

St Oswald's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School

Easington Avenue, Wrekenton, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear, NE9 7LH

Inspection dates 15–16 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	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.

- Children have a good and often outstanding start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This is due to good and often outstanding teaching that promotes children's personal development and their speaking and listening skills very well.
- Teachers have good questioning skills and some have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They actively involve pupils in their learning. As a result, pupils are keen to learn. Teachers review pupils' learning throughout lessons helping them to learn at a good and sometimes outstanding pace.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary both in and out of lessons. They take pride in their school, feel safe and relationships are strong. They have outstanding support for their personal development through the school's strong commitment to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The headteacher has high expectations. She promotes her aspirations for pupils through a caring, positive approach to leading and managing the school. A supportive deputy headteacher and staff are striving to improve their teaching and raise standards further.
- Governors have also supported this drive for improvement and the teaching of mathematics has improved. They are very committed to the school and encourage and challenge it to raise standards further at Key Stage 1.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet consistently outstanding. Pupils' needs are not well met in all lessons. Teachers do not always use time well or ensure pupils know how to be successful so they can work at a faster pace. Marking of pupils' work is not always clear enough to help them improve.
- In Key Stage 1, the teaching of sounds that letters make (phonics) does not always sufficiently support pupils' reading skills. Pupils are sometimes not given enough opportunities to write nor to develop their spelling, punctuation or grammar skills. Some pupils' weak handwriting skills also slow their progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 29 lessons or parts of lessons, of which three were joint observations with the headteacher.
- Inspectors observed groups of pupils working with teaching assistants and specifically listened to Year 2 pupils read, and other year groups in lessons.
- Inspectors talked to a range of pupils, including the school council, about their work and play in school.
- Meetings were held with six governors, teaching staff, including senior and subject leaders. A telephone conversation was held with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors were unable to take account of responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) when planning the inspection because there were insufficient responses. They did consider staff questionnaires and also parental and pupils' surveys completed by the school.
- Inspectors observed the overall work of the school and looked at a number of documents, including the school's data about pupils' current progress. They also studied documents relating to safeguarding, governance, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors looked at a range of other evidence including school displays, the school's website and work representing the school's wider achievements beyond the classroom.

Inspection team

David Shearsmith, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Anne Humble	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized primary school.
- An above average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children in the care of the local authority and children of service families.
- An above average proportion of pupils are supported at school action. An average proportion of pupils are supported at school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The school has achieved the National Healthy School status, Sports Mark and Basic Skills Quality Mark awards.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is taught in a recently built unit that opened in September 2012 for one Reception class and one Nursery class.
- The school currently provides before school care that is managed by the governing body.
- The school has experienced a number of staffing changes since the last inspection, including the appointment of a new deputy headteacher.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently outstanding by:
 - more often using the existing outstanding teaching as a model for raising the overall quality of teaching
 - ensuring that pupils' needs are well met in all lessons, particularly the more -able in Key Stage 1
 - improving the use of time and the pace of pupils' learning in lessons to accelerate pupils' progress and raise standards further
 - ensuring pupils know how to be successful in all lessons so they can check on their own learning and reach higher standards in their work
 - improving the quality of marking by teachers giving pupils very clear instructions on how to improve their work and time to make corrections.
- Improve standards in reading and writing at Key Stage 1 by:
 - continue to improve the teaching of sounds that letters make (phonics) to even better support pupils' overall reading skills
 - improving pupils' handwriting and presentation skills
 - linking reading and writing more effectively to promote pupils' understanding of punctuation, spelling and grammar
 - providing pupils with more stimulating and interesting opportunities to write in other subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Achievement is good because the school knows its pupils well and is ambitious for them to achieve as well as they can. Standards in mathematics, at both key stages, have risen recently due to the improved teaching of mathematics and pupils' progress in this subject is particularly good.
- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are well below those typical for their age. They have particular weaknesses in their literacy and mathematical skills. They make good and sometimes outstanding progress because their needs in this key stage are catered for well.
- They make good overall progress in Key Stage 1 to reach standards that are below average. Standards and pupils' progress in reading and writing are relatively weaker than in mathematics. Reading and writing skills are not always sufficiently developed alongside each other to promote pupils' understanding of punctuation, spelling and grammar. Pupils do not always have sufficient opportunities to be involved in writing in other subjects. Sometimes pupils' weaker handwriting and presentation skills also affect their progress.
- Pupils make good and sometimes outstanding progress across Key Stage 2, due to consistently good or better teaching. They reach standards in English and mathematics that are broadly average overall and are continuing to improve.
- The teaching of sounds that letters make (phonics) has not until very recently sufficiently helped pupils with their reading. Pupils' skills are improving as illustrated by their good performance in the most recent Year 1 national phonics test. However, teachers at Key Stage 1 are only just beginning to develop fully pupils' overall reading skills. Standards in reading are below the national average but now improving. By the time pupils leave Key Stage 2, standards in reading are in line with the national average due to the accelerated progress they make.
- Pupils entitled to the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, also make good progress. The school has developed a comprehensive support system for these pupils, through intensive teaching in small groups. They reach standards that are close to those that similar pupils nationally would achieve.
- Pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs make good progress overall, but quicker in Key Stage 2 than in Key Stage 1. By the time they leave, in Year 6, they have made good progress and reach standards that are above those of similar pupils nationally.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers have good questioning skills and involve pupils well, particularly in outstanding lessons.
- In a mathematics lesson in the Reception class, children were enthralled by the use of a crocodile puppet. The teacher's highly effective questioning explored the children's understanding of calculations. She then provided them with a 'crocodile challenge' that extended their understanding of number, particularly the more -able. This high quality teaching is not always evident, particularly in Key Stage 1, where more-able pupils' needs are not always well met in lessons.
- Most teachers use time effectively and the pace of learning is often good and sometimes better. In a Year 5 literacy lesson, the teacher stimulated pupils with a thought provoking video. Short tasks and quick reviews of learning were then used so that pupils could plan their writing. They made outstanding progress in their speaking and listening skills. Time was used well and the pace of learning was rapid.
- The majority of teachers mark pupils' work diligently and there is some existing good practice. Where teachers give very clear actions for improvement and time is allowed for pupils to improve, pupils reach higher standards in their work. In some classes, particularly in Key Stage

1, work is not marked sufficiently well. Consequently, pupils do not always know what they need to do to improve, especially in their writing.

- The teaching of writing in Key Stage 1 has some relative weaknesses. For example, in a writing lesson in Year 2, pupils were using verbs and adjectives to improve their sentences. Pupils' progress in the lesson was somewhat hampered because they were not able to check that they had met the objectives of the lesson. They also had too little guidance on how to be successful and to make faster progress.
- Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to the good and sometimes better progress of pupils with very specific needs, especially in Key Stage 2. Provision in the Rainbow Room significantly supports pupils with very complex needs. It is successful at meeting their needs and ensuring that they make good progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils relate very well to each other and their behaviour is exemplary both in and out of class. They are courteous, well mannered and proud of their school. A breakfast club provides a very good start to the day and was used to very good effect during the national tests to prepare pupils for this experience.
- The school's curriculum provides outstanding support for pupils' personal development. They have a good understanding of different types of bullying. Consequently bullying is rare. If it does happen, pupils said that they were very confident staff members would help them to resolve it.
- The school is also highly effective at supporting pupils' personal development relating to any difficulties they may encounter in their lives. The school chaplain is an integral part of the school. Pupils, with a range of personal needs, are very confident they can go to her for reassurance and guidance.
- Attendance is average. There is a range of strategies to promote attendance and punctuality, which has been effective in improving attendance. Pupils said they enjoyed coming to school because 'the school is fantastic'.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very well promoted. This supports pupils' personal development exceptionally well. Spirituality is promoted very well across the school, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage, where pupils have access to some inspirational teaching.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep safe in different situations, including how to stay safe on the internet.
- Pupils are keen to learn, even when the pace of learning sometimes slows. They work well together in groups and pairs and support each other in their learning. They take responsibility around the school, including supporting pupils at playtimes through the 'Buddy Bus Stop'.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is ambitious for the pupils in her care. She is very well supported by the deputy headteacher and a dedicated staff who are keen to make sure pupils succeed. The school is very committed to ensuring pupils have equality of opportunity to achieve well. They support pupils with specific needs exceptionally well at Key Stage 2. Consequently, these pupils make at least good progress by the time they leave in Year 6
- The headteacher regularly checks on the quality of teaching. This has been particularly helpful for new staff. The school has used staff development to good effect to improve the quality of the teaching of mathematics. Staff also worked with governors to check on the effectiveness of the changes in the mathematics curriculum. The school already uses existing outstanding practice as a model for other staff, but leaders realise this needs to continue to even further improve the

quality of teaching.

- The school uses performance management well to improve standards and the quality of teaching. Regular pupils' progress meetings and good use of the school's data have enabled the school to be accurate in its evaluation of its work. Teachers are rewarded appropriately for their leadership and teaching roles in the school. The school has already put action in place to improve standards at Key Stage one. These have not yet impacted on results although progress is improving.
- The school gives due regard to safeguarding, the systems and practice for which meet requirements.
- The local authority has given good support to the school, particularly when it was improving the mathematics curriculum.
- The school works exceptionally well with parents, who are encouraged to participate in a wide range of school activities. The school's website keeps parents well informed.
- The school works with a range of partners to support pupils' personal development and well-being. It has good links with the local secondary school and uses its expertise to support pupils' learning, for example, through links with teachers who have particular subject expertise.
- The school's curriculum provides a good range of opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in a wide range of contexts. Pupils enjoy visits and visitors who come into school to enrich the curriculum and that help them to have a good understanding of the world around them and to support their wider skills.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are very committed to the school. Their skills and training have enabled them to support the school's daily work. They have also challenged leaders to do better, for example to improve the achievement of Key Stage 1 pupils in reading and writing, and have a good understanding of how it needs to improve further. The governors have a good understanding of data about pupils' achievement and of the quality of teaching. The school's budget is well managed. Governors have been particularly successful in providing a new extension to the school. The pupil premium funding has been used wisely and has had a very positive impact on the performance of those pupils eligible for it. Governors are ambitious for the school. They hold the headteacher to account for the school's performance and reward staff appropriately.

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	108384
Local authority	Gateshead
Inspection number	411711

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	244
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mary Gibson
Headteacher	Christine Wallace
Date of previous school inspection	29 April 2008
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