

St Agnes' Catholic Primary School

Rosedale Road, Crawcrook, Ryton, Tyne and Wear NE40 4UN

Inspection dates

12–13 March 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders, including governors, have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The headteacher has taken swift action where improvements were needed, particularly to check on the impact of teaching and learning upon pupil outcomes. These improvements, especially those to check on the progress made by the most able pupils, are not embedded.
- Some middle leaders are new to their roles. They have accessed relevant training, which has developed their subject knowledge. Their role in monitoring the impact of their work is not fully established.
- Leaders provide a varied curriculum. Many opportunities for pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development enrich pupils' personal growth. However, some teachers' expectations of pupils' presentation of work, across all subjects, are too low.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make good progress from their starting points, due to effective support.
- Pupils' behaviour, in lessons, and around school, is exemplary. Pupils are polite, respectful and considerate to others.
- Governors bring a wide range of skills and experience to their roles. They have an accurate view of the school's overall effectiveness.
- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers and teaching assistants are skilled and have secure subject knowledge.
- Work set for the pupils, particularly the most able, in developing their reasoning and problem-solving skills in mathematics, is not sufficiently demanding. New approaches have started to improve the outcomes of current pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils
- Children in Reception make a very strong start to their school life because of highly effective leadership of early years. The quality of teaching and learning is inspirational. The proportion of children exceeding the early learning goals is above the national average.
- The transition from Reception to key stage 1 does not enable pupils to build progressively on their strong foundations. This is due to lower expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Pupils demonstrate that they have a strong understanding of the school's Christian values. This helps them to understand the importance of British values and they can relate them to many aspects of their learning.
- Leaders promote a strong culture of safeguarding. Leaders place high priority on providing effective pastoral support for vulnerable pupils and their families.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further develop the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that teachers:
 - raise expectations and the amount of challenge provided for all groups of pupils, especially for those who are most able
 - place greater emphasis on developing pupils' reasoning and problem-solving skills in mathematics
 - ensure that the presentation of work across all subjects is of the highest quality.
- Further develop the quality of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that leaders check more regularly that the improvements they make are having a positive impact upon the outcomes for pupils
 - ensuring that the middle leaders' roles in evaluating their work are firmly established.
- Capitalise on the strong start that children make in the Reception Year by:
 - strengthening transition from Reception to Year 1
 - ensuring higher expectations of what pupils can achieve in key stage 1.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The recently appointed headteacher leads the school with the Christian values at the centre of her vision. The relationships between staff and pupils are superb, with staff providing highly effective levels of care, guidance and support.
- Following a decline in standards, particularly in mathematics and for the most able pupils, the school is now set on an upward trend of improvement. The headteacher and deputy headteacher, both appointed in September 2018, have had a positive impact in tackling the issues that resulted in this decline.
- Some middle leaders are also new to their posts. They are enthusiastic in their roles and they share the senior leaders' views of what needs to improve. The local authority has liaised closely with subject leaders to develop their leadership skills. As a result, leaders' actions are already starting to improve current pupils' outcomes. However, leaders' skills, to evaluate the difference that these improvements are making, are not fully developed.
- The well-developed curriculum is structured to provide a purposeful approach that builds on pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in different subjects. Teachers develop pupils' knowledge by imparting their own secure subject knowledge effectively. A current focus has been to broaden pupils' vocabulary. Work in pupils' books shows that pupils can use sophisticated language to create the desired effect in their writing.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is woven seamlessly through the curriculum. Pupils take on a range of responsibilities, for example sports leaders, lunchtime monitors, school councillors and play buddies.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively to support disadvantaged pupils. Over time, the progress made by disadvantaged pupils, in reading, writing and mathematics, has declined. However, the number of disadvantaged pupils across the school is small, and several are also pupils with SEND. The current pupil premium strategy is detailed and focuses on individual pupils' needs. Consequently, the disadvantaged pupils currently in school are making good progress from their starting points.
- The leader for physical education (PE) and sports premium has a wide range of expertise to help her to carry out her role. The leader ensures that the relevant funding is used well to make a positive contribution to pupils' interest and participation in games, sports and physical activity. Staff have developed their skills in teaching PE by working closely with the sports coaches.
- Leaders use funding well to ensure that adults support pupils with SEND to overcome any barriers to their learning. As a result, pupils with SEND make good progress from their starting points, especially in reading and writing.
- Leadership of teaching and learning is strong. Senior leaders have focused on providing high-quality training for staff. As a result, pupils' work in books shows that the quality of teaching and learning has recently improved. However, leadership systems to check that these improvements are making a positive difference to pupils' outcomes, are not fully embedded. This is particularly so for the most able pupils in mathematics.

- The headteacher is appreciative of the support what she has received as a new headteacher from the diocese and the local authority. Local authority advisors are effectively supporting staff to improve the quality of teaching and learning further, particularly in mathematics.

Governance of the school

- Governors are ambitious for the pupils in school and share the headteacher's determination to further improve this good school. They have an accurate view of the strengths and areas that need further improvement. Records from governors' meetings show that they have a clear understanding of their role in school improvement, offering an appropriate balance of support and challenge.
- Governors have carefully evaluated their own skills and use these effectively when carrying out their specific roles. For example, the governor who has a special interest in safeguarding has ensured that the staff and governors access regular training to know how to keep pupils safe in school.
- Governors check that the additional funding that is received by the school is used effectively to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. Governors are aware that, over time, the progress of disadvantaged pupils has declined. Together with the headteacher, they have ensured that the targets for the disadvantaged pupils currently in school are sharply focused on removing their barriers to academic learning.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Senior leaders and governors have established a strong culture of safeguarding across the school. Staff have a good understanding of the procedures in place to protect pupils. Staff access relevant safeguarding training to ensure that they can identify potential concerns. The designated safeguarding leads act upon concerns in a timely and appropriate way.
- All records relating to safeguarding are detailed and thorough. Relevant checks are made to make sure that all adults, including volunteers, are suitable to work with children.
- Parents speak highly of how pupils are kept safe in school. They particularly recognise the excellent work that the school does to promote online safety.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Senior leaders have provided teaching staff with high-quality professional development to support them with recent changes and approaches to teaching and learning. As a result, teachers and teaching assistants have secure skills and subject knowledge and work together effectively.
- Strong relationships exist between the staff and the pupils. Attitudes to learning are positive and pupils are keen to learn. Teachers and teaching assistants use questioning effectively to assess whether the pupils are understanding what they are learning.

- Teachers use assessment information to inform them of pupils' strengths and where they might need further challenge or support. However, this is not as successful for the most able pupils across the school. As a result, work in books shows that current high-ability pupils do not receive the challenge they require. This is particularly evident in key stage 1, where the high outcomes that children attain by the end of Reception are not built upon. It is also evident for most-able pupils in key stages 1 and 2 in current pupils' mathematics books.
- The teaching of reading is a strength of the school. Teachers ensure that pupils have the opportunity to read a wide variety of texts across different subjects. Pupils have access to high-quality texts, which they find motivating and interesting. In 2018, reading at the expected and higher standard was above the national average in key stages 1 and 2.
- The teaching of phonics is also a strength of the school. Teaching is highly effective and work in pupils' writing books shows that they have opportunities to apply the phonic skills they learn in discrete phonics sessions. This leads to strong phonics outcomes for pupils over time. The proportion of pupils reaching the required standard in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 has been above average over time.
- The teaching of mathematics is a focus for school improvement, because, over time, the proportion of pupils attaining the higher standards in mathematics has declined. Current leaders identified that pupils need to develop further their mathematical reasoning and problem-solving skills. Teachers have accessed relevant training and, consequently, this has increased the opportunities that they provide for pupils within lessons. Pupils' work in books shows that sometimes this work does not sufficiently challenge pupils, particularly those who are most able.
- Teaching staff have worked with the English advisor from the local authority, focusing upon improving the quality of writing. This has successfully resulted in embedding a consistent approach to writing, particularly around sentence structures, across the school. In 2018 in key stage 1, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected level in writing was below the national average. Work in books in key stage 1 shows that many current pupils are making stronger progress in writing than in mathematics. However, because pupils enter Year 1 at such a high standard, teachers' expectations for these pupils are not high enough to enable them to reach the standards of which they are capable.
- Although pupils take a pride in their work and work hard in lessons, occasionally some teachers' expectations of the presentation of pupils' work in books are too low. Consequently, some higher standards are not met. For example, in joined handwriting, pupils are not expected to join their handwriting even when they are able to do so.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Parents speak highly of the strong communication that exists between home and school. One parent spoke for many when commenting that 'teachers actively

encourage dialogue. An open-door policy really exists.’

- Christian values permeate all aspects of school life. Pupils talk maturely about what their own faith means to them. They are regularly taught about, and show genuine respect for, other faiths. Pupils have a clear understanding of the British values and this is reflected in their learning and attitudes.
- The arrangements to support pupils’ welfare are a strength of the school. Staff and pupils have forged strong relationships, rooted in mutual respect. Pupils trust adults and say that they are listened to and feel valued. Therefore, when pupils are vulnerable or have challenging circumstances, pupils say that they feel well supported.
- Pupils benefit from a wide range of after-school clubs, for example, cookery, choir and Irish dancing, which enable them to develop interests and skills beyond the school day.
- Pupils talk confidently about how to keep themselves safe online. They understand the benefits and the dangers of using the internet and about the importance of not sharing personal information. One pupil talked about how the resources provided by school about cyber bullying supported her outside of school when she encountered issues.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils’ attendance is consistently above the national average. The attendance of pupils who are regularly absent from school is also above the national average. Pupils show a maturity in recognising the importance of attending school. One pupil stated: ‘If pupils miss school then they miss out on their learning. They will find it difficult to catch up.’
- Pupils’ behaviour in class and around school is exemplary. They are polite and considerate to their peers, showing mutual respect to each other and their teachers. Teachers set high expectations for pupils’ conduct and pupils rise to that challenge.
- Pupils say that bullying at school is very rare, but they are taught how to recognise what constitutes bullying and what to do if it happens. Pupils say that they are sure that teachers would deal with it if it occurred. Some pupils talked about bullying issues that happened outside of school and how the teachers and resources from lessons had helped them to deal with these matters successfully.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- In 2018, pupils’ progress at the end of key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics was in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils who attained the higher standard in mathematics was below that in reading and writing. The headteacher has taken swift action to correct this.
- Leaders have introduced new approaches to reading, writing and more problem-solving and reasoning opportunities in mathematics. The local authority mathematics advisor has supported the mathematics leader, who is new to the role. Leaders are working well to improve this part of the mathematics curriculum, but it is not fully established. Work in current pupils’ books shows that the opportunities for reasoning and problem-solving have increased. However, books show that there is insufficient challenge for

the most able pupils, particularly in mathematics in key stages 1 and 2.

- The progress of pupils with SEND is good. The special educational needs coordinator is experienced in her role and ensures that pupils' needs are accurately identified. She liaises closely with an experienced learning support teacher in school to provide targeted support or interventions.
- Almost all pupils acquire the phonics knowledge and skills that they need by the end of Year 1. This is because of effective teaching of phonics. As a result, pupils' attainment in the phonics screening check has been above the national average over time.
- By the end of key stage 1, pupils' attainment has been variable over time. Although attainment is usually above the national average, there are some pockets of underachievement, considering pupils' very high starting points at the end of Reception. In 2018, the proportion of boys attaining the expected standard in writing was below the national average. Leaders quickly identified and tackled this with some success. Due to new approaches to writing, boys currently in key stage 1 are making stronger progress than boys historically. Leaders are aware that a higher proportion of pupils should attain the higher standard at the end of key stage 1, given the extremely high proportion of pupils who exceed the expected standard at the end of Reception.
- By the end of key stage 2, attainment has been above the national average over time. Although progress was average in reading, writing and mathematics in 2018, it had declined over three years in writing. In 2018, the proportion of boys attaining the higher standards was below the national averages in all subjects, except in English grammar, punctuation and spelling. Attainment at the higher standards in mathematics was below the national average for all groups of pupils. Leaders acted swiftly to deal with this. Work in current pupils' books indicates that new approaches are leading to improved rates of progress, particularly in writing. The proportion of pupils working within a greater depth of learning across the school is increasing.
- In 2018, the progress of disadvantaged pupils had declined in reading, writing and mathematics compared to the previous year. Senior leaders and governors created a detailed plan for the use of the funding to support disadvantaged pupils. This has accurately identified the barriers to learning for this group of pupils. Work in pupils' books, and the school's own assessment information, provide evidence that disadvantaged pupils, especially those who are most able, are making good progress from their starting points.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Children get off to an excellent start to in Reception because the early years leader has high expectations for children in her care. Children experience a wide range of interesting activities, which build skilfully on their interests, strengths and what they need to do to improve even further.
- Most children enter Reception with skills, knowledge and understanding above those typical for their age, particularly in communication and language and personal, social and emotional development. Most children have skills in the specific areas of reading, writing, mathematics, which are typical for their age when they join the school. Children make strong progress across the Reception Year, because adults know the

children well and plan suitably challenging activities to build on children's existing skills.

- The proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the time they leave the Reception class has been consistently above the average nationally for four years. The proportion of children who exceed the early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1 is also significantly above the national average. Therefore, children are exceptionally well prepared to enter Year 1.
- In 2018, although the proportion of children exceeding the early learning goal in number was more than double the national average, it was lower than outcomes in reading, writing and shape, space and measures. Staff joined an early years mathematics hub and now ensure that purposeful activities in number develop children's skills to the highest standard. For example, during the inspection, an inspector saw children buy their daily snack items using real money. Children decided which coins to use and how much change they required. An additional problem was added by the teacher when the shop only had certain coins. Children grappled with adding and subtracting in twos, fives and tens.
- Staff assess children's learning skilfully using their expertise about the ways in which young children learn and develop. They use children's records of achievement, known as 'learning journeys', to record children's interests and strengths and identify next steps in their learning. Staff use this information accurately, evaluating the positive effect that Reception practice has on children's outcomes.
- Children have access to carefully planned, high-quality resources, both indoors and outdoors. Children were observed developing their early literacy and numeracy skills exceptionally well, cooperating with each other, and using their problem-solving and reasoning skills to explore and investigate. Adults structure learning activities to enable children to develop emotionally, socially and academically. Adults' incisive questioning develops the children's thinking even further.
- The teaching of phonics and reading in Reception is highly effective. Children participate actively in phonics sessions, which are carefully planned to match the needs of all children. Children participate eagerly in a range of activities to practise their decoding skills so that they become automatic. Children can recall favourite stories that have been read to them. They can read books independently because they have the capacity to concentrate, the skills to decode and enthusiasm for reading.
- Safeguarding in the early years is effective. Children are taught how to keep themselves safe and behaviour is exemplary. Children share resources and play cooperatively, both indoors and outdoors. They manage their own behaviour and feelings extremely well. There are no breaches of the statutory welfare requirements.
- Parents of children in Reception are overwhelmingly positive about how well their children settle into school and how much progress they make across the Reception year. Pupils appreciate the communication between home and school, especially opportunities provided by school for parents to continue with their child's learning at home.

School details

Unique reference number	108390
Local authority	Gateshead
Inspection number	10086829

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	200
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Patrick Garraghan
Headteacher	Mrs Joanne Woods
Telephone number	0191 413 2184
Website	www.stagnescrawcrook.co.uk
Email address	stagnescatholicprimaryschool@gateshead.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	11 January 2007

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for the pupil premium is below average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND support is above average, but below average for the proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The school offers a range of clubs and activities after school.
- The school is designated as having a religious character and received a Section 48 inspection in December 2018

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in a range of lessons. In many of these sessions, the headteacher accompanied them. The quality of pupils' work in a wide range of subjects, and in all classes across the school, was scrutinised.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour around school and reviewed the school's promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The inspectors observed pupils in the playground and during lunchtime.
- The lead inspector spoke to members of the governing body and the school improvement partner from the local authority. A telephone conversation was held with an officer from the Catholic Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle.
- Inspectors considered the 60 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and met with parents during the inspection.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and met with pupils to listen to their views about the school.
- A range of documentation was examined, including a summary of the school's self-evaluation, the school development plan, safeguarding information, pupil premium documents, sports premium documents, the school's assessment information and governing body meeting minutes.

Inspection team

Alison Aitchison, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Stephen Fallon

Ofsted Inspector

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