

St Oswald's CE Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108711
Local Authority	South Tyneside
Inspection number	288163
Inspection dates	7 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Mr Andrew Scott

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	216
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Beverley Taylor
Headteacher	Mr Michael Falcus
Date of previous school inspection	January 2002
School address	St Oswald's Road Hebburn Tyne and Wear NE31 1HT
Telephone number	0191 4832844
Fax number	0191 4832844

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

St Oswald's is an average sized primary school in an urban area of significant social and economic disadvantage. Almost all pupils are from White British families. The movement within the pupil population is much less than the national picture. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities varies considerably, but is below average at present. When children start in the Reception class their attainment is low, especially in language.

The school was visited by one inspector for one day. The overall effectiveness of the school and the following issues were investigated: academic achievement, teaching, school development and the quality of care, guidance and support. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation document, national published assessment data, the school's records and procedures, observation of the school at work, parents' questionnaires and discussions with staff and pupils. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspection found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

St Oswald's is an outstanding school. Its strong Christian ethos and high expectations enable pupils to prosper in their personal development and academic achievement. In discussion, pupils openly said how much they enjoy school and feel very valued. Respect for their teachers came top of their list of strengths and helps to explain their good attendance. The very caring family ethos ensures that pupils are relaxed yet very focused on their work - an ideal combination for learning. The peals of laughter that sometimes echo down the corridors when pupils move around school typify the happy atmosphere. Parents certainly approve of 'its wonderful sense of community' and 'very approachable staff'.

Achievement is outstanding and standards are above average. When children start school, their skills and abilities are much lower than those typical for their age. They have particular weaknesses in language, in their creative and physical development and also in their awareness of the world about them. Outstanding teaching in the Reception Year enables them to make swift progress and comfortably reach all the goals expected of them. There is a high level of challenge here. For example, children in the café (role-play corner) were not just required to act out parts but make proper calculations about the cost of their food orders. Before they began to paint, children discussed options such as colour washes and textures. The learning environment has been considerably improved recently and it inspires children to learn.

This excellent start is built on robustly in Key Stage 1 and standards are usually above average by Year 2. Last year, standards in mathematics were average and the school was quick to identify a weakness in problem-solving and to address it. The school's records show a much better performance this year. Pupils make excellent progress through Key Stage 2 and have achieved significantly above average results in national tests in Year 6 in four out of the last five years. Their results in 2006 were well above average and the school met its challenging targets. The consistency of success is a testament to the quality of management and teaching.

Teaching is judged to be outstanding overall because it is consistently good with much that is excellent, especially in the Reception class and Years 2 and 6. In all lessons, the excellent rapport between pupils and adults guarantees a harmonious and purposeful atmosphere. Clear presentation of new learning, high challenge and the involvement of all pupils are common strengths. Teachers' work is informed by first-class systems that identify exactly what pupils need to learn next and how well they are progressing. Consequently, excellent guidance from teachers and teaching assistants in lessons really reinforces learning. Many pupils benefit from working with a rich curriculum that successfully promotes their independence as learners, but this is not the case in all classes.

As the school's pastoral care and support are excellent, it is no surprise that pupils' personal development is outstanding. In addition to the very rigorous procedures for safeguarding pupils, staff embrace the Christian spirit of the school in their dealings with pupils. This has a clear impact on pupils' self-esteem and enables them to become mature, sensible and very caring towards one another. Their behaviour is

hard to fault, despite inevitable differences of opinion. They are very aware of healthy and safe lifestyles and about social responsibility through a strong school council and profitable links with the local community. There is an excellent cultural dimension, especially through performing arts. A story-teller was busy captivating the pupils during the inspection day. However, pupils' awareness of multicultural issues is not as advanced as it should be.

Leadership and management at all levels are outstanding, especially the leadership of the headteacher. According to his colleagues, he 'lives and breathes the school' and he is obviously much respected. He is wise, thoughtful and promotes the right kind of values for any school. A sign of his confident leadership is his skilful delegation of it, and the deputy headteacher and senior teachers are highly effective. The school's self-evaluation is very accurate, if a shade modest. It is very perceptive about its own strengths, and skilled monitoring, especially of lessons, leaves it in no doubt where it can improve further. This is clear from the improvement in mathematics in Year 2 and pupils' computer skills, identified as an issue in the previous inspection.

Parents think highly of the school. One parent summed up the views of many by saying, 'We are thrilled with the level of teaching ... and cannot praise the staff and leadership team enough.' A few have concerns about their individual children's progress, but the inspection found that pupils' progress overall is impressive. The school has developed extremely well since the last inspection; for example, in sustaining high standards, and enhancing the Foundation Stage provision and accommodation. A hallmark of the school's success lies in the calibre and stability of staff, as well as their eagerness to develop professionally. The school is very well resourced and in a very healthy financial position. Therefore, the school has outstanding capacity to develop further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make consistently good use of the curriculum to extend opportunities for pupils to develop their independent learning skills.
- Increase pupils' awareness of multicultural issues.

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Annex A

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?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	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
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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 learners' needs?	1
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?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
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

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.



8 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Oswald's CE Aided Primary School, Tyne and Wear,
E31 1HT

I am writing to thank you for the part you played in the inspection of your school. Your comments were very helpful in enabling me to get to know your school in the short time I was with you.

I think that you have an excellent school. I know you are very happy to attend, and your parents agree. You are quite right to appreciate your teachers because they help you to reach high standards and achieve extremely well during your time at the school. Because they make learning fun and have high expectations of you, you work very hard and develop very positive attitudes to work. Sometimes, you do not have enough chance to work things out for yourselves and so I have asked the school to provide more opportunities.

I particularly liked the family atmosphere in the school and the Christian values that influence all that you do. The staff take excellent care of you and this rubs off on you. Your behaviour is outstanding and you look after one another extremely well. I was very impressed by the warmth of your welcome for new children. You develop into thoughtful, kind and very sensible young people, with a strong awareness of right and wrong, and how to lead a safe and healthy lifestyle. You are certainly well set for your life ahead.

Your headteacher and all the staff have done an outstanding job in making sure that the school continues to make such good progress, especially in your test results. The staff are fully committed to improve your school even further and know there are still a few things that will help to make even better progress. They will, for example, promote all your subjects equally so that your learning will become broader and more interesting. In addition, I have asked them to help you to learn more about the different cultures that exist in our country nowadays.

I wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Scott
School Inspector