

St Bede's RC Primary School, Jarrow

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108725
Local Authority	South Tyneside
Inspection number	309781
Inspection dates	28–29 April 2008
Reporting inspector	David Earley

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	172
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Roy Smith
Headteacher	Mrs Joan Neil
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2004
School address	Harold Street Jarrow Tyne and Wear NE32 3AJ
Telephone number	0191 4898218
Fax number	0191 4203603

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average sized school in the centre of Jarrow. It serves an area with high levels of social deprivation and unemployment. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is above average. Most pupils are of White British origin. A small number of pupils learn English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. The school has achieved the Activemark Award.

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. There are some outstanding features. The headteacher provides very clear and purposeful leadership. The staff and governors share a commitment to leave no stone unturned in order to provide the best for each pupil. A parent rightly commented that the school helps children, 'to become well rounded individuals.'

Pupils make good progress overall. From starting points below those expected for their ages, children make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage, although most do not reach the targets set for their learning by the time they leave the Reception class. In Key Stages 1 and 2 the rate of learning accelerates and pupils make good progress. By the end of Year 6 standards are significantly above average.

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Relationships and behaviour are outstanding. Pupils have a good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle and they enjoy coming to school. They feel safe and well looked after and attendance is above average. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to increase their independence by, for example, planning and organising activities which contribute to the life of the school. Pupils' social skills are outstanding and they are well prepared for the next stage in their education. They make good contributions to the wider communities. Opportunities to increase their understanding of the cultural diversity of British society are limited.

Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are typically lively and interesting but because much learning is teacher directed there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to learn independently. Assessment is used well to provide tasks which are well suited to different abilities and backgrounds. The involvement of pupils in this gives them a good understanding of what they need to do in order to improve.

The curriculum is good. It is well planned to suit the needs of pupils of all backgrounds and abilities. Good enrichment activities help to extend the curriculum and deepen pupils' understanding. There is a good focus on literacy and numeracy and good links with outside agencies help to extend the curriculum. There is good provision for personal, social and health education.

Care, support and guidance are good. There is an outstanding family atmosphere enhanced by the school's very strong Christian values. This underpins pupils' positive attitudes to learning. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who learn English as an additional language are well supported so that they make good progress. A good system of checks helps to give teachers the information they need to help pupils to improve their work. The school does everything it can to ensure that pupils are safeguarded.

Leadership and management are good. There is a shared vision for improvement and a commitment to provide the best for each pupil. Governance is good. Governors play an important role in supporting the school and holding it to account for its performance.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory and this leads to satisfactory progress. This is because teaching and the curriculum are satisfactory. Children are well supported and cared

for. Relationships are very good and children settle in very quickly. Clear routines are in place so that children know exactly what is expected of them and they behave very well. Activities are not always appropriately matched to needs of young children and this limits their progress. This is particularly the case when they are kept for too long sitting in whole-class groups. At times, teachers provide too much direction which reduces opportunities for them to make choices and develop independence. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are satisfactory. Appropriate priorities for improvement have been identified leading to some improvements. For example, younger children make good progress in their knowledge of letters and sounds. However, strategies implemented by the school have not yet resulted in significantly increasing the rate of progress overall.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the rate of progress in the Foundation Stage.
- Increase the independence of pupils in their learning and in their contributions to the life of the school.
- Improve awareness of cultural diversity in British society.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement of pupils, whatever their background or ability, is good. By the end of Year 6 standards are above average. Children start Nursery with skills below those typical for their age. They make satisfactory progress, although by the time they enter Year 1 most pupils do not reach the goals set for their learning. The pace of learning increases in Key Stage 1 and pupils make good progress. In the national tests in 2007, standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 were average. Currently, pupils are making good progress in Year 2, although they are expected to reach below average standards. This is because their starting points were lower than usual and there is a higher proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in this group. Good progress continues in Key Stage 2. In the national tests in 2007 in English, mathematics and science standards were significantly above average overall. Pupils in the current Year 6 are making good progress and are expected to reach above average standards.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good overall, and exceptional in some areas. Relationships are excellent and pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Pupils say that they feel safe and very well looked after. Pupils get on well together and their very good levels of confidence and self-esteem help to support their learning. However, there are limited opportunities for pupils to build on this and further develop their independence in and beyond the classroom. They enjoy being at school and attendance is above average. Pupils have a good understanding of how to maintain a healthy lifestyle. They contribute well to the school community as councillors and 'Buddies'. Good links with the church and support for charitable events help pupils to develop a good understanding of the role they play in the wider community. They have a satisfactory awareness of cultural diversity in British society but there are insufficient opportunities to extend that understanding. However, their good literacy and numeracy skills and exceptional social skills equip them well for the next stages of learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. It is never less than satisfactory and is occasionally outstanding. This is significant in the good progress most pupils make. The very supportive learning atmosphere and interesting lessons lead to positive attitudes to learning. Assessment is used effectively to match challenging tasks to pupils' different needs and abilities. Pupils are involved in assessing their own learning which helps to develop their understanding of how to improve. Teaching assistants skilfully support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who learn English as an additional language so that they progress at the same rate as their peers. Teachers have good subject knowledge. This enables them to explain clearly and ask challenging questions, which help to deepen understanding. However, opportunities for pupils to use their skills and understanding more independently are restricted because much learning is closely teacher directed.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It is well balanced and helps pupils of all abilities and backgrounds to make good progress. For example, pupils with special talents in mathematics performed very well in an international mathematics competition. There is a good range of enrichment activities to extend the curriculum, including visits and visitors. When pupils visited a Roman fort or worked with a book illustrator their skills and understanding were extended. There is a good focus on the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) has a positive impact on learning. Good provision for personal, social and health education successfully supports pupils' ability to be healthy, stay safe and keep busy. There are good links with outside agencies and other schools. This ensures, for example, that the transfer to the next stage of education is usually a smooth one.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. The excellent relationships and strong Christian values help to create an exceptional family atmosphere. This enhances the support and guidance pupils of all backgrounds and abilities receive, and is important in promoting their progress and personal development. Adults are very perceptive to pupils' needs and their strong commitment to providing the best for all pupils' results in a caring and inclusive approach. This is well demonstrated by the welcoming induction procedure for pupils new to the school. Procedures for child protection, safeguarding, risk assessment and health and safety meet requirements. There are strong links with parents. They are very supportive of the care and guidance provided by the school. Academic guidance is good. Pupil tracking is used effectively to check progress and provide challenging targets for improvement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides very strong leadership. She works with determination and energy to drive the school forward. In this she is well supported by her deputy. Staff and governors work closely together and share a clear vision for improvement. They ensure that all pupils are included in what the school has to offer and this leads to good overall achievement and personal development. Self-evaluation is realistic and forms the basis of a well prioritised development plan. The school is not complacent. It knows the aspects of its work which need to be better because teaching and learning are systematically checked in order to make improvements. For example, it has identified the need to raise standards for higher ability pupils and this is bearing fruit with more pupils achieving at the higher levels. The school is aware of the need to improve provision in the Foundation Stage. Governance is good. Governors know the school well and are very supportive. This enables them to play an important role in helping to shape the direction of the school and to hold it to account for its performance. Issues from the previous inspection have been successfully addressed. Very strong leadership and a shared commitment to provide only the best for its pupils give the school good capacity to improve further.

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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	3
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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.

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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

30 April 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Bede's RC Primary School, Jarrow, South Tyneside, NE32 3AJ

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to visit you. Your school is good and there are parts that are excellent. We really enjoyed talking to you and were impressed by your politeness and courtesy. We were also impressed by the way you know about the importance of healthy eating and exercise in keeping fit. It is good to see that the pupil council does a good job in helping to make improvements and that buddies help to take care of others.

These are some of the things your school does well.

- You work hard and do well in your learning.
- The school takes good care of you and keeps a good check on how well you are doing.
- Your headteacher, teachers and governors work hard to make the school a better place and to help your learning.
- Lessons are interesting and you go on lots of visits and have visitors in school so that you want to learn.
- Your behaviour is excellent and you get on extremely well with each other.

These are some of the things we have suggested to make your school even better.

- We would like the youngest children to make even faster progress in lessons.
- We would like you to try and do things for yourselves more, so that you become less dependent on the teachers.
- We would like you to find out more about people in our country who have different traditions and customs.

Thank you again for your kind and courteous welcome.

Yours sincerely

David Earley

Lead inspector