

St Mary's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School, Wingate

Wingate, County Durham, TS28 5AN,

Inspection dates

18–19 April 2013

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		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Teaching is consistently good. For pupils in Years 2 and 3, it is outstanding. Work is well-matched to pupils' individual needs. Teachers are skilful at checking how well pupils are doing and offer extra support or extra challenges where necessary. Reading is taught well.
- Pupils, including many who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium and those with special educational needs, make good progress. As a result, standards have risen for pupils at the end of Year 2 and are typically above average at the end of Year 6.
- The school provides remarkably well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The curriculum enthuses pupils. It helps them to see how subjects link together and offers them many chances to write at length in English and in other subjects.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They care exceptionally well for one another; they say they feel extremely safe. They are determined to succeed in their work. Attendance is improving.
- The headteacher and the governing body have a precise understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Areas of weak teaching have been eradicated. They know clearly how to improve the school further. This is an improving school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is good teaching of mathematics and pupils make good progress. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to use their mathematical skills in real-life problem-solving activities in mathematics lessons and in other subjects.
- When teachers mark work, some teachers do not always make clear to pupils how to make their work better next time.
- Previous weak teaching has delayed the progress of some pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium funding. Strategies to support and challenge these pupils need improving in order to close the gap in their progress compared with that of their peers more rapidly.
- Attendance is average. Too many families take holidays in term time.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector had meetings with staff, groups of pupils and the Chair and other members of the Governing Body. The inspector also met 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 seven lessons taught by three teachers and listened to a group of pupils read. In addition, the inspector made a number of short visits to lessons.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher conducted four joint observations of lessons with the inspector. The inspector also observed the headteacher and deputy headteacher reporting back to teachers on their findings regarding the quality of learning and pupils' achievement in lessons.
- Five staff completed questionnaires and the responses were analysed.
- Too few parents had responded to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) for their opinions to be published. However, inspectors spoke to a group of parents and analysed the school's own questionnaire of parents' views.

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 White British.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium (funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, looked-after children and children from military service families) is well-above average. A large majority of these pupils also has special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is well-above average.
- The proportions of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are well-above average.
- There is a higher proportion of boys than girls in the school.
- There is a breakfast-club and many after-school clubs which are managed by the governing body.
- The school has had too few pupils in its last three Year 6 classes to be measured against the current government floor standards. These are the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment in English and mathematics.
- The headteacher is also headteacher of another local school with which this school is federated. She divides her time between the two schools.
- Many more pupils than is the case across the country leave or join the school at other than the usual times.
- There have been changes to staffing during the current school year.
- There are three classes for pupils in Reception and Year 1; Years 2 and 3; Years 4, 5 and 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is outstanding, to raise standards and rates of pupils' progress further, especially in mathematics and for those pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, by:
 - sharing the outstanding teaching practice that is in the school already
 - offering more opportunities for pupils to improve their mathematics skills by practising them in a wider range of mathematical areas and in real-life problem-solving activities in subjects across the curriculum
 - ensuring that all teachers mark work for pupils in a way that helps pupils to do better next time
 - improving the methods the school uses to support and challenge those pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding.
- Further improve attendance by working closely with those families who take term-time holidays.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- The abilities of different year groups vary in this small school. Most children start school with skills that are below and occasionally well-below those typically expected for their age. In the past, as a result of weak teaching, children made slow progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 1. Recent improvements in what is provided and in the quality of teaching for these pupils ensure that they now make good progress regardless of their starting points.
- Outstanding teaching in Year 2 has helped pupils to make up for previous underachievement. As a result, standards have improved at the end of Year 2. However, the gap between those pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium and other pupils is wide. They are one and a half years behind in English and mathematics.
- At the end of Year 6 standards fluctuate. In 2010 and 2011 standards were above average. In 2012, they were well-below average. This was a year group with a high proportion of pupils who were eligible for the pupil premium, had special needs or who had joined the school in Year 5 or Year 6. There was also an extremely high proportion of boys with low standards. In Year 2, boys did better than girls. However, across school, both boys and girls now make good progress.
- The work of pupils currently in Year 6 is average. This represents good progress for these pupils who reached standards that were well-below average at the end of Year 2.
- In 2012, pupils who were eligible for the pupil premium were a term behind other pupils in the school in mathematics; in writing they were two years behind. However, all pupils in this Year 6 class had attainment which was too far below average. The school has identified closing the gap in progress for these pupils as a key issue in teachers' performance management. Good and outstanding teaching is beginning to close that gap, although some strategies are recent and are not yet fully refined or in place.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress from their starting points because they receive excellent support and good and outstanding teaching from teachers and teaching assistants.
- Inspection evidence shows that progress in reading is good. This is a result of good and consistent teaching in how to link letters and the sounds they make to help pupils read words they are not used to. This was seen in the Reception and Year 1 class where the teacher very cleverly taught pupils how to recognise letters through skilful questioning and by ensuring that learning activities offered pupils many chances to find and read letters. There is a strong focus in all classes on helping pupils to enjoy books and read more often in school and at home.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teachers are very skilful at making sure that they set work that is hard enough for pupils of all abilities. As lessons progress, they check understanding and offer extra explanation or more demanding work as is required for individual pupils. Teachers offer a range of interesting activities and allow pupils time to engage with tasks. They ask questions which encourage pupils to think hard and explain their ideas. Teaching assistants are also very skilful at supporting and challenging pupils to do well in their work.
- For example, in a mathematics lesson for pupils in Years 2 and 3, the teacher meticulously planned work which was hard enough for pupils of a wide range of ages and abilities. She challenged pupils to understand how to subtract using the column method and extended the most-able pupils to think about decimal places. There are, however, too few opportunities for pupils to practise their skills in mathematics in real-life problem-solving activities or in different subjects.
- Lessons have exciting activities. There are many well-planned opportunities for pupils to talk together and work in teams to explore and plan together and develop their skills of speaking and listening. For example, pupils in the Years 4, 5 and 6 class enjoyed developing their reading and research skills in finding out and taking notes about the Romans.

- In an excellent lesson in the Years 2 and 3 class, the teacher made it clear how pupils could improve their writing skills. She offered opportunities for pupils to practise sentence skills and they studied the poem they had written together in the previous lesson. The teacher then allowed pupils time and freedom to develop their creativity and imagination. As a result, pupils wrote some outstanding poems and made excellent progress in their writing.
- Teachers make it clear to pupils what they are to learn. Pupils have clear targets which help them know how to succeed in individual pieces of work and marking helps pupils know how well they have done. However, some teachers do not always make it clear to pupils how they can improve their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils say that behaviour is excellent in their lessons. There are clear expectations and a consistent system of rewards and sanctions which pupils have helped to create. As a result they have a very clear understanding of how to behave well. Indeed, excellent behaviour was evident in lessons during the inspection as well as around the school.
- The school's records of behaviour show that the behaviour of the vast majority of pupils has been excellent in the past three years. In the Year 6 class in 2012, pupils who had joined the school in Year 5 and Year 6 found good behaviour difficult. As a result, there was the only, unavoidable, exclusion of the past five years.
- Pupils respect one another and care for one another extremely well. They play and work exceptionally well together and are remarkably polite to adults, eagerly talking about their school. They are extremely happy in school and are stimulated by their learning. Indeed, they are determined to succeed in their work and persevere until they understand what they are learning.
- Pupils feel exceptionally safe. They are aware of different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying and name-calling. However, they say that there is no bullying, although friends occasionally fall out. Even this is very rare and when it does happen they know how to deal with it through talking to 'buddies' who also look after younger children and help pupils play safely and enjoyably together.
- Pupils develop social skills in the breakfast- and after-school clubs. The school council helps pupils develop important organisational skills. It has helped to plan and raise funds to improve the playground and the quiet area and organises fund-raising to support St Mary's Village in Africa. It discusses any concerns pupils have about safety and their views on their lessons, including religious education.
- Attendance is average and improving. In the past term it has been extremely high because pupils enjoy coming to school. Last year it was above average in the same term. However, attendance drops in the autumn and summer terms because too many families take holidays during term time.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has a very clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. She has tackled weak teaching, improved its quality overall, and ensured that pupils make good progress. She strives for high standards and continuous improvement. For example, there has been in-depth analysis of the reasons why standards declined in 2012 and strategies put in place to make sure that the learning needs of individual pupils in Year 6 are met.
- The headteacher ensures that even on those days when she is not in school, the school runs smoothly. This is because there are clear procedures in place. The deputy headteacher is well-informed about all important issues and has the skills to manage any concerns that may arise. Strong teamwork and high morale ensure that all staff work together very well.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have a very clear view of the quality of teaching and how it helps pupils to make good progress. They offer clear advice about how to improve

teaching and teachers welcome and act upon this advice. This has ensured that teaching across school is consistently good or better.

- Performance management is clearly focussed on increasing the rates at which pupils make progress, improving the quality of teaching and raising standards. The headteacher has set targets for teachers and pupils which are more demanding than previously. Teachers are very clear that they will be rewarded only when their pupils have done as well as, or better than, they should have done.
- Information about pupils' skills and abilities is used well so that teachers plan work that is set at an appropriate and challenging level for all pupils in mixed-age classes. It is also used well so that all staff are clear about the progress pupils are making. The school has a strong commitment to promoting equal opportunities and tackling discrimination for all pupils, including the many pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium or have special educational needs.
- The curriculum is clearly focused on developing pupils' basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics and as a result pupils make good progress. It provides many opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual, moral and social awareness, especially through the teaching of religious education, art and history. There are many opportunities for pupils to broaden their cultural awareness through an exciting programme of visits and visitors.
- The local authority works very effectively with the school. It has offered helpful legal advice on how to manage staffing issues and advice that has led to improvements in what is provided in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the quality of teaching across school.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body has a very clear view of the strengths of the school and the areas in which it could be improved further. As a result, governors have taken decisive action to eradicate weak teaching. They make regular visits to classes to see how well pupils are learning and how well subjects are taught and feedback systematically to other governors. They have very clear procedures to monitor the effectiveness of the shared headteacher role and joint committees to ensure that the federation functions well. The governing body skilfully manages the budget of this small school, working closely with parent groups to raise extra funds. Governors monitor the performance of all staff. They have a clear understanding of school data and know that the gap between pupils eligible for the pupil premium grant and other pupils in school is wide and are determined to close it. The Chair is very well-informed about the school and offers clear leadership. Governors ensure that all staff and governors have received appropriate training, for example to ensure that pupils are kept safe from harm and to improve teaching.

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	114279
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	401419

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	59
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Margaret Greener
Headteacher	Jane Lewin
Date of previous school inspection	8 July 2010
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