



St Lawrence's RC Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 108509
LEA Newcastle upon Tyne
Inspection number 277991
Inspection dates 2 March 2006 to 3 March 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Andrew Scott

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Headlam Street
School category	Voluntary aided		Byker
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Newcastle upon Tyne, Tyne and Wear NE6 2JX
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0191 2659881
Number on roll	218	Fax number	0191 2659806
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Tony Cunningham
Date of previous inspection	1 November 1999	Headteacher	Miss Bernadette Lamb

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average-sized urban school, serving a community of considerable deprivation. The pupil population is fairly static and mainly from white British families; approximately 12% of pupils do not have English as their first language. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school gives its pupils a satisfactory education. Pupils achieve satisfactorily throughout the school, although their attainment is below average in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in the nursery and reception classes and overall, but they are stronger in Years 2, 5 and 6 because pupils receive more challenge and stimulation. However, teachers do not plan all lessons systematically enough to allow for pupils' different abilities. The curriculum is satisfactory and pupils' learning is enriched well through visits and activities. However, pupils do not have enough opportunity to take responsibility for their own learning. Overall, though, their personal development is good, especially their behaviour and enjoyment of learning, which are outstanding attributes. The school takes good care of its pupils and guides them well in their work.

Satisfactory leadership and management at all levels have enabled the school to make steady progress since the last inspection. Inspectors broadly agree with the school's view of itself even though it is not wholly objective and, in some aspects, too generous. This is because the headteacher and governors do not monitor or evaluate the work of the school with sufficient rigour and then establish action plans that are fully effective. Nevertheless, the school offers satisfactory value for money and has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Regularly monitor the school's progress and identify clear action plans.
- Ensure that action plans are carried out efficiently.
- Raise standards by providing work that is better matched to pupils' different abilities.
- Give pupils more scope to become more independent in their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Inspectors agree with the school that the achievement of all pupils is satisfactory, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language. Throughout the school. Pupils make satisfactory progress in lessons. Achievement in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Children enter the nursery class with abilities that are below that expected for children of their age. By the end of the reception year, most children are unlikely to achieve all the goals expected of them, but may well do in mathematical and creative development.

By Year 2, standards remain below average in reading and writing. Until recently, pupils' performance in mathematics was average but, last year, this fell below average. By Year 6, standards have tended to fluctuate around average in English, mathematics and science. In last year's national tests, standards fell below average in mathematics and English, although they were above average in science. In the current Year 6,

standards are just below average in all subjects. There are good indications that standards should rise in subsequent years.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school rightly judges pupils' personal development and well-being to be good. Attendance is satisfactory. Pupils clearly enjoy coming to school. For example, they talk with great enthusiasm about life at school and the activities they enjoy the most, such as art and design. Their enjoyment is reflected in their outstanding moral and social development. As a result, pupils' behaviour is exemplary and they have excellent attitudes to work. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall.

Pupils understand the qualities they need to make their school a harmonious community where everyone can feel safe and secure. Through the healthy schools' programme, pupils are developing a good understanding of the need to eat healthy food and take regular exercise, although this is not always reflected in the choices they make when eating school lunch. The social skills which pupils develop provide a good platform for their future lives beyond this school. This is further enhanced by their sound level of basic skills and their ability to work very well cooperatively and collaboratively. More could be done, however, to develop pupils' independent learning skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory and not good, as the school believes. There are certainly several strengths in teaching, for instance, teachers are good at presenting new learning and they use resources skilfully, like puppets and interactive whiteboards, to motivate pupils. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' attitudes, behaviour and presentation. As a result, pupils are eager to do well; are rarely inattentive, and take considerable pride in their work.

Teaching is better, usually good, in Years 2, 5 and 6. In these classes, teachers are more effective at using assessment information to match work to different abilities. In addition, teachers make lessons more exciting so that pupils learn more swiftly. The use of a video cartoon certainly stirred Year 6 pupils in an English lesson to suggest interesting vocabulary.

Overall, though, teachers do not always plan work to provide a consistent challenge for all pupils. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or who have English as an additional language benefit from close and sensitive support from teaching assistants, but still find some work too demanding. Conversely, more able pupils consider some work too easy and so their pace of learning is only moderate.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Inspectors judge the curriculum to be satisfactory, although the school considers it to be good. There is an appropriate focus on basic skills in literacy and numeracy in all classes, and all subjects have a clear framework so that pupils build well on previous learning. Literacy and numeracy are developed well through other subjects in Years 5 and 6, but this is less common elsewhere. There is good enrichment through visits to places of interest, visitors to the school and other activities, such as an origami workshop.

Teachers do not provide enough scope for pupils to learn for themselves through discovery or investigation. Consequently, pupils are too reliant on adults and have too few opportunities to make their own decisions. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is satisfactory. Adult support in lessons is good, but pupils' individual learning plans are not focused enough.

The specialist provision for pupils with English as an additional language is good, but work in lessons is not always adapted to meet their needs.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with the school that care, guidance and support for pupils are all good. The relevant procedures for safeguarding pupils and ensuring their health and safety are securely in place. Sensitive care and warm relationships ensure that pupils flourish in their personal development. As teachers are excellent role models, pupils readily learn how to be sensible, caring and respectful.

There are good systems to help teachers know exactly how well pupils are doing in their work and so provide support where it is needed. Pupils have a good understanding of the targets teachers set for improvement and try hard to put these into practice in their work. However, teachers do not systematically show pupils how they can improve further through helpful marking of their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Inspectors judge leadership and management to be satisfactory, although the school believes them to be good. The headteacher ensures that the school functions efficiently and that it is a happy place in which to work and learn. Her consultative approach creates a good team spirit and takes into account the views of parents and pupils. Good provision for pupils' personal development and welfare is at the heart of the school's work. This creates a good climate for learning where pupils' behaviour and attitudes to work are exemplary.

Actions to improve standards have been less effective. Although the school's monitoring systems are satisfactory and its self-evaluation is reasonably accurate, they do not

always focus on the outcomes of the work of the school or why standards have not risen at a faster rate. For example, monitoring of work in classrooms has not been systematic or rigorous enough to identify precisely any weaknesses in teaching and learning. In general terms, however, the school is aware of the priorities for development and what needs to be done to achieve them. This demonstrates a satisfactory capacity to improve.

Governance is satisfactory. Governors are supportive of the school and are rightly proud of the care it provides for its pupils. They now need to use their knowledge of the school to ensure that the questions they ask are insightful and focus on raising standards. Resources are deployed effectively to give satisfactory value for money.

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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?	3	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	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	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?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	3	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	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	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?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	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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3 March 2006

Dear children

Mrs Buller and I thoroughly enjoyed our visit to your school, and meeting you and your teachers. Thank you very much for all your comments and help around the school. We believe that your school gives you a satisfactory education, because:

you develop into sensible and caring individuals

you behave extremely well and have excellent attitudes to your work

your learning benefits from some interesting activities and visits

the adults in the school take good care of you and make sure you are healthy and safe.

However, your school could be better if:

your headteacher and governors find better ways to improve the standards of your work

teachers give you work that is always challenging, not too easy and not too hard

you have more chance to become more independent in your own learning.

I wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Scott

Additional Inspector