

St Wilfrid's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School

Claremont Terrace, Blyth, Northumberland, NE24 2LE

Inspection dates 18–19 June 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	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.

- Children's personal development is supported well in the Nursery. The school also has a strong focus on developing their literacy skills. They settle quickly into learning and make good progress across the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Pupils continue to make good progress across the school due to systems that ensure all pupils can make at least good or better progress. By the time they leave in Year 6 standards are above average.
- Teaching is good and sometimes outstanding. Teachers question pupils effectively and know each pupil's ability well. Teachers plan work that challenges pupils to do their best and they respond well. Teaching assistants provide good support to a range of pupils across the school.
- Pupils love coming to school and have good attitudes to learning. They are well-mannered and polite and play harmoniously together in the playground. Pupils have a good understanding of how to manage their own safety and say that bullying is rare.
- The headteacher's determined leadership has successfully steered the school through its transition to a primary school. She is well supported by a strong senior leadership team and a committed staff. As a result teaching has improved and standards are rising.
- Governors have challenged the school to improve as they know the school well. They have a wide range of skills and have used these to good effect and the school continues to improve.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of teaching does not yet result in outstanding achievement for pupils. Marking does not always give clear advice to help pupils to improve their work. Pupils are not always clear on how to achieve the task set or given good examples so they know exactly what they have to do.
- Standards in writing at Key Stage 1 are not high enough. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to practice their writing in other subjects. Pupils do not use their reading skills to improve their writing, and their handwriting and presentation skills are weak.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 30 lessons or parts of lessons, of which two were observed jointly with the headteacher, and other lessons observed with the deputy headteacher and assistant headteachers.
- Inspectors observed groups of pupils, as well as individual pupils, working with teaching assistants. They listened to six Year 2 pupils read, and heard pupils in other year groups read in lessons.
- Inspectors talked to a range of pupils about their work and play in school. They also studied a wide range of pupils' work across the school.
- Meetings were held with five governors as well as teaching staff, including middle leaders and the headteacher. The lead inspector also met with two representatives from the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the overall work of the school and studied a number of documents including the school's data about pupils' current progress. They also examined documents relating to safeguarding, governance, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors took account of the 29 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). They also considered the school's parent survey, and staff questionnaires. Inspectors talked to a number of parents in the playground and had a discussion with a parent on the telephone.
- Inspectors looked at school displays, its website and a range of other evidence relating to the wider work of the school.

Inspection team

David Shearsmith, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lesley Richardson

Additional Inspector

Jim Hall

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than an average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage with an increasing proportion from minority ethnic groups, two-thirds of whom speak English as an additional language.
- An above-average proportion of pupils are supported by the pupil premium, which is additional funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children in the care of the local authority.
- A well-above average proportion of pupils are supported through school action. An above-average proportion of pupils are supported at school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is taught in a Reception and a Nursery class as well as a class that includes some pupils from Year 1.
- The school has a breakfast club managed by the governing body.
- In September 2011, the school changed status from a first school to a primary school. It has experienced significant staffing changes during this transition period.
- Since the last inspection the school has appointed a new assistant headteacher to strengthen the school's leadership.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it results in outstanding pupil achievement by:
 - ensuring pupils have good examples of how to complete the task set
 - ensuring pupils always know what they have to achieve and how to achieve it
 - improving the quality of marking of pupils' work by giving clear advice on how to improve and time to respond.
- Raise standards in writing at Key Stage 1 by:
 - improving pupils' presentation and handwriting skills so they are more efficient in their writing and take a greater pride in their work
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to practise their writing in other subjects
 - using pupils' good reading skills to improve their writing skills by using good-quality texts to improve their vocabulary and grammatical skills.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- The school has made a significant difference to pupils' performance since its transition to a primary school. It rigorously tracks pupils' progress and this has had a very positive impact across the school. Standards improved for Year 6 pupils by the time they left in 2013 and progress has rapidly improved over the last year for all pupils.
- Children enter the school with skills that are below what is typical for their age and often have weaknesses in their literacy and personal development skills. They make good progress across the Early Years Foundation Stage because the school ensures they settle quickly into learning and has a strong focus on their personal development. Children receive a rich diet of literacy experiences that improves their vocabulary and their speaking and listening skills, which are just below what is typical for their age but continuing to improve.
- Pupils make good progress across Key Stage 1. They reach standards in reading and mathematics that are broadly average as they move in to Year 3. However, standards in writing are below average and weak handwriting skills slow their progress. Pupils have few opportunities to use their reading skills to enhance the quality of their writing and few occasions to practise their writing skills in other subjects.
- Pupils continue to make good progress across Key Stage 2. By the time they leave the school in Year 6 they reach standards that are above average in reading, writing and mathematics and these standards are continuing to improve rapidly. Progress is particularly strong in mathematics because the school has had a strong focus in this area.
- The school's systematic approach to teaching phonics (sounds that letters make) has had a positive impact on pupils' skills in reading. The Year 1 reading check shows pupils' rate of improvement has improved over the last two years with pupils being on track to be above the national average this year.
- A strong focus on checking the progress of pupils eligible for the pupil premium ensures they typically make good progress across the school. As a result they reach standards that are just above similar pupils nationally. The gap between them and other pupils is closing rapidly.
- The most able pupils are on track to reach standards that are above comparable pupils nationally. They make consistently good progress as they are challenged to reach higher levels in their work. In the current Year 6, more pupils than previously are on track to achieve the higher Level 5 in all subjects and some will reach the highest Level 6.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make at least good progress. Teaching assistants are used effectively to ensure these pupils do well. Despite the differing needs that some pupils have, this year they are on track to reach a standard comparable with similar pupils nationally. This reflects the school's commitment to ensuring every pupil has an equal opportunity.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is usually good and sometimes outstanding. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Pupils are challenged to do the best they are capable of. They respond well to teachers' adept questioning, which deepens their understanding so they make good progress.
- Teachers know their pupils well and skilfully plan lessons that ensure all pupils make at least good progress. An example of this was in a Year 2 reading lesson. Pupils were learning different letters related to the sounds they made. They enjoyed the challenge of recognising the sounds and letters in a text and because the teacher had such excellent knowledge of the subject and of each child's level of development, they made outstanding progress in their reading skills.
- Teachers are skilled in choosing activities that are relevant and engage pupils well. For example, when pupils were practising finding the median of numbers using data from the World Cup. They were given clear guidance and good examples of how to tackle the problem. As a result they

were able to get on with the task quickly and made good progress; some made outstanding progress. However, some teachers do not give these good examples and so progress slows.

- In the Early Years Foundation Stage children settle quickly to learning due to skilful teaching and a strong focus on their personal development. Children typically get rich literacy experiences that increase their vocabulary and improve their speaking and listening skills. Children are thoroughly involved in their outdoor learning activities. Projects, which are well-planned, interest and inspire children to learn.
- When pupils are clear about what they are learning and how to be successful in the tasks they are set, they make good progress. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, pupils were seen producing a leaflet about 'stranger danger' and used a helpful check list well to gauge their own progress. However, this level of clarity is not always the case and so pupils are sometimes unsure what they are expected to do and how they are to achieve it.
- Pupils' work is marked diligently and often, with examples of good marking across the school. However, the quality of marking does not always help pupils to improve their work or deepen their understanding and so their progress slows. For example, sometimes, when pupils have misunderstood, this is not resolved quickly enough by teachers, as is the case in some mathematics lessons and writing sessions. In addition, pupils do not always have the opportunity to respond to the advice given in the marking.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good
- Pupils are well-mannered and polite. They move around the school responsibly and behave well at lunchtimes in the dining-hall, where they enjoy their lunches with friends. Pupils play well at playtimes and are supported by 'buddies' in the playground. Lunchtime play is well-supervised and pupils enjoy participating in activities with their friends.
- Pupils respond well to teachers' questions in lessons. They settle quickly to work and are very industrious. Pupils enjoy working with each other, discussing their work and solving problems. They have good attitudes to learning and this contributes to their good progress.
- The school has rigorous systems in place to improve attendance. Pupils are encouraged to attend regularly and parents are now more aware of how attendance can affect their child's progress. As a result attendance is rising and is now average.
- The school has a well-attended breakfast club and pupils enjoy this good start to their day. Pupils also attend a range of after-school clubs, including a variety of sporting activities.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- The school has good systems in place to ensure pupils are safe and secure. Pupils say they feel safe. They have good opportunities through lessons in school, visits and visitors, to know how to manage their own safety. During the inspection pupils were spoken to about 'stranger danger', which effectively raised their awareness of related risks. They also know how to keep safe on the internet and have a good understanding about fire and road safety.
- Pupils state that bullying is rare and they know about the different types of bullying. They recognise that sometimes 'it is just friends falling out'. If bullying does happen, pupils know that staff in the school will help to sort it out quickly.
- Pupils, staff and the majority of parents were positive about how well the school cares for its pupils ensuring they are safe and secure in and around the school building.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has high expectations of everyone in the school and is ambitious for pupils to achieve well. She is well-supported by an effective deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher. Together they have improved the quality of teaching and standards are rising.
- A committed team of staff is also keen for the school to improve. Middle leaders have been

instrumental in helping to improve the teaching of some subjects. The teaching of mathematics has improved and standards are rising rapidly.

- Teachers have responded positively to the targets set for them through the school's performance management. This is underpinned by quality training for staff, which has improved teaching and the staff's leadership and management skills. Staff are rewarded appropriately through the pay scale for their performance both in the classroom as teachers and out of the classroom as managers.
- The school has a very accurate view of its performance. It uses this effectively to decide on its next steps for improvement. This has been very successful in driving up standards and improving pupils' progress.
- The school's curriculum provides rich and varied activities that promote pupils' deeper understanding of the world around them. Visits and visitors enrich pupils' experiences and raise their aspirations of what they can achieve. The new primary school sports funding has been used effectively to increase the amount of sport available to pupils as well as improving teachers' skills in teaching sport activities.
- The school places a strong emphasis on pupils' personal development. Consequently pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils enjoy a range of musical and artistic experiences that inspire them to learn. A quiet area for prayer and reflection supports pupils' spirituality well.
- The school has a wide range of partnerships that promote pupils' learning, progress and personal development. Pupils with specific needs are well-catered for and as a result, they achieve well.
- The school has a wide range of strategies to engage parents in the life of the school. Volunteer parents are encouraged to help with readers. Regular workshops encourage parents to understand how pupils are learning mathematics and reading.
- The local authority has given particularly good support during the last year to enable the school to improve.
- The school's arrangements for keeping pupils safe and secure meet requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are proud of the school and are skilful and well-trained. They have a good understanding of the school's data and use it effectively to challenge the school about pupils' progress and standards.
 - They have established a steering group to check on the school's improvement, to improve teaching and to raise standards. It is underpinned by regular visits to the school so governors know about the quality of teaching, as well as looking at pupils' work.
 - Governors manage the school's finances well and have a strong understanding of how the pupil premium funding is used to improve outcomes for these pupils. They have ensured that the impact of this work is reported on in the school's website. They also reward teachers appropriately for good performance.
 - They are keen for the governing body to improve further. They have strengthened the school's leadership and have ensured middle leaders are trained to be more effective in their roles. This has resulted in strengthening the teaching of mathematics, amongst other improvements.

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	122304
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	442278

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	317
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	P Quinn
Headteacher	Pauline Johnstone
Date of previous school inspection	7 November 2012
Telephone number	01670 352919
Fax number	01670 546311
Email address	admin@blythstwilfridsprimary.northumberland.sch.uk

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