



St Aloysius RC Voluntary Aided Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 108720
Local Authority South Tyneside
Inspection number 288166
Inspection date 8 November 2006
Reporting inspector Tom Grieveson HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Argyle Street
School category	Voluntary aided		Hebburn, Tyne and Wear
Age range of pupils	3-7		NE31 1RZ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0191 4832845
Number on roll (school)	223	Fax number	0191 4834033
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Eddie Watson
		Headteacher	Mrs Eileen Lawson
Date of previous school inspection	1 December 2001		

Age group 3-7	Inspection date 8 November 2006	Inspection number 288166
-------------------------	---	------------------------------------

© 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 one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Aloysius is a Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Infant School situated in a residential area near the centre of Hebburn in South Tyneside. The school caters for 223 boys and girls between the ages of 3 and 7. The buildings are old but very well maintained and on-going work is continuing to improve the site's facilities. Most pupils reside in the areas surrounding the school, although some travel from the nearby towns of Jarrow and South Shields. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. Most pupils are White British with a small percentage from other minority ethnic groups but all are from households where English is the first language. One tenth of the pupils have additional learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

St Aloysius Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Infants is a good school, which excels in the personal development of its pupils and the manner in which it cares for their welfare. The large majority of parents consider that their children are happy at school and make good progress.

The school's aim of achieving high standards within a Catholic ethos has been consistently maintained over time. Throughout Key Stage 1 most pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make good progress in their learning and reach standards which are well above average by the time they are seven years old. More able boys however should reach higher levels in their writing and more able girls should do so in mathematics.

Children make good progress throughout their time in the Nursery and Reception classes. Most enter school with below average communication and social skills. Children enjoy their work and thrive in the stimulating environment provided by staff. Their needs are well understood and effectively catered for. Consequently, by the time they enter Year 1, most children have achieved well and reach broadly expected standards.

Good progress and high achievement occur because teaching is consistently good. Teachers make very good use of the school's accurate assessment information to provide relevant and well designed activities, which meet the needs of pupils. Learning targets are challenging, although pupils are not yet directly involved in setting them.

Leadership and management are good. The Headteacher's very good and determined leadership has maintained a secure focus on raising standards and this has ensured that progress since the previous inspection has been good. She benefits from the support and dedication of a hard working and effective staff team and a committed governing body. The school understands its strengths and pursues those areas requiring improvement with determination. The school's capacity for further improvement is good.

The majority of pupils demonstrate very good behaviour and excellent attitudes towards their work. They are happy at school and proud of their achievements. Pupils talk about their school with genuine fondness, knowing how well they are cared for and valued. Relationships are extremely positive. All members of the school community demonstrate respect towards each other. Pupils recognise that staff provides them with high quality guidance and support. They respond well to the advice they receive and this helps them to improve. The school provides excellent care for pupils. Safety procedures are robust and consistently carried out. Pupils are confident in their surroundings and this provides a secure platform to support their learning. The school provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the achievement and standards of more able boys in writing and more able girls in mathematics.

- Fully involve pupils in setting learning targets.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The standards achieved by pupils have been well above average over time in reading, writing and mathematics. From below average attainment on entry to the school, pupils make good progress and achieve well. This occurs because expectations are high. Teachers plan learning using the very good assessment information about pupils to ensure that lessons are challenging but always appropriate to meet their needs. Pupils' basic skills are developed well and teachers take many opportunities to develop these skills in other subjects. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support learning in other subjects is a particular strength. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well because of the carefully targeted and very good support which they receive. Although more able pupils do well, more of them should achieve even higher standards in writing and mathematics.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils enjoy school and talk positively about their work. Relationships between pupils and staff are excellent. There is genuine respect shown in all parts of the school and this reflects the school's mission values well. Attendance rates are improving and are now just above average. Systems for monitoring attendance are good.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The school closely follows its 'Catholic Mission' statement, although pupils also develop a good understanding of other world faiths and cultures. Pupils understand right from wrong and older ones in particular take responsibility for their own behaviour and actions. Behaviour around school is very good. Pupils are extremely courteous and friendly towards visitors. They know they are safe in school and are confident that staff will help them if problems arise. The use of Family Groups to build relationships across the school is effective and the manner in which older pupils take responsibility for their younger peers is noteworthy.

Pupils enjoy and appreciate the many opportunities the school creates to celebrate their achievements. They also demonstrate a keen commitment to charity fundraising. Through this work they gain a good appreciation of the needs of children living in countries affected by war and famine.

Pupils talk positively about healthy lifestyles. Participation rates in the 'wake up shake up' sessions prior to school starting are high. Pupils enjoy and show great commitment to this activity. They also take an active part in the sporting provision, which is provided after the teaching day. Pupils enjoy the many opportunities to participate in community events and in welcoming the community into school based activities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress because teaching is good. Teachers are clear about what they want pupils to learn. Lesson planning is thorough and tightly structured to meet their needs.

Teachers are enthusiastic about their work and this has a positive effect on pupils' attitudes and their commitment to learning. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to stimulate pupils' interest. Effective questioning encourages pupils to think and to demonstrate what they know and can do. In lessons, pupils discuss their ideas and work together well. This helps them to improve their speaking and listening skills, extend their vocabulary, and learn about team work. Teaching assistants are well deployed to meet the needs of all pupils but particularly the least able. Consequently, those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are effectively supported. This ensures that they are fully engaged in their learning and this helps them make good progress. Activities are well organised and well resourced in all classes.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and meets all statutory requirements. It is well coordinated to provide pupils with experiences of a broad range of subjects and to develop their basic skills. Teachers use good assessment procedures to plan appropriate learning experiences which effectively meet pupils' needs. The curriculum is further enriched by a variety of activities provided both within and beyond the teaching day, including Spanish and French and a significant use of ICT.

In the Nursery and Reception classes, children are provided with a good range of activities in order to develop their skills and help them learn. Younger children benefit from very good outdoor provision with a range of equipment and landscaping, which provides well for pupils' physical development. Despite the limitations on space, a corridor area provides ample opportunities for young children to engage in purposeful role play.

Pupils' work is attractively displayed around the school. This highlights the good emphasis on developing their basic skills, the provision of a broad curriculum and good opportunities to develop pupils' creative talents.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

This school excels in the care it demonstrates towards the pupils. There is a strong caring ethos, underpinned by the school's mission statement, which is evident in all aspects of its work. Highly positive relationships between pupils and adults ensure that pupils feel safe and know that help is available should they need it. Policies and

procedures for child protection are thorough and in place. The school is taking all necessary steps to ensure that pupils are safe and their welfare catered for. Very good transition arrangements exist for the successful transfer of pupils to the Junior School at the end of Year 2.

The guidance and support, which pupils receive, is good. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported; their needs are known and effectively catered for. The school has revised the way it tracks pupils' progress and this is effective. Teachers have an accurate basis from which to set pupils' learning targets, although pupils are not yet directly involved in setting them. Nonetheless, pupils receive good feedback from staff about how to improve and this supports their learning well.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The Headteacher, ably supported by a strong staff team and governors, has ensured there is a strong and clear educational direction for the school focused on raising standards. Collectively, they have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and where improvement is still required. The school improvement plan accurately reflects these priorities and actions are effectively targeted to good effect to bring about further progress. Subject leaders work diligently. They are very effective, keen to improve and provide good support to colleagues.

Governors make good use of the accurate and timely information, which they receive from the Headteacher and staff from which to make appropriate decisions. They are increasingly active in monitoring the school's performance and provide an appropriate balance of challenge and support to help the school improve. Financial resources are used well to meet the school's priorities. Despite its age, the school building and grounds are exceptionally well maintained and to a high standard.

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

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	-----------------------

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	3
How well learners enjoy their education	1
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	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 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

The Pupils

St Aloysius RC Voluntary Aided Infant School

Argyle Street

Hebburn

Tyne and Wear

NE31 1RZ

9 November 2006

Dear Pupils

As you know, I visited your school on 8 November 2006 to carry out its inspection. The report has now been completed and I would like to tell you what it contains.

St Aloysius Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Infants is a good school. It does an excellent job in the way it helps you develop as people and how it cares for you. Mrs Lawson, the staff and governors work very hard and do a really good job in helping you to learn.

Thank you very much for the welcome which you gave me. You helped so much in providing lots of information about your school. You told us how you enjoy your learning and all the activities in which you are involved.

Your behaviour during the inspection was very good. You work hard. You help each other. You try hard, even when the work is difficult. All this shows that you are very responsible.

Older pupils have helped the younger ones to settle well at school. This shows that you are very caring people. The school council have helped Mrs Lawson and the staff very much. In particular, their help in making your school a healthy place is very good.

Please thank your parents for all the very useful information which they provided. They clearly like your school and think that it is doing well. They are right.

I have asked Mrs Lawson, the staff and governors to make two things even better.

- To ensure that you are all involved in setting targets to help you learn.
- To help everyone do even better with their writing and mathematics.

Thank you for making my visit to St Aloysius so enjoyable. My very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Tom Grieveson

Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools