

St Aloysius' RC Voluntary Aided Junior School

Argyle Street, Hebburn, Tyne and Wear NE31 1BQ

Inspection dates

30 September – 1 October 2015

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- School leaders and governors, together with the dynamic and highly effective headteacher, have ensured that St Aloysius' has improved at a rapid pace since the last inspection. The quality of education at this school is now outstanding.
- Staff at all levels have a keen eye on the progress and well-being of every pupil at school. Should anyone begin to fall behind or struggle socially, high-quality support is swiftly arranged.
- School systems for checking the quality of teaching and the progress pupils are making are first-rate. These enable the school to support pupils as individuals.
- The quality of teaching is characterised by excellent and responsive planning. Teachers are acutely aware of how well pupils are progressing in lessons. They reshape lessons the next day to help to push pupils further forward or to cover any concept which needs more focus.
- A few pupils do not always fully understand how to apply their mathematical skills and understanding when solving problems and in practical situations.
- The curriculum is outstanding. The extra-curricular offer is strong and includes a wide variety of sporting and musical opportunities. The residential programme is valued by pupils.
- The behaviour of the pupils is outstanding. They are polite and courteous in lessons and around school. They show a love of learning and get down to work very quickly, with a high level of enthusiasm. They show an excellent level of resilience in lessons.
- Pupils attend school regularly; they are punctual to school and to lessons.
- Pupils show care towards one another. They understand that everyone is different and that all are equal. In this way, they show a tolerance that is important in modern-day Britain. Their spiritual development is particularly well catered for.
- Pupils make excellent progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Those that are more able, those with special educational needs and those whose circumstances could put them at a disadvantage all make rapid progress from their starting points. They reach standards that are above average and make greater progress than their peers nationally.
- The school is successful in striving for excellence. It offers a warm welcome and a content and secure environment. This ethos, as captured by the school motto and school prayer, is alive within school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all pupils fully understand how to apply their mathematical skills and understanding when solving problems and in practical situations.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding

- The headteacher is a highly effective leader. He has established a culture of high expectation and ambition. This culture is shared by staff and is central to the school's drive for improvement. Staff morale is high, and teachers and other members of staff are very positive about the direction of the school. The headteacher is focused on ensuring that 'no child is left behind'.
- The senior team and other middle leaders are highly focused on improving teaching and outcomes for pupils. Together with the headteacher, they have a very accurate view of the performance of the school. One of the keys to the success of the school is the speed at which any area of relative underperformance is tackled. A striking example is that of the progress pupils make in reading, which was an area of weakness at the last inspection. A rapid and effective overhaul of the reading curriculum, investment in books, changes in teaching and an increase in time spent reading with pupils have led to sustained improvements in outcomes.
- The impact of the leadership is that the quality of education at school has improved rapidly and is now outstanding. The school has capacity to improve further.
- The leadership of teaching and learning is a particular strength of the school. School leaders work well with staff to improve the quality of teaching. Pay progression is linked to improved teaching, leadership and achievement.
- The curriculum is impressive. It supports both the academic and wider development of the pupils. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities, covering sports, the arts, music and pupils' spiritual development. These include football, dancing, skipping, basketball and residential visits. The knitting together of personal development and academic development through the planned curriculum is strong.
- The ethos of the school is one of tolerance, reflection and personal development. Pupils' spiritual development is well catered for through the variety of opportunities in and around the curriculum. Pupils understand the difference between right and wrong and are developing well socially. The school supports the cultural development of the pupils through the variety of experiences offered through the curriculum. Pupils are well prepared for life in today's Britain.
- Skills in literacy, oracy and numeracy are systematically developed across the curriculum.
- Leaders and governors monitor the use and impact of additional funding exceptionally well. Pupil premium funding has helped improve the performance of eligible pupils. The progress they make is the same as that of non-pupil-premium pupils at school and sometimes above that of non-pupil-premium pupils nationally. The physical education (PE) and sport premium for primary schools helps to support the excellent PE provision within school and has aided the substantial increase in the proportion of pupils participating in sports events.
- The school is inclusive and works harmoniously so that all pupils thrive. Different groups of pupils, including those who have special educational needs and those who are more able, make excellent progress.
- The school ensures that pupils are kept safe through strong policies and procedures and through dealing with issues of safety in lessons. The school works effectively with parents and carers to ensure that pupils are supported and feel safe.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors know their school exceptionally well. They make frequent visits to the school to find things out for themselves by talking with staff and pupils.
 - Governors are ambitious for the school and have an impressive understanding of performance data and the quality of teaching. They hold school leaders to account effectively, including through performance management arrangements. Governors ensure that staff only receive financial reward if pupils reach their achievement targets. They ensure good use of money.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding

- One of the reasons that pupils make rapid progress is the systematic approach taken by teachers and teaching assistants. During lessons they check the progress that pupils are making. After lessons they

check to see how much progress the pupils have made and shape the next session by making it more challenging or reviewing concepts, depending on how the pupils progressed.

- Teachers plan interesting lessons; they ensure that this planning caters both for any pupils with special educational needs and for those who are more able.
- In a Year 5 mathematics lesson, for example, the teaching assistants and the teacher worked very effectively with different groups of pupils to help to solve written problems using longer numbers. The exciting context, together with the focus of the pupils and expert teacher questioning, helped all groups of pupils to make excellent progress.
- Pupils receive regular high-quality written feedback on their work and spend time ensuring that they put any advice into practice.
- Teachers question pupils skilfully and this helps to challenge and sharpen their thinking. Pupils are confident to answer questions in class and do so articulately.
- Teaching over time is characterised by high expectations. For example, the quality and length of pupils' written English is excellent. Activities leading up to a piece of writing are varied and interesting, and pupils are keen to learn. When it is time to concentrate fully on the task in hand, pupils' level of focus and resilience is strong. Pupils are determined to succeed and teachers provide them with the tools to do so.
- School leaders have developed the teaching of reading over the past two years. Of note is the whole-school reading ladder 'out of this world', where pupils move to the next planet on the wall once they have successfully read a number of books.
- When asked, pupils indicated that they knew what their next steps were in their learning. They said that they get homework and one commented, 'I even sometimes like it!'
- Very occasionally, pupils complete mathematical problems without fully understanding what it is they are doing. They go through the process but do not always understand what is happening mathematically.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent. In class they are attentive and listen carefully to what teachers are saying. When it is time to get down to work or to discuss in pairs, they do so with visible joy and are desperate to learn. Their level of focus in lessons is one of the reasons they make so much progress at school.
- Pupils understand how to stay healthy. Very many of them are involved in the wide range of extra-curricular sporting activities which are on offer. These include both competitive sports and other activities, such as dance.
- Pupils play an important part in the development of the school. Recent examples include shaping how the school looks. Pupils designed the stained glass window in the prayer room and contributed to the triptychs in the hall. They have helped design the 'This St Aloysius pupil can...' campaign, which encourages pupils to aim high in life and to follow their dreams.
- Pupils understand how to stay safe. For example, they are able to share ideas as to how to stay safe online. They understand the difference between bullying and unkind behaviour, and say there is very little of either at school. They say that adults at school quickly deal with any such behaviours. They described to inspectors the 'no bully' programme at school and they actively help other pupils feeling lonely at the friendship stop in the playground.
- The school supports pupils to develop into rounded citizens. They are ready for secondary school when they leave Year 6. They understand, at an age-appropriate level, what it is to live in Britain and what helps make a tolerant and welcoming society.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. They are polite and courteous in lessons and around school.
- Disruption in classrooms is rare and instances of negative behaviour exceptional.
- The system for managing behaviour is simple; it is well understood by staff and pupils. The reward chart, where positive behaviours are systematically rewarded through notes and letters home, and the consequences of moving to the orange or red zones are clearly understood and help pupils to remain

focused.

- Attendance is above the national average. No groups of pupils are hindered by low attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

are outstanding

- Pupils make outstanding progress in reading. Their rates of progress in reading have improved considerably since the last inspection. This is due to the rapid improvements in the quality of the teaching of reading and a more systematic approach to supporting parents with reading at home. The proportion of pupils making the progress expected of them is high compared to the national average. The proportion of pupils making more than expected progress is also high compared to the national average. As a result, pupils enter the school in Year 3 with standards of attainment in reading that are broadly average and leave attaining standards that are higher than average.
- Pupils also make outstanding progress in writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils making more than expected progress rose further in 2015. As a result, more pupils left school reaching Level 5 or above in different areas of the curriculum.
- Disadvantaged pupils make rapid progress from their starting points. Progress portfolios and an increased focus on a whole-school level for these pupils have had a positive impact. Disadvantaged pupils at school make as much progress as their non-disadvantaged peers, both in school and nationally. Sometimes they make even greater progress. As a result, any gaps in the standards they reach are narrowing significantly over time.
- Pupils who have special educational needs benefit from high-quality support. They make rapid progress from their starting points. They are reaching ever higher standards by the time they leave school.
- More-able pupils are well served at school. Expert planning helps to stretch them and they are set challenging goals, enabling them to also make impressive progress from their starting points.
- The exciting opportunities available throughout the curriculum ensure that pupils make excellent progress across the curriculum. Progress in PE and sport is particularly strong. In a Year 6 history lesson, pupils were making strides in their understanding of the Victorian era while maintaining high standards in their written English. In a Year 4 science lesson, pupils' understanding of separating mixtures from a wizard's brew was developing rapidly. Work scrutiny in French indicates that pupils are making strong progress. These examples are representative of the progress that pupils make on a daily basis.
- Published data in 2014 point towards good progress rather than outstanding progress. Inspection evidence included current progress of all year groups, standards in current Year 6 and standards and attainment in 2015. These data represent outstanding progress.

School details

Unique reference number	108719
Local authority	South Tyneside
Inspection number	10002039

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	241
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Eddie Watson
Headteacher	Nick Conway
Telephone number	0191 483 2274
Website	www.st-aloysius.co.uk
Email address	info@st-aloysius.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	20 September 2013

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized junior school. It is federated with St Aloysius RC Infant School. The two schools share the same governing body.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families, those that are looked after and those who have been in the public care system) is average.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- Since the previous inspection, the structure of the school leadership team has changed and the governing body has reconstituted.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed lessons and groups of pupils working with teaching assistants and listened to some pupils from different year groups reading. They talked to pupils in lessons and looked at work in their books. Inspectors talked to three specific groups of pupils about life at school and the work they were doing.
- Inspectors conducted joint observations with the headteacher and discussed findings.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body and the teaching staff, including middle and senior leaders. Discussions were held with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took into account the school's staff questionnaires and spoke to parents about their views of the school. They looked at the 21 responses to Parent View and considered the parent questionnaires commissioned by the school. They considered several letters written directly to inspectors about the work of the school.
- Inspectors observed the overall work of the school and looked at a number of documents, including the school's data about pupils' current progress. They also studied documents relating to safeguarding, governance, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors also looked at a range of other evidence, including school displays, the school website and evidence representing the school's wider achievements beyond the classroom.

Inspection team

Michael Wardle, Lead Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Geoff Dorrity

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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