



St Leonard's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 108846
LEA Sunderland
Inspection number 278059
Inspection dates 7 March 2006 to 8 March 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs Jennie Platt

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Tunstall Village Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Silksworth
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Sunderland, Tyne and Wear SR3 2BB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0191 5536288
Number on roll	193	Fax number	0191 5536290
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Father Brian Russell
Date of previous inspection	1 November 2000	Headteacher	Mr James Frazer

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This school is slightly smaller than average. The intake includes more boys than girls. Pupils come from an area that is socially and economically similar to the national picture, although there are pockets of deprivation. The number of pupils entitled to a free school meal is below average. A very small number of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. None is in the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The children's attainment when they start school is generally typical for their age. A below average number of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and no pupil has a statement of special educational need. The school has faced several difficulties since 2002 with changes of headteacher and this adversely affected standards and morale in the school. The school is currently led by an acting headteacher and deputy headteacher. Stability has been restored. A new headteacher is due to take up the position in September.

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 provides an acceptable quality of education, with some good features. This inspection judgement is not as positive as the view of the school and most parents. The inspection team acknowledges good features, especially in pupils' personal development. Standards are above average in English and average in science and mathematics. Overall progress is satisfactory, although higher attaining pupils in mathematics and science could achieve more. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. Effective teaching enables children to make good progress and a high proportion reach the level expected by the end of Reception and, particularly in mathematics, many exceed this level. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress but teachers are not given sufficient guidance to meet all their needs. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Literacy lessons are challenging and exciting but this is less evident in science and mathematics. The curriculum is broad and enriched by a wide range of sporting activities. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Consultation, over strengths and weaknesses, with governors and parents is limited. Difficulty in appointing a new headteacher led to a decline in standards which are currently not as high as at the previous inspection. Under the acting headteacher, stability has been re-established and standards are rising. Monitoring is now in place but the information gathered is not used efficiently to set priorities for raising standards. Overall capacity to improve is satisfactory and the school provides sound value for money.

not applicable

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve achievement for the higher attaining pupils in science and mathematics by setting more challenging activities and providing more opportunities for investigation in science.
- Provide more guidance for teachers about pupils in their class who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.
- Use information from assessment of the pupils' progress to set priorities for raising standards.
- Include more consultation with governors and parents when evaluating the school's strengths and weaknesses.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Overall achievement is satisfactory. The decline in test results standards in science and mathematics in Year 6 last year was linked to a cohort that underachieved because of staffing difficulties in Key Stage 2. This interrupted the pupils' sequential build up of skills and knowledge. As a result, the school failed to reach its targets. With the more stable situation in school, standards are improving and the school is better placed to reach its challenging targets. High standards in English in Year 6 have been sustained

and pupils make good progress. Progress in science and mathematics is satisfactory and standards are broadly average but higher attaining pupils could achieve more. Test results in Year 2 have usually been above average. Current standards in Year 2 are above average in reading and writing and average in mathematics where higher attaining pupils could also be further challenged.

Most children start school with skills that are broadly average. By the end of the reception year, the vast majority have made good progress to reach the level expected for their age. Teaching of mathematics in the reception year is especially effective and many children exceed the level expected. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress, especially those with a social difficulty where the warm relationships enable them to flourish.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development is good. Pupils enjoy school and appreciate the variety of after school activities. Attendance is good. Pupils work hard and have good attitudes to their work. The presentation of work is good. Older pupils are sensible and carry out responsibly several duties around the school. Behaviour is good and makes a positive contribution to smooth running lessons.

Pupils know how to keep healthy. Many choose the healthy option at lunchtime. Pupils say physical education and after school sports are their favourite activities. Even the younger pupils have a good understanding about keeping safe because they pay close attention to advice from staff and visitors. Activities in school, such as the ECO club, teach the pupils effectively about caring for the environment and supporting the less fortunate. Pupils put this understanding to good effect by helping in the community. The focus on independence and especially literacy skills prepares pupils well for the future.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Their spirituality is evident during periods of reflection and prayers. Imaginative artwork shows an understanding of the styles of famous artists. Pupils celebrate their own faith and appreciate the different beliefs of others. This understanding could be extended for older pupils.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Learning is good in Reception and in English because teaching is good. In the reception class, staff skilfully encourage independence and practical activities make learning fun. Strengths in English include a thorough understanding of teaching writing, especially in encouraging planning and editing work. Activities are imaginative as well as challenging and this accelerates learning. Lively introductions to numeracy lessons are not always followed up with challenging

tasks. Pupils are often all set the same work sheet and higher attaining pupils waste valuable time completing work that is too easy. A review of work in science shows a similar lack of challenge and pupils correctly identified limited opportunity to carry out investigations. This mismatch of work to ability is caused by assessment information not being used as effectively in mathematics and science as it is in English. Strengths throughout the school include good relationships and there is always a good show of hands to teachers' questions. Teachers use the interactive whiteboards well to make lessons more interesting. Teaching for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is satisfactory overall. Teachers and support staff offer effective guidance but teachers do not receive enough information about the range of needs and this makes it difficult to ensure that all needs are fully met.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory with good enrichment activities. Literacy and numeracy skills are developed across the curriculum. Information and communication technology (ICT) has improved with better resources. The focus on healthy lifestyles is a strength, with a rich variety of sporting activities led by professional coaches. Extensive development of the school grounds includes more opportunities for physical activity. The Foundation Stage curriculum is good with learning firmly based on first hand experiences. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is satisfactory. Resources are adapted to encourage independence and full access to the curriculum. Staff need more information to check all needs are fully met. Visits and visitors make activities more interesting and consolidate learning. The exciting range of after school activities enhances skills, especially in music and sport. A residential outdoor experience and a visit to France for older pupils build confidence and extend pupils' cultural development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Provision for care, guidance and support is satisfactory. Effective procedures are in place for child protection and staff are alert to the needs of more vulnerable children. Staff training is thorough and links with support agencies are good. Health and safety issues are regularly addressed by the headteacher, governors and site supervisor. Parents appreciate the sensitive induction procedures for children starting school. Effective links with local secondary schools for swimming and a range of activities prepare pupils well for the next stage of education. The school recognises the importance of listening to the pupils and a school council has been set up. It meets regularly and is beginning to have an impact on school life. To involve pupils more in their learning, the school sets pupils targets to inform them how to improve. Currently, these are more effective in literacy than other subjects because the targets are clearer and pupils remember them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory rather than good as judged by the school because many strategies have not yet impacted on achievement. The drive to raise standards has been slowed by uncertainty about the length of time the acting headteacher would be in place. Nevertheless, he has effectively brought the school more in line with identified good practice, especially the focus on making learning more enjoyable. He has raised staff morale and put the school on an even keel so it is well placed to move forward.

The school evaluates its own performance and has a satisfactory picture of what is working well. However, consultation with all involved in the school is not sufficiently rigorous, so judgments are not always accurate. New monitoring procedures are good and enable the school to track pupils' progress. This information is not yet used effectively when setting priorities to raise attainment. However, the progress of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is not closely tracked and staff are not fully informed about all of the pupils' needs.

Governance is satisfactory. The governing body checks that all statutory duties are met and have faced some difficult decisions to keep a balanced budget. Effective use is made of resources and the school provides satisfactory value for money. Governors are supportive but not yet fully involved in early decision making.

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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	2	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	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	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?	3	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	2	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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St Leonard's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School

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SR3 2BB

9 March 2006

Dear Pupils

Thank you very much for the friendly welcome you gave Mrs Bennett and me when we visited your school. We appreciated the way you were eager to chat to us and helped us when we were looking for a class.

We liked these things the most.

You told us you enjoyed school especially physical education and this is very clear by the number of pupils who take part in the interesting activities available.

You behave well and have good relationships and said 'we enjoy having friends'.

Staff give good attention to keeping you safe and you know how to look after yourselves.

You work hard and especially present your work neatly.

The school runs smoothly and is well organised.

We have asked your teachers to look at the following things to make your school even better.

You told us some of you could work harder and science is not always interesting. We agree and have asked teachers to look at how this could be improved.

Teachers sometimes need more advice to provide the best help for all pupils.

To consult with more people and use all available information when looking how to make everyone's learning even better.

We wish you well for your future happiness.

Yours faithfully

Mrs J E Platt

Lead inspector