



St Oswald's RC Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 108497
LEA Newcastle upon Tyne
Inspection number 277987
Inspection dates 11 July 2006 to 12 July 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs Judith Straw

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Hartford Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Gosforth
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Newcastle upon Tyne, Tyne and Wear
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0191 2852437
Number on roll	210	Fax number	0191 2852437
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Nick Nolan
Date of previous inspection	1 January 2001	Headteacher	Mrs Alison Wallace

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 11 July 2006 - 12 July 2006	Inspection number 277987
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average sized voluntary aided Roman Catholic primary school. Very few pupils are entitled to free school meals. Almost all the pupils are of White British heritage. A small minority of pupils have English as an additional language. Few pupils have specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The children have above average levels of attainment when they enter the school. The headteacher is retiring at the end of this term and the deputy headteacher will become acting headteacher.

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 many outstanding features. This matches the school's own view. One of many highly satisfied parents wrote, 'My children are flourishing at this wonderful school.' Standards are very high and pupils achieve well. There was outstanding achievement in writing this year when pupils far exceeded the challenging targets that had been set. The headteacher's inspiring leadership, ably supported by her excellent deputy, has created a positive Christian ethos in which every child is valued and cared for and is given the chance to reach their full potential. Provision in the Foundation Stage is outstanding because the children experience a good balance of learning through play and more formal teaching. Teaching and learning are uniformly good and some teaching is outstanding. Pupils enjoy their learning. This is one reason why standards are high and the pupils achieve well. Every morning, lessons begin with a quick series of mathematical problems and pupils rapidly settle to work and are eager and ready to learn. Pupils' personal development is outstanding. They are friendly, polite and eagerly participate in the numerous academic, creative and sporting activities provided within the excellent curriculum. Pupils are very keen learners in Years 3 to 6, but a few, mainly boys in Years 1 and 2, are less ready to work at a brisk pace when working independently. The school cares for the pupils well and offers good support and guidance, particularly for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Leadership and management are good because there is a shared vision and commitment to high standards. Governance is good. There has been very good progress since the last inspection and there is good capacity to develop further. The school provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

Improve the ability of a small minority of pupils, mainly boys in Years 1 and 2, to get on with their work without the direct guidance and supervision of an adult.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils reach high standards when they leave at the end of Year 6 and they meet challenging personal targets. The achievement of pupils is good. Children enter Reception with above average attainment and make very good progress during the Foundation Stage so that the majority of children reach or exceed their early learning goals. Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 1 and 2 and, by the end of Year 2, reach standards that are very high in comparison to those reached nationally. By the end of Year 2, girls achieve better than boys. In Years 3 to 6, standards are consistently very high and there is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls. Attainment in English fell slightly in 2005 but, as a result of action taken by the school, pupils have made exceptional progress in writing this year. Over 50% gained higher than expected levels in the 2006 national tests. Throughout the school, a notable feature is that all pupils produce a large amount of high quality work. Pupils with

learning difficulties and/or disabilities make equally good progress because of the support they receive from teaching and support staff.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are outstanding. Their evident enjoyment of a wide and exciting curriculum is one of the reasons why achievement is good and standards are high. Pupils have a clear understanding of how their actions affect the happiness of themselves and others. As a result, behaviour is exemplary and most pupils demonstrate respect for themselves and others. In Years 3 to 6, pupils have an outstanding ability to take responsibility for their own learning to work independently. They are confident that guidance will be provided when needed. In Years 1 and 2, most pupils are developing as independent learners. Attendance is good. It is consistently well above the national average. Pupils make a strong contribution to the community in the part they play in local events and through extensive charity fund raising. They have a secure understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles and participate in numerous sporting events. They are prepared extremely well for their next stage in education and for life as valuable members of society through a strong focus on key skills and moral values.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Some teaching, particularly in Years 3 to 6, is consistently outstanding, leading to high standards. Pupils enjoy learning because teachers are skilled at teaching in varied and exciting ways which meet the needs of all pupils, whatever their ability. For example, in an outstanding numeracy lesson where pupils were explaining how they were solving problems, the teacher was quick to reassure some that the fastest method of solving a problem is not necessarily the best method for them. Teachers set high expectations and pupils are left in no doubt about what it is they are required to learn. However, at times, a few pupils in Years 1 and 2, mainly boys, do not meet teachers' high expectations because they do not work fast enough. This is one of the reasons why, in some years, the standards reached by boys at the end of Year 2 are not as high as those achieved by girls. The teachers' marking is of a high quality. Individual pieces of pupils' work are carefully annotated with comments from the teachers giving praise where merited, and showing how the work could be improved further. Pupils have individual learning targets in their books so they know what to aim for in the next stage of their learning. This speeds up their learning. Teachers are beginning to provide opportunities for pupils to assess their own and other pupils' work but this is not yet wholly consistent across the school. Careful tracking of pupils' attainment, particularly in English and mathematics, ensures

good progress. This is because teachers quickly identify pupils whose progress slows and then take action to put things right.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Inspectors consider that the school has been modest in judging the curriculum as good. It is outstanding because the school provides a very broad range of experiences suited to the needs and interests of all pupils. The curriculum is adapted every year to meet the specific needs of learners. For example, recent changes to the curriculum in English have produced exceptional progress for pupils in Year 6. Subjects are presented in an exciting way and, through the research projects they do in Key Stage 2, pupils become independent learners. Learning is frequently extended beyond the classroom in a series of splendid visits to museums, galleries, theatres and outdoor centres. Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has improved beyond recognition since the last inspection so that pupils are confident and competent on computers. Enrichment activities after school include modern foreign languages, kick-boxing, music and many different sports. There are also opportunities for extra tuition in several musical instruments. Pupils gain enormously from residential trips to outdoor activity centres that promote their personal development very well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good overall. Procedures for child protection, risk assessment and health and safety are in place and are followed effectively by staff. Pupils feel safe in school and are free from any bullying or harassment. The support and guidance provided for pupils' academic progress is based on very effective tracking systems and on excellent relationships where pupils have every confidence that their teachers will help them to achieve their best. Clear targets and high expectations contribute to pupils' success in reaching high standards. The school works well with parents who overwhelmingly agree that their children thrive in the warm and encouraging atmosphere the school provides.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good throughout the school. The outstanding leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher has developed and maintained the positive ethos of the school over a number of years. The strong commitment by leaders to evaluating the school's performance and improving it further has ensured that year after year high standards have been maintained. Regular and effective monitoring of teaching guarantees good quality work in the classroom. The leadership ensures that the Foundation Stage gives the youngest children an outstanding start to their education. The school knows itself well and has never wavered from a commitment to constant improvement. The school works well in partnership with many

other organisations and with parents. As one parent said, 'St Oswald's has an exceptional child-parent- school partnership.' Curriculum leaders have a clear vision for what they want to achieve and how they want to develop their subject areas. Governance is good. Governors have a sound knowledge of the school. They hold it to account as a critical friend and are rightly proud of their school. The budget is well managed and the school gives good value for money. The matters raised in the last inspection have been dealt with very successfully. Under the leadership of the deputy headteacher, who will be acting headteacher next term, the school has good capacity to maintain current high standards and make further improvements.

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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	1	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	2	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?	1	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	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	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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To the pupils of:

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Newcastle upon Tyne

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NE3 5LE

11 July 2006

Dear Pupils

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school earlier this week. We very much enjoyed talking to you and hearing your views about your school. It is obvious that you really enjoy the many activities the teachers provide for you. We thought the concert was splendid and very much enjoyed hearing your singing in hymn practice.

We were impressed with the work we saw in your books and on display and the high standards you achieve. We think your teachers are doing a good job by planning interesting and enjoyable lessons so that you make rapid progress. The teachers check your work regularly and help you to improve so that by the end of Year 6 you are doing very well indeed.

Mrs Wallace is an excellent headteacher and we are sure you will all be sorry when she leaves at the end of this term. Mrs Holmes will be a worthy successor. Your school is well led and managed.

To make your school even better, we have asked your teachers to look at lessons in Years 1 and 2 where some of you do not work as fast as you could do and only really concentrate when teachers are watching you. You need to learn to work well, even when teachers are not watching you.

We wish you every success in the future. You have many reasons to be proud of your school.

Judith Straw and Linda Buller

Additional Inspectors