

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ST CHARLES CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Newcastle

LEA area: Newcastle

Unique reference number: 108496

Headteacher: Mr M White

Reporting inspector: N A Pett  
17331

Dates of inspection: 23<sup>rd</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> May 2000

Inspection number: 190911

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Regent Farm Road Gosforth Newcastle-upon-Tyne
Postcode:	NE3 3HE
Telephone number:	(0191) 285 2553
Fax number:	(0191) 285 2553
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Siobahn O'Brien
Date of previous inspection:	20 <sup>th</sup> May 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	
N A Pett	Registered inspector
M Hammond	Lay inspector
R C Whittington	Team inspector
Mrs N Rowland	Team inspector

The inspection contractor was:

PPI Group Ltd  
7 Hill Street  
Bristol  
BS1 5RW

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Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school is situated on the north-western side of Newcastle. It caters for boys and girls aged between 4 and 11 years of age and serves its parish in the area of Gosforth, which is an area of established housing and some new developments. There are 208 pupils on roll and it is broadly the same size as other primary schools nationally. Pupils come from the full range of socio-economic backgrounds, with more pupils enjoying advantaged homes. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The ethnic heritage of the pupils is mainly white European, although the percentage of pupils not having English as their first language is above the national average. Thirteen pupils are identified as having special educational needs, which is below the national average. Two pupils hold a statement to address their specific needs, which is broadly in line with the national average. Attainment on entry, at under five, is broadly in line with the expectations for their ages for the majority of the children. The school's aims seek to provide for the needs of all of its pupils within the context of the Catholic faith and to address each pupil's needs in academic and personal terms.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

This is a good school with many significant strengths. It has a very good ethos in its Catholic context. Standards in National Curriculum tests at the end of both key stages are consistently well above the national average and the results obtained by similar schools. Results are often very high. Pupils make good progress. Teaching is overall of a good standard. The school is effectively managed, and gives good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Achieves standards in literacy and numeracy which are well above national expectations.
- Teaches effectively to promote the good progress of the large majority of pupils.
- Achieves very high standards in pupils' behaviour, attitudes and values.
- Provides exceptionally well for pupils' personal development, in particular their spiritual, moral and social development.

#### **What could be improved**

- Ensuring that highest attaining pupils have work which consistently makes appropriate demands.
- Developing assessment to provide more formal records on pupils' progress.
- In extending the range of activities outside of lessons.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.*

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school was last inspected in 1996. It has sustained its ethos as a caring school in the Catholic tradition and has maintained its results in National Curriculum tests. Plans and schemes of work have been reviewed to enable the pupils to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills as they move through the school. Teachers' planning is generally effective. The provision for geography is now good, and the standards being achieved by the pupils are very much improved. Subject coordinators have the opportunity to monitor the work of their subjects in relation to planning and pupils' work. The school recognises that it needs to extend the monitoring of teaching to share good practice and ensure consistency in teachers' practice. Improvements have been brought about by the school's own assessment of its needs. This includes detailed analysis of pupils' standards through a wide range of testing systems, the provision for information and communication technology and in overall development planning. Overall, school improvement has been good. The school has the potential for further improvement.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
English	A*	A	A	B	well above average    A above average        B average                    C below average          D well below average     E
Mathematics	A*	A	A*	A	
Science	A*	B	A*	A	

The table clearly shows that the results achieved in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2 are consistently well above the national average. The trend for improvement over the last four years is very similar to the national trend. Compared to the 1999 results for similar schools, results in mathematics and science were well above the average and in English, results were above average. This group of pupils had a larger proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Results in the end of Key Stage 1 tests were very high in comparison with national averages and those for similar schools. Targets for the percentage of pupils reaching the national average are being consistently met.

Standards being achieved by under fives are above expectations in the areas of learning. A detailed scrutiny of pupils' work in Years 2 and 6, and a review of pupils' work in other year groups, shows that the standards for the large majority are above national expectations in the core subjects, although they overall are better at the end of Key Stage 2 than at the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils make good progress, although there is occasionally some underachievement for the most able pupils. Nevertheless, the majority of pupils achieve well in relation to their ability.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very good attitudes towards their work and teachers. They enjoy school and work hard.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The behaviour of the very large majority of pupils is very good at all times. They understand the difference between right and wrong.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils show responsibility towards others and for their work. They collaborate well and have very good relationships with teachers and each other.
Attendance	Very good. The overall attendance figures for the last year were higher than the average for primary schools nationally. Unauthorised absence is lower than the national average.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Good

*Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.*

The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection. It is always at least satisfactory, is good in just over a half of lessons and very good in nearly a quarter of lessons. Teaching for under fives in Reception is consistently good. There is a higher percentage of very good teaching in Key Stage 2 than in Key Stage 1. This reflects the better pace of the lessons and the better demands made of the pupils, which stretches them to higher achievement. Teaching of literacy and numeracy is overall good. On occasions, insufficient attention is given to ensuring that pupils of high potential are given work which extends their thinking skills and enhances their learning. Whilst they make good progress there is an element of underachievement.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. There is very good provision for literacy and numeracy. There is effective coverage of the foundation subjects.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision is very good for pupils identified and those who hold statements to address their specific needs. The identification of gifted and talented pupils is underdeveloped.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Effective support is provided and these pupils achieve as well as their peers.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good provision is made for all aspects of pupils' personal development. A particular strength is the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The overall care is very good and is seen as a strength of the school by the parents.

There is good provision of extra-curricular sport but not for other activities. Good use is made of visits to enhance the curriculum. National Curriculum requirements are met. Good individual education plans exist for pupils with learning difficulties but there is inadequate target setting and the provision of plans for the more able pupils. Formal assessment records are underdeveloped. Opportunities for pupils' multicultural development in subjects across the curriculum are missed and there is no whole school policy for this aspect to guide teachers' planning.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides clear and effective direction for the school and works well in partnership with the deputy headteacher. Pupils are cared for very well. Whole school management through subject coordinators is underdeveloped.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Statutory responsibilities are effectively met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Analysis of test results is carried out and there is monitoring, but the practice needs further development to ensure that individual target setting is more rigorous.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school seeks to provide the best opportunities for its pupils and provides good value for money.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall, standards are good and pupils make progress.</li> <li>• The school cares very well for their children.</li> <li>• Behaviour is very good.</li> <li>• Very good attitudes, values and beliefs are promoted and achieved by the school.</li> <li>• The quality of teaching is good.</li> <li>• Homework is appropriate.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activities outside of lessons.</li> <li>• Challenge for most able pupils.</li> <li>• Closer involvement in the work of the school.</li> </ul>

Inspectors firmly agree with all of the points that please parents most. Although the school provides many opportunities for sport and a wide range of visits, inspectors agree that the opportunities for other activities are limited. Similarly inspectors agree that the school needs to develop the quality of work that it provides for the most able. A minority of parents are involved in school life and the school needs to consider how it may extend the involvement of parents in its work.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL**

#### **Achieves standards in literacy and numeracy which are well above national expectations.**

1. Early years children in Reception achieve standards of speaking and listening which are above expectations for their ages, as are their standards in mathematics. In other areas, not subject to such scrutiny, teachers' plans and records show that they achieve appropriate standards for their ages in the areas of learning.
2. The National test results have shown standards by the end of both key stages to be well above the national average and the average for similar schools. Any minor fluctuations reflect slight differences in the number of pupils with special educational needs in a particular year group taking the tests. The work seen during the inspection reflects the national test results overall. The standards currently being achieved in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are at least in line with national expectations by the end of both key stages and, for a significant majority of pupils, above this level.
3. At both key stages, the very large majority of pupils make good progress in English and mathematics. They speak well using a good vocabulary, which includes specific technical language, which they understand, for example, in English in their understanding of grammatical terms, in mathematics in the identification and properties of various shapes and in science the correct name for skeletal bones. The large majority of pupils read very well, with expression and understanding of the stories or information they have gleaned. Overall, the very large majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress and, by the end of Key Stage 2, they write for a wide range of purposes very well. Work is completed and the pupils are proud of their achievements. For a minority of higher attaining pupils their progress is still good. The percentage achieving Level 5 in national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 is well above the national average in English and is very high in mathematics and science.

#### **Teaches effectively to promote the progress of the large majority of pupils.**

4. Since the last inspection the quality of teaching has shown improvement. It is always at least satisfactory, is good in just over a half of lessons and very good in nearly a quarter of lessons. Teaching for under fives in Reception is consistently good. There is a higher percentage of very good teaching in Key Stage 2 than in Key Stage 1. This reflects the better pace of the lessons and the better demands made of the pupils, which stretches them to higher achievement.
5. Generally, teachers have high expectations in relation to pupils' work and behaviour and this contributes very positively to the development of pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills, as well as to their personal development. The overall quality of work seen through a scrutiny of pupils' work, from their very good response to the teaching and their obvious enjoyment in lessons, clearly shows that the teaching is good over time. There is a good balance of experience and expertise amongst the staff.
6. Teachers plan their lessons effectively, sharing with their pupils the purposes of the lesson so that they fully understand what they will be doing and why they will be doing it. Objectives are written on the board to remind pupils throughout the lessons what they are doing. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy are well used but are also modified as necessary to meet pupils' differing needs and to link with other subject areas, for example, in developing writing techniques in history and through the use of mathematics in science. Teachers and pupils enjoy lessons and the pupils are very willing to ask and answer questions. Good relationships and behaviour are the hallmark of lessons. Opportunities to develop pupils' independent learning skills fully are limited by the accommodation and resources, although, where possible, as, for example, through homework and raising and answering questions, this is achieved. Good examples were seen of homework to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding.

7. Teachers make good use of time and resources. Lessons proceed at a brisk pace. In the best lessons teachers ask challenging questions and set work which develops pupils' thinking skills. In many lessons there is a good range of work, set to meet the differing needs of the pupils. On occasions, insufficient attention is given to ensuring that pupils of high potential are given work which extends their thinking skills and enhances their learning. Whilst they make good progress, there is an element of underachievement. Where group work is used, teachers intervene where appropriate and good use is made of learning support staff. Teachers often praise pupils in lessons and discuss work with them. They know their pupils well and use their knowledge to plan appropriate work. Overall, the quality of marking varies widely. It is only for older pupils that comments are consistently given how work might be improved, and this is in the core subjects with regards to National Curriculum Levels that they might obtain. The formal recording of attainment and progress in all subjects is underdeveloped.

**Achieves very high standards in pupils' behaviour, attitudes and values.**

8. The school cares very well for all of its pupils. The standards of behaviour are very good, both in classrooms and in and around the school. In lessons, the good examples set by the teachers, and their generally high expectations in relation to work and behaviour, establish a very good learning ethos. Because of the effective teaching pupils understand what they have to do and have the confidence to tackle their work in a sensible manner. The pupils fully understand the code of behaviour and there is good use of rewards and sanctions. They have very positive attitudes towards school, enjoy their lessons and have very good relationships with their peers and adults in the school.
9. The fact that the pupils are well known by the whole staff enables the support, welfare and guidance of the school to be good. Whilst assessment procedures are underdeveloped, the teachers are aware enough to meet the personal and academic needs of the pupils. The very good levels of attendance make a significant contribution to the continuity of pupils' learning.
10. Opportunities are taken to provide pupils with a range of responsibilities, which they accept willingly. These include class-based and whole school tasks, as well as opportunities to bring their own ideas and knowledge to their work. They enjoy homework and research assignments and, through the high expectations of their teachers, understand that they must give of their best in their work and behaviour. This encourages their sensible attitudes. The provision of personal and social education, within subjects or discretely, enhances their knowledge and understanding.
11. Linked together, all of this provision of care and direction has maintained the very good ethos commented upon in the last report. Pupils can learn and enjoy their learning.

**Provides exceptionally well for pupils' personal development, in particular their spiritual, moral and social development.**

12. The inspectors appointed by the Diocese will report upon the provision for pupils' spiritual development in the context of the school's Catholic denominational status. Generally, in lessons, the Catholic ethos is clearly established. This adds to the opportunities for pupils to develop their values and beliefs. Some opportunities are missed in science and art to broaden this aspect of pupils' development. Overall, moral and social development is very good. Moral development is well provided for through the overall ethos of the school; pupils are expected to behave and work hard, which they do. Teachers clearly explain the school's code of conduct. Older pupils support younger pupils very effectively. Opportunities are taken to make pupils fully aware of those who are not as fortunate as they are and to support a range of activities designed to help others. Social development is very good. They have very good relationships with each other, sharing their ideas and resources sensibly. The pupils are proud of their achievements and want to do well. Teachers successfully encourage pupils' attitudes and this contributes well to their understanding of citizenship and roles within the parish.
13. Cultural development is well provided for in relation to the pupils' religious background and their cultural heritage, for example, in the ethos of the school and in topics such as the Victorian school room experience and through a range of visits and visitors. The multicultural provision

takes into account coverage of major world faiths but in some subjects, such as art and music, opportunities are missed to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of the diversity of the multicultural society in which we live. This is particularly apparent through the displays, but also in the scrutiny of pupils' work, where coverage of such topics is underdeveloped.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

### **Ensuring that highest attaining pupils have work which consistently makes appropriate demands.**

14. The very large majority of pupils achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. In the very large majority of lessons seen, and from the scrutiny of pupils' work, teachers plan effectively and set work which generally meets the differing needs of their pupils. In the best lessons and work seen, the pupils are given work which maintains their interests and in which they achieve standards which are above the national expectations for their ages. Nevertheless, there are a significant minority of instances, in English and mathematics, where pupils of high prior attainment are not set work which fully develops their thinking skills. In the best lessons, when pupils have finished the initial work, they are set more complex tasks to produce their own examples and find solutions to the problems they develop. In other lessons, when pupils have completed their work quickly, they are given additional work which incurs more examples of the same and thus does not extend their thinking sufficiently. The monitoring of teaching, by subject coordinators, to eliminate the minority of instances where the higher attaining pupils are insufficiently challenged to eliminate their underachievement, is underdeveloped.

### **Developing the procedures for assessment to provide more detailed records on pupils' progress.**

15. Whilst teachers know their pupils well, they have an over-reliance on this personal knowledge of their pupils in overall approaches to assessment. The school has a wealth of data, drawn from National Curriculum test results and teachers' assessments, and from a further range of national tests, which it uses. This data is analysed effectively so that the school is aware of pupils' progress in the core subjects. In relation to other subjects, teachers carry out their marking but there are insufficient records maintained to show pupils' overall progress and the staff are not in a position to share assessment information formally on a whole-school basis. The significant aspect for improvement is to have appropriate procedures which provide the data, which is effectively recorded, and which can be used to inform school and individual target setting, and lesson planning, over the longer term. This is particularly pertinent with respect to the higher attaining pupils, to ensure that they are set work which fully meets their needs. There are no portfolios of pupils' assessed work to assist staff in moderation exercises or to help if a new member of staff is appointed.

### **In extending the range of activities outside of lessons.**

16. There is a very good range of sporting activities for older pupils. They participate in competitive fixtures and both boys and girls enjoy good success. Parents indicated their concerns and the inspection team agrees that there is a limited range of other activities available for pupils in both key stages. Pupils participate in a range of visits which enrich the overall curriculum. Opportunities exist for instrumental music lessons for a minority of pupils but otherwise there are very limited opportunities outside of lessons. The inspection team recognises that many pupils are brought to and from school by their parents but little use is made of the lunch break to provide activities. A small number of parents provide support in school but their role in supporting activities using their interests and skills are very limited.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

The governors, headteacher and staff now need to:

- establish procedures to eliminate the minority of instances where the highest ability pupils are insufficiently challenged to eliminate underachievement (paragraph 14);
- improve the formal recording of pupils' work so that the setting of individual targets and the monitoring of pupils' work are extended (paragraph 15);
- consider opportunities to extend the range of activities outside of lessons to enrich the curriculum (paragraph 16).

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	22
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	8

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	23	54	23	0	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR-Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	n/a	208
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	n/a	9

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR-Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	n/a	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	n/a	11

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	4

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	12

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	3.7
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	19	13	32

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	18	19
	Girls	13	13	12
	Total	31	31	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (97)	97 (97)	97 (100)
	National	82 (80)	83 (85)	87 (86)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	18	18
	Girls	13	13	13
	Total	31	31	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (94)	97 (100)	97 (100)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	14	15	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	13	14
	Girls	13	13	13
	Total	25	26	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (84)	90 (77)	93 (74)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	13	13
	Girls	13	12	13
	Total	25	25	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (84)	89 (77)	90 (87)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	175
Any other minority ethnic group	2

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

*This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR-Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.1
Average class size	29.7

#### **Education support staff: YR-Y6**

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	60

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1998/99
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	£
Total income	342,022
Total expenditure	332,434
Expenditure per pupil	1,599
Balance brought forward from previous year	-2,346
Balance carried forward to next year	7,242



## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	208
Number of questionnaires returned	99

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	62	37	1	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	65	34	1	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	78	20	0	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	53	39	7	0	1
The teaching is good.	66	30	2	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	41	48	7	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	64	30	6	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	70	28	1	1	0
The school works closely with parents.	34	48	11	4	2
The school is well led and managed.	59	35	6	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	69	30	0	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	25	17	24	23	10

### Summary of parents' and carers' responses

Overall, parents and carers are very supportive of the school. Areas of concern related to how closely the school works with parents, the range of activities outside of lessons and a minority of parents referred to the quality of work set for the more able pupils. Inspectors agree that there are a limited number of activities available. Similarly inspectors agree that the school needs to develop the quality of work that it provides for the most able. A minority of parents are involved in school life and the school needs to consider how it may extend the involvement of parents in its work.