

Our Lady and St Joseph's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School, Brooms

St Ives Road, Leadgate, Consett, County Durham, DH8 7SN

Inspection dates 10–11 December 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		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher, governors and all staff have worked together since the last inspection to successfully address weaknesses and bring about school improvement. Consequently, attainment has risen and pupils' progress has speeded up.
- From starting points which are often well below those typical for their age, pupils make good progress as they move through the school and achieve well to reach average standards in Year 6 tests and assessments.
- Teaching is good. Teachers are knowledgeable, give clear explanations and make good use of varied resources which engage the interest of pupils.
- The school provides a calm, supportive and welcoming atmosphere where the talents of all individuals are valued and nurtured.
- Pupils feel safe at school, behave well and want to learn. They are respectful and kind to each other, to staff and to visitors.
- The headteacher deploys staff and resources well and ensures that all pupils are given the support they need to make good progress.
- Governors, leaders and managers at all levels understand the school's strengths and weaknesses and have identified ways it can become even better. Consequently, the school is well placed to improve further.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is good rather than outstanding. Pupils, especially the most able, are not always challenged to achieve their very best and teachers' best skills are not yet fully shared across the school.
- Opportunities for children in the Reception class to learn outdoors are not as good as those provided in the indoor classroom.
- Pupils' progress in reading and writing is slightly slower than that in mathematics. New approaches to teaching phonics (the sounds that letters make) have yet to have their full impact on improving achievement.
- Pupils do not always have enough opportunities to develop, use and improve their literacy skills in all subjects.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 10 lessons and part-lessons which included a joint observation with the headteacher. She also listened to pupils read and observed the teaching of literacy to smaller groups of pupils.
- Discussions were held with parents, pupils, staff, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at pupils' books, progress data, safeguarding information and other documentation.
- Twenty-six responses to the on-line questionnaire 'Parent View' were considered as well as those from school staff.

Inspection team

Ann Ashdown, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for children in the care of the local authority, those known to be eligible for free school meals and those from service families.
- A below average proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, while an average proportion speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported at school action is well above average as is the proportion supported at school action plus and with a statement of special educational needs.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of already good teaching so more is outstanding by:
 - giving pupils in the Reception class the same good opportunities to learn outdoors as they have indoors
 - ensuring all groups of pupils, particularly the most able, are fully challenged with demanding tasks which enable more of them to make even better than expected progress
 - sharing more widely the good and outstanding practice in teaching that exists within the school and observing that found in other schools.
- Raise attainment and accelerate pupils' progress, especially in reading and writing, by:
 - monitoring the impact of the more structured approach to the teaching of phonics across the school and refining and improving this where necessary
 - giving pupils more opportunities to develop, use and improve their literacy skills across all areas of the curriculum.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils make good progress and achieve well. Work in younger children's 'Learning Journeys', older pupils books, that displayed on walls and the school's own pupil progress data all confirm the good progress that pupils are making over time.
- Children enter the Reception class with skills which are often well below those typical for their age, particularly in speaking and using language. They make good progress and soon become more confident learners. However, although they have good learning opportunities in the classroom, those they have outdoors are not sufficiently well developed.
- Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Numbers are small so the attainment of pupils in each year group varies and has fluctuated above and below average at the end of Key Stage 1. However, for the last two years results in tests and assessments at the end of Year 6 have been average overall and pupils' progress has been in the top third of schools nationally.
- In 2013, test results show that pupils made their best progress in mathematics. During the inspection Year 5 and Year 6 pupils were seen confidently using their good mathematical skills to manipulate data and use a variety of charts and graphs to clearly display the information they had gathered.
- The school has, rightly, continued to focus on improving pupils' literacy skills. Although the full impact of a more structured approach to teaching phonics has yet to be fully felt, it is already helping pupils to become even more confident readers.
- Test scores show that pupils who are eligible for free school meals are approximately two terms behind other pupils in their attainment in mathematics and English. However, they are making good progress in line with other pupils and gaps in attainment are beginning to narrow. This is because pupil premium funding is spent wisely on small group and one-to-one tuition as well as the popular 'Rise and Shine' club which provides pupils with a structured start to the day.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language achieve well because their progress is tracked carefully and they receive skilled and timely support from both teachers and teaching assistants.
- The most-able pupils generally make good progress in their learning but in 2013 fewer pupils achieved the higher grades in reading and writing. The school recognises the need to make sure that all pupils, but particularly the most able, are fully challenged in all lessons so they attain the highest grades and make even faster progress.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good and in some lessons there are elements of outstanding teaching. Teachers are knowledgeable and explain their subjects clearly. Pupils respond well to the good teaching they receive. Most are keen to answer questions and produce their best work.
- Teachers manage their classes well. For example, in the Reception class, skilled teachers and teaching assistants consistently re-enforce the school's expectations of good behaviour. Consequently, pupils quickly settle into school routines and learn to share resources, take turns, listen and concentrate.
- Teachers plan their lessons carefully and use interesting resources and varied tasks to capture their pupils' interest. Older pupils, for example, responded enthusiastically to well-chosen video clips of sporting heroes to discuss whether or not sports men and women were good role models for children.
- Pupils' social and moral development is promoted well in lessons. In an English lesson in Key Stage 1, pupils developed their literacy skills and shared their ideas in groups to explore the

feelings of the characters in the story of '*The Snowman*' that they were enjoying reading.

- In most lessons teachers match work carefully to the needs of all groups of pupils so it not too easy or too hard. However, this good practice is not yet fully shared. In a minority of lessons some pupils, particularly the most able, are not always given tasks that are challenging enough to help them reach the highest levels and make even faster progress.
- Teachers mark pupils' work thoroughly and set them challenging targets. Pupils are clear about how well they are doing and how to improve their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- In this very welcoming school children know that their skills and talents are valued. Nowhere was this more apparent than in the excellent school Christmas play that was enjoyed by a hall full of parents and friends. Pupils and staff worked seamlessly together to celebrate Christmas, entertain their families and demonstrate their considerable singing and dramatic talents.
- In lessons most pupils are keen to learn and work hard. They typically behave well in the dining hall and around the school. Most are kind to each other and respectful to staff. Pupils who had arrived at the school recently said they felt welcome and had found it easy to settle in.
- Attendance is average and continues to improve. Exclusions are rare. Any incidents of poor behaviour or bullying are dealt with swiftly and effectively.
- Pupils have a sensible attitude to risk taking and know how to keep themselves safe. Talks from visitors such as the local police help to make them aware of, for example, the dangers of talking to strangers. Pupils are aware of different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying and know how to stay safe when using the internet.
- Most parents are very pleased with the education their children receive and particularly the personal support the school gives. A few parents expressed concerns about how the school communicates with them, for example about their child's progress. The inspector investigated these concerns, examined the school's reports to parents and found them to be thorough and helpful.
- Pupils are proud of their school and keen to contribute to all that it does. They talked enthusiastically about participating in many events linked to their faith and the church calendar, about the work of the school council, about raising money for different charities and about singing Christmas songs and carols for older members of their local community.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher's leadership is good. She values the skills of all staff and deploys staff and resources particularly well. Teaching is carefully monitored and the performance of staff is very well managed.
- Extra funding such as the pupil premium and that for primary school sport is very well spent and carefully targeted to ensure all pupils make good progress and to promote their physical well-being. Although in a few lessons the most-able group are not fully challenged, in this highly inclusive school pupils have good equal opportunities to succeed and discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.
- Appropriate priorities for improvement are quickly identified. Weaknesses, such as that in reading, are being successfully tackled by a more structured approach to the teaching of phonics. However, the school is not complacent and recognises that this has still to have its full impact and needs to be monitored and improved when needed.
- Senior and middle leaders monitor the work of their areas of responsibility carefully and have been instrumental in bringing about valuable improvements in the way in which pupils' progress is tracked and in the quality of teaching in mathematics.
- Teachers and teaching assistants receive high-quality extra training, such as that in phonics, to

improve their skills. However, good and outstanding practice in teaching both from within and beyond the school has yet to be fully shared.

- Good partnership working with a local cluster of schools has several benefits. It ensures a smooth transition for pupils moving to secondary school and allows staff performance to be consistently managed across a group of schools.
- The curriculum meets the needs of pupils and promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. It enables pupils to make good progress in developing their literacy skills in English lessons although opportunities for them to develop and use these skills in other subjects are more limited. A range of enrichment activities adds greatly to pupils' enjoyment of learning. They talked excitedly about all the different sporting activities, including dance, which they were able to choose from as well as the interesting trips and visits they had been on.
- Safeguarding arrangements fully meet requirements. Staff are well trained and there are very thorough procedures, for example, for risk assessments, in place.
- The local authority provides good 'light touch' support for the school. The Educational Advisor visits each term and gives valuable help with target-setting, performance management and school self-evaluation.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are very knowledgeable about the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They are well aware of how it performs compared to other schools and use their expertise to provide both support and challenge. They are clear about the quality of teaching and how staff performance is managed, how targets are set and how teachers are rewarded. Finances are very well managed and the school is held to account for the spending of pupil premium monies. These funds are carefully monitored and their use clearly communicated through the school website.

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	114253
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	425804

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	116
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tom Clark
Headteacher	Sharon Fenwick
Date of previous school inspection	15 November 2011
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