

# St Chad's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School

The Baltic, Witton Park, Bishop Auckland, County Durham, DL14 0EP

**Inspection dates** 9–10 September 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The highly personalised attention from the caring staff is greatly valued by pupils and their families.
- Children develop a love of learning from a young age in the Early Years Foundation Stage where they can explore and find out things for themselves. They achieve well.
- By the time they leave Year 6, most pupils usually attain well above the national average in reading and above the national average in writing and mathematics.
- Throughout their time at school, most pupils make good progress. Most disabled pupils and those with special educational needs usually make progress at rates similar to their peers.
- The quality of teaching is good and at times outstanding. Teachers and teaching assistants work very well together to plan activities which enthuse and excite pupils.
- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. They are extremely keen to learn. Pupils say they feel very safe in school and learn how to keep safe in other environments.
- The school is exceptionally well led by the headteacher and deputy headteacher. All staff share their vision for bringing out the best in pupils' personal development and academic achievement.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils make a positive contribution to the local environment and have a high level of awareness of global issues.
- All staff, including leaders, managers and the governing body, work well as a team. Their successful actions have led to improvements in the quality of teaching and pupils' achievements. The school continues to improve.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils do not always make the same rate of progress in writing as they do in other subjects, particularly in Key Stage 1. Some written work contains too many errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Pupils do not consistently respond to teachers' marking so that they learn from their errors.
- Some middle leaders are at an early stage in developing their areas of responsibility.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching in six lessons. In addition, the inspector made a number of short visits to lessons and listened to pupils read.
- Discussions were held with: school staff; groups of pupils; the headteacher; governors; parents and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation, including safeguarding documents, the school's procedures for gaining an accurate view of its own performance, its development plans, records of pupils' standards and progress, documents relating to attendance and behaviour, and pupils' work in their books.
- There were 17 parental responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) which the inspector took into account alongside the responses to the school's own parental survey. Ten responses to the inspection questionnaire for staff were also taken into account.

## Inspection team

Naomi Taylor, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- St Chad's is smaller than the average sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium is much lower than that found nationally. This is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs supported through school action is lower than that found nationally.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is lower than that found nationally.
- Almost all pupils are White British.
- Pupils are taught in mixed-age classes.
- Since the previous inspection, there has been an increase in the number of pupils joining the school during Key Stages 1 and 2.
- The headteacher is also headteacher of Ramshaw Primary School and is a Local Leader in Education. He and senior staff take a leading role in providing support for other schools, including the development of leaders and managers.
- Since the previous inspection there have been some key changes in staffing. A new deputy headteacher and a new Early Years Foundation Stage manager have been appointed within the last 12 months.
- St Chad's holds the Basic Skills Quality Mark, Investors in People, Investors in Children and Healthy School status.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

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

- Improve teaching further in order to raise pupils' attainment and achievement, particularly in writing in Key Stage 1, by:
  - embedding the school's recent focus on spelling, punctuation and grammar and encouraging pupils to check the accuracy of their written work across all subjects
  - ensuring pupils respond to teachers' marking and learn from their mistakes.
- Improve further the effectiveness of leadership and management by developing the skills of relatively new middle leaders in ensuring new initiatives are fully implemented and their impact measured to raise achievement in their areas of responsibility.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management

are good

- Staff, parents and governors value highly the passion and drive shown by the headteacher. He has established a talented and dedicated staff team who put the needs of pupils and their families at the heart of all they do.
- Together, the senior leadership team have successfully implemented strategies to improve teaching and achievement. Actions have been put in place to effectively address the areas for development identified at the previous inspection. Priorities are clearly stated in the school's improvement plan.
- Regular lesson observations, impromptu visits to classrooms and analysis of pupils' work are used to check effectively on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. Staff are not content with teaching which is less than good. This is a key factor in why the quality of teaching is now consistently good and still improving.
- Tailored staff training is in place to rapidly drive whole-school improvement. The progress of pupils is closely checked and extra support is swiftly put into place when necessary.
- Overall, checks on teaching and achievement are effective by leaders and managers. However, some middle leaders are still at an early stage in developing their skills in checking the implementation and impact of new initiatives across the school.
- Staff work exceptionally well in partnership with external agencies to meet the needs of pupils whose current circumstances make them vulnerable. This helps to accelerate pupils' growing confidence in their own abilities, ensuring that they make the same rates of progress as their peers.
- The local authority provides light-touch support in recognition of the skills of the senior leadership team and their ability to develop their school. The headteacher has provided opportunities for staff to visit his other school to observe best practice.
- The curriculum now provides a wide range of interesting and stimulating activities based around pupils' interests. Pupils particularly enjoy topic work, art, music, sport, opportunities to learn a foreign language and residential opportunities in this country and in France. All of this has had a significant impact on nurturing pupils' love for learning and improving their achievement.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exceptional. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the village community. Pupils involved in the Rights Respecting Council play a significant role in raising awareness among all pupils of children's rights both in this country and globally.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors bring with them a range of skills. Those governors who spoke with inspectors have an accurate view of the strengths of the school and are clear about actions in place to ensure ongoing improvements. New initiatives are closely monitored by governors and they have a good understanding of data showing pupils' achievement and how this compares with other schools nationally. This enables them to effectively challenge the senior leadership team. They check the progress of pupils supported by pupil premium funding to make sure that spending has a good impact on improving their achievement. The finance committee and headteacher ensure good value for money in all that the school does, including the use of the primary school sports funding. Governors have an accurate overview of the quality of teaching and how it is directly linked to staff salaries. They undertake statutory duties, making sure safeguarding meets requirements so that pupils and staff are extremely safe.

### The behaviour and safety of pupils

are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. All the parents who spoke with the inspector shared this view, as did all who responded to Parent View. School records also show that this is the case.
- 'Moving our children to St Chad's was the best thing we have done' wrote one parent in a survey undertaken in the summer term. This view was echoed by other parents who spoke to the inspector and talked about a 'real community feeling in the school'.
- Pupils are clearly happy to come to school and are keen to learn both in the classroom and outdoors. This is reflected in their above average attendance.
- The older pupils act as excellent role models for the younger children. For example, they take it in turns to show the children in the Reception Year how to care for the pet rabbits, keeping them groomed, exercised and well nourished.

- When moving around the school and during breaks and lunchtimes, pupils are extremely courteous towards each other and adults. The driver of the school bus described pupils as 'delightful' and this was reiterated by lunchtime supervisors. Pupils take great pride in wearing their school uniform.
- Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities as 'pupil mentors', members of the school council, leading the organisation of school fairs and ensuring the school is at the heart of village community activities.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- Pupils say they feel extremely safe in school and they have very positive relationships with each other and the adults around them. They understand different forms of bullying and, for example, the importance of e-safety both when at school and at home.
- When pupils go on trips and residential visits, the staff encourage pupils to analyse the potential risks and how to keep themselves safe. Pupils talked animatedly about trips to outdoor centres and to France which clearly broaden their horizons.
- Pupils are actively engaged in 'health and safety walkthroughs', taking turns to accompany a member of staff in checking that the school is helping to keep pupils and staff as safe as possible.
- The primary school sport funding is used to broaden sporting opportunities for pupils, while developing the expertise of staff using specialist coaches. This has, for example, led to increased opportunities in activities such as tag rugby and football tournaments, as well as bike ability courses. As a result, more pupils are taking part in a wider range of sporting activities to help them stay healthy and promote their well-being.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- Good or better teaching is the norm at this school. From an early age, pupils develop a desire to find out things for themselves.
- Classrooms are organised well and the content and timing of activities are planned effectively. Learning outdoors, and trips and visitors to the school, capture the imagination of pupils. Pupils are clear about what they are going to learn and know what is expected of them. As a result, they are eager to learn.
- An example of pupils' thirst for learning was evident when pupils in Years 3 and 4 were introduced to 'nonsense' poetry. Pupils listened intently as the teacher skilfully recited a poem which captivated their imaginations. In pairs, they carefully analysed the words within the poem and discovered how letters had been moved about to alter otherwise familiar words. This equipped them with skills and confidence to use their imagination and creativity to write their own poems. Excellent progress was made by all groups of pupils in developing their writing and creative language skills.
- There is now a whole-school approach to teaching mathematics which has resulted in accelerating pupils' progress. In Years 5 and 6, pupils told the inspector about how the weekly mathematics challenge promotes the sharing of ideas and how real-life situations bring learning to life for them and ignite their enthusiasm for experimenting with numbers. They also talked about how they develop and use their numeracy skills in science and during topic work.
- There has also been a recent change in the way in which spelling, punctuation and grammar are taught which is already accelerating pupils' progress. However, pupils do not have well-developed skills in checking their own work before it is marked.
- Teachers mark pupils' books regularly and provide good written advice to pupils on how to improve their work. However, pupils do not consistently correct and revise their work to help them learn from their mistakes.
- Effective teamwork by teachers, skilled teaching assistants and volunteers ensures a high level of support for all groups of pupils.

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Following a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils are well prepared for learning in Key Stage 1.
- In the Year 1 reading screening check, most pupils achieve the expected level. This is because teachers and teaching assistants are competent in the teaching of phonics (matching letters to the sounds that they make). Those pupils who struggle to read are given effective support and this leads, in most cases, to rapid improvements. Pupils in Key Stage 2 enjoy reading a wide range of books which are recorded in their reading logs. As a result, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels in reading by the time

they leave school is usually higher than the national average.

- Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1 and standards in reading are above average by the end of Year 2. Standards in writing and mathematics have been broadly average but with too few reaching the higher levels in writing. Nevertheless, this reflects good progress given these pupils' starting points in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- In 2013, there was a dip in Year 6 results due to the nature of the cohort. Published results for this year group need to be viewed with caution as there were so few pupils. Results in 2014 show a significant improvement with all pupils reaching at least the expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion reaching the higher levels in reading were well above average. The proportion reaching the higher levels in writing were higher than the national average and, in mathematics, in line with national expectations.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because their different needs are quickly identified. Excellent support from teachers, teaching assistants and external agencies helps each of them to make good progress in reaching their challenging targets.
- The school provides good support for the very few disadvantaged pupils who are supported by the pupil premium funding, including those known to be eligible for free school meals. As a result, they make equally good or better progress and attain as well as their peers in school and nationally, in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The most able pupils are effectively challenged to aim high. Those pupils with exceptional talents are provided for well by the school. For example, some are taught with older pupils for certain subjects and the local secondary school provides support for a small minority. This ensures these pupils make the same good progress as other groups and demonstrates the school's commitment to equal opportunities for all.

### The early years provision

**is good**

- Children settle extremely well into school life as a result of exceptionally strong links between families, local nurseries and school staff. Having only started school the previous week, the inspector saw that children were very comfortable leaving their parents to go and play with other children before the start of the school day. They were happy to be escorted to the Reception class by their Year 6 mentors who helped them with their coats and bags before settling them into class.
- Most children start school with skills and knowledge that are below those typical for their age, and for some well below, particularly in the areas of number recognition, communication, language and emotional development.
- There is a strong emphasis on activities to promote the core skills of language and mathematics, which ensures children make good progress in the Reception class. As a result, they leave the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills in speaking and listening, number and reading that are broadly at the level expected for their age.
- Classrooms and outdoor areas are organised well and activities and resources carefully match children's interests. There is a consistent approach to making clear to children what they are going to learn and children know what is expected of them. As a result, they arrive at their activities eager to learn and settle quickly to work. Their activities are recorded in learning journals to share with parents. Staff assess carefully the progress being made to inform planning activities to challenge children.
- The outdoor areas are still under development by the Early Years Foundation staff but already there are increased opportunities for children to explore and find out things for themselves. For example, after learning the 'a' sound in phonics, children using the outdoor area practised drawing this letter on the floor and on the walls and then found objects beginning with this sound. This excited the children and encouraged them to explore further.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed with a strong team approach by staff who quickly get to know the children and build activities around their interests. As a result, all children are well prepared for learning in Key Stage 1 and this was the view shared by parents who spoke with the inspector.

## 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>	114263
<b>Local authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	449236

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>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	85
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Brian Jones
<b>Headteacher</b>	Dominic Brown
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21 September 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01388 603632
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