

St Wilfrid’s Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School

Old Ford Road, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear, NE10 0DJ

Inspection dates

10–11 February 2016

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Require improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, teaching has not been consistently good enough to ensure that all pupils achieve as well as they can.
- The incisive actions of new staff, including middle leaders, have not yet had time to impact upon raising standards across the school.
- The targets set in the school are not specific or challenging enough to ensure that all groups of pupils make sufficient progress.
- It is only recently that improvements in mathematics and writing have started to lead to better outcomes for pupils.
- Pupils do not consistently make as much progress as they should in lessons. At times, pupils do not find tasks challenging.
- The gaps in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and others nationally have not been significantly reduced.
- The proportion of children who reach the expected level for their age at the end of Reception has not increased adequately over time. Too many pupils remain below expectations when they move into Year 1.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has created a caring and nurturing ethos within the school. Conduct around school is good.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability are very well provided for and expertly supported. Most make good progress from their different starting points.
- Parents are highly positive about the school. They are confident that their children are safe and well cared for. The vast majority of pupils are happy and enjoy school.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress. The most-able pupils are now challenged with greater consistency across different classes.
- Governors are knowledgeable and experienced. They are frequently involved in supporting the school’s work and have ensured that good use is made of additional funding to promote sports activities.
- Leaders know children and their families well. They ensure that pupils have full access to a broad curriculum that enriches and inspires their learning.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the impact of leaders and managers so that they quickly raise attainment for all groups of pupils, especially in writing and mathematics, by:
 - ensuring that targets set for teachers in their performance management cycle are challenging and specific enough to help more pupils make accelerated progress
 - improving school development planning to include more specific success criteria linked to the progress made by different groups of pupils
 - providing governors with a clear and succinct overview of the progress made by different groups in school so that they can regularly measure, check and challenge the school's performance more robustly
 - ensuring that staff consistently apply the school's new assessment and marking policy in all classes.

- Continue to increase the skills of teachers so that they all promote the highest quality of learning in mathematics and writing by:
 - ensuring that all groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, are consistently challenged and more are supported to exceed expected progress
 - ensuring that pupils use time in lessons as productively as possible so that they catch up to age-related expectations more rapidly.

- Secure more rapid progress for children in the early years, particularly in writing, by:
 - maximising staff time so that it is used more efficiently to focus on learning and raise attainment
 - encouraging more children to access and choose the writing activities on offer in the outdoor area
 - providing more opportunities for children to use and apply their writing skills independently in all areas of the classroom.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

requires improvement

- The actions of senior leaders have not been swift enough to improve achievement for some groups of pupils in the school. Determined attempts to support staff development and challenge weaker teaching have only recently begun to raise achievement.
- Subject leaders now observe lessons and scrutinise books effectively to suggest improvements. Recently, these interventions have helped pupils make better progress especially in reading and phonics, where outcomes are now improving rapidly. Changes to staffing have started to help improve outcomes in mathematics and writing but progress in these subjects has been slower.
- Leaders have created a nurturing environment in the school where pupils are happy and well cared for. At times, their view of standards has been overgenerous and so expectations of pupil progress have not always been high enough.
- While governors and leaders follow clear procedures to manage the performance of staff, targets set for teachers are not challenging or specific enough. This limits expectations of what pupils can achieve and too few make above expected progress.
- Leaders have correctly identified areas that require further improvement within the school development plan. They know the school's strengths and where weaker areas persist. However, success criteria linked to the achievement of groups of pupils is not always sufficiently precise to help governors evaluate the impacts of their actions.
- Tracking the progress of individuals is closely monitored. However, leaders do not track the progress made by different groups of pupils sufficiently. As a result, inconsistent outcomes for different groups of pupils have not been challenged. Gaps between the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally have not closed over time.
- Leaders ensure that pupils who have special educational needs and disability are well supported. Lessons are tailored to meet the needs of each individual and the impact of additional support is carefully measured for this group. Pupils who speak English as an additional language work determinedly in class and staff intervene effectively in their learning to check understanding. Consequently, this group has consistently made good progress. The most-able pupils are now regularly challenged and supported in all areas of the curriculum.
- An exciting curriculum offers a range of opportunities for pupils to learn. History, geography and science activities engage pupils' interests and a variety of visits enliven learning. For example, Year 5 and 6 pupils ably demonstrated a detailed knowledge of life in the Second World War following a visit to the Victoria Tunnel.
- Staff develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness skilfully, building this seamlessly into other subjects. In Year 3 and 4, pupils have created thoughtful modern-day Beatitudes (eight blessings recounted in the Sermon on the Mount in the Gospel of Matthew) that show why they believe diversity is important. In Key Stage 1, pupils explore the feelings of characters maturely within their guided reading sessions, helping them understand and empathise with others.
- A highly positive and inclusive school culture is promoted by all staff where everyone is welcomed and included regardless of background or difference. Leaders promote equality of opportunity throughout the school. Discriminatory behaviour is not tolerated and any form of prejudice is challenged. British values distinctively underpin the school's work.
- Parental engagement has increased significantly since the previous inspection with weekly family assemblies, a parents' craft group and the 'Little Wilf's' toddler group. Parents are highly positive about the school, praising the headteacher and other staff for their support.
- Physical education and the primary school sport funding has been used effectively to improve teaching and increase pupils' participation in sport. Extra-curricular sports clubs are well attended and pupils enjoy more opportunities to take part in inter-school competitive sports. Pupils' gymnastic skills are particularly notable.
- Leaders are working with other local schools to begin to improve outcomes for current pupils. Middle leaders have recently received support from local authority advisers to raise standards. Subject leaders have worked closely with link governors to produce detailed reports that identify recent improvements.
- Arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The headteacher champions provision for families that are vulnerable, keenly promoting their well-being and garnering support from outside agencies when needed.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors are committed to improving the school and providing a high-quality education for all. They use their professional experience and expertise to check on pupils' learning and report thoroughly

following their visits to school. They have supported leaders in ensuring that pupils who speak English as an additional language and those with special educational needs make good progress.

- Governors receive regular information about the achievement of pupils and the performance of teachers. However, targets for staff are insufficiently challenging to help more pupils make accelerated progress. The information provided to measure the progress made by different groups of pupils is limited and prevents governors from accurately analysing the school's actions.
- Governors know staff and pupils well and positive relationships promote regular communication with senior and middle leaders. Governors monitor the effective use of sports funding and the pupil premium funding. They know that funding has been used to improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and improved the behaviour of this group. They have not been provided with sufficient summary information about pupils' progress to monitor the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and others nationally.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- Over time, teaching has not consistently improved outcomes for different groups of pupils across school. The quality of teaching has recently been strengthened by leaders with a zero-tolerance approach towards weak teaching. New staff, including middle leaders, have strengthened the teaching team since September 2015. The impact of stronger teaching is seen in better standards of work produced by pupils. Lesson observations conducted by leaders and external advisers show greater challenge for the most-able pupils and increased progress in learning for current pupils.
- A new assessment and marking policy has been introduced to support the effective monitoring of pupils' progress. Termly assessments of pupil progress are accurate but the new policy is not consistently used across school. Rapid progress is evident in those classes where the policy is applied routinely and effectively. For example, in Year 2 careful monitoring and feedback on pupils' handwriting has produced striking results. However, in other classes, written feedback is not as effective as it does not follow the school's assessment and marking policy in full.
- Leaders have identified that more work needs to be done to improve teaching and learning in mathematics and writing. Additional time is generally used well to allow pupils to practise their basic skills in these subjects.
- The teaching of reading and phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) has improved recently. Activities are well planned to suit the needs of pupils. For example, in a Key Stage 1 guided reading session linked to science fiction, the teacher developed awareness of characters' motives by leading a detailed discussion on possible reactions to an alien invasion. Probing questions challenged the most-able pupils in this group while clear explanations from the teacher helped pupils understand new vocabulary.
- Improvements in the teaching of writing are underway and there are early signs of success. For example, science and topic books show increased opportunities for writing across the curriculum. Current pupils capably use a range of styles to write for different purposes and some of the best examples are displayed around school. Key Stage 2 interviews with local people who were evacuated during the Second World War and forest adventures written by Year 1 pupils are just two of the prominent displays around school.
- In mathematics, support from the subject leader has raised staff confidence so problem solving and reasoning are now taught frequently and skilfully. Open-ended tasks engage pupils' interest as they ponder and puzzle through tasks demonstrating resilience. Work in pupils' mathematics books shows that for most pupils, progress has increased since September.
- Teaching is strongest where staff have good subject knowledge and use this to plan exciting tasks. Staff demonstrate wide-ranging skills and they intervene effectively to correct pupils' misconceptions, explain in detail and give clear suggestions for improvement.
- Pupils with disability and those who have special educational needs are supported well. They often receive additional support in reading, writing and mathematics which is tailored to their needs by highly skilled staff. Within lessons, this group of pupils work with greater independence now and teaching assistants work effectively to offer help only when it is needed.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language have made good progress since the previous inspection. Staff are vigilant with regard to their needs, particularly relating to their understanding of new, unusual or technical vocabulary such as within a Year 3 and 4 science class who were studying food chains. Consequently, pupils with English as an additional language pick up and apply new words effectively and their grasp of English vocabulary does not become a barrier to learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- A lively and engaging curriculum supports pupils' physical and emotional well-being. Regular physical education lessons promote physical fitness well, allowing pupils to develop enthusiasm for sports and exercise. A healthy menu is offered at lunchtime; pupils are encouraged to choose a balanced meal and talk knowledgeably about their healthy choices. Extra-curricular cookery lessons also develop a good knowledge of healthy foods. In Year 2, a specialist 'Roots of Empathy' programme promotes emotional well-being successfully as it allows pupils to talk about, recognise and explain their feelings.
- Incidents of bullying are rare. When issues arise they are addressed promptly. Leaders have enabled pupils to understand and identify different types of bullying and they know how to respond appropriately. Older pupils support others by taking on responsibility as 'Bully Busters' and pupils find the school's 'Worry Box' helpful if they need to share any concerns.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school because teachers take care of them. Different classes demonstrate age-appropriate understanding of how to keep safe as safety education is embedded seamlessly within the wider curriculum. Younger pupils were able to explain sun safety, the need to avoid dark clothes at night and how to stay safe while using electricity.
- A group of pupils regularly carry out risk assessments around school which they share with leaders and governors to suggest improvements. Older pupils clearly articulate the potential risks of using the internet and know the steps they should take to keep themselves safe.
- Pupils, including those of Gypsy Roma backgrounds, who are in school for short periods or join partway through their primary education, are well cared for and supported by staff and other pupils.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Leaders ensure that positive relationships form the bedrock of learning in this school. The opinions of staff, parents and pupils are all gathered and listened to. Every child, family and staff member is valued.
- Pupils cooperate well with their peers during learning tasks, keenly discussing the different strategies available for tackling problems, especially in mathematics.
- Conduct around school is good. Pupils are polite and courteous to one another and to adults, including visitors, coaches and supervisory staff.
- The vast majority of pupils and parents agree that behaviour in school is good. For those pupils with specific behavioural needs, staff are well trained to help them access the full curriculum and exclusions have reduced over time. Attendance has previously been lower than average for some groups but has improved in the past year.

Outcomes for pupils require improvement

- Pupils' attainment has fluctuated over the past three years. There was a dip across all areas of school in 2015. While most pupils make at least expected progress from their different starting points, too few exceed this to make better than expected progress. The school has begun to tackle this issue by appointing a new team of teachers and middle leaders who are now starting to raise expectations and help current pupils to catch up.
- The proportion of pupils who achieve the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check has remained below the national average since the previous inspection. Inspection activities and the school's own monitoring demonstrate that current pupils now have more time to study basic reading skills, receive targeted teaching at a level that suits their abilities and as a result are making better progress. The current Year 2 class are currently making particularly rapid progress as the result of strong teaching.
- Since the previous inspection, attainment at the end of Year 2 has varied because of inconsistencies in teaching. In national assessments, at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2015, achievement was lower than previously in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders increased boys' attainment due to interventions during the year but other groups did not achieve as well as in previous years. Over time, achievement in reading and mathematics has been higher than in writing. Leaders identified the need to improve progress in writing and now closer links to other local schools support staff development. Currently, work in books shows that pupils in Key Stage 1 are making faster progress, with more opportunities to write in many areas of the curriculum.
- Since the previous inspection, by the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment has been inconsistent over time and across subjects. Overall, attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has been below that of

other pupils nationally. As in Key Stage 1, attainment at the end of Year 6 has usually been lower in writing than other subjects. Too few pupils were in Year 6 last year for the data from the most recent national assessments in 2015 to be significantly relevant. However, overall in 2015 assessments, writing showed improvement while attainment in reading and mathematics dipped. Current pupils, particularly those in upper Key Stage 2, are making more rapid progress than previous cohorts in reading, writing and mathematics due to the influence of new staff and more effective middle leadership in these subjects.

- Leaders have used pupil premium funding effectively to close gaps between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and their peers in school. However, the gap in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and others nationally has not closed.
- The achievement of pupils with disability and those with special educational needs is monitored carefully across school. Leaders work in partnership with external agencies, enabling this group of pupils to make good progress from their different starting points in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Gypsy Roma pupils and others who join the school partway through their education make at least expected progress during their time at the school.

Early years provision

requires improvement

- Achievement at the end of Reception has slowly increased each year since the previous inspection, but the number of pupils achieving a good level of development is below the national average.
- At the end of Reception, literacy skills in particular are below those of other children nationally and prevent overall attainment reaching higher standards. Leaders have identified this trend and responded with detailed plans to address gaps in this subject. For example, reading now has a higher priority and staff have harnessed good links with parents to support their children's reading at home. Consequently, children are keen to read and share books with others.
- Children's writing skills are considerably lower than those of others nationally at the end of Reception and improvements in this area have not been as rapid as progress made in other aspects of learning. Currently, children are supported well to develop writing when working individually with adults. For example, they have written birthday card messages to story characters and were keen to write their own Lenten promises. However, there are insufficient opportunities for children to use and apply their writing skills independently in all areas of the classroom. While there is good provision on offer for children to write in the outside area, few children choose to access this activity independently when they are learning outdoors.
- Teaching has not secured rapid enough progress since the previous inspection. On occasions, leaders agree that the pace of learning could be quickened, with a sharper focus on maximising the use of staff time. For example, routine tasks such as lining up and washing hands could be speeded up so they do not take up too much learning time.
- Children enter the school with skills and abilities which are lower than those typical for their age. Skills in literacy and number are particularly low at the start of Nursery. Current children made good progress during their first year in school so that the majority reached typical levels or above by the time they entered the Reception class. This reflects the recent improvements made to provision and the targeted teaching now being provided.
- Leaders have rightly identified areas that need to be developed in the early years. Communication and language skills are now being promoted effectively in Reception with an additional programme targeted at improving speaking, listening and understanding. Children who qualify for early years pupil premium funding and those who speak English as an additional language have demonstrated good progress as the result of this approach.
- Relationships with parents are highly positive. Recent workshops have encouraged parents to learn more about the school's method of teaching phonics. This has had a good impact on the current Year 1 class, who were better prepared for their move into Year 1 than previous children.
- Children's behaviour is a strength of the provision. Children are polite and friendly at all times. They enjoy their learning and show good levels of engagement and cooperation. When supported by adults, they are keen to persevere and practise their basic skills. For example, Nursery children improved their letter formation while recalling rhymes to help them remember how to form letter shapes correctly. They repeated the activity frequently and enthusiastically by using different media, such as mark-making in dried rice and shaving foam.
- Staff are vigilant and caring, ensuring that hygiene and safety are effectively managed. For example, they provide safety reminders when children are using scissors and explain classroom rules to help children understand why they are necessary. All safeguarding and welfare requirements are met.

School details

Unique reference number	108400
Local authority	Gateshead
Inspection number	10002125

This inspection 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	127
Appropriate authority	Gateshead Local Authority
Chair	Phillip Cunningham
Headteacher	Elizabeth Wright
Telephone number	0191 477 1909
Website	stwilfridsrcprimary.org/
Email address	stwilfridsrcprimaryschool@gateshead.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	2 October 2013

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are White British. A small number come from minority ethnic groups. A few pupils are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language.
- A very small minority of pupils are Gypsy Roma. They join the school at different times for part of the school year.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who enter or leave the school at times other than usual is above average.
- The school receives additional funding through the pupil premium for a higher-than-average proportion of pupils. 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 who are looked after by the local authority.
- There have been several staffing changes since the previous inspection and three staff have been new to post since September 2015.
- There were no pupils educated in the school's additional resource unit during the inspection as this provision is due to close at the end of February 2016.
- The children in the Nursery class attend on a part-time basis, for either five morning or five afternoon sessions per week. Children in the Reception class receive full-time provision.
- The school runs a breakfast club and some after-school clubs, a parents' craft group and a baby and toddler group.
- There were too few pupils in Year 6 to make valid comparisons to the current floor standards.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a number of lessons and parts of lessons taught by six teachers, a sports coach and teaching assistants. One joint observation was carried out with the headteacher.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, middle leaders and other staff. They met with two governors and a representative from the local authority. Meetings were held with two groups of pupils and inspectors spoke informally to pupils in lessons and during playtimes.
- Inspectors viewed examples of the school's tracking and assessment information, scrutinised a selection of pupils' books and accessed a range of documents linked to child protection and safeguarding.
- Inspectors examined the school's website and reviewed a selection of policies and other documentation linked to behaviour and attendance.
- The three responses from the online questionnaire (Parent View) were viewed and considered. Inspectors met with a number of parents at the beginning of the school day to gather their views. Views were also gathered from parents who requested meetings with the lead inspector, from those who attended the school's craft club and from the school's own survey of parents.
- The 13 responses to the staff survey were analysed. There were no responses made by pupils to the online survey of pupils' views. The 72 pupils' responses to the school's own survey of pupils were reviewed.
- Inspectors also visited the school's breakfast club.

Inspection team

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