



Our Lady and St Joseph's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School, Brooms

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 114253
LEA Durham
Inspection number 279347
Inspection dates 30 March 2006 to 31 March 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs Shirley Herring

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	St Ives Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Leadgate
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Consett, County Durham DH8 7SN
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01207 503979
Number on roll	127	Fax number	01207 503979
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Tom Clark
Date of previous inspection	1 October 1999	Headteacher	Mrs Sharon Fenwick

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector.

Description of the school

Our Lady and St Joseph's is a small Catholic, village primary school. It is a popular school that has very close links with the local parish community. All four classes contain mixed-age groups. The number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. Though no child currently has a statement for their needs, the system of banding in the local authority indicates a higher than average proportion of pupils who require specific learning support. Almost all the children are from a white British background. Two children on the school roll are from the Travelling community. There are indications of above average social deprivation. Children enter the reception class with below average skills, particularly speaking skills. The school received an achievement award in 2003.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The inspector agrees with the school and parents that this is a good school that gives good value for money. Standards are average when pupils leave school and achievement is good. Personal development, firmly based on the school's Catholic ethos, is good. Teaching is good overall and is strongest in the reception class and Years 5 and 6. The curriculum is well planned to meet the needs of pupils in mixed-age classes and a good range of visits enhances learning. The school plans good activities for pupils to improve their speaking skills, but planning for writing is less systematic. Pupils receive a good level of care and support, but many pupils are not aware of their own targets for improvement. The headteacher's leadership and management are good and stem from her high aspirations to raise standards. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well organised so that they achieve well. Many coordinators are new to their responsibilities and their management role is underdeveloped. Assessment information is not organised to track pupils' progress through the school. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. This significant improvement since the last inspection indicates the school's capacity to improve further. The school has good links with the parish and organisations that support families and children.

not applicable

What the school should do to improve further

- Quicken the pace of lessons to the level of those in the Foundation Stage and in Year 5 and Year 6.
- Develop the role of the coordinators to monitor standards, achievement and assessment.
- Organise assessment information to track pupils' progress through the school and ensure that all pupils are aware of their own targets for improvement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are average by the time pupils leave school and achievement is good. Achievement is accelerated in reception and Year 5 and 6 because of the consistently good teaching in these years. Children enter the reception class with levels of attainment that are below average and the speaking skills of some children are poor. Good teaching in the reception class and specialist language support enable children to achieve well. By the end of reception, children's social and mathematical skills are average, though their communication and language skills are below average, but improving.

Achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, where teaching is sound. In the 2005 national tests at the end of Year 2, standards in writing and science were average, and standards in reading and mathematics were below average. Achievement is good at the end of Year 6 because of the consistently good teaching in Year 5 and Year 6. In

the 2005 national tests standards were average in mathematics, slightly above average in science but below average in English. This followed some disruption in staffing in the final term. Pupils are currently on line to achieve their challenging targets. Work is currently average in English and above average in mathematics and science, with a high proportion of pupils working at the higher levels. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported and achieve well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development is good and is firmly based on the school's Catholic ethos. Clear rules and sanctions that are understood by the pupils encourage good behaviour. The school uses a good range of strategies and support effectively to deal with pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. In particular, there is a high level of support in Year 2 to deal with the high proportion of pupils with challenging behaviour in that year. Pupils generally settle quickly to their tasks and have good attitudes to learning. They report that adults deal promptly with the very occasional instances of bullying. Attendance is average. Pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles which the school encourages by providing fresh fruit and healthy lunches. They understand the need to work and play safely, for example by responding to clear instructions for handling science equipment and taking part in initiatives such as cycling proficiency and anti bullying week. Pupils make a good contribution to the community through the school council, involvement in Parish activities and support for charities such as CAFOD, the Catholic agency for overseas development. They are prepared for future well-being by the school's good attention to basic skills and the opportunities to work together. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school makes particular efforts to raise multicultural awareness.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall. Teaching in reception and Year 5 and Year 6 is consistently good so that pupils make particularly good progress in these classes. The good teaching is characterised by interesting activities that are managed well and by thorough planning which takes full account of careful assessments of pupils' work. In the teaching judged to be satisfactory, the pace of lessons slows and the attention of some pupils wanes. A strong feature of teaching throughout the school is the good contribution of the skilled teaching assistants, who support learning well. Teaching for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well organised in class and in small groups with the result that they learn well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. Good planning for the needs of pupils in mixed-age classes covers all subjects. The organisation of teaching groups for literacy and numeracy to include pupils of similar age and ability helps staff to plan work at the correct level. The good programme for developing personal, social and health education contributes well to pupils' personal development and has parental support. There is a good emphasis on developing speaking skills in all lessons, though planning for writing in other subjects is less systematic. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well to enhance learning. A good range of visits in all classes extends learning. Older pupils spoke knowledgeably about their geography field trip to trace the River Derwent from its source to the sea. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is good. It is firmly based on suitably practical activities in all areas of learning which meet the needs of young children well. This is a great improvement since the last inspection.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school takes good care of its pupils. All statutory requirements regarding risk assessments and personnel checks are in place. The generous level of teaching assistants contributes to a good level of support for pupils with learning or behaviour difficulties. The school is quick to identify any areas of need and seek necessary specialist advice at an early stage. This has been particularly effective in supporting pupils with speech and language difficulties. In Year 5 and Year 6 pupils are well aware of what they need to do to improve, through their individual literacy and numeracy targets. However, this good practice in using targets is not consistent through the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good overall. The leadership of the headteacher is good and her high aspirations have contributed to pupils' good achievement and personal development. The decision to spend resources on additional support staff has raised achievement. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well managed and they achieve well. The school is committed to equal opportunities for all and the organisation of teaching groups supports all pupils well. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and has been used to set challenging targets for improvement. Questionnaires seek and take account of parents' views. Regular assessments provide considerable information about individual pupils. However, the recording systems in place are not effective in tracking pupils' progress across the school. The good leadership and management of the Foundation Stage have led to good improvements since the last inspection. This indicates the school's capacity to improve further. Many coordinators are new to their area of responsibility and their role in monitoring teaching, standards and achievement is not yet developed. The literacy coordinator has recently been appointed as a leading literacy teacher, though

there has not yet been the opportunity for her to share her expertise with other teachers in school. Governance is satisfactory. The governing body is supportive and well informed, but has limited first hand experience of the day to day running of the school.

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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	3	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	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	3	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?	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?	2	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	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

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The Children

Our Lady and St Joseph's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School, Brooms

St Ives Road

Leadgate

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County Durham

DH8 7SN

31 March 2006

Dear Children,

Thank you for making me so welcome when I inspected your school. You told me how much you like your school and how well all the adults take care of you. I was impressed by how well you behave in class and in the playground.

Mrs Fenwick organises the school well. I think you have good teachers who help you to learn well in English, mathematics and science. All the adults work really hard to help those of you who find it difficult to learn or to behave. I hope you will help them by doing your best.

I have asked Mrs Fenwick to encourage teachers to share their ideas with each other, so that all your lessons will be good. I have also asked the teachers to make sure that you all know your own targets to help you to improve. I would like Mrs Fenwick to keep all your test results together so that she can see the progress you are making from reception to Year 6.

Yours faithfully

Mrs Herring

Lead Inspector