

Our Lady and St Anne's RC Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108510
Local Authority	Newcastle upon Tyne
Inspection number	288123
Inspection dates	13–14 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Mr Denis Goodchild

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	218
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Miss Erica Howell
Headteacher	Mr Michael O'Brien
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2001
School address	Summerhill Terrace Newcastle upon Tyne Tyne and Wear NE4 6EB
Telephone number	0191 2325496
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average primary school situated in an area of high social deprivation. Though the majority of pupils are White British there are a high percentage of minority ethnic pupils, mainly of Asian origin. The proportion of pupils with English as an additional language is well above average and the proportion on free school meals is above average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. Children's attainment on entry to the Nursery is below average. The school has benefited from a regeneration initiative in the community. The headteacher was appointed in September 2006.

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 that provides good value for money. The school is valued by the parents; they overwhelmingly agree that the school is safe and secure and that their children enjoy coming to school. As one parent, reflecting the view of many, commented, 'My child goes to school with a smile on his face and comes home with a smile on his face.' Effective partnerships with parents and carers are quickly established on entry to school and further developed so that parents can support their child's learning.

Pupils achieve well. Children start school with attainment below that which is typical for their age; it is well below in social and language skills. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage and this progress continues through Key Stage 1. The results of assessments in 2006 in Key Stage 1 were an improvement on those of the previous year and showed that standards were broadly average. Pupils make very good progress in reading because of good emphasis on developing reading strategies. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are broadly average and pupils make good overall progress. Test results in 2006 in English and mathematics were average and an improvement on those in the previous year, but results in science continued to decline and were below average. Following successful action taken by the school, boys' results improved overall in 2006. Pupils with English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also make good progress because their needs are identified and addressed at an early stage.

The school places a strong emphasis on personal development and care, guidance and support are good. As a result, pupils make good progress in this aspect of their education and develop into mature, sensible individuals who care for each other, enjoy school and work hard in lessons. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. This is evident in their excellent behaviour around school, the care and consideration shown to one another and in how well they support charities. Strong links with other countries gives pupils a very good appreciation of other cultures and lifestyles. Pupils willingly accept responsibility and in their work on the school council contribute to the school community. Attendance has improved and is in line with the national average. Pupils have a good understanding of safe and healthy living and are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Teaching is good overall. Children get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception because of a good range of well managed activities. Typically, in Key Stages 1 and 2, teachers ask pupils to explain their answer and they are given sufficient time to practise and develop skills. Occasionally, the pace of teaching is too slow and not enough use is made of the information available to set more challenging work and increase the rate of progress. The curriculum is satisfactory and promotes pupils' personal development well. A good range of clubs, visits and visitors add enjoyment to pupils' learning.

Leadership and management are good. The actions being taken to raise standards are well chosen and demonstrate that the school has good capacity for continued improvement. The headteacher is very well supported by the senior management team and by good governance and he has the full confidence of parents. The schools' own self-evaluation is accurate and clearly outlines what the school needs to do to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Build on recent initiatives to raise standards in science.

- Use the good information available on pupils' attainment more effectively to match the work set for pupils to their needs and abilities.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. Pupils reach broadly average standards by the time they are ready for secondary school. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also make good progress because of additional support which addresses their needs. Pupils who learn English as an additional language attain similar standards to their classmates.

Children's attainment when they start school in the Nursery is below that which is typical for children of this age. It is well below average in language and social skills. Good teaching and well managed activities in the Nursery and Reception help children make good progress particularly in reading and social skills. Nevertheless, there is still a significant number who do not reach the expected standards in all the early learning goals. The schools' results in the 2006 national assessments for Year 2 were average in writing, reading and mathematics. This is an improvement on the previous year's results and more typical of results over recent years. They represent overall good progress and show that pupils achieve well. Pupils make very good progress in reading because letter recognition skills are developed well at an early stage.

Standards are broadly average at the end Key Stage 2. Although pupils' achievement is good, their progress through the key stage is uneven; it accelerates through the second half of the key stage. The 2006 Key Stage 2 test results show that standards were broadly average in English and mathematics. Both results were an improvement on the previous year and reflect the initiatives taken by the school to raise standards in these subjects. Consequently, the school exceeded its targets for English and met its target mathematics; they exceeded their target for the more able pupils in mathematics. In science, test results were below average and declined for the third year. The school has identified what needs to be done to raise standards in science, but measures taken are at a very early stage and have yet to affect results. Boys' results improved because of the success of the school's initiatives targeted at improving boys' progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and say that teachers make learning 'fun'. Attendance has improved and is average. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The school has a strong spiritual ethos and pupils have time for quiet reflection. In assemblies, they are asked to pray to 'whatever name you give your God...' Pupils are encouraged to think of others and write their own prayers, posting them in a special 'prayer box'. These are shared by the headteacher and allow pupils' innermost thoughts and feelings to be expressed. One prayer asked that someone will 'never feel cold inside or hurt again.' These moments are valued by the pupils and one commented, 'What I like best about this school is the prayer box because it helps us to care and think about others.' This sense of care and respect for others is evident in the very good relationships, the excellent behaviour of pupils and the support they give to a range of charities. They learn about other cultures through different parts of the curriculum and this is well represented in displays of pupils' work. The school has a Healthy School award and pupils understand the need to eat healthily and keep fit: many take advantage of a wide range of extra-curricular activities. The

pupils know how to stay safe and who to ask for advice and support. They willingly accept responsibility and their work in the school council makes a valuable contribution to school life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall. Typically, teachers are knowledgeable and produce detailed lesson plans. Lessons are therefore well structured and organised and no time is wasted. Children get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception because well managed activities help them to make good progress. Teachers have very good relationships with pupils and high expectations of behaviour. This provides calm, well-ordered classrooms, which support pupils' learning. Teachers use information and communication technology well in their lessons and this adds enjoyment to learning. In the most effective teaching, pupils are challenged to explain their answers and this deepens their understanding. Pupils make good progress where teaching proceeds at a lively pace and they have opportunity to use their knowledge and practise their skills. In a few lessons in Key Stage 2, the pace is too slow and pupils are not given sufficient time to work independently and use what they know. Teachers have a wealth of information on their pupils, but this is not used as effectively as it could be in all lessons to match work accurately to the needs of the pupils to help them achieve as well as they should.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school provides an adequate curriculum that caters very well for pupils' personal development. For example, as part of the Eco Schools scheme, Year 2 and Year 5 pupils have embarked on a partnership to establish a gardening club. They visited a garden centre with a view to establishing their own vegetable garden and using the produce in the cookery club. In addition to developing pupils' personal and organisational skills, such activities add enjoyment to learning. A good range of visits, visitors and clubs enriches the curriculum. Pupils particularly enjoy the range of physical activities on offer.

The early curriculum ensures that pupils' reading skills are well addressed enabling all pupils to make very good progress in their reading. In order to raise standards in mathematics, there has been a focus on developing calculation strategies and computer software has been purchased to complement this. Initial tracking shows an improvement in pupils' achievement in mathematics and pupils say they enjoy the subject. To reverse the decline of standards in science, the school has correctly identified the need to develop pupils' investigative skills and extend pupils' scientific vocabulary. A focus on speaking and listening is also helping to improve pupils' verbal reasoning and explanations and thereby support scientific enquiry. Teachers plan work that makes links between subjects and to provide opportunity for pupils to use and develop their basic skills in different contexts.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Procedures and routines to ensure pupils' health and safety are thorough and risk assessments are fully in place. The very good relationships within school and caring ethos mean that pupils are confident that there is someone to go to if they are upset. The overwhelming majority of parents state that their children are well cared for and supported. Effective partnerships between

school, parents and other agencies ensure that there is early identification of children who need additional help and support is quickly provided. This helps pupils with English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress in the early years. A Parent Link worker, funded by 'New Deal,' develops good links with parents and encourages them to participate in a wide range of activities that support their children's learning.

The school has new and very effective checking and recording systems to measure pupils' academic progress. Teachers are, therefore, in a position to provide good guidance on how pupils can improve. Not all pupils get the benefit of such advice or know what they need to do to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has made an excellent start and has quickly got to grips with the main issues. He and the staff have the overwhelming support of the parents who value the care their children receive and the happy ethos of the school. The senior management team is very well supported by the rest of the staff in their drive for improvement. As a result, the school is very well placed to build on the improvements seen in the 2006 results in English and mathematics. This is because leaders have effectively evaluated the school's work through good monitoring systems. They then put strategies in place to address any weaknesses. For example, they have developed clear guidelines for calculation strategies throughout the school and so raise standards in mathematics. Actions to raise standards in science are identified as a high priority.

The schools' own self-evaluation identifies that a minority pupils in Key Stage 2 do not achieve as well as they could. The inspection confirms the accuracy of the schools' judgement. This factor and the schools' response in implementing a system for tracking individual progress precisely is the basis for their good capacity to improve.

Governance is good. Governors monitor the school's work and they have a good knowledge and understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. They are, therefore, well placed to support the school in its drive to raise standards. Issues raised at the last inspection have been addressed successfully.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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	3
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
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	3

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?	3
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.

Annex A

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

Our Lady and St Anne's RC Voluntary Aided Primary School

Summerhill Terrace

Newcastle upon Tyne

Tyne and Wear

NE4 6EB

15 March 2007

Dear Pupils

Thank you very much for making us so welcome when we recently visited your school. You made our work very easy by being so polite and helpful.

What I will remember most about your school is how happy it is and how grateful everybody was to work in the school. One of your helpers said to me, 'This school is one big family, when I come here it is like being at home.' I think she is right. This is because your headteacher, teachers and helpers take good care of you and keep you safe. You told us that you feel safe and there is always someone to go to if you are worried. Your parents also think this is true. Of course you play your part by being so well behaved and also showing that you care by your work in the school council, the 'prayer box' and your contribution to charities.

You told us you enjoy coming to school, particularly the visits and clubs, and how lots of sporting activities and eating the right kind of food keeps you fit and healthy. You also enjoy your lessons because teachers work hard to make them interesting. You do very well with your reading and are getting better at English and mathematics. We think you can do even better in these subjects and also much better in science. Your headteacher and the teachers also think you can do better and already have plans in place to help you improve.

You can do your bit by listening very carefully when your teachers tell you what you need to do to improve and by working very hard to reach and exceed your own personal targets.

We wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Denis Goodchild

Lead Inspector