

St Aloysius' RC Voluntary Aided Junior School

Argyle Street, Hebburn, Tyne and Wear, NE31 1BQ

Inspection dates 19–20 September 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Standards in reading are not yet as high as they should be.
- The quality of teaching is not consistently good across the school and, as a result, the rate of progress is slower than it should be in some year groups.
- Teachers do not always plan lessons that meet the different learning needs of all pupils, especially the most-able pupils, who, as a result, do not always make enough progress.

The school has the following strengths

- Progress in writing and mathematics has improved and is continuing to accelerate.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are good. Pupils show pride in their school and are particularly pleased with their sporting successes.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Pupils are polite and courteous at all times. They take on responsibilities willingly and are conscientious in carrying out their duties.
- The new headteacher of the federated school and other senior leaders know the school well and have introduced a range of initiatives which have resulted in significant improvements in achievement and teaching. As a result, the school's overall performance is improving strongly.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 14 lessons, one of which was a joint observation with the headteacher. Inspectors also heard pupils read in Year 5.
- They took account of 10 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View) and 15 questionnaires completed by the staff.
- They held a meeting with members of the school council and talked informally with other pupils at lunchtimes and break times. Inspectors also talked to two members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. They also had discussions with leaders who have other responsibilities including the leaders of literacy and numeracy and the special educational needs coordinator.
- Inspectors observed the school at work and looked at a range of documentation including internal and external information relating to pupils' progress, pupils' workbooks, school improvement planning and the school's procedures for gaining an accurate view of its own performance. They also considered reports written by the local authority, documents relating to the management of teachers' performance, minutes of governing body meetings and safeguarding and child protection documents.

Inspection team

Peter Eeva, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Benjamin Harding

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized junior school. It has been federated with St Aloysius Infant School since September 2009. The two schools share the same governing body.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium, (the pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those that are looked after) is average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or by a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- Since the previous inspection there has been a period of significant changes in staffing, particularly at headteacher level, with two periods when an acting headteacher was in post for substantial periods of time. The new headteacher of the two federated schools took up post in September 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to be consistently good or better across the school and hence increase the rate of progress for all groups of pupils, but especially the most able, by:
 - making sure that all teachers plan tasks that closely match the needs of individuals and groups of pupils, especially the most able.
 - ensuring that the rate at which learning proceeds in lessons is at least good in all year groups
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to learn on their own.
- Raise standards in reading by:
 - ensuring pupils make full use of opportunities to read as often and as widely as possible, especially in school
 - building systematically on the skills that pupils already have from the time they enter the school
 - working closely with parents to help them to encourage their children to read more often at home.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because standards in reading, although improving, are not high enough and teaching does not consistently enable pupils, especially the most able, to make at least good progress from their broadly average starting points in Year 3.
- There has been a recent drive to improve standards in reading, writing and mathematics and this has led to much more rapid progress and higher standards in writing and mathematics. However, standards in reading still lag behind. In the past, pupils have not read widely and frequently in school because they did not have regular opportunities to do so and because the books available to them did not interest them. When pupils enter the school, teaching does not build sufficiently well on the skills pupils have by systematically teaching reading.
- Under the leadership of the acting headteacher, a much improved selection of books was provided and all pupils are encouraged to read as often as possible in school and at home and the school is beginning to work more closely with parents to encourage their children to read. This has increased pupils' enthusiasm for reading and is beginning to have a positive effect on their achievement.
- Most pupils start school with standards that are expected of their age. They make slower progress in Year 3 and particularly Year 4 but progress accelerates in Years 5 and 6 as a result of good and sometimes outstanding teaching. By the end of Year 6, standards are broadly average overall.
- Achievement in recent years has been lower in reading than in writing and mathematics and also more broadly for some of the most-able pupils and in some year groups. The proportion who make more progress than is expected of them has been low. Senior leaders have recognised this and have put measures in place to improve the rates of progress. Standards in writing and mathematics have risen as a result of teachers focusing closely on these developing skills in these subjects in Years 5 and 6. Although there has been some attention to improving standards of reading, the benefits have been slower to emerge.
- Leaders use data effectively to track pupils' achievement. They use effective systems to check on pupils' progress throughout the school and, as a result, the school can promptly identify any gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills. Individual pupils' learning can then be quickly boosted by timely support.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make similar progress to their peers in writing and mathematics but they are making better progress in reading as a result of the school's detailed knowledge of their needs and the effective interventions to meet their individual needs. Teaching assistants provide high-quality support when it is needed both in class and in small groups and one-to-one sessions.
- There is effective use of pupil premium funding and close checks on the progress of pupils eligible for the pupil premium means that they make similar progress and reach similar standards to other pupils in the school and previous gaps in performance have now closed.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement. Teachers plan lessons which interest their pupils but in Years 3 and 4 these do not always meet the needs of individuals or some groups of pupils, especially the most able, sufficiently well. As a result, these pupils are given work that is not hard enough for them. In some lessons the pace of learning is too slow and pupils have too few opportunities to learn things by themselves. As a result, pupils do not make good progress in Years 3 and 4.
- There are examples of good and outstanding practice and this is reflected in the improved progress pupils are now making in Years 5 and 6, especially in writing and mathematics.
- Some teaching is outstanding. In a Year 6 class pupils made rapid progress as they used their

knowledge of Greek mythology to successfully write play scripts. Timely prompts and suggestions from the teacher kept the pace high and contributed to the resulting success of the pupils.

- Teachers want their pupils to do their best. Good relationships are typical between pupils and the adults who work with them. As one pupil put it, 'Teachers really care about you and help you to learn'.
- Pupils develop good skills in writing and mathematics and have regular opportunities to practise these in other subjects. This is having a positive impact in improving their achievement in writing and mathematics. However, until recently, opportunities to read have not been frequent enough for pupils to develop their reading skills as rapidly as they should.
- Teaching assistants are deployed well and have a detailed understanding of the needs of different individuals and groups of pupils including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.
- Teachers mark pupils work regularly and carefully. They routinely provide constructive feedback, giving suggestions about how the work can be improved, and pupils typically respond to these suggestions.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. The school's records confirm that this is typical.
- Attendance is above average. However, the school is not complacent and has effective systems in place to ensure that it remains so.
- The school has well-understood and effective systems for managing behaviour. Pupils are very keen to preserve their Golden Time by behaving well and this means that lessons typically proceed without interruption. Pupils have a wide range of after-school and lunchtime clubs and activities which they appreciate and these, together with their physical education lessons make a positive impact on pupils' physical well-being. They are rightly proud of their truly impressive sporting successes.
- In the playground, pupils play well together. The play leaders make sure that there is interesting and appropriate equipment to play with.
- Pupils are very polite and courteous to adults and visitors to their school. They are eager to talk about how good they think their school is and find it hard to think of significant improvements they would like.
- Pupils feel safe and say that there is very little, if any, bullying. They understand the different forms bullying can take and are confident that if any bullying happened it would be swiftly dealt with.
- Pupils have opportunities to take on responsibilities such as being buddies and play leaders and they take their roles very seriously.
- Pupils are clear about how to stay safe in a range of situations including when using the internet.

The leadership and management are good

- Through strong and purposeful leadership, the new headteacher has quickly identified the areas which the school needs to improve, particularly in the achievement of pupils and the quality of teaching, and has set about making the changes needed. He has introduced effective plans which are beginning to have a significant impact, particularly in raising standards in writing and mathematics. Improvements in other areas such as reading and the quality of teaching in Years 3 and 4 are also proving effective but at a slower pace.
- After a period of turbulence in staffing at a senior level and the creation of a federation with the nearby infant school, staff believe that the school is now on a more even keel. Under the

committed and effective leadership of the headteacher there are clear plans in place to bring the two schools more closely aligned which will allow them to benefit from some common systems and procedures, aimed at improving pupils' achievement.

- Supported by an equally determined and effective senior leadership team, the new headteacher has put in place a range of plans and, as a result, standards in writing and mathematics have improved and there are signs that standards and progress in reading are improving too. The two schools are moving toward having common approaches to the teaching of English and mathematics.
- Staff morale is high. Staff speak optimistically of the future and believe that recent improvements will continue under the new leadership team.
- Leaders check on individual pupil's progress regularly and take prompt action to help pupils catch up if they fall behind.
- The leadership and management of teaching are now stronger and as a result teaching has improved albeit with some inconsistencies in quality still remaining. There are regular and robust checks on the quality of teaching and training is provided to improve the skills of teachers.
- The school's leadership has an accurate understanding of its successes and its areas for further development. Leaders are aware that the quality of teaching and the progress of pupils in different year groups and in some subjects vary too much and are providing good quality support and training to address this.
- The school knows and cares for its pupils as individuals and successfully removes any barriers to learning. Equality of opportunity is central to the school's work and removing differences in the achievement of significant groups is a priority. As a result, gaps in performance between some groups have disappeared.
- The curriculum has been developed to promote pupils' involvement in their learning and to ensure that their writing and mathematical skills are developed across other subjects. This is having a positive impact in improving achievement in these subjects. Pupils speak highly of the visits and extra-curricular clubs and activities that are offered.
- Links between performance management systems and professional development opportunities are effective and arrangements for pay and the promotion of staff are now linked closely to staff's performance and the progress of their pupils.
- The development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is very important to the school and, as a result, pupils' personal development is of a good quality.
- Safeguarding and child protection procedures are effective and meet current requirements.
- The local authority has provided valuable support during a period of significant change which is appreciated by the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body of the two federated schools shows great determination to derive full benefit from the federation in order to achieve improvement. This is evident, for example, in the high degree of support it provides for the new headteacher's plans and actions to improve teaching and achievement. A number of governors are becoming increasingly effective in using the information available to ask the questions which help to hold the school to account. They are active in seeking training to become more skilled, building on their own wide range of skills. Governors know the school well. They are familiar with the Teachers' Standards and use them to help manage teachers' performance. They oversee the spending of any pupil premium funding and are aware of the positive impact it has on pupils' achievement. Governors are aware of the new primary sports funding and are developing plans on how this will be used to improve pupils' physical well-being.

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	108719
Local authority	South Tyneside
Inspection number	413012

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	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	233
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Eddie Watson
Headteacher	Nick Conway
Date of previous school inspection	11 September 2008
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