



St John Boste Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection Report - Amended

Unique Reference Number 108853
Local Authority Sunderland
Inspection number 288209
Inspection dates 20–21 November 2006
Reporting inspector Andrea Lyons HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Castle Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Oxclose Village, Washington
Age range of pupils	4–11		Tyne and Wear, NE38 0HL
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0191 2193800
Number on roll (school)	180	Fax number	0191 2193803
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr John Holleran
		Headteacher	Mr Geoff Laidler
Date of previous school inspection	1 May 2002		

Age group 4–11	Inspection dates 20–21 November 2006	Inspection number 288209
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Amended Report Addendum

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St John Boste is a smaller than average primary school situated in a residential area of Washington, which varies in its social and economic background. However, most pupils come from homes that are not socially disadvantaged. By comparison with national figures, the school has far fewer pupils entitled to free school meals, pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities, pupils who have English as an additional language or pupils from a minority ethnic background. There are no pupils with statements of special educational need and a very small number of pupils who are looked after.

A new headteacher has very recently taken up post.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

St John Boste is a good school. It has a history of consistently high achievement, and is well regarded by parents, many of whom choose to send their children there from outside the catchment area. Some of the school's results in the national tests have fallen recently, from an extremely high level to one which is more variable. Nevertheless, pupils generally achieve above the national average, their behaviour is exemplary, and their basic skills are very firmly established. The school has a notably positive and caring atmosphere, and provides good care and support, particularly with regard to pastoral care. Parents recognise the school's many strengths and are supportive of its work. The governing body is extremely committed and supportive, but does not sufficiently challenge and hold the school to account.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Pupils' excellent literacy and numeracy skills and their very good attitudes to work mean that they generally make good or better progress. However, the progress of some groups of pupils is less good, for example, pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, higher ability pupils, and those who are entitled to free school meals. Assessment practice varies in its quality and marking does not consistently tell students what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good.

Partnership work is good. The school has strong links with the local parish and a number of charitable organisations, but few organised links with the local community.

The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. The school has not developed a secure senior and middle management team. Some key aspects of school self-evaluation and planning are out of date or limited in scope. The new headteacher has just begun to develop initial plans for key areas of improvement, including the establishment of a larger middle management team, which are timely and appropriate. The school has a satisfactory capacity to continue to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the progress and attainment of specific groups of pupils in the school, for example those who have learning difficulties and disabilities; higher ability pupils; and those who are entitled to free school meals.
- Improve assessment so that pupils know why they have succeeded and what they need to do next to improve.
- Develop a secure senior and middle management team.
- Improve and update self-evaluation and strategic planning, including accountability arrangements with the governing body.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. Standards are above, and are often well above, average. Most pupils make good progress.

Pupils' attainment on entry to school is above average overall. Effective teaching in Reception and Key Stage 1 ensures that they make good progress. At the end of Key Stage 1, standards in reading, writing and mathematics have been above or well above average for several years. However, the 2006 results are lower for the more able pupils than the previous years, especially in writing. The school is now aware of this and has plans to tackle this issue. In Key Stage 2, progress builds steadily through the school and standards at the end of this key stage have been well above average in all three subjects for the last three years. However, the 2006 results again show that standards have fallen in these subjects and in the number of pupils achieving the higher levels, with English showing the biggest dip.

The school has a wealth of assessment data, but insufficiently analyses this to spot problems in specific subject areas or particular pupil groups early enough, for example, the dip in reading and writing for above average Year 2 pupils.

Although pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities receive effective teaching and support in class, they make only satisfactory progress because their progress is not tracked systematically, there is too long between reviews, and support is not sufficiently focused on their individual needs.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are excellent. They enjoy coming to school, feel safe and valued, and appreciate what the school gives them. They say, 'We have good friends at school and get to do really fun things in our lessons'. Their enjoyment of their education is demonstrated by their positive attitudes, and good attendance and punctuality. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social education is outstanding. The school has a strong Christian ethos, and from that pupils have developed a very clear sense of care, support and respect for others. This results in exemplary behaviour both in and outside lessons, and very good relationships between all members of the school.

However, although the school introduces other faiths appropriately through the curriculum, it does not offer enough real life experiences to develop a full understanding of other cultures and faiths. Pupils support a number of charities both here and abroad.

Pupils say that they are encouraged to develop healthy lifestyles, and there is good participation in a range of after school sport clubs. While at school, most eat healthily and drink water at regular intervals. They have a good understanding of the dangers associated with smoking and substance abuse.

The school council provides pupils with opportunities to voice their opinions and make a difference in their school. They are beginning to work independently to plan and manage new developments, such as a healthy tuck shop. Their high level of basic skills, courtesy, and positive attitudes to work give them a good foundation for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are clearly planned and structured, and teachers provide clear explanations to pupils, based on good subject knowledge. Teachers know their pupils well, based on a range of formal assessments, evaluations of previous lessons and regular marking of work. They provide pupils with suitable activities to develop their knowledge and skills. Where necessary, activities are adapted and extended to allow additional practice until the teacher is confident that the majority of pupils are secure in their new learning. Excellent relationships between staff and pupils result in a positive, purposeful learning environment.

The best lessons are also faster paced, more challenging, and have a more varied range of activities, which capture the pupils' interest. Pupils are encouraged to participate and to take responsibility for their learning, individually and in groups. However, some lessons are too dominated by the teacher, the pace is too slow, and there is not enough challenge. Even in these lessons the high level of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, and their good attitudes to work, mean that they often make at least satisfactory and sometimes good progress.

The quality of marking varies across the school. In some cases, teachers do not provide enough guidance for pupils to know why they have done well, and the next steps they need to take to improve. This limits pupils' progress and ability to work independently. Staff have had some training in developing diagnostic assessment, and there are now examples of good practice, particularly in extended writing.

The school has an excellent group of teaching assistants, who are used very effectively, both to support individual pupils and to share overall responsibility for the class.

Pupils are confident about what they have learned and can explain it well. Their attitudes to work are very good, with high levels of concentration, perseverance and pride in their work.

Some groups of pupils do not make the progress they should. The teaching available for these pupils remains good overall, but is insufficiently focused on areas of individual need.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school offers a good curriculum, which meets all statutory requirements. French and music are taught by specialist teachers. The provision in the Foundation Stage comprises a healthy blend of guided and independent activity. Its curriculum and resources have been restructured recently, and this is having a positive effect on pupils' confidence and personal development. The school provides a wide range of thriving clubs and activities, including a choir, sports clubs, information and communication technology (ICT) and eco activities, which enrich the curriculum for many pupils. The

work in each subject is planned to ensure that pupils build knowledge and skills progressively. The school concentrates on the teaching of basic skills, to good effect. However, opportunities for pupils to extend their writing skills through independent writing are limited in some classes. The school promotes the pupils' awareness of safety issues well and is working towards the Healthy Schools award. Playground "special friends" together with the school council, make significant contributions to the school's life and ethos.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support for pupils are good. The pastoral care offered and the development of pupils' emotional well-being are outstanding. All staff, including support and administrative staff, are extremely supportive of pupils and show great commitment to their welfare.

Support for pupils' academic progress is good overall. Adults are always available to help and pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own progress. However, marking is not consistently effective, and some groups of pupils, such as children with learning difficulties and disabilities and looked after children, do not always receive sufficiently focused attention.

Procedures for safeguarding children follow statutory recommendations and procedures, and other statutory requirements such as risk assessments are met.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. Some key areas of the school's self-evaluation and planning are out of date and are limited in scope and effectiveness. The very recently appointed headteacher has understandably not yet had time to come fully to grips with the detailed management and strategic planning of the school. However, he has begun to evaluate the school's processes and performance, and has already begun to develop initial plans for development in some key areas. These are well focused and appropriate. The school's middle management is not well established or secure. The senior management team is limited in size and scope, and the roles of curriculum leaders have not been consistent over the past few years. The headteacher is rightly looking to develop a larger senior management team with responsibilities centred on the five outcomes of Every Child Matters.

The governing body is very highly committed to and involved in the school and has provided a good level of support both in terms of governance and direct support to staff and pupils. However, it is still in the early stages of developing its role in terms of challenge and overall accountability.

Monitoring of the quality of teaching has been variable both in approach and quality, and there are areas where there is little evidence. There is a planned programme of

monitoring involving both the senior team and curriculum leaders, but there is no agreed format or focus.

The school runs smoothly on a day to day basis, and statutory requirements are met. The school manages its finances well to provide a good staffing ratio and continue a programme of refurbishment to the school. It provides good value for money.

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
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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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
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	3

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	1
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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
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	3
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 John Boste Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School

Castle Road

Oxclose Village

Washington

Tyne and Wear

NE38 0HL

20 November 2006

Dear Children

Thank you for welcoming us to St John Boste's School. We were very impressed by how thoughtful and polite you were, and how well you could explain things about your school. You gave us lots of useful information and a real insight into what your school is like.

You told us that you think St John Boste is a good school and we agree. We thought that there were some particularly good things about it. For instance, we think that your teachers and support staff teach you well. They know what they are talking about, and explain it well, and make sure that you have interesting things to do. You are making good progress in all your work. Your reading, writing and mathematics are very good.

The atmosphere in the school is very caring and respectful of others. All of you, staff and pupils, make it a happy and purposeful place to be. Your behaviour was outstandingly good, both around school and in lessons, where you concentrate well and persevere with your work.

We think staff care for you well, and you told us that felt happy and safe in school. We could see that!

We have asked Mr Laidler and all the staff to think about a couple of things to help your school become even better. Firstly, they are going to look at how they mark your work so that you always know exactly what you have done well, and what you need to do next to improve. You might want to think how you could help with this. Secondly, they are going to double check that every child in school is making the best progress that he or she can, even when you find some things difficult or need a bit more challenge.

Please thank your parents for us, for sending in so many questionnaires. They also think that St John's is a good school.

We very much enjoyed our time in your school. Thank you for being so helpful. You are a credit to your school and your families.

Yours sincerely

Andrea Lyons, Her Majesty's Inspector

Alan Keenleyside, Additional Inspector

Farha Ahmad, Additional Inspector