

English Martyrs' Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School

Redcar Road, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear, SR5 5AU

Inspection dates 19-20 September 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Most pupils learn well and make good, or better progress in all subjects before they leave Year 6.
- Attainment in English and mathematics is average and improving quickly.
- Pupils enjoy reading. Most read a variety of texts fluently and talk confidently about their favourite authors. Less-able readers are supported well and make good progress.
- Teaching and learning are largely good with some that are outstanding. Most teachers have high expectations and plan lessons that are interesting and help pupils to learn well.
- Behaviour and safety of pupils are good. Pupils behave well and demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. Attendance is average and exclusions are rare.
- Leadership is of good quality with evident strengths in the work of the executive headteacher, senior leaders and governing body. The clarity of direction, well-planned professional development and good partnership work have contributed well to the quality of teaching over time and the improving outcomes for pupils.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Progress in mathematics is too variable because work is not always fully matched to the needs of all pupils. Across the school, pupils are not always given sufficient opportunities to use their basic skills in problem-solving activities. Marking does not always provide good feedback for improvement.
- Teaching is good overall but in some lessons the pace of learning is too slow because teachers' explanations are too long and lack clarity. This is particularly the case in Year 3 where pupils are often seated for too long and this results in a number of pupils quickly losing interest in their learning.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 11 lessons of which two were joint observations with the executive headteacher. In addition, the inspection team made a number of other short visits to lessons and listened to pupils read.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, the Chair of Governors, staff and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 16 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection.
- They observed the school's work and took into account the work in pupils' books, the school's own data on pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring information, records relating to behaviour and attendance and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Margaret Armstrong, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Edward Price, Team Inspector

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school in which the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium is higher than the national average.
- There are few pupils on roll from minority ethnic groups or who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportions of pupils identified as special educational needs and those supported at school action plus or who have statements of special educational need are above average. There is a small number of pupils whose education is shared with Columbia Grange School.
- The school is currently above the government floor standard, which sets the minimum expected for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has been in a soft federation with St John Bosco Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School since September 2008.
- The school has an executive headteacher who is a National Leader of Education. She provides leadership support to other local schools.
- The school runs its own breakfast club and offers a number of learning opportunities for families.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of teaching which is good or better by:
 - ensuring the length and complexity of teachers' explanations are always well matched to pupils' concentration levels, particularly in Year 3
 - ensuring the pace of learning is brisk in all lessons
 - sharing the best practices in teaching through peer coaching and mentoring.
- Accelerate progress in mathematics to be at least good by:
 - ensuring that all teachers use information gathered from assessments to pitch learning at appropriate levels, particularly for the less-able pupils
 - broadening the range of curriculum opportunities to enable pupils of all abilities to apply their mathematical skills to solve problems
 - giving pupils clearer indications of how to improve their work through feedback in lessons and marking.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children start in the Nursery with skills which are well below those expected for their age. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and achieve well. This is because adults are supportive, listen to the children and create conditions in which children feel safe and secure. The teaching of phonics (linking of letters and the sounds they make) is excellent and this ensures children make good progress in the development of literacy skills.
- Attainment is average by the end of Year 6. The proportion of pupils making expected progress is above average in reading, writing and mathematics, however, the proportion making more than expected progress is lower in mathematics than in the other subjects. This is because the less-able pupils are not always challenged sufficiently. In addition, pupils do not have enough opportunities to solve problems in a range of contexts.
- The use of booster classes for Year 6 has shown positive impact with most recent test results indicating a larger proportion of pupils achieving at the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics.
- School tracking indicates that although progress is good it is inconsistent across year groups. This is because the pace of learning is too slow in some lessons. When this is the case, pupils do not fully engage in their learning.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, including those who share their education at another school, and those known to be eligible for the pupil premium progress equally as well as other pupils because the school provides specific and focused support where additional intervention is required.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The overall quality of teaching is good and has a positive impact on the progress of pupils over time. There is some outstanding teaching. A strength of the teaching is in the high-quality relationships between pupils, teachers and other adults which results in positive attitudes to learning.
- Pupils enjoy their lessons. Most listen carefully and demonstrate high levels of interest and motivation especially when the tasks provided enable them to participate in exciting, creative activities. For example, pupils in Year 6 showed high levels of interest and worked productively in groups to design web-pages to attract visitors to Bamburgh Castle.
- Teachers draw upon a range of strategies to review past learning and to share new learning. Best practice was evident when teachers adapted their plans in response to pupils' needs as the lesson progressed. Teaching assistants are well trained and support teachers effectively to address learning needs at all levels.
- Assessment is regular and accurate and in the best lessons is used very effectively to plan well-matched, challenging and interesting activities which motivate pupils of different abilities. In the small number of lessons which require improvement, the pace of learning is too slow. This is because teachers keep the whole class together for too long and less-able pupils find it difficult to maintain their concentration.
- The quality of marking differs across the school and across subjects. In the best practice seen, marking showed clear reference to individual learning targets. Pupils were informed of their successes and of how to improve further through prescriptive next steps in learning. Where this was the case, pupils demonstrated accelerated progress. At present, there are too few opportunities for pupils to return to teacher-marked work and correct identified areas to improve, particularly in mathematics.
- Teachers set high expectations for pupils. They understand how pupils learn best and provide pupils with tasks which stimulate their interest and engagement. For example, pupils in Year 4 extended their understanding and use of imaginative language when acting

as 'Tomb Raiders' as part of a study of Ancient Egypt. Activities were exciting and pupils worked enthusiastically in role as 'Discoverers'.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The school provides a caring, supportive environment where pupils behave well and show respect for themselves, each other and adults.
- Parents' views reflect pupils' feelings and indicate they believe the school provides well for their children's welfare.
- Pupils' behaviour is nearly always good and sometimes exemplary. Pupils who have behavioural difficulties are supported well and this enables them to play a full part in the life of the school. Scrutiny of behavioural records and discussions show behaviour is good over time too.
- Pupils willingly take on a range of responsibilities, such as buddies and school councillors, and are proud of the contributions they make.
- Pupils feel safe in school and they are confident they can get support if they have any concerns. They talk knowledgeably about different aspects of bullying and what to do should they occur. Pupils reported that bullying is rare and, if it did take place, was dealt with very quickly by senior staff.
- School leaders have worked hard to increase attendance and there has been steady improvement. The sensitive support provided by the pastoral support worker has helped to reduce the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent and encourage punctuality.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They are given ample opportunities to explore values and beliefs and reflect upon their own achievements. Pupils willingly take responsibility when involved in group activities in sport, music and other creative activities.

The leadership and management are good

- The executive headteacher provides the school with exceptionally strong and highly effective leadership. She is very well supported by the deputy headteacher in their work with staff to identify and address the priorities for the school and drive it forward. Morale is high and staff share high aspirations for pupils to achieve well.
- Leaders and governors provide a challenging vision which is reflected in high targets and productive collaboration with the partner school to secure joint understanding of standards. Progress of pupils is effectively tracked and teachers use this information to identify pupils not making rapid enough progress and to provide appropriate interventions. The result of such interventions and booster classes over the past year demonstrate particular impact on the progress of pupils in Years 5 and 6.
- Close attention to targeted areas indicate a number of improvements since the previous inspection. Consequently, the school is well placed to continue to improve further. The curriculum has been developed to enhance pupils' motivation to learn. It is designed to lift attainment in basic skills, promote good progress and underpin good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. However, the curriculum does not provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to practise and develop their numeracy skills in problem-solving activities. The school provides an excellent range of enrichment activities through visits, visitors and residential visits. Inclusion is fully promoted and all pupils have every opportunity to participate.
- The school's self-evaluation is accurate and informs exemplary development-planning that is clear about how improvements will be made. A strong feature is the effective programme of professional development of all staff which involves sharing good practice with other local schools and draws on expert help from outside. The impact of this is seen in the increasing involvement of senior leaders in monitoring the work of the school. Developing good and outstanding teaching is a main priority for the school and there is an embedded, monitored

system to support teachers and develop skills which is reflected through their performance management linked to professional development.

- Well-established lines of communication ensure that parents are well informed and opportunities for them to engage with and support their children are effective. Responses to Parent View and the school's most recent questionnaire indicate that most parents believe that the care for their children and the quality of teaching are good.
- The local authority provides effective support for the leadership of English and mathematics which has improved the quality of teaching in these areas.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - holds the school to account in positive ways and helps to shape its strategic direction
 - has a good understanding of achievement and progress data which they use to challenge the school towards improving outcomes for pupils. They actively promote equality of opportunity which is reflected in the good progress all groups make
 - ensure that safeguarding of pupils meets statutory requirements
 - tracks the school's use of funding rigorously and has ensured the pupil premium is used effectively to support learning.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	108842
Local authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	401017

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	195
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Darren Hubbard
Headteacher	Anne MacKay
Date of previous school inspection	24-25 February 2010
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