

St Bede's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School

Hampshire Place, Usworth, Washington, Tyne and Wear, NE37 2NP

Inspection dates 29–30 January 2014

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.

- Leaders, managers and governors have successfully tackled weaknesses and brought about significant school improvement since the last inspection. Teaching is now good and pupils achieve well.
- Pupils make good progress as they move through the school. Their attainment in tests in English and mathematics is above average by the end of Year 6 and they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Good teaching, sensitive personal support and wise spending of extra funds all ensure that disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and those eligible for free school meals make good progress.
- Teachers are knowledgeable, explain topics clearly and use interesting resources. Lessons are briskly paced and teachers manage their classes well.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They behave well, are proud of their achievements and show kindness and respect to each other and to all staff.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher know the school well and are clear about how to make it even better. Staff feel valued and morale is high. Consequently, the school is well placed to improve further.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' attainment and progress in early reading and at Key Stage 1 are not as rapid as that at Key Stage 2.
- Teaching is good but not outstanding. Lessons are not yet sufficiently challenging and engaging, and questioning is not probing enough to inspire pupils to make really rapid progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 12 lessons and part-lessons. The deputy headteacher and lead inspector made several shorter visits to classrooms. Inspectors listened to pupils read.
- Discussions were held with parents, pupils, staff, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at pupils' books, progress data, safeguarding information and other documentation.
- Forty-five responses to the online questionnaire, 'Parent View', were considered as well as those from the school's own parental surveys and from school staff.

Inspection team

Ann Ashdown, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lesley Richardson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is an average-sized primary school.
- 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, for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those from service families, is below average.
- Few pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported at school action is average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or 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?

- Raise attainment and further speed up pupils' progress in phonics (understanding of how sounds are formed from letters), and at Key Stage 1 by:
 - ensuring teachers in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 share information about pupils' attainment and progress more frequently to plan pupils' future learning better
 - ensuring that, in phonics, pupils are working at levels appropriate to their abilities and are moved on quickly to new learning when they are ready
 - implementing plans to give teachers further training in the teaching of phonics and checking that this helps to raise pupils' attainment.
- Improve teaching so that more is outstanding by:
 - ensuring activities are always sufficiently challenging and engaging to inspire pupils to make even faster progress
 - asking probing questions which make pupils think more deeply and develop higher levels of understanding
 - giving teachers regular opportunities to see outstanding teaching in practice.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Work seen in pupils' books, that displayed on walls and the school's own records all confirm that pupils achieve well at St Bede's. More pupils make expected progress than is found nationally; many do better.
- From broadly average starting points, pupils make good progress, develop good basic skills and reach above-average standards when they leave the school. In 2013, test results were above average in English and mathematics. They continued the upward trend in attainment of the last three years.
- Children enter the Nursery class with skills which are broadly typical for their age in personal and social development, although they are often below this in literacy. They settle quickly into school routines and learn how to share and take turns. In the Reception class they continue to make good progress as they develop good levels of concentration and become confident learners.
- Pupils do not do as well as they should in matching letters with the sounds they make (phonics). Progress, particularly in phonics, slows slightly in Key Stage 1. However, the school is already addressing this relative weakness. Staff are being given more training in phonics teaching. The school is exploring ways of organising teaching groups to make sure pupils are given the right level of work for their ability and moved on quickly to new learning when they are ready.
- Pupils' good literacy and numeracy skills prepare them well for the next stage of their education. They have good opportunities to practise these skills in all subjects, especially in the interesting range of topics such as space, pets or Ancient Egypt, which they enjoy studying.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, and those few from minority ethnic backgrounds or who speak English as an additional language, all achieve well. If it is needed, they are given timely and sensitive support and high-quality one-to-one tuition from teachers and teaching assistants.
- Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds are given good opportunities to succeed. Those who are supported by the pupil premium make at least the same good progress and sometimes even better progress than their classmates. In tests in 2013 all of the very small number of pupils eligible for free school meals reached the expected Level 4 in English and mathematics.
- The most able pupils achieve well at St Bede's. They respond well to the good teaching they receive and in 2013 a well-above average proportion of pupils reached the higher Level 5 in mathematics.

The quality of teaching is good

- Consistently good teaching, combined with pupils' good attitudes to learning, means that all groups of pupils make good progress in their learning. Classes are well managed and briskly paced lessons are conducted in an atmosphere of respect and trust. Teachers use their knowledge well to explain topics clearly.
- In the Nursery and Reception classes children enjoy learning through a range of varied activities both indoors and out. One group of children gained a good understanding of how colours changed as they added white paint to other colours while another group learnt how ingredients were mixed together to make delicious scones.
- Teachers use interesting resources which provide pupils with a good stimulus for their writing. In a Year 2 class there was much excitement as Charlie, a chocolate labrador, was brought into the classroom because pupils were studying a topic on pets.
- In a Year 4 lesson the teacher clearly illustrated common features of newspaper reporting such as alliteration, using her own amusing article entitled 'Biscuits Baffle St Bede's. Consequently, pupils made good progress in understanding the techniques used by reporters to provide lively writing which people would want to read.

- In a Year 5 mathematics lesson the teacher provided an interesting and demanding challenge for the most able pupils. They thoroughly enjoyed researching on the internet, and explaining to the whole class, just how they had worked out the height of a pile of 150 billion five pound notes.
- In some lessons pupils' progress slows a little when activities are not as challenging and engaging and do not inspire them to make such rapid headway. Teachers questioning does not always give pupils opportunities to think deeply and further develop their understanding.
- Pupils' books are marked regularly and they are given helpful pointers on how to improve their work. Pupils who need extra help with their learning are given high-quality and often one-to-one tuition, which enables them to make good progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They behave well in the dining hall, the school yard and in classrooms. They have good attitudes to learning and in lessons answer questions readily and contribute well to class discussions.
- Attendance is improving. The number of pupils who are often absent has reduced considerably and overall attendance is now average. Pupils are punctual to school.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say that they feel very safe in school. They are knowledgeable about different types of bullying but are confident that, should this occur, it would be quickly dealt with. Pupils have a sensible attitude to risk taking and are well informed about how to keep themselves safe, especially when using the internet.
- Parents speak very warmly of the good personal support the school gives to children and their families. Several parents were keen to tell inspectors their personal stories of the excellent help the school had given them, which had enabled their children to succeed at school.
- The culture of the school is one which continuously promotes pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils work well together in groups and teams, and develop confidence. They are well aware of the needs of others.
- Pupils relish taking responsibility and helping others. Year 6 pupils speak enthusiastically about helping their 'special friends' in the Reception class and also about working and playing alongside pupils who go to a local special school, with which St Bede's has a close partnership.

The leadership and management are good

- At St Bede's the headteacher and deputy headteacher have created a culture where good behaviour and good teaching can flourish. Staff feel valued and, as staff questionnaires and the laughter which is frequently heard in corridors confirm, morale is high.
- Governors, leaders and managers know the school well, have evaluated its work accurately and tackled weaknesses. The work that staff do is well managed and further staff training, such as that in phonics, is linked to clear priorities for improvement.
- Teaching is monitored regularly and staff are given constructive help in improving their skills even further. Providing more opportunities for staff to see outstanding teaching in practice is a school priority.
- Middle leaders play a full part in bringing about school improvements. They are knowledgeable, monitor the work of their areas of responsibility and are keen to share their expertise with others.
- Systems to check pupils' progress are now much sharper and enable staff to identify pupils who are falling behind and need extra help. However, the school recognises that there is still a need for even more frequent sharing of information about the progress of younger children and pupils in Key Stage 1 to enable teachers to plan precisely the right work for them.
- Extra funding has been put to good use. That earmarked for school sport has been well spent on an impressive new outdoor gym, which is in continual use by pupils. Wise spending of pupil premium funding has ensured that those who are eligible for free school meals are given equal

opportunities to succeed and make good progress.

- The curriculum has been reviewed and has improved considerably since the last inspection. Stimulating work on interesting topics is of a high standard and gives pupils many opportunities to practise their good basic skills of literacy and numeracy. A good range of trips and visits and after-school clubs adds to pupils' enjoyment of school.
- All safeguarding requirements are met. Staff are well trained and fully aware of, for example, risk assessment procedures.
- The local authority provides light touch support for the school. The School Improvement Adviser visits termly and has provided help with analysing data and improving teaching and learning.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is good. Governors are very involved with, and well informed about, the school's work and the quality of teaching. Finances are well managed and governors keep a close eye on the spending of extra funds such as the pupil premium to ensure all pupils make good progress. They are clear about how the school is performing compared to other schools and know how staff are managed, weaknesses tackled and teachers rewarded.

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	108852
Local authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	430938

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	231
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steven Hill
Headteacher	Dominic Curran
Date of previous school inspection	26 June 2012
Telephone number	0191 219 3795
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