



St Bede's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 108852
Local Authority Sunderland
Inspection number 288208
Inspection dates 30 November –1 December 2006
Reporting inspector Alan Keenleyside

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Hampshire Place
School category	Voluntary aided		Usworth, Washington
Age range of pupils	3–11		Tyne and Wear, NE37 2NP
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0191 2193795
Number on roll (school)	212	Fax number	0191 2193797
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Steve Hill
		Headteacher	Mr Denis Naden
Date of previous school inspection	1 June 2001		

Age group 3–11	Inspection dates 30 November –1 December 2006	Inspection number 288208
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Bede's is a smaller than average sized primary school situated in a residential area of Washington. Most pupils live locally but some travel from further away because of the school's religious character. The area served by the school has below average indicators of socio-economic circumstances. A small number of pupils are entitled to free school meals. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. The school is accredited as a Healthy School.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

St Bede's is an outstanding school in which pupils make very good progress in their learning and achieve standards which are well above average. The school enjoys the support of the overwhelming majority of its parents. One parent wrote 'I feel that the school has an excellent learning environment'. The inspectors agree with the majority view of parents that the school offers their children a wonderful start to their education.

Children enter the Foundation Stage with standards that are broadly typical for their age. Provision is good and they make very good progress and do better than expected for their age by the time they enter Year 1. Very good progress is continued and pupils achieve well above average standards by the end of Year 2. High quality teaching at Key Stage 2 helps the pupils to make rapid progress in their learning and pupils reach exceptionally high standards by the time they are eleven.

Teaching in the Foundation Stage is wholly good with some exemplary features. At Key Stage 1 teaching is good, whilst that at Key Stage 2 is consistently outstanding. Pupils enjoy school, have very positive attitudes and behave exceptionally well. Personal development is outstanding because of the excellent quality care and support they receive such as, the way in which teachers diligently track pupils' academic progress, set challenging targets, and involve them in assessing their progress.

Leadership and management are outstanding and have ensured an unrelenting focus on raising standards. The highly effective leadership of the headteacher is a strength of the school. The school has a clear understanding of its strengths and where improvement is required such as in boys' writing. School leaders are committed to the safety and well being of all pupils. They make very good use of assessment information to plan future work. The school has made very good progress since the last inspection and management has a very clear understanding of what needs to be done to improve still further. The school gives outstanding value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards further in boys' writing.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Achievement and standards are outstanding. Pupils' attainment on entry to school varies considerably over time but is broadly average overall. Pupils make a good start in the nursery and reception classes where they make very good progress in their first year and do better than expected for their age by the time they enter Year 1. This very good progress continues throughout Key Stage 1 so that by the end of Year 2 standards are well above average. At Key Stage 2 pupils make exceptionally good progress and achieve standards which are very high by the end of Year 6. Although attainment at Year 6 has been above the national averages since 2001 it is only in the 2006 test results that this rapid change in achievement is evident. This outstanding progress

and high standards occur because teaching and learning are always good and often outstanding, particularly at Key Stage 2. Furthermore, all pupils are set challenging targets which the large majority meet consistently. The school carefully analyses its performance and teachers use this information to plan lessons which accurately meet the needs of all pupils. Standards reached in boys' writing are not as good as the girls' and the school has recently introduced targeted actions to ensure improvement. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make consistently good progress because their needs are well understood and pupils receive effective support.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Personal development is outstanding. Pupils greatly enjoy school and respond positively to the many exciting and fun opportunities available. When asked what they thought was good about the school, some Year 6 pupils said, 'Where do you start?' Pupils feel proud to be part of the school community. They know that their views are sought and valued, both in lessons and through the school council. Behaviour is excellent. The school is a happy community where bullying or racial incidents are almost unheard of. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is excellent. They demonstrate a very clear understanding of right and wrong and this is reflected in their discussions with staff and their actions. Cultural development is good. They learn to think about their own place in the world, alongside an understanding of those different to themselves. Although pupils are well informed about their own cultures and Christian beliefs, they know less about other world religions. They know how to keep themselves safe and healthy. Excellent care and relationships are helping pupils to grow into confident, thoughtful, mature young people. They are very well prepared for the next stage of their education, such as being encouraged to be independent learners. They welcome the many opportunities to take responsibilities and help others, for example, as 'special friends' for younger pupils in the school. The level of attendance is close to the national average. The school does all it can to improve this but a number of parents withdraw their children during term time for annual holidays.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is consistently good and often outstanding. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good with outstanding features and the children make very good progress, especially in their language and social development. Teaching is consistently good with outstanding teaching in nearly half of all the lessons seen in Key Stage 2. This is why pupils are making excellent progress and standards are exceptionally high by Year 6. In the best teaching, lessons are interesting, busy and purposeful. Teachers are extremely good at capturing pupils' interest and getting everyone fully involved in lessons. Good resources, exciting activities and excellent relationships result in

outstanding behaviour and concentration. One boy said, 'Sometimes you don't realise you are working and learning.'

Teachers plan thoroughly to make sure work is at the right level for all the children. They explain new ideas clearly, often using technology well. Pupils are sure that teachers, and other adults, work very hard to help them, so they do their best to improve. Teachers give good advice on how well each pupil is doing and how it might be better. They encourage pupils to play a part in this. Many pupils confidently assess their efforts against their personal targets and say what they need to work on. This helps them to make rapid progress. In a small number of lessons, the pace of learning drops now and then. This is usually because explanations go on a bit too long, or teachers continue to direct when the class is eager to start their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good, with outstanding enrichment from clubs, visits and visitors. The school makes sure that everyone benefits from what is offered. There is a good focus on literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT) which results in high standards. Teachers are quick to make improvements to help pupils learn more effectively, such as developing their writing skills. Personal and social development is given a strong emphasis and lies at the heart of the school's work. There is an exceptional range of popular and well attended clubs. These are evaluated each year to review the impact upon pupils' learning. Visits, special events and expert visitors make an outstanding contribution. For example, specialist teachers help with French, music, crafts, physical education and many sports. Pupils enjoy and learn from many visits, for example some Year 6 pupils said, 'We read Shakespeare, but it didn't make much sense until we saw the actors do it.' Events such as health week or 'make a play day' are very popular and bring new experiences. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is good with a rich and varied range of learning experiences.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. The school successfully promotes a caring environment and pupils care for each other exceptionally well. 'Special friends' ensure that playtimes are happy occasions in keeping with the Catholic ethos of the school. Pupils say that adults look after and support them very well in dealing with their concerns. Parents speak warmly of the care their children receive. The school does everything in its power to keep pupils safe and help them to learn. Procedures for safeguarding pupils, ensuring their health and safety are rigorously followed. Excellent relationships, both with adults and each other, help pupils to feel secure and valued. Pupils know there is always someone close by to turn to for help. One said, 'Our mission statement begins with "everyone cares", and it's true'.

The school keeps a very close eye on academic and personal progress. This information is used promptly to provide extra help or more challenging work. They love the systems for setting targets and earning rewards, because 'it helps you know where you are and

how to move up to the next level.' A key strength of the school is the way pupils are brought into this process, looking at their own work critically and suggesting new targets. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are identified at an early stage. The school works well with other partners to meet the needs of these pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Outstanding leadership and management throughout the school play a crucial role in promoting the Christian ethos and very positive climate for learning that all pupils thrive in and enjoy. The highly effective leadership of the head teacher ably supported by the senior management team, provides purposeful direction which is focused on raising standards. The school's self-evaluation is accurate, in recognising strengths and highlighting areas that need to be improved, such as raising standards in boys' writing. This links closely to a well established performance management system with the emphasis on staff development. This reflects a clear commitment to further improve the quality of teaching and raise standards.

The chair of governors and the headteacher work effectively together sharing a clear determination to improve the school. Governors have a good range of management expertise and are active in determining priorities for the school improvement plan. They are supportive, well informed and they discharge their responsibilities to very good effect.

The school is highly inclusive. Staff demonstrate exceptional care towards pupils and value their contributions. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. Communication with parents, an issue at the last inspection, is now well established and the school takes good account of views in determining priorities. Pupils' views are regularly sought and consistently responded to. The school makes good use of its resources. It has targeted its budget carefully to make excellent provision for physical education and the excellent provision for outdoor learning opportunities for Foundation Stage pupils. The capacity for future improvement is outstanding.

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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?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
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	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	1

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?	1

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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

St Bede's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School

Hampshire Place

Usworth

Washington

Tyne and Wear

NE37 2NP

30 November 2006

Dear Children

I had a great time when we visited recently and just like you, I really like your school. Thank you for making us so welcome. We really enjoyed talking to you and finding out about what you enjoyed doing. You are really proud of your school and rightly so.

Some of the things we really liked were:

- you work very hard and make such excellent progress
- your outstanding behaviour and excellent attitude to your work
- the staff take excellent care of you and make sure you are healthy and safe; and
- you have a very good headteacher who works closely with all the staff to make sure you do as well as you can.

However, your work would be even better if:

- you improved your writing.

Thank you for the part you played in the inspection of your school. We hope that you will carry on enjoying learning and helping your teachers to improve St Bede's Catholic Primary School. I wish you every success in all you do in the future. It is very well deserved.

Yours sincerely

Alan Keenleyside

Lead Inspector