

St Paul's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School

Wolviston Mill Lane, Billingham, Stockton-on-Tees, TS22 5LU

Inspection dates 19–20 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	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.

- The school provides all pupils with a very high-quality education. Pupils achieve very well and reach standards of attainment that are often well above average.
- The quality of teaching is often outstanding and never less than good. Mostly, teachers plan interesting tasks which make pupils eager to learn and which helps them to progress quickly. On occasions, the tasks planned for some pupils are not challenging enough.
- Pupils are very enthusiastic about their lessons, take a lot of pride in their work and try their hardest to achieve high targets.
- Pupils' behaviour is of a very high standard. They are always polite and courteous and learn and play together exceptionally well.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare and that they feel very safe in school. Parents agree with this view. Pupils are very well cared for throughout the school.
- Leadership and management, including governance, are very effective. Together, they keep a close eye on the school's performance and know precisely how to improve the school's effectiveness even further.
- The curriculum is very well-planned and provides pupils with a wide range of opportunities to practise their skills in reading and writing. It also very effectively supports their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which is outstanding.
- All leaders demonstrate a clear commitment and determination to continue to improve teaching and pupils' achievement.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 15 lessons, two of which were joint observations with the headteacher and the assistant headteacher.
- Meetings were held with two groups of pupils, including the school council and pupils from Year 6, the Chair and other members of the Governing Body, school staff with leadership responsibilities and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors met parents informally and took account of 42 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). They also took account of 26 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed the school at work and looked at a range of documents, including internal and external data related to pupils' progress, pupils' workbooks, school improvement planning, and the school's procedures for gaining an accurate view of its own performance. They examined minutes of governing body meetings, reports written by the local authority and safeguarding and child protection documents.

Inspection team

Peter Eeva, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Graham Clark

Additional Inspector

Irene Lavelle

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those who are looked after by the local authority or from service families, is very small.
- The proportion of pupils who are from minority ethnic backgrounds is low and there are very few pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- There is a specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs who have considerably more difficulty in controlling their emotions and behaving sensibly than is the norm, called the Complex Needs Unit. There are five pupils currently on roll and pupils are educated both in the Complex Needs Unit and with the rest of the school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching even further by ensuring that all teachers use the information about pupils' progress to plan activities that precisely match the abilities of all pupils.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- From the Early Years Foundation Stage to the end of Key Stage 2 pupils make rapid gains in their knowledge, understanding and skills.
- Most children enter the Nursery class with standards that are typical for children of their age. By the end of Year 6, pupils reach standards that are well above average. In 2010 and 2011, a higher than average proportion of pupils exceeded the level expected for their age. Although the achievement of some pupils dipped in 2012 in writing and mathematics, the school's own data show that pupils currently in Year 6 are well on course to attain well above average standards. Inspection evidence indicates that this is also likely to be the case in 2014.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to a very good start, as a result of the caring environment, very good teaching and the exciting opportunities to learn inside and outside the classroom. As a result, they make very good progress.
- Programmes to develop pupils' reading skills help younger ones make a rapid start to learning to read. Year 2 pupils read accurately and can decode new and difficult words with confidence. This is built on as they move through the school so that by the end of Year 6 pupils read very well.
- Pupils' mathematical skills and understanding are very good. By Years 5 and 6, pupils to choose and use appropriate and well-chosen strategies to solve complex problems.
- Pupils write with imagination, using their well-developed skills in their topic work. They show very close attention to detail and by Year 6 can adapt their writing style to suit a range of audiences and purposes as a result of the actions taken by the staff to improve writing skills throughout the school.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is rigorously monitored and regularly reviewed. Carefully planned support which closely matches individual pupils' needs, makes sure that these pupils make progress similar to that of other pupils. Pupils who attend the Complex Needs Unit make very good progress, too. The care and skill shown by the staff and the successful integration into the life of the main school play a critical part in this.
- The progress and attainment of the very small number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or are looked after by the local authority, has, in the past, not been as rapid or as high as for other pupils. Effective use of the pupil premium funding has resulted in these pupils now making much faster progress and attaining higher standards. This illustrates the school's excellent promotion of equality of opportunity.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- The quality of teaching is never less than good and is often outstanding in the impact it has on pupils' attainment and progress over time. The school's own records and other evidence gathered during the inspection show that high-quality teaching is the norm.
- Teachers plan very interesting and stimulating lessons, which give pupils opportunities to make rapid progress. In a small number of lessons, teachers do not always match the work they give pupils to do precisely to suit all abilities. Consequently, some pupils find the work too easy and so they make slower progress in these lessons.
- Very positive relationships between teachers and pupils and well-established classroom routines mean that lessons proceed without interruption and no time is lost for learning. As one pupil said 'teachers make hard work fun'.
- Pupils have a wide range of interesting things to write about because literacy is taught in a very imaginative and creative way. Excellent links are made with other subjects and pupils routinely write at length to suit different audiences and purposes. In a Year 6 lesson pupils enthusiastically used a range of engaging ways to write the story of the Pied Piper of Hamelin as a play script

- Teaching assistants play a key role in helping some pupils to learn. They have an excellent understanding of what pupils need in order to learn and intervene very effectively to help them overcome any difficulties which might slow their learning. This applies at least equally to staff who work with those pupils attached to the Complex Needs Unit.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is very strong and their enthusiasm for what they are teaching communicates itself to the pupils and as a result pupils are eager to be involved. In the vast majority of cases very high expectations by all adults throughout the school make sure that all pupils rise to the challenge and do their very best.
- Teachers mark work regularly and are using a recently introduced whole-school system which shows pupils where they have done well and where they could improve. Pupils are beginning to respond to suggestions for improvement by making changes to their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils are very polite, well-mannered and courteous towards each other and to adults and visitors. They show a great deal of pride in their school. They are extremely well-behaved in lessons and around the school. This promotes pupils' very positive attitudes to learning.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare. They are aware of the different types of bullying and say that if any occurred it would be dealt with quickly and effectively.
- Pupils say that they feel very safe in school and they have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, for example when using the Internet.
- The responses to Parent View indicates that the vast majority of parents agree that their children are very safe at school, very well looked after and would recommend the school to other parents.
- The school provides opportunities for pupils to take on roles of responsibility such as Play Leaders. They take these very seriously and are diligent in carrying out their duties.
- The active school council play its part in improving the school and can point to successful initiatives it has been involved in such as the Grab Bags at lunchtimes.
- Attendance is consistently above average and has risen over recent years. Punctuality is excellent.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The school is led very well by a highly effective and determined headteacher supported by an equally effective leadership team and other leaders throughout the school. All staff are highly ambitious for the pupils and their needs are of the highest importance.
- The school knows its strengths and areas for improvement very well. It monitors and evaluates the progress of the pupils rigorously and if any pupils fall behind effective support is put in place swiftly, either individually or in small groups and as a consequence pupils catch up quickly.
- The leadership team is united in its determination to continue to improve the quality of teaching still further. There is a well-planned programme of lesson observations by leaders at all levels and the school is pro-active in finding training which will help staff to improve their classroom and management skills.
- Equality of opportunity is outstanding with all groups making the similar progress. Pupils who join the Complex Needs Unit integrate into the main part of the school as soon as they are able and they too make rapid progress from their individual starting points.
- The curriculum is rich and varied and meets the needs and interests of all students extremely well. It is enriched by a wide range of visits and visitors and by the varied after-school clubs and activities. These also broaden pupils' social skills and cultural experiences. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is further promoted by the high expectations of all staff. Pupils develop into very confident, independent and eager learners who are more than ready for the next stage in their education.

- The school has been very successful in developing a range of partnerships particularly with local schools.
- The smooth running of the school is due in no small part to the highly effective administrative team who are highly valued by the staff.
- The local authority provides appropriate light touch support, which is valued by the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is highly effective and committed to the school. Its members have a good understanding of the school's performance, know the strengths of the school and have an accurate understanding of what needs to be done to improve the school still further, in particular the quality of teaching and achievement. Governors not only provide support to the senior leaders, but regularly challenge them and make sure that performance management procedures set challenging targets. They have a good understanding of the connection between the quality of teaching, Teachers' Standards and salary progression. Governors are involved in allocating the pupil premium funding and are aware of the impact it is having on pupils' achievement. Governors make sure that all statutory requirements regarding safeguarding and child protection are 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	111677
Local authority	Stockton-on-Tees
Inspection number	412268

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	251
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Patrick Keane
Headteacher	Catherine Connelly
Date of previous school inspection	27 March 2009
Telephone number	01642 360022
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