

St Oswald's R C Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108718
Local Authority	South Tyneside
Inspection number	309778
Inspection dates	18–19 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Gianna Ulyatt

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	251
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Alan Brewster
Headteacher	Mrs Irene Pallas
Date of previous school inspection	1 October 2003
School address	Nash Avenue Whiteleas South Shields Tyne and Wear NE34 8NS
Telephone number	0191 5367922
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is broadly average in size and is situated in a former mining and shipbuilding community within the South Tyneside conurbation. The school serves an area of social disadvantage. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly average. Most pupils are from White British families with very few from minority ethnic backgrounds. The number of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The percentage of pupils with statements of educational need is above average.

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 with outstanding features in the care and guidance it offers and in pupils' personal development. Parents appreciate the work of the school. They speak very highly of the care and education their children receive and value the way the school consults with them and seeks their views. As one parent wrote, 'The school is very family orientated, but above all the children enjoy what this school has to offer.'

Pupils' personal development is so successful that they show high levels of confidence in all they do. They willingly engage adults in conversation and enter into sensible discussions about a variety of topics. Older pupils willingly look after younger ones. Pupils' understand the importance of staying safe and healthy. At lunchtime, pupils tuck in to healthy food, and sporting clubs after school are well attended. Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils are courteous, well-mannered and extremely attentive during lessons. They truly value the work of the school council because, through its action, their ideas are listened to.

Pupils achieve well and standards are above average. They are well prepared for the next stage of learning. When children start school, their level of attainment is below that which is typical for this age group. They make good progress throughout the school, achieve well and reach above average standards by the time they leave at the end of Year 6. The results of national assessments and tests for seven- and 11-year-olds show that standards are being maintained. Boys and girls tend to achieve equally well. Those of above average ability achieve better in English and science than they do in mathematics. Pupils who come from minority ethnic groups progress well. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also make good progress.

Teaching and learning are good because teachers assess pupils regularly and provide intensive support for those who are not making the expected progress. Relationships are excellent so pupils concentrate well and do their best. Particularly good features of the teaching are the way teachers make pupils think through challenging questions and the way they make sure pupils are clear about what they need to do to be successful. The curriculum is good and planning overall takes good account of individual needs. It is well adjusted, especially in English, to match the ability range in classes. Enrichment activities are extensive and support pupils' personal development very well. The school provides outstanding levels of care and pupils work in an environment where they are well supported and treated as individuals.

The school is well led and managed by a dedicated headteacher, enthusiastic senior leadership team and knowledgeable governors. As a result, challenging targets are set to ensure good standards are being maintained. Any slight dips are quickly addressed and dealt with as a whole school issue. The school knows its strengths and is well focused on making the right improvements. Governors are well informed and fully involved in the life of the school. They challenge the school effectively and are very supportive in helping it develop. With good provision and good outcomes, the school offers good value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The good provision in the Foundation Stage ensures that children learn in a caring, safe and stimulating environment, both indoors and outside. Activities are interesting and motivate children to learn. There is good emphasis given, through play, to early literacy and mathematics; consequently, children achieve well in these key areas. Activities are often linked to themes

and are planned well to achieve a good balance between directed tasks and those from which children can choose. Teaching is good because it gives good levels of support yet allows children to develop their own ideas. This approach has a positive effect on learning and promotes independence and confidence. Good organisation enables children from Nursery and Reception to work together for part of the day. This arrangement is particularly effective in promoting their personal development. Induction arrangements are good and parents appreciate the way in which their knowledge of their own child's capabilities and skills is taken into account by the school. Assessment procedures are good because they are based upon continuous observations of the children. However, the information gathered is not always used quickly enough to inform day-to-day planning which means opportunities are sometimes missed to extend learning. Leadership is good. The strengths of the provision are well recognised and appropriate areas for development have been identified.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that pupils of above average ability achieve as well in mathematics as they do in English and science

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are above average and pupils achieve well. Children enter the Nursery with a range of abilities and skills that are lower than those typical for their age. Throughout the Foundation Stage, children make good progress in all areas of learning and in particular in their personal development. On leaving the Reception class, they attain the levels expected for their age. Pupils throughout the school make good progress. The school's results in national assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 show that standards are significantly high and have been so for a number of years. In 2007 there was a slight dip in attainment because around one third of the pupils in this year group had learning difficulties. Test results at the end of Key Stage 2 show a pattern of at least above average standards being maintained for the past four years. A slight dip in English in 2006 was quickly addressed and test results for 2007 showed a dramatic improvement with pupils exceeding their targets. In mathematics, however, pupils of above average ability do not achieve as well as they do in English and science. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress. Boys and girls tend to achieve equally well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Their excellent behaviour, positive attitudes to their work and their caring relationships with others create a very happy atmosphere that contributes considerably to their success. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The school's ethos helps them develop a clear understanding of right and wrong as they become increasingly mature and responsible. As one pupil remarked, 'I wouldn't like to live in a world without rules. Without rules there would be chaos.' The school council contributes very effectively to school life, for example, by asking for more variety in the choices of fruit and vegetables at lunch time. They know that good health depends on a good diet and plenty of exercise. They talk with great maturity about how to keep themselves safe and pupils are courteous and cooperate very well. The school is organised into family groups so that older pupils take pleasure in being helpful and caring for the younger ones. Teamwork is encouraged. Pupils share ideas in lessons with a partner. Their awareness and

understanding of other cultures are enriched through visits and learning about a variety of religious festivals. Pupils enjoy school very much. Attendance is good and pupils arrive at school on time and eager to start the day. They are well prepared for the next stage of their learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is good. Teachers have well organised classroom routines and their management of pupils' behaviour is excellent. Resources, including the interactive whiteboards, are used very well to engage pupils' attention and motivate them to learn. The interactive classroom displays are used effectively as an aid to learning. Planning is detailed and questioning is used to good effect to extend children's thinking and assess their learning. In English, teaching has been very effective in raising standards by ensuring a close match of work to the abilities of all pupils. However, in mathematics activities for the more able pupils are not always sufficiently challenging to ensure they achieve as well as they could. Skilled assistants provide additional and effective support for pupils who find learning hard. Assessment is good overall. Teachers mark work regularly but advice given to pupils about how to improve their English work is more effective than guidance in mathematics.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum and other activities are good with some elements being outstanding. Statutory requirements are met and pupils' learning in English, mathematics and science is strongly promoted. Strong links with the City Learning Centre contribute considerably to pupils' skills in information and communication technology. Speaking and listening are very well promoted during house group sessions, assemblies and drama. Pupils say that one of the best things about school is the number of books around. They enjoy learning French and fully appreciate the good range of visits and visitors. These, alongside the extensive range of out-of-school activities, have a strong impact on pupils' physical skills, personal development and well-being. All after-school activities are well attended. The school has achieved the Active Mark for its work in promoting sport and is well supported by the School Sport Partnership. The school is currently working on ways to make the curriculum even more creative, so that learning can become more tailored to the interests of individuals.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Regular checks are carried out to identify and respond to any risks that might exist on the school's premises. This level of scrutiny is maintained when out-of-school visits are planned. Safeguarding procedures for ensuring that children are protected are in place and staff receive appropriate training. The strong links with external agencies ensure that pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive the support they need. Planning for these pupils is detailed and appropriate to their specific needs. They make good progress and achieve well because they are well tutored through specific learning programmes. Teachers assess all pupils each half term and analyse the results of tests. From this information, and their deep knowledge of their pupils, individual targets are established.

Those who do not achieve as well as expected are quickly given additional and intensive support to help them catch up. This is one of the reasons why pupils achieve well.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides thoughtful direction for the work of the school. All pupils' inclusion in the school's provision for academic and personal development is central to this vision. The senior leadership team work closely together to ensure assessment procedures and data are fully analysed so that pupils' learning can be tracked and monitored. As a result, the school sets realistic but challenging targets for its pupils so that good standards are being maintained. As a team, the staff and governors set a clear direction for educational developments and place strong emphasis on improving the provision. The high attainment in English is a direct result of new initiatives which are consistently applied across the school. The school is beginning to train leaders for all subjects in order to develop management skills across the school. The school improvement plan provides a good basis for moving the school forward and its priorities are based closely on the development points identified through whole school self-evaluation. Issues from the last inspection have been fully addressed and the school has good capacity for further improvement.

Governance is good. Governors are experienced, knowledgeable and well informed. They are very committed to the school and make a good contribution to its role in the local community. They show a good awareness of the standards achieved and the school's other outcomes. They challenge the school, monitor its work and assist in setting targets.

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

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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 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.

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

19 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Oswald's R C Voluntary Aided Primary School, South Tyneside, NE34 8NS

The other two inspectors and I would like to thank you for making us very welcome when we visited your school. We particularly enjoyed talking to you over lunch time and seeing how much you enjoyed your lunches. You are very friendly and caring. You are growing up into confident and healthy young people. It is good to see how well you concentrate in lessons and how you listen very carefully to the ideas of your classmates. I can tell you like school because your behaviour in lessons and around the school is excellent. You go to a good school where teachers, assistants and all staff care very much about you.

I know you work hard and try your best at all times because your teachers certainly make learning interesting. Your standards are good in English, mathematics and science. In English and science you all do particularly well. Many of you say you like mathematics. However, school tests show that those of you who get particularly good marks in English and science do not reach the same high standard in mathematics. The school is going to look at ways in which mathematics, at the higher levels, can stretch you further than it does now. In turn, you have to work very hard at your number work and problem solving so your parents and teachers can be even more proud of you.

Thank you again for being so helpful and, don't forget, keep the good friendships you have made and always do your very best.

Gianna Ulyatt

Lead inspector