



St Philip Neri Roman Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Better
education
and care

Unique Reference Number 108394
Local Authority Gateshead
Inspection number 288087
Inspection dates 30–31 January 2007
Reporting inspector Joe Clark

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Ellison Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Dunston, Gateshead
Age range of pupils	4–11		Tyne and Wear, NE8 2QU
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0191 4604378
Number on roll (school)	113	Fax number	0191 4604378
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Paul Hutchins
		Headteacher	Mrs Lucie Stephenson
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2001		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
4–11	30–31 January 2007	288087

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

St. Philip Neri is a smaller than average Catholic primary school. It serves a mixed area but most children come from areas of relative social and economic disadvantage. Children's attainment at entry to the Reception class is below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. Almost all the children are of White British heritage and only a small minority do not speak English as their main language.

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. Pupils' personal development is outstanding and their behaviour is excellent. They enjoy coming to school. Through good curriculum provision, especially in sport, and an effective programme of personal, social and health education, they become aware of the benefits of safe practices and of adopting a healthy life-style. Their attendance is good. They are given excellent care and support. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Relationships between pupils and adults, and with each other, are very supportive and help raise pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem. This reflects the strong Catholic ethos and values of its patron saint, typified in the school's strong pastoral system and motto: 'A joyous heart is more easily made perfect than one which is cast down'. Pupils enjoy the many extra-curricular activities the school provides; they take on responsibilities eagerly and fulfil them conscientiously.

In their academic work, pupils attain high standards and achieve well. Results at the end of Year 6 can vary because of the small numbers in a particular age group but in the national tests at the end of Year 6 in both 2005 and 2006 they were significantly above average. Given that children enter Reception with standards that are below national expectation they achieve well. The Foundation Stage provides children with a good start to their learning and by the end of the Reception year standards are matching national expectations in most cases. Throughout the school, standards in writing are not as high as in reading.

Pupils achieve well because teaching and learning are good. Tasks provide a good level of challenge to all pupils and teaching assistants also make a good contribution to the pupils' learning. Although work is marked regularly and with encouraging comments, there is insufficient guidance for pupils on how well they are learning and what they need to do to improve. The curriculum is well matched to their needs and interests, and as a result pupils bring excellent attitudes to their studies. Systems to record and track individual pupils' progress do not give a full picture of a pupils' progress as they move through school.

The school is effectively led and managed. The recently appointed headteacher has introduced new ideas and ways of working which have revitalised the teaching. Her energetic and motivating leadership, supported by an effective deputy and the rest of the staff, is bringing about many improvements, for example, in systems of monitoring and evaluation. Through Governors' Days and curriculum links to subject areas, governors play an important part in the management of the school. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and very happy with what it provides. As one parent wrote: 'We could not wish for a better education and school environment for our daughter'. The school has good capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards further, particularly in writing.

- Improve the quality of marking so that pupils know the standard they are working at and what they need to do to improve.
- Develop systems to record and track pupils' progress as they move through the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children enter Reception with standards that are below that normally expected, especially in speaking and listening. They make good progress and by the end of Reception they are achieving expected levels in most areas of learning. Statutory targets at the end of Key Stage 2 in both English and mathematics are challenging and have been achieved in each of the last two years. Through Years 1 to 6, pupils continue to progress well and by the end of Year 6 the results they achieve in national tests are significantly above average, as in 2005 and 2006. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities progress as well as other pupils. The school has correctly identified that standards in writing across the school are lower than they should be.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils like coming to school because, not only do they enjoy their lessons and the many other activities the school provides, they also feel secure and happy in their relationships with both adults and each other. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding, reflecting the school's strong Christian commitment to personal values. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are excellent. Attendance and punctuality are good and there are virtually no unauthorised absences. Pupils make a strong contribution to the community, not only the local parish but the wider community also, for example, through the fire service and a local special school. They love to take on responsibilities through the many opportunities the school provides, such as house captains or playground buddies. They give generously to charity through direct giving or special events such as the sponsored Derwent Walk.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good throughout the school. In the Foundation Stage teachers have a good understanding of how young children learn best. As a result, the emphasis is on practical activities and fun so that children are happy and learn well. Teachers have good support from a strong team of teaching assistants who help to cater successfully for the different age ranges and abilities in the class. Planning is good. Tasks are well matched to pupils' abilities and provide an interesting range of learning experiences. Teachers are beginning to use interactive whiteboards to present

lessons in more imaginative and interesting ways. Pupils' work is marked regularly but it does not always provide them with enough detailed information of how well they are doing and what it is they need to do to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is well matched to pupils' needs and as a result, the pupils are eager to learn. All statutory requirements are met. Good curriculum links exist with the partner high school, particularly in sport, and with a local special school in science. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good and they make good progress. Higher attaining pupils achieve well but there is still scope to extend even more pupils to enable them to achieve the higher grades in national tests at the end of Year 6. The range of extra-curricular activities, and pupil participation, is good, particularly in Key Stage 2. Effective curriculum support has been sought from the local authority, especially in the Foundation Stage, and parent volunteers provide good support for the development of pupils' reading.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides excellent care and support for its pupils. All teachers have had recent child protection and first-aid training and risk assessments are robustly and regularly carried out. Relationships and communication with parents are good. Pupils feel safe in school and have confidence in their teachers and other adults. They say there is no bullying in school. Good links with outside agencies, such as the community police officer and fire service, ensure pupils are informed and aware of safety issues. Good links with the partner high school help in transition at the end of Year 6. Good use is made of support agencies, for example, the Amber Project to help children and families through behaviour support programmes. The pupils are aware of what they are aiming for because they have learning targets in literacy, numeracy and personal development. Guidance on the standards individual pupils are achieving in their work, and what each has to do to improve and move up a level, is satisfactory, but more could be done.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school is well led and managed and gives good value for money. The headteacher is giving clear direction for what needs to be done to bring about further improvement. She is well supported by a strong staff team who successfully manage and effectively coordinate most subjects. Key areas, such as the Foundation Stage, and the provision for pupils with learning difficulties and physical disabilities, are well led and managed. There are good systems in place for monitoring the work of the school and accurately evaluating how well it is doing. Better systems for tracking individual children's progress as they move through the school have already been identified as an area for

development. There are good links with parents. More than fifty percent of parents and carers responded to the Ofsted questionnaire, the overwhelming majority expressing strong support for the school's values and leadership. The governing body knows the school well and is beginning to develop a more strategic role in the school's long term development. Finances are well managed. The local authority is providing effective specialist support, especially in the Foundation Stage. There is good capacity for further improvement.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

St Philip Neri Roman Catholic Primary School

Ellison Road

Dunston

Gateshead

Tyne and Wear

NE8 2QU

4 February 2007

Dear Children

Thank you so much for your warm welcome when I visited your school recently. If St Philip Neri was here now, he would be very proud of every one of you! I really appreciated the help you gave me in sharing your work and your ideas. These are some of the things I found out about your school:

Your behaviour and attitudes are excellent and everybody gets on well together.

You have a very good headteacher who, along with the other adults in the school, takes excellent care of you.

Your teachers and other adults are people you can look up to because they teach you well and help you make good progress.

You are very generous and have raised a lot of money for CAFOD and other charities.

You know how important it is to eat healthy food and keep fit.

We have asked the school to help you in two simple ways by:

- helping to improve the quality of your writing
- helping more of you to get Level 5 or higher in your SATs at the end of Year 6.

Thank you once again for being so friendly and helpful and good luck for the future!

Yours faithfully

Joe Clark

Lead Inspector