanced across the school and provides a range of opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, such as a lesson about Muslim prayer mats in Year 1. However, coverage of subjects is not planned in enough detail to ensure clear continuity and progression across the school. This is particularly the case in mathematics. In some year groups, opportunities to develop basic skills through a range of subjects are well developed but this is not the case universally. The vast majority of parents and carers are positive about the school and are kept informed about aspects of school life and their children's progress. They praise the approachability of staff.

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.



28 June 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Bede's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School,
Washington, NE37 2NP**

Thank you very much for being so helpful when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed hearing your views about your school, looking at your work, listening to some of you read and touring the school with you. Here are the main things we found.

Your school is giving you a satisfactory standard of education. Your headteacher, teachers and governors are determined that your school will continue to improve. You are making satisfactory progress in your reading, writing and mathematics and the rate at which you are progressing is improving. You behave well in lessons but occasionally some of you do not behave as well at lunchtime. Some of you said that this was because you get bored, the school is aware of this already so we hope this will change.

Here are some of the other things I have asked your school to do to make it even better.

- We have asked your teachers to teach lessons which are as good as the best ones we saw, and to make it clear what you are learning.
- We have asked your teachers to help you understand what you need to do next to improve and to help you know the targets you have been given.
- We would like you to have more time to work independently on challenging tasks in lessons.
- We have asked your teachers to give you more opportunities to practise your reading, writing and mathematical skills in other subjects.

You can help by working hard, coming to school regularly and behaving as well as you can.

Yours sincerely

Susan Waugh
Lead Inspector

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