



St Cuthbert's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School, New Seaham

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 114235
LEA Durham
Inspection number 279341
Inspection dates 9 November 2005 to 10 November 2005
Reporting inspector Mrs Linda Buller

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Mill Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Seaham
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		County Durham, SR7 0HW
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0191 5813090
Number on roll	151	Fax number	0191 5813390
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Rev. Father J Clohosey
Date of previous inspection	1 November 2000	Headteacher	Mr M McNichol

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 9 November 2005 - 10 November 2005	Inspection number 279341
-----------------------------	--	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

St Cuthbert's is a smaller than average sized Roman Catholic primary school situated in the town of Seaham on the east coast of Durham. The school caters for boys and girls aged four to eleven. Pupils come from a range of backgrounds and almost all are of white British heritage. Children's attainment on entry to the school is typical of that found nationally. The percentage of pupils who claim free school meals is below average. A small number of pupils speak a first language other than English. The proportion of pupil with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school judges itself to be an effective school and inspectors agree. The school provides good value for money with resources used well so that pupils attain above average standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The school has made good progress since the last inspection because it gains a clear and accurate view of how it is doing from good self-evaluation. It is well placed to improve further.

In the overall good provision for the Foundation Stage, good teaching is well focused on children's learning, enabling them to make good progress. Throughout the school adults provide a caring atmosphere in which all pupils feel safe. Pupils' behaviour is good and their enjoyment in coming to school is reflected in above average levels of attendance. Teaching is good overall and pupils enjoy a wide range of interesting work. Occasionally, however, the level of challenge which teachers plan for all pupils is not as effective in whole class teaching at the beginning of lessons. The school provides good care and guidance for all pupils. Leadership and management are also good and provide clear direction for the school's work by setting good key priorities. However, the focus in the monitoring of lessons on what each pupil is learning is not clear enough for the school to ensure that all pupils are progressing at a fast enough rate.

What the school should do to improve further

Ensure that all pupils progress at a fast enough rate by:

- providing a good level of challenge throughout lessons for all pupils
- making sure that classroom observation has a clear focus on the learning of each pupil.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils enter the reception class with ability levels which are typical of those seen nationally. They achieve well and by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 they attain standards that are above the national average. They enjoy school and make good progress, particularly in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 who have above average ability, however, do not always maintain this good rate of progress in all subjects. This is because the more able pupils spend time at the beginning of lessons consolidating what they already know before they move on to the challenging tasks planned for them. As a result, some pupils did not make the expected gains, although the overall results in English in the Year 6 tests in 2004 were outstanding and other subjects were above average, exceeding the school's targets. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well throughout the school because they are offered good support and are consistently challenged in their work.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The overall personal development and well-being of pupils are good, and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also good. The Christian ethos permeates all aspects of school life. Pupils' evident care and concern for others show at lunchtime where older pupils look after younger ones in their house group. Behaviour is very good and children work well together, supporting one another during lessons. Older children share their views with visitors in a mature way. The school council proudly explains how their ideas are valued and acted on and have a good understanding of their contribution to their school and wider community. They have recently decided to improve the quality of snacks offered at playtimes so that fruit is readily available. Children eat healthy lunches and enjoy sport, and recognise these are both good for them. Pupils support many charities and willingly give presents to those less fortunate than themselves, particularly at Christmas time. Attendance is above average and children enjoy school. They listen carefully in lessons and say, 'Teachers are always there to help you so you learn better'. Children feel safe in school, and are well prepared for their place in the world because standards are good in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT).

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The school evaluates teaching to be good overall and inspectors agree. When teaching is good there is a clear focus on what each pupil is required to learn, particularly in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2. In Years 3 to 6, however, more able pupils can spend too much time at the beginning of lessons going over what they already know. Teachers have good subject knowledge. They use a variety of teaching methods to engage learners. For example, good use is made of the electronic white boards, and as a result pupils demonstrate their enjoyment of learning. This is particularly strong in the Foundation Stage where good emphasis is given to the development of children's basic skills through the use of interesting and relevant games. Relationships between staff and pupils are good, behaviour is managed well and pupils are keen to learn. Where teachers' subject knowledge is not as strong, the pace of lessons slows and there is little variety in the learning styles offered.

Assessment procedures are good. In the main teachers use their knowledge of pupils' prior attainment well to set independent tasks that provide good levels of challenge for pupils of all abilities. However, they are not always as successful in using this knowledge to plan the beginning of lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum is rich and varied, offering pupils access to a wide range of learning opportunities. The varied and enjoyable Foundation Stage curriculum is good, meeting the needs of the children well. The school places a strong emphasis on developing pupils' skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT. This leads to pupils attaining standards that are above the national average, and helps them build strong foundations for their future lives and the world of work. A particular strength of the curriculum is its after-school provision. The school offers an extensive range of sporting and musical activities and opportunities for technology and scientific enjoyment. There are many exciting visits for children to make out of school, including residential field trips.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school's good care and protection for its pupils enable them to be safe, happy and confident learners. All the required health and safety systems are in place and good attention is paid by staff in lessons to ensure pupils follow safe practices. Effective child protection procedures meet requirements, and staff have received relevant and up to date training. Pupils and parents strongly endorse this standard of care. Pupils are confident that their teachers will always help them to overcome their problems whether it is in their personal development or if they feel they are struggling with their work. Each pupil is set targets that they confirm help them to know what they need to do next to reach higher standards.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good; the school knows itself well through accurate self-evaluation that takes account of the views of everybody connected to the school. Pupils' attainments are assessed and the information gained is used effectively to agree priorities for improvement. Monitoring through classroom observation, however, is less effective. The focus on what each group of pupils is learning is not clear enough to enable the school to ensure that they are all progressing at a fast enough rate.

Teamwork is a strength of the school. As a result the school is successful in maintaining good levels of care and promoting the personal development and well-being of pupils, including those who are the most vulnerable. The school has a strong commitment to equality of opportunity, trying to make sure that every individual does as well as possible in all aspects of school life. The school has worked hard to improve standards in writing since the time of the last inspection and its efforts are beginning to bear fruit. The school has a good capacity to improve further.

Governors share the school's vision; they have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are rightly proud of the above average standards. They are not yet using their knowledge to hold the school fully to account.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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
--	-----------------------	--------------

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	2	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?	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?	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	3	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	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

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE
T 0207 421 6800
F 0207 421 6707
www.ofsted.gov.uk

St Cuthbert's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School, New Seaham
Mill Road
Seaham
County Durham
SR7 0HW

12 November 2005

Dear Pupils

The inspection team enjoyed visiting your school and seeing your work. You have a good school where you enjoy your work and feel safe. Thank you for helping us to find out about your school by talking to us about your work, your life in school and the things you like most.

With your help this is what we found out about your school:

you help one another and behave well

you learn interesting things and have many out of school activities

you have good teachers who help you to reach good standards and make sure that you are safe and happy

your headteacher checks how well the school is doing and looks for ways to make it better.

What we have asked your school to do now is:

make sure that in all parts of your lessons you are all doing work that will help you to improve.

Thank you again for helping with the inspection and we hope you continue to enjoy your time at St Cuthbert's.

Yours faithfully

Linda Buller
Lead inspector

Annex B