

St Joseph's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School, Ushaw Moor

Durham Road, Ushaw Moor, Durham, DH7 7LF

Inspection dates 4–5 February 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		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils' achievement is good. Pupils make good progress. Standards have risen in Year 2 and Year 6.
- Teaching is good overall and some is outstanding.
- Pupils who have special educational needs receive high quality support.
- Teaching is sometimes outstanding in writing in the classes for pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 1, and Year 5 and Year 6.
- Teachers plan lessons which have interesting topics and a range of activities. They use questions very well and check pupils' understanding as lessons progress.
- Teaching assistants are very skilled at teaching and supporting pupils' learning.
- The teaching offers pupils many exciting opportunities to see the links between subjects. Pupils enjoy physical education, geography, history, science and art.
- The school offers excellent care and support and provides extremely well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They care exceptionally well for one another and say they feel extremely safe. Attendance is above average.
- The headteacher and the governing body have a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and relative weaknesses. As a result, teaching and standards have improved.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils are given too few chances to write at length in English and other subjects or apply their skills in mathematics.
- In some mathematics lessons, teachers spend too much time going over what pupils already know rather than teaching them new skills.
- Targets to help increase pupils' progress in the school development plan and in the management of teachers' performance are not specific enough.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector held meetings with staff, groups of pupils and the Chair and four other members of the Governing Body. The inspectors also met with the school's local authority education development adviser.
- The inspector looked at a range of evidence including the school's improvement plan; the school's data relating to pupils' progress; the work in pupils' books and the school's documentation relating to safeguarding.
- The inspector observed teaching and learning in six lessons taught by six teachers. He conducted two observations, and made many short visits to lessons, jointly with the headteacher. In addition, the inspector listened to a group of pupils from Years 1 and 2 read.
- The inspector also observed the headteacher reporting back to the teachers on her findings regarding the quality of teaching, learning and pupils' achievement in the lesson.
- The inspector took into account the 22 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View).
- Fourteen staff completed questionnaires and the responses were analysed.

Inspection team

Gordon Potter, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Almost all pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is average. 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 children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average.
- There is a breakfast club, and lunchtime and after-school clubs. These are managed by the governing body and run by school staff, external coaches and staff from Durham University.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment in English and mathematics.
- There are four classes for children and pupils in the Reception Year and Year 1; Years 1 and 2; Years 3 and 4; Years 5 and 6. The most able pupils in Year 2 and pupils in Key Stage 2 are taught in three sets for mathematics and English.
- The headteacher is also headteacher of another local school. She divides her time between the two schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that more is outstanding, in order to raise standards and rates of pupils' progress further, by:
 - offering pupils even more opportunities to apply their skills in problem-solving activities in mathematics, and in writing imaginatively and at length in English and other subjects
 - ensuring teachers plan work in mathematics that provides a good balance between what pupils already know and the new skills they have to learn
 - including specific expectations for pupils' progress in the school improvement plan and the management of teachers' performance.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The abilities of different year groups vary in this small school. Most children currently in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 started school with skills and knowledge that were well below those typically expected for their age.
- Good teaching, including some excellent teaching of writing, helps pupils make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. As a result, more children than has been the case in the past are now typically in line with the expectations for their age and have a good level of development when they enter Year 1.
- Further good teaching in Key Stage 1 helps pupils to make good progress from their well below starting points on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage. Standards at the end of Year 2 have risen and are slightly below average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Standards have also risen at the end of Year 6, so that in 2011 and 2013 they were in line with the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Indeed, in 2012, attainment at the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics was above average. Pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics from their starting points at the end of Year 2.
- Pupils currently in Year 6 are on track to attain standards that are in line with those expected for their age. They have made good progress from below average starting points at the end of Year 2. This is a result of good teaching in Key Stage 2 and occasionally outstanding teaching of writing in Year 6.
- In 2012 and 2013, the most able pupils achieved well because the school identified their needs early and focused effectively on meeting them. The most able pupils currently in Year 6 have been clearly identified and work is targeted to help them attain above and well above average standards.
- There were too few pupils in Year 6 in 2013 who were eligible for the pupil premium funding to make meaningful comparisons about their attainment without identifying them. Pupils currently in the school who are eligible, including those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, make similar good progress overall as other pupils in the school in English and mathematics. This ensures that the gap between those pupils and other pupils in the school is much narrower at the end of Year 6 than it was at the end of Year 2.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because of the good teaching and support that they receive from teachers and teaching assistants. They make excellent progress in writing in the lessons where they are taught in small groups by the special educational needs teacher.
- The school is very clearly focused on identifying any pupils who are at risk of falling behind and concentrates on ensuring that all pupils make at least good progress. This clearly shows the school's commitment to promoting equal opportunities and tackling discrimination.
- Inspection evidence shows that pupils' progress in reading is good. There is a consistent focus on reading across the school. Pupils of all ages speak enthusiastically about the books and authors they enjoy when reading in school and at home.
- The teaching of how letters are linked to sounds is good. As a result, almost all pupils have a clear understanding of letters and the sounds they make (phonics) and understand how this helps them to read unfamiliar words.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good overall, with some outstanding teaching of writing in the classes for pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 1, and Year 5 and Year 6. Teachers plan interesting activities and question pupils well in both whole class and small group settings. They encourage pupils to talk through ideas, plan carefully and work creatively together. Teachers are very skilful

at explaining what pupils are to learn and leading them through ways to do tasks.

- For example, the teacher in the class for pupils in Years 5 and 6 used pupils' enthusiasm and enjoyment of the book they were reading as a stimulus for writing. She allowed pupils time to talk together and gather ideas for their writing; she made it absolutely clear to pupils what skills they had to develop and how they would know they had been successful. She offered pupils sufficient time to concentrate on their writing and checked pupils' progress as the lesson progressed.
- However, progress is good in writing rather than outstanding, because not all teachers offer pupils sufficient opportunities to write imaginatively or at length in English and other subjects.
- There is good teaching of mathematics. In a mathematics lesson for pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4, for example, the teacher used her good subject knowledge, focused questioning and clear explanations, so that pupils understood different ways to do doubling and halving. Well planned games engaged pupils' interest and they made good progress. The most able pupils were challenged to extend their understanding of decimals and fractions.
- Progress is good in mathematics rather than outstanding because, in some lessons, teachers spend too much time going over what pupils already know rather than teaching them new skills and concepts. There are too few opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills in problem-solving activities, including examples that have more than one answer.
- Teachers use marking and target-setting well. They make it clear to pupils how they can improve their work and move on to the next level in their learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils say that behaviour is excellent in their lessons and around school. Indeed, outstanding behaviour was evident in lessons where pupils are extremely keen to do their very best. They are very proud of their school and work extremely hard at all times, supporting one another in their learning. As a result, there have been no exclusions.
- Pupils also conduct themselves exceptionally well around the school and in the dining hall. Older pupils look after younger children and help pupils play safely and enjoyably together. They show great respect for one another and are extremely polite to adults.
- Pupils show maturity and enjoy taking on responsibilities well. They develop social skills through the many opportunities to learn together, in the sports activities they do with pupils from other schools and in the school clubs.
- The elected Head Boy and Head Girl and school council help to draw up school rules and discuss them and other health and safety issues with the governing body. It offers ideas to improve the playground and organises a healthy tuck shop.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Parents and pupils are certain that pupils are safe and happy in school and there are exemplary procedures to ensure that this is indeed the case, with all adults offering highly effective and sensitive care to pupils. Pupils know they can turn to adults for help and be certain that it will be dealt with effectively.
- As a result, pupils feel extremely safe. They are very aware of different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying and racism. They say that there is no bullying. Occasionally, friends fall out but pupils say they are able to solve problems between themselves or by asking school 'buddies' to help them. The extremely small number of pupils who find it difficult to behave well are exceptionally well managed by the school and their behaviour has improved rapidly.
- Attendance is above average. This is because pupils feel very safe and enjoy their lessons and because of the many exciting topics they study.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has high expectations and aspirations for all her staff and pupils. As a result, there is a welcoming, calm, safe and purposeful environment in the school which enables teachers and pupils to flourish and give of their best. The deputy headteacher leads the school well in the headteacher's absence.
- The headteacher has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and relative weaknesses. In this very small school, she has delegated responsibilities and staff willingly accept responsibility and accountability for areas of learning. She ensures that they have the training and support to develop their leadership skills. As a result, leadership across the school is good. Since the previous inspection, there have been improvements in the Early Years Foundation Stage, standards have risen, and teaching is good and occasionally outstanding.
- The headteacher regularly checks the quality of teaching; she clearly understands what constitutes good teaching and judges it accurately. She is clear in her feedback to teachers and checks that points for improvement are followed up closely.
- The headteacher and other teachers have clear expertise in using data to measure and evaluate pupils' progress. The school improvement plan has appropriate areas for development and there are clear procedures to check its impact regularly and systematically. However, it lacks specific targets for pupils' attainment and progress. As a result, while good teaching has helped pupils make good progress, progress is not yet outstanding in all key stages and all subjects.
- Teachers are very clear that they will be rewarded only when the targets in their performance management have been met. However, these targets are not yet clearly linked to pupils' attainment and progress.
- Funding to support the learning of those pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium has been used to develop their basic skills, to employ extra teachers and to purchase appropriate resources. They are used to offer pupils cultural opportunities through visits and extra-curricular activities. As a result, they make the same good progress as other pupils in the school.
- The new primary school sports funding has been used effectively to develop competitive sports, to use coaches to develop teachers' expertise in teaching football and gymnastics and to introduce new sports, such as bokwa.
- Physical education is well taught by coaches and teachers. Pupils say they enjoy their lessons and teachers welcome the development of their skills alongside the coaches. These are contributing well to pupils' physical development and well-being.
- While the school focuses on developing pupils' basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics, it also provides many opportunities for pupils to see the links between subjects. It does not yet offer sufficient opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills or to write across different subjects. It builds on pupils' enjoyment of history, art, religious education and science and contributes strongly to their excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness.
- The school welcomes the support and advice it receives from the local authority and its education development advisers. They support the school and have been engaged in helping it to improve the teaching and to develop teachers' leadership skills.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body offers strong support and increasing challenge to the school and has improved its effectiveness through training and applying the professional skills of its members to appropriate roles within school. This allows the governing body to have a very clear overview of pupils' attainment and progress. The budget is extremely well managed. Governors ensure that the school fulfils all its statutory responsibilities for safeguarding. Governors receive clear information about how the pupil premium funding and the new primary school sports funding are allocated and are knowledgeable about their impact. All staff have been vetted and are trained appropriately to keep pupils safe and free from harm. Governors have clear systems to check the achievement of pupils, the quality of teaching and the curriculum. They monitor the school improvement plan and arrangements to improve teachers' performance, although targets to raise attainment and increase pupils' progress are not yet specific enough.

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	114272
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	430868

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	100
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mary Everett
Headteacher	Erica Smith
Date of previous school inspection	23 April 2012
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