

Our Lady of the Rosary Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary

Westway, Peterlee, County Durham, SR8 1DE

Inspection dates

10–11 February 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
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 school has improved rapidly since the last inspection. The headteacher and senior leaders are well supported by staff and governors.
- Children enter early years and settle quickly. They enjoy their learning and make good progress, leaving the Reception year at levels expected for their age.
- Pupils' progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 is rising quickly and the gaps between different groups are narrowing. By the end of Year 6 pupils' standards in writing and mathematics are already average, with those in reading above average.
- Pupils engage very well in learning. They are diligent and show a strong work ethic because they want to learn.
- Improvements to the ways in which reading, writing and mathematics are taught and rigorous tracking of pupils' progress have secured good teaching. The teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) is excellent.
- Teachers consistently check on pupils' work to excellent effect. Pupils learn by correcting and improving their work successfully.
- Pupils behave well in class and around the school. They thoroughly enjoy school and feel safe.
- Developments in the school's leadership and management have been very effective. All leaders have greater responsibility and have been trained to carry out their roles very well. Leaders correctly identify weaknesses and, by tackling these successfully, have raised the quality of teaching and outcomes for pupils.
- The school has correctly identified its next raft of development plans and is well placed to improve further.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Writing levels, particularly for boys, are below those in reading and mathematics at all stages across the school.
- Communication with parents about how the school identifies bullying and deals with it needs improvement.
- Some parents are not yet fully engaged in making sure that their children attend school regularly.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 17 lessons and learning sessions and listened to pupils reading. The headteacher and acting deputy headteacher each took part in a joint observation with an inspector.
- Separate discussions were held with the headteacher and acting deputy headteacher, staff, members of the governing body, the national leader of education (NLE) who has been supporting the school, and a representative from the local authority. The opinions of 16 members of staff were also considered from their questionnaire responses.
- Inspectors observed the school's work, looked at children's learning journals, staff planning journals, data on pupils' progress, planning and monitoring documentation, information relating to the welfare of children and safeguarding.
- Inspectors took account of the 35 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), discussions with about 20 parents and a telephone message from a parent. They also considered the results of the school's most recent questionnaire to parents.
- Inspectors observed pupils during morning playtime and lunchtime, and attended a whole-school assembly for collective worship.

Inspection team

Kate Pringle, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
John Pattinson	Additional Inspector
Frank Cain	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, who are supported through the pupil premium funding, is well above average. This additional funding is allocated to the school for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and pupils looked after by the local authority.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British background.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- Children in the nursery attend part time for 15 hours a week and those in the Reception class attend full time.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Since the last inspection a new headteacher has been appointed and took up post in September 2013. The seconded acting deputy headteacher who was in place for a year returned to her parent school in the spring half term of 2014. Since then an acting deputy headteacher and an acting assistant headteacher have been appointed from within the school.
- The school works closely with the Peterlee Partnership Teaching Schools Alliance, Durham local authority and with a NLE based at Wingate Infant School.
- The school runs a breakfast club and an after-school club each day.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievements in writing, especially for boys, by finding different ways in which pupils can become more interested and better motivated and which will challenge their creativity and working style.
- Improve opportunities for parents to understand the importance of good attendance for their children and the work of the school to prevent bullying by:
 - helping those families whose children have higher levels of absence to attend school regularly
 - keeping parents informed of the different aspects of bullying and how the school deals with these.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- In this school morale is high and a considerable team spirit has developed because of close working relationships and the respect that individuals have for one another.
- The headteacher, together with senior and middle leaders, is strongly focused on raising outcomes for pupils through the regular and rigorous monitoring of teaching. A wealth of highly focused training has enabled staff at all levels to increase their knowledge and skills. This has led successfully to improvements in the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils.
- The close and effective working relationship between the school, the Peterlee Partnership and two other local schools led by a NLE has supported staff in the sharing of best practice, developing resources and in training. As a result, all staff have had excellent opportunities to extend their professional development.
- Leaders and managers understand how successfully the school is now performing. Strengths are celebrated and well-timed actions address those areas where improvement is needed effectively. Those who lead and govern the school are well aware of the progress the school has made over the past year and are adamant that this shall continue.
- There are clear links between teaching, pupils' achievements and the pay progression of teachers. Systems are firmly embedded. All staff have individual targets to work towards, which are regularly reviewed.
- Leaders check on pupils' progress regularly and rigorously. Those pupils who are not progressing as well as they should be are identified quickly and support is put in place to address their individual needs. This has improved their achievement successfully, especially in reading and mathematics. The school has identified that standards in writing now need to be the central focus, particularly for boys who do not achieve as well as girls. A programme of action to address boys' writing is beginning to have an impact.
- The use of pupil premium funding supports reading and mathematics for disadvantaged pupils effectively. Recent assessments show higher standards and reduced gaps between these pupils and others by the end of each key stage.
- The primary school sport fund has been used to train teachers, extend the range of sports on offer and engage specialist staff. The school is part of the local schools' sports partnership. More pupils are engaged in physical activities and there are increased opportunities to compete with local schools.
- Whatever their need or disability, all pupils are included in all aspects of school life. There is a clear commitment to equal opportunities for all, with every effort made to ensure that there is no discrimination. Pupils are happy in school and learn to accept one another's differences. This is supported by the friendships formed by pupils and their good behaviour.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The consideration of others, to reflect upon similarities and differences and how to work together harmoniously are core strengths of the school. Pupils regularly welcome visitors to the schools and participate in visits which enhance their understanding of the world. The school provides activities after school and regularly contributes to those who are in need, both in this country and abroad.
- The curriculum is wide and the school holds a range of awards which celebrate the learning of new skills. Opportunities to link this learning across subjects enhance pupils' knowledge and understanding. All these opportunities support pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- The strong links with other partnership schools, with the local authority and the support of the NLE, together with the school staff, have enabled the school to improve rapidly over the past months. Expectations are high, increasing the quality of teaching and accelerating pupils' progress. All staff are committed on their journey towards excellence.
- Safeguarding requirements meet requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors understand the strengths of the school well. They work closely with the headteacher, senior leaders, local authority and the NLE to evaluate performance and drive improvement. They are carefully monitoring the impact of teaching on pupils' performance and make use of appropriate training to keep abreast of changes and make sure they are able to challenge the school when needed.
 - Governors review data and understand how the spending of the pupil premium money is used to benefit this group of pupils. They refer to improvements in reading and mathematics and how the focus has now changed to support writing. They oversee the allocation of sport funding and are aware of how this money is increasing involvement in sport and fitness levels and raising the quality of all teachers' ability to teach physical education well.
 - Governors monitor the system to check on the performance of staff and hold the headteacher to account.

They recognise the rising quality of teaching in the school and are prepared to tackle underperformance.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are polite and listen carefully to teachers and to their friends, both in lessons and around the school.
- Good use is made of the behaviour policy to make sure pupils know what is expected of them. Pupils are very aware of what is regarded as unacceptable behaviour and the consequences of this.
- Pupils recognise that misbehaviour and bullying can happen, but that this is rare. They are adamant that staff intervene quickly and situations are resolved quickly. They recognise all of the different forms that bullying can take and are taught how to deal with these situations.
- The majority of parents believe that behaviour is good and that bullying is not a problem. A few parents disagree with this and slightly more are unsure about how the school tackles bullying. Inspectors found that pupils did not consider behaviour or bullying to be a concern and that the school responds quickly and successfully to any such event.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Staff know their pupils very well and quickly pick up on any concerns that pupils may be encountering both in and out of school. A range of good quality support is used quickly to help pupils and their families.
- Over time attendance is rising but it is variable from day to day, largely because of a small number of pupils who are either persistently late for school or who fail to attend regularly. Although the school uses a range of strategies to improve attendance and reduce persistent absentees, attendance is not rising quickly enough.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school and their parents agree with them. The school curriculum encourages pupils to respect their own rights and those of others, to recognise dangers and to make sensible choices, for example when using the internet.

The quality of teaching is good

- Pupils' enjoyment of school is evident in the good relationships they have with staff and their aptitude for learning. Teachers expect the best and pupils settle to work rapidly, rising to new challenges. Even when the going gets tough, pupils persevere as they tackle new skills and strategies.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and develop different learning strategies which best fit the needs of their pupils. They quickly recognise who is falling behind and put in place appropriate support to enable them to catch up and this has a good impact upon raising achievement across the school.
- The close working relationship between teachers and teaching assistants works well. Good quality training means that assistants provide high levels of support for identified pupils within the class and through other group learning sessions.
- The teaching of reading over the past year has been very effective. The phonics programme is having a good impact and standards are rising.
- In mathematics, a similar focus encourages pupils to use their newly learnt calculation skills through investigative activities. This was clearly evident in one lesson where pupils investigated the possibilities of finding certain numbers by drawing cards or rolling dice. Opportunities to solve problems are having a considerable impact upon the pupils' mental agility and their ability to use a range of strategies to solve problems speedily.
- In writing, progress is increasing. The introduction of pupils' individual portfolios from the Reception year on is providing a good record of the progress pupils make over time. There is an increased focus this year upon the development of this area of the curriculum. The school recognises that boys need greater stimulation and motivation in order to achieve as well as girls. Teachers are starting to provide more opportunities to write at length across different subjects using experiences which better engage boys' interests.
- Teachers like the new curriculum and the greater freedom it gives them to choose topics of study which are relevant to the interests of their pupils. There are greater opportunities to use reading, writing, mathematical and computing skills across other subjects. By Year 6 there is no difference in the quality expected in topic books than in writing and mathematics books.

- Teachers know the abilities of pupils well and use past achievements to form a basis for the next step in learning. For example in one class, pupils had developed some descriptive ideas for writing about a dragon's cave. Before starting to write their passages, the teacher directed pupils back to their last piece of writing and her comments. She then asked pupils to focus upon what they have read and include this in their work for the morning.
- Marking is a real strength across all classes. Teachers use the same strategy consistently and pupils are given time to read comments and to respond to them, so learning from their past errors and misunderstandings. Pupils understand the process and respond well. Their books are neat and tidy as pupils are proud of their work.
- Parents believe that teaching is good and their children progress well. This view is endorsed by the inspectors' findings.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Entry levels to Year 1 in reading, writing and mathematics are as expected for pupils' age. Pupils make good progress from their individual starting points and leave Year 6 with standards that are average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Improvements to teaching have had a significant impact upon raising achievement since the last inspection. Assessments are secure and well moderated.
- At Key Stage 1, pupils achieve at expected levels for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. Most recent assessments indicate pupils are broadly where they should be for their age. Boys underperform compared to girls, however, particularly in writing.
- By Year 6 pupils' standards are average over time. However, current assessments show that, in reading, pupils are already achieving at levels expected by the end of Year 6 in reading. In mathematics and writing, attainment is in line with where pupils should be. Nevertheless, boys' attainment in writing is significantly behind that of girls.
- Progress in reading for the pupils in the current Year 6 from the end of Key Stage 1 to December 2014 is already outstanding. In mathematics and writing, progress is in line with expectations. Pupils are well placed to continue to build on their achievements and reach levels at least expected for their age. This indicates good progress overall.
- The gaps between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils across all year groups are narrowing. By Year 2 the gap is negligible in all subjects. There is clear evidence from recent assessments that in the present Year 6 gaps are reducing in all subjects compared to 2014. Disadvantaged pupils are now making good progress compared to previous years.
- In 2014, disadvantaged pupils were working at levels approximately two years behind in all subjects compared to other pupils in the school. Current assessments indicate that this gap has already narrowed to a year behind in all subjects.
- Compared to non-disadvantaged pupils nationally in 2014, disadvantaged pupils were working three terms behind in mathematics and four terms behind in reading and writing. Current assessments show the subject gaps to be similar. The expectation is that, given the current rate of progress, these gaps are on track to reduce further.
- Pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs are well supported as their needs are identified early. Staff help them according to their individual needs. These pupils make similar progress to others in the school.
- The most-able pupils are making good progress in reading and mathematics. In writing, progress is not as good overall, although in some classes it can be outstanding. The proportion of pupils who are achieving at the higher levels by the end of Year 6 is increasing in all subjects.
- The focus upon reading and changes to how it is taught have been highly effective in increasing standards across the school.
- The teaching of phonics is outstanding and has had a very strong impact upon reading standards. In Year 1 in 2014, the proportion of pupils achieving the phonics standard was in line with the national average. The present Year 1 understand how letters blend together and take their time to sound out words new to them. Not all grasp the meaning of what they are reading, however, as they concentrate so much upon the reading of the words. By the time pupils leave Year 6, they have a real enjoyment of books and read with confidence and understanding. They are able to talk about their favourite authors and their favourite books.

The early years provision

is good

- Children enter nursery with skills that are below those typical for their age. Skills in personal and social development and in speaking and listening are particularly low. By the time children leave the Reception class most are ready for the challenges of Year 1.
- Children make good progress because teaching is good. Staff understand well the needs of different children and provide activities that encourage them to engage in learning and which are fun. They enjoy making choices and concentrate well on their chosen activities.
- Teachers use assessment effectively to address individual needs and focus appropriately upon developing skills which help the children to interact positively with others. Key words are taught which relate to different activities. Listening skills and writing are strongly promoted. Children understand what, and how, they are learning and this contributes well to their good progress.
- Staff make the best use of the outdoor area, but recognise its restrictions and have plans to extend learning opportunities after the area is improved.
- Children feel safe. They understand the daily routines and happily join in 'tidying up'. They learn to share and take turns as they join in activities with their friends. Children's behaviour is good.
- Leadership and management of the early years are good. Learning records of children's achievement are well developed and clearly indicate the progress made. The team works closely together and has made good improvements to the setting over the past months. All staff are supported very effectively through high quality training and this has had a positive impact upon the quality of teaching in the early years and better progress for children.

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	114282
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	453694

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	314
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Shaun Gooch
Headteacher	David Swift
Date of previous school inspection	6 March 2013
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