

# St Aloysius RC Voluntary Aided Infant and Nursery School

Sharpendon Street, Hebburn, Tyne & Wear, NE31 1RZ

**Inspection dates** 19–20 September 2013

|                                |                      |             |          |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|----------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>   | Previous inspection: | Good        | 2        |
|                                | This inspection:     | <b>Good</b> | <b>2</b> |
| Achievement of pupils          |                      | Good        | 2        |
| Quality of teaching            |                      | Good        | 2        |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils |                      | Good        | 2        |
| Leadership and management      |                      | Good        | 2        |

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- From their starting points, which for many children are below average, pupils make good progress and reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 2.
- Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, where provision is good. They are happy and enjoy a range of interesting activities outside the classroom.
- Teachers explain work clearly and have high expectations of their pupils, allowing them to learn well. Pupils are given clear feedback on what they need to do to improve their work.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very well through the interesting topics they study, the range of local visits they go on and the thought-provoking assemblies they attend.
- Pupils say that they feel very safe in school. They behave well and are kind and courteous to each other, to adults and to visitors.
- With support from the governing body, the new senior leadership team, led effectively by the newly appointed headteacher, is continuing to improve the quality of teaching and learning. The school is in a strong position to improve further.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough of the most-able pupils are reaching the highest levels of attainment.
- Pupils' standards in writing are not as high as in reading and mathematics.
- Teaching is not yet outstanding. A small amount still requires improvement. The skills of the best teachers have not been shared well enough among all adults in school to ensure that all lessons are consistently good or better.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 19 lessons or parts of lessons, one of which was a shared observation with the headteacher. Inspectors also listened to children read, observed pupils at playtime and observed teaching assistants working with pupils.
- Discussions were held with senior leaders, staff, governors, pupils, parents and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a range of evidence including: the school’s self-evaluation of its work, the school’s information about pupils’ progress and documentation relating to teachers’ performance, pupils’ behaviour, attendance and the school’s safeguarding procedures.
- Inspectors took account of 17 responses from parents to the online questionnaire (Parent View), and 20 responses from staff.
- Inspectors looked at a range of other evidence including school displays, its website and work representing the school’s wider achievements beyond the classroom.

## Inspection team

Philip Scott, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Graeme Clarke

Additional Inspector

Timothy Nelson

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school has been federated with a nearby junior school since September 2009 and shares the same governing body and headteacher.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, and pupils whose parents are serving in the armed forces, is average.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage, and there are very few pupils that speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is slightly below average but the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- A new headteacher took up post in September 2013 following a period of significant change in staffing and senior leadership over the past two years.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment ,especially in writing, by:
  - ensuring work is sufficiently challenging in all lessons, especially for the most-able pupils
  - planning more opportunities for pupils to write to the best of their ability
  - allowing pupils time to have more practice in areas identified for development by teachers when marking pupils' work.
- Further improve teaching so that it is always at least good and more is outstanding by:
  - sustaining an appropriate pace in all lessons to secure the interest and concentration of all pupils but especially the most able
  - further develop the skills of all staff, both teachers and support staff, exploiting the school's current expertise to ensure a consistency of approach across the school
  - reshaping tasks and refining questions teachers ask to ensure all pupils are engaged and challenged in all parts of lessons, and especially the most able.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Children come into the Nursery and Reception classes with skills and knowledge which are often below those expected for their age, especially in speech and language, writing and number. They quickly settle into school routines, make good progress and become confident learners.
- This good progress continues as pupils move through the school and as a result, they reach average standards by the end of Year 2, with the exception of the proportion of pupils reaching the highest standards, which is lower than nationally.
- While progress in writing is good from children's starting points, it is not as strong as that in reading and mathematics.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage benefit from well-designed opportunities for development in a stimulating indoor and outdoor environment, and caring, supportive relationships with adults in the setting. During the inspection, children outdoors were totally absorbed in mixing a magic potion from spiders' eggs, snake scales, witches warts and water, using imaginative and exciting words to describe what they were doing.
- In lessons, pupils are hard-working and make good progress. Work seen in pupils' books and the school's own tracking data confirmed that pupils are achieving well.
- Pupils are making good progress in developing reading skills, and read regularly at school and at home. The school is continuing to develop and refine how it teaches the knowledge of letters and the sounds they make, enabling pupils to make even faster progress in decoding unfamiliar words and enabling them to read with expression and meaning.
- Pupils achieve well in mathematics, having good opportunities to use and develop their numeracy skills. They use practical materials well to help them understanding basic calculations, for example, most pupils in a Year 1 lesson on subtraction were able to successfully use a number line to count backwards from 20 to solve a number problem.
- There is now no gap in the performance of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals compared to their classmates. These pupils make similarly good progress overall and reach similar standards to other groups of pupils. This is because the extra money (the pupil premium) is spent wisely on providing a range of additional support for pupils such as extra teaching support for groups and individuals, and access to extra-curricular activities. This shows the school's commitment to give equal opportunities for all pupils to access all it has to offer.
- Early identification of pupils at risk of falling behind enables the school to make effective provision for pupils who find learning difficult. Well-planned activities enable pupils who are disabled and those with special educational needs to make good progress that is in line with their peers and above that of similar pupils nationally.

### The quality of teaching is good

- The vast majority of teaching is good, securing good progress for pupils and helping them to learn effectively. In lessons where teaching is particularly strong, teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve, the pace of learning enables pupils to concentrate and be involved in the lesson, and teachers build successfully upon what pupils already know. Occasionally, not all teaching follows this effective practice.
- Teachers' questioning is usually good, open-ended and deepens pupils' understanding. In a few lessons seen, not all pupils were involved in whole-class sessions as questions were either too easy or too hard, opportunities to make pupils think more deeply were missed and they lost concentration.
- Teachers insist on high standards of behaviour and instructions are clear. They know their pupils and manage their classes very well, which contributes to the good progress pupils make.
- Teachers use a wide range of interesting and exciting resources that promote pupils' interest and engagement in lessons, such as in a Year 1 history lesson where pupils used their own

research to enthusiastically sort seaside activities into those happening in the past, present or both. They were delighted to tell an inspector that ice cream is from the present day only.

- Pupils' work is marked thoroughly and regularly. Pupils are clear about how they can improve their work through the 'Green for Good' and 'Pink for Think' strategy, and value the praise they receive for doing well. However, on occasions pupils are not given enough time or extra examples to consolidate or improve areas that have been identified as their next steps in the marking.
- Teachers' planning and observations of lessons show that most of the work undertaken by pupils successfully matches their abilities, but on occasions it is not challenging enough, especially for the most-able pupils.
- In most lessons, teaching assistants support and facilitate learning effectively and improve learning for all pupils, working successfully with teachers to promote rapid learning, but there is some variation across the school. Occasionally, some tasks are over-directed and pupils do not flourish as independent learners.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- Pupils behave well in the playground, in classrooms and around the school. They are polite and courteous to adults and visitors to school, and know how to look after each other, take turns and share equipment.
- Pupils' behaviour when moving around the school is exemplary, such as when arriving for an assembly or when a Year 2 class came into the school hall for a physical education (PE) lesson in silence, and stored their shoes on a bench without a fuss. An exception to this is when unsupervised pupils arrive or leave the dining area through the covered walkway, when some run rather than walk safely.
- The youngest children in the Reception and Nursery classes follow instructions carefully, and enjoy working and playing together, although some boys can occasionally be rough in creative play. Nursery children displayed high levels of cooperation with each other despite having been in school for only a short time.
- Pupils behave well in lessons, where their attitude to learning is good and they willingly participate. They are keen to answer questions and generally work very hard and enthusiastically.
- Pupils report that they like coming to school, the teachers 'are lovely' and that they find learning fun. They are reassured and feel safe within the well-maintained and secure school site.
- Pupils understand that there are different kinds of bullying and know about cyber-bullying, but clearly state that this kind of behaviour does not happen in this school. Written records confirm this view, the last recorded incident being nearly two years ago. Parents and staff are unreservedly positive about the behaviour in school, raising no concerns at all.
- Although broadly average over time, attendance dipped slightly last year due to both a short-term illness that affected many pupils, and holidays taken by some families in term-time. All staff makes sure that absences are followed up rigorously, and that parents realise the importance of sending their children to school whenever possible.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The new senior leadership team, led by the talented and astute recently appointed headteacher, has a clear, uncompromising and ambitious vision to drive improvement. This is based upon an accurate and realistic evaluation of what the school already does well and areas in which it needs to improve. After a period of disruption to school staffing and senior leadership, the school is well placed to quickly improve further.
- The federation with the nearby junior school is beginning to have a positive impact on school improvement such as through shared governance, joint staff meetings, joint moderation of Year

2 assessment data and a teacher moving from the junior to the infant school to bring a continuity of practice between schools. The headteacher is clear about the need to develop leadership structures across the whole federation, but has had insufficient time to enable these to take effect.

- The curriculum meets the needs and interests of all pupils, and promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. Pupils are enthusiastic about the interesting topics they study such as 'The Seaside', which are enhanced by visits out of school.
- The school provides a number of opportunities for pupils to participate in out of school PE activities, such as the 'mini-athletics' session which was very well attended by pupils from Years 1 and 2, enabling them to develop a healthy lifestyle and better physical well-being. The school has further plans to use extra funding for school sport to allow every child the chance to participate in some form of extra-curricular PE activity, and has 100% take-up of its healthy and nutritious school lunch.
- Pupils' progress is carefully tracked, individual targets for progress and attainment set, and those needing extra help are quickly identified and supported. The impact of this in improving writing is yet to be seen.
- Parents are fully supportive of the school, and speak highly of how well their children are looked after and taught. Every parent who responded to the on-line survey Parent View reported that they would recommend the school to another parent. Staff morale is high.
- Safeguarding meets requirements and both record keeping and staff training is thorough and up to date.
- The local authority provides good support for the school, especially through the recent process of appointing the headteacher. The local authority representative visits regularly and has provided support in a range of areas such as developing the Early Years Foundation Stage environment and in developing writing.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The single governing body for the two schools in the federation is determined and ambitious for the school to develop further and benefit fully from the federation. Governors have a good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and are highly ambitious for pupils' achievement and well-being. They are starting to develop their own skills and are establishing new systems and procedures to become more effective in systematically holding the senior leadership team to account. Governors are beginning to use their own individual professional expertise and are becoming fully informed on the leadership of teaching and management of staff. The governing body is fully supportive of the new headteacher's drive to improve key areas of teaching and to raise progress and attainment.
  - Governors are familiar with school performance data posted on the internet, and are kept fully informed by headteacher reports and their own visits to school. Finances are well managed and governors ensure that the pupil premium is spent wisely and effectively to maximise its impact on pupils' achievement.

## 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

|                                |                |
|--------------------------------|----------------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b> | 108720         |
| <b>Local authority</b>         | South Tyneside |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 427144         |

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Primary                                |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Voluntary aided                        |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 3–7                                    |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed                                  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 237                                    |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body                     |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Eddie Watson                           |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Nick Conway                            |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 12 October 2009                        |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 0191 483 2845                          |
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