



St Charles' RC Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 108496
LEA Newcastle upon Tyne
Inspection number 277986
Inspection dates 28 November 2005 to 29 November 2005
Reporting inspector Mrs Gianna Ulyatt

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Regent Farm Road
School category	Community		Gosforth
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Newcastle upon Tyne, Tyne and Wear
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0191 2852553
Number on roll	208	Fax number	0191 2840690
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Dr Peter Mitchell
Date of previous inspection	1 May 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Victoria Lindsay

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors

Description of the school

St Charles Primary School serves its Catholic parish in a socially advantaged area in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. There are 208 children on role aged from four to eleven years. The proportion of children eligible for free school meals is a quarter of the national average. Very few children speak English as a second language. The number of children who have learning difficulties is about a quarter of the national average and the proportion with statements is very low. Attendance is good. Overall attainment on entry is above average.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with some outstanding features. The school accurately assesses its effectiveness. Parents are justified in the praise they offer and confidence they have in the school. Teaching is good and encourages children to be analytical in their thinking. Standards are very high and children thoroughly enjoy school. Their personal development is outstanding. They have a mature understanding that being part of a community brings rights as well as responsibilities. Children are enthusiastic learners in this caring environment and benefit from a rich range of learning opportunities, which prepare them well for their future lives. Foundation Stage teaching is good because staff interact sensitively with children. The school is taking action to develop outdoor provision. The school is fully inclusive and works well with outside agencies to ensure its children have the right learning opportunities to help them make good progress. The school is well led and managed. The senior management team, staff and governors work together with a common purpose. Value for money is good. The school has good capacity to improve but in order to do so it must ensure the marking of children's work gives clear indications how to improve and tracking procedures are better co-ordinated so that teachers can quickly identify any lack of progress in individuals or groups of children.

not applicable

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the way assessment is co-ordinated so that the progress of individuals and groups of children can be easily tracked and monitored
- Provide children with clearer indications of how to improve when their work is marked.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are very high and achievement is good. Children start school with a broad range of ability, but overall attainment is above average. By the end of the Foundation Stage they reach standards above national expectation. This places them in a strong position to begin the national curriculum. A strength of the school is that children at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 consistently attain very high standards in national test results. Children throughout the school make good progress and overall achieve well. The 2005 results in English for Year 6 children were particularly outstanding with more than two-thirds achieving at the higher level. Although standards are high in Year 2, there is a slight decline in the trend. This is because attainment in writing and mathematics have dipped slightly over the last few years. The school caters very well for all its children. Those who have above average ability achieve well to reach the higher levels. Children with learning difficulties achieve well to reach the national average standard. Children who have English as a second language reach high standards.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Assemblies help children develop a strong spiritual awareness and a clear understanding of right and wrong. Children in Year 6 have an annual retreat day for deep reflection. Children love school and their attitude to learning is excellent. Regular attendance is a strong feature. Children are confident and have very positive self-esteem. Behaviour is exemplary and evident in the very good relationships they have established. Children care for others through regular charity work. They are proud of their achievements, including their own presentation of 'Make Poverty History'. Personal development and well-being are outstanding. Children are very clear about ways to promote healthy lifestyles through exercise and the correct food choices. They know they are safe in school. Children have a mature understanding that being part of a community brings rights and responsibilities and the school encourages them to develop workplace skills. A good example of this was when the School Council initiated the idea of creating a better playground. The whole school was involved in extensive research before designing the area. This was opened as part of the tenth anniversary party.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall. Teachers encourage children to be analytical in their thinking and to take risks when answering questions. Close interaction in small groups in the reception class accelerates learning. Teachers throughout make good use of the interactive white boards helping children tackle new work with enjoyment and independence. An example of outstanding teaching was where children were challenged to use computer technology to read and plot co-ordinates in mathematics. Teachers have good subject knowledge and prepare work well for children but some do not always take full account of the broad ability range in the class. Teachers know children well but miss opportunities to set specific targets for individuals. Marking is inconsistent and does not give children clear enough guidance on what they need to do to improve. Teaching assistants support children well offering them good guidance. Children who have learning difficulties make very good progress because they are well supported in small groups with work that matches their learning needs.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is rich and varied. It meets statutory requirements and very strongly promotes children's learning of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills. Children are given essential life-long skills which prepare them well for their future. Children particularly enjoy art history and geography. The school encourages its good links with the parish, parents, local authority and the wider

community to enrich learning opportunities for all of its children, during the school day and after school. Parents are actively involved in teaching French. Instrumental tuition is available. Additional funding has secured a range of sporting activities including basketball, kickboxing, rugby and tennis. Children take a full and active part in many special events, such as 'Singing at the Sage'. Their knowledge and awareness of environmental issues are increased through the involvement in 'Enviroschools'. Year 4 children recently won a 'Power Day' with their Eco Sculpture. The school is aware that outdoor provision for Foundation Stage children is underdeveloped and for that purpose it has acquired funding from a local business.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school takes good care of its children and the high level of staff commitment ensures their health, safety and welfare. Child protection procedures are well established, regularly reviewed and understood by all staff. Rigorous risk assessments demonstrate a strong commitment to children's safety. All groups of children receive good support in a caring environment. The successful nurture group encourages children's self-esteem as they learn through activities appropriate for them. Individual education plans make sure that children who have learning difficulties progress well through the right level of support. Parents of reception children are very happy that children settle quickly because of the welcoming environment. Parents support their children's work at home. Children say that it is easy to make friends in school and they know what to do if they feel unhappy.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The head teacher is well supported by knowledgeable governors. She has very clear vision and expects very high standards in the school. Both she and the deputy are new to the school and together they provide good leadership. Monitoring of lessons gives teachers specific points for improvement and leads to better learning and enjoyment of lessons. Staff training and professional development are high on the agenda to ensure that subject and aspect leadership roles and responsibilities are strengthened. Teamwork is good and purposeful.

The school is committed to high levels of care and to equality. It works successfully with outside agencies and parents ensuring all children are fully involved in the life of the school and well cared for. The school has an accurate picture of its strengths and areas for improvement because it is self-critical and takes on board the opinions of all. However, the procedures for tracking pupils' attainment need improving so teachers can more readily identify those who are not making the progress they should. The school has good capacity to improve.

The personal development of its children is strong and their views are sought and acted upon through the School Council. Parents are very supportive, express a keenness

to be actively involved in new initiatives and speak highly of the education their children receive.

The school has made good use of the new ICT suite and children are achieving well in this subject. Resources overall are used well; however the larger equipment for reception children is not easily accessible.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

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30 November 05

Dear Children

First of all I would like to thank you all for being so helpful, kind and polite during our very enjoyable visit to your school. You are very mature and sensible children and it was a great pleasure for the inspectors to talk with you about your work in school and your other interests. We particularly enjoyed joining you for assembly. We think you are very respectful and sing beautifully. You have a very deep understanding of right and wrong and can see that Shalom is the best way forward. You obviously know there are many people less fortunate than yourselves and give generously to many charities.

We like the way your teachers and all the other adults care for you and give you the chance to learn so many things. We loved reading the stories you have written in your books and seeing the difficult problems you solve in mathematics. We were very impressed with the way you have re-designed your playground. Congratulations in winning a 'Power Day' with your Eco Sculpture. Well done Year 4!!

We are particularly impressed at your enthusiasm in lessons. You listen very well to your teachers and really enjoy your work. That is why you are doing so well in school and your workbooks are so lovely to look at. We have asked teachers to mark your work so you know exactly how well you are doing and what you have to think about next. So you in turn have to make sure you think even harder so you don't repeat mistakes.

We have asked your teachers to keep a closer eye on your progress, so if you feel you are not sure about new learning or feel you are getting behind your group, let your teacher know so you can be helped straight away.

We wish you every success in the future and hope that many of the friendships you have established will stay with you for a long time.

With best wishes

Gianna Ulyatt
(Lead Inspector)