

St William's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School

Elwick View, Trimdon Village, Trimdon Station, County Durham, TS29 6HY

Inspection dates 23–24 January 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Teaching is outstanding. Lessons have a range of highly interesting activities and pupils work at a brisk pace. Teachers make it extremely clear to pupils what they are to learn and they ask questions which stretch pupils. Teaching assistants are exceptionally skilful at supporting and teaching pupils of all abilities.
- Marking is very well done so that pupils are clear about the level of their work and know how to improve it. Pupils have clear targets that help them take the next steps in their learning. Work is challenging and pitched at exactly the right level for all pupils.
- Pupils' achievement is outstanding. They have high attainment and make outstanding progress from their starting points.
- There is a vibrant learning atmosphere in school; pupils are excited by their learning and enjoy school immensely. The excellent curriculum is based on pupils' own interests. It helps them to see the links between subjects and offers them many opportunities to practise their writing and mathematics.
- The school provides exceptionally well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary; they say they feel extremely safe. Attendance is above average.
- The leadership of the headteacher is outstanding. With the governing body, she has taken decisive action to tackle previous weak teaching. Their very effective action has improved pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching from good to outstanding. This is clearly an improving school. All teachers contribute extremely skilfully to school improvement. They relish the responsibility and accountability they have for their own classes and for subjects across the school.
- Teachers are set targets to improve their performance and these are used extremely successfully to increase pupils' progress. However, these targets are not yet rigorous enough or consistent across school.
- In the few lessons where teaching is good, as opposed to outstanding, the pace of learning is slower, pupils spend too long on tasks and progress is not so rapid.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector had meetings with staff, groups of pupils, the Chair the Governing Body and other governors. The inspector also met and spoke by telephone to the school's local authority Education Development Partner.
- The inspector looked at a range of evidence including: the school's improvement plan; the school's data relating to pupils' progress; monitoring reports; the work pupils were doing in their books and the school's documentation relating to safeguarding.
- The inspector observed teaching and learning in five lessons taught by five teachers and listened to a group of pupils read. In addition, the inspector made a number of short visits to lessons.
- The headteacher conducted four joint observations of lessons with the inspector. The inspector also observed the headteacher reporting back to teachers on the findings regarding the quality of learning and pupils' achievement in lessons.
- The inspectors took into account the 45 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View).
- Fourteen staff completed questionnaires and the responses were analysed.

Inspection team

Gordon Potter, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is much smaller than the average sized primary school.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is below average.
- The proportions of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are well below average.
- There are many lunchtime and after-school clubs, which are managed by the headteacher and run voluntarily by staff.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that there is an even higher proportion of outstanding teaching, especially checking that pupils work at a brisk pace in all lessons.
- Ensure leaders set more rigorous targets for teachers to ensure even more rapid and consistent progress for pupils across the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Most children start school with skills that are in line with those expected for their age. Improvements in teaching mean that children do extremely well in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1 so that at the end of Year 2, their attainment has risen and they are above average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils make outstanding progress in all subjects as a result of excellent teaching. Teachers use imaginative approaches which allow pupils to see how skills in writing and mathematics are used in real-life settings. As a result, attainment at the end of Year 6 is typically well above average. Results of national tests in 2012 were high in all subjects.
- Pupils with special educational needs attain standards that are in line with age-related expectations and above similar pupils across the country. They make excellent progress from their starting points, as a result of work that is extremely well suited to their abilities and outstanding support and teaching from teaching assistants.
- Pupil premium funding has been used well to improve the basic skills of the very few pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. In 2012, there were no pupils in this group in Year 6; in Year 2, these pupils attained standards that were better than all pupils across the country in maths, and were in line in reading and writing. Outstanding teaching is ensuring that any gaps in attainment compared to other pupils in the school are closing rapidly and that they make similarly excellent progress in line with other pupils in the school. This shows the school's commitment to promoting equal opportunities and tackling discrimination.
- Inspection evidence shows that pupils make outstanding progress in reading. This is a result of exceptionally effective teaching of how to link sounds and letters to help pupils read words they are not familiar with, and a highly successful drive to help pupils enjoy books and read more in school and at home.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Teaching is outstanding overall and never less than good. Teachers make sure that work is set at exactly the right level for pupils of all abilities. They ask questions which stretch pupils and encourage them to develop their ideas and reshape work during lessons. Lessons are extremely interesting, involve pupils in finding out things for themselves and with their friends learn rapidly.
- Teachers make it exceptionally clear to pupils what they will learn and how they will know if they have been successful. This is particularly the case with marking and target setting. Pupils' work is regularly marked and comments tell pupils how successful they have been and how to improve their work. Time is provided for pupils to act upon any advice they give. Pupils know the level of their work and in all classes have clear targets to help them take the next steps in their learning.
- Reading and writing are taught most effectively, especially through the use of topic work as a stimulus for pupils' ideas. For example, outstanding teaching in Years 3 and 4 fascinated pupils in the story of the Lambton Worm. Pupils talked together about the knight and the dragon and the teaching assistant led an excellent role play activity to help less-able pupils develop their ideas. Excellent approaches of this kind are used across the school with many opportunities provided for pupils to write across subjects.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage and across the school, there is excellent teaching of linking sounds and letters (phonics) and many opportunities for children to read in class and at home. Accordingly, progress in reading is excellent and attainment high.
- Pupils are encouraged to think about how writers develop their stories and their characters. For example, in a good lesson in the Year 4 and Year 5 class, pupils analysed characters in 'The Secrets of Vesuvius'. The lesson was good rather than outstanding because the teacher did not

move on the learning quickly enough.

- Mathematics is also taught skilfully with plenty of opportunities for pupils to practise their mathematics skills in real-life, problem-solving activities. For example, in Years 5 and 6, pupils were encouraged to use their skills in understanding negative numbers by looking at bank statements and the minus temperatures on an icy winter's day. These approaches helped them to understand a concept which they initially found difficult.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils are extremely happy in school and are excited by their learning. They respect one another, work and play extremely well together and are exceptionally polite to adults. Pupils are very proud of their school and praised the fact that it is the best school in the area and amongst the best in the county for its examination results.
- Pupils say that behaviour is excellent in their lessons and any minor misbehaviour is quickly dealt with by their teachers. Indeed, excellent behaviour was evident in lessons during the inspection as well as around the school. The school's records of behaviour show that behaviour has been outstanding in the past three years. This is because of the successful use of clear expectations, a consistent system of rewards and sanctions and the pupils' own very clear understanding of how to behave well. As a result, there has only been one, unavoidable, exclusion in the past five years.
- Pupils feel exceptionally safe and are aware of different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying. They say that there is no bullying, although friends occasionally fall out. Even this is extremely rare and when it does happen, they are confident that it will be dealt with quickly. 'Buddies', 'Leap Leaders' and members of the school council look after younger children and help pupils play safely and enjoyably together. Pupils develop social skills in the lunch-time and after-school clubs. Pupils say the school council listens to their concerns and ideas. The council has helped to plan and raise funds to improve the playground and organises a Fair Trade tuck shop.
- Attendance is above average because pupils very much enjoy coming to school.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher has had a major impact on the school. She inspires and motivates staff. Her judgement of teaching is extremely rigorous and helps teachers to recognise how to improve their teaching. Advice is linked closely to training leading to excellent teaching and outstanding progress.
- The headteacher sets a clear lead and demands high expectations from all staff. Delegation and sharing are keys to success and all staff has leadership responsibilities. They fulfil these roles most effectively and are fully accountable for progress in their classes and for subjects they lead.
- Leaders have highly developed skills in planning improvements and checking that they are successful. The school's view about its own performance is accurate and offers accurate priorities for even further development.
- The headteacher's effective checks on teaching eradicated any weak aspects. Excellent procedures for tracking pupils' progress identify pupils who had made slower progress as a result of previous weaker teaching. Outstanding teaching and support are helping them to catch up.
- Teachers are set targets to improve their performance. These are focussed on raising pupils' attainment and improving the quality of teaching. However, these targets are not yet consistent across school and some lack the challenge to ensure pupils make outstanding progress year on year. Nevertheless, staff are only rewarded when their pupils make as much progress as expected.
- The curriculum is inspiring. It is based upon pupils' own interests and helps them see the links between subjects. There are many opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual and cultural awareness. They know about many different faiths, appreciate the beauty of the natural world

and enjoy the wonderful things, such as music, art and literature.

- The local authority has effectively supported the school, offering advice on, for example, how to improve the tracking of pupils' progress and providing a range of training for all staff.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body has extremely clear procedures to hold the school to account. They review data and carry out detailed assessments of the overall provision, including how the pupil premium funding is helping pupils to achieve better. This gives them an exceptionally clear view of the school's many strengths and relative weaknesses. They ensure that the school fulfils its statutory responsibilities for safeguarding. The governing body has distinct procedures to check on teaching, the curriculum, pupils' achievement and on the budget. With the headteacher, they have taken decisive action to tackle weak teaching and establish a team of outstanding teachers, whose performance is clearly assessed and whose training needs are effectively met.

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	114259
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	403233

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	115
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Anne-Marie Robertshaw
Headteacher	Kate Ellis
Date of previous school inspection	19 September 2007
Telephone number	01429 880348
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