

# St Alphonsus' RC Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	111715
<b>Local Authority</b>	Middlesbrough
<b>Inspection number</b>	310670
<b>Inspection date</b>	27 September 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Margaret Armstrong

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3-11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	197
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Father David White
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Gerard Finn
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 January 2004
<b>School address</b>	Cadogan Street North Ormesby Middlesbrough TS3 6PX
<b>Telephone number</b>	01642 243400
<b>Fax number</b>	01642 243400

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The overall effectiveness of the school and the following issues were investigated: achievement and standards, personal development and well-being, teaching, care, guidance and support and leadership and management. Evidence was gathered from the school's self evaluation documentation, national published assessment data, the school's records and procedures, observation of the school at work, parents' questionnaires and discussion with staff and pupils. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspection found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

This is an average sized primary school which is situated in an urban area of significant social and economic disadvantage. The large majority of pupils are from White British families and the remainder are from a wide range of minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is higher than average, as is the percentage who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The proportion of pupils learning English as an additional language is higher than that found nationally. A very small proportion of pupils are looked after by the local authority. When children start school their attainment is exceptionally low, especially in language and social development. The school provides a good range of study support activities.

## 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. Its strong Christian values and high expectations enable pupils to flourish in their personal development and academic achievement. In discussion, pupils openly said how much they enjoy school and this is reflected in their improving attendance. They find learning exciting and most play a full and active part in the life of the school. Parents are very supportive of the school and are satisfied with the quality of education and care it provides. As one parent noted, 'It is a lovely school and I am pleased my child is a part of it'. The school has made good progress since the last inspection, particularly in the way in which steps taken have increased parental involvement in the work of the school.

In Key Stages 1 and 2, achievement is good. Standards are broadly average and rising. The school's most recent Key Stage 2 test results in mathematics and science show a significant improvement on the previous year. High attaining pupils did particularly well. This improvement is that the result of teachers making better use of assessment data to provide more focused teaching which takes into account the wide range of abilities of the pupils. Although pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1, the work provided does not always build sufficiently upon the pupils' prior learning. This is because the information from assessments is not used with as much success as it is in Key Stage 2. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, those from minority ethnic groups and other vulnerable pupils make good progress because support enhances their learning. Those new to learning English are well supported so they soon gain confidence and play an active part in lessons. The attainment of boys and girls is comparable, except in English where boys' writing skills are weak. The school has implemented a good range of strategies including the use of 'Talking Partners' and 'Big Write' to help them improve.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Relationships are good and, as a result, most pupils are well behaved and manage their feelings and emotions well. However, a small number of boys in Year 1 display challenging behaviour which is adversely affecting their learning, despite the use of well-planned interventions by the school. A strong emphasis is placed on promoting healthy lifestyles. This is borne out by pupils' clear understanding of what constitutes a healthy diet and by the large numbers who participate in the good range of sporting activities on offer. Pupils take on new responsibilities confidently including participating in the school council and acting as 'Guardian Angels' for younger children. They are keen to be involved in community activities and are proud of the work they do to raise funds for charities, including the support they give to both their local church and St Michael's in Bolivia. The good grounding pupils receive in their social and basic skills prepares them well for the next stages of learning. The school takes exceptional care of its pupils and ensures their safeguarding is a key focus. A very close check is kept on the welfare of those potentially at risk and strong links with outside agencies support this work. As a result, pupils feel safe and secure and they are confident issues such as bullying or any other form of harassment would not be tolerated in their school.

Teaching and learning are good. Relationships are exemplary and, as a result, most pupils work hard and learn at a fast rate. Teaching assistants are well trained and provide high quality, targeted support. This means pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the increasing number with additional needs are able to play a full part in lessons and achieve well. Marking is not used consistently across the school resulting in pupils being unsure about how well they are doing and how they might improve. The curriculum provides a good range of opportunities for pupils to enrich their learning ranging from visitors into school including

community artists and sports personalities, visits out of school to participate in the Teesside University Meteor Project and support from outside agencies such as Tees Valley Music Service.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher sets a clear direction for the work of the school and he has worked relentlessly to make the best possible use of the accommodation to support learning. The newly built state-of-the-art information and communication technology (ICT) suite is an excellent example of his determination to ensure pupils learn in a modern, exciting environment. The newly formed senior leadership team provides a sharp focus on raising standards and achievement. For example the team analyses data rigorously and have implemented new systems to track pupils' progress which are used well to measure progress. Effective assessment systems provide a clear picture of where support is needed and give valuable information for planning future work and setting targets. Self-evaluation procedures are comprehensive and provide an accurate picture of what is working well and what needs attention. Teaching and learning are monitored regularly by senior leaders and support is provided when required. This has resulted in the improved performance of higher attaining pupils at the end of Year 6 because teaching has increased the level of challenge for these pupils. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are enthusiastic and supportive and are keen to develop their role further in monitoring the school's performance and development. The strengthened leadership confirms the school has a good capacity to improve further. The school provides good value for money.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. Children join the school with skills which are exceptionally low in comparison with those typical for their age. Induction procedures are thorough so children settle in quickly and soon become busy learners. They make good progress because teachers build well on their starting points. Most children behave well and make good progress in their personal development. Teachers and support staff have a clear understanding of how young children learn. They provide a good balance of activities led by an adult and those initiated by children and they keep a close check on how they are doing. Effective links with parents ensure they are actively involved in their children's education. Leadership from the Foundation Stage leader is good. Any weaknesses are tackled swiftly. Children's safety has a high priority and vulnerable children receive high quality support when it is needed. The good start children make in the Foundation Stage prepares them well for the next stage in their learning.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve the use of assessment where necessary to ensure that work matches the needs of all groups of learners.
- Improve the use of marking across the school so pupils know what they need to do to move on in their learning.

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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 <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
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	3
The behaviour of learners	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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	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**

28 September 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Alphonsus' RC Primary School, Middlesbrough, TS3 6PX

I am writing to thank you for the part you played in the inspection of your school. Your comments were very helpful in enabling me to get to know your school in the short time I was with you.

I think you have a good school. Many of you told me how much you enjoy school and that you think you are getting on well. I agree with you, your teachers and your parents. I enjoyed visiting your classrooms and I was very pleased to see how hard you work with your teachers and other adults. Your work is good quality. This is because most of you are keen to learn and work hard. The headteacher and teachers make sure you learn well.

I particularly liked the family atmosphere in school and the Christian values that influence all you do. The staff take very good care of you and they want you to feel safe and secure in school. Most of you behave well and look after each other. You develop into thoughtful, kind and sensible young people, with a strong awareness of right and wrong, and how to lead a safe and healthy lifestyle. Well done to the Guardian Angels! You look after the younger children in school very well.

Even though your school is good, the headteacher, staff and governors want to make it even better. You are given work that interests you and that helps you make good progress. I have asked the school to improve the way your work is marked and to make sure that information about what you can already know and can do is always used to plan lessons. You can help by always doing your best and continuing to involve yourself fully in the life of the school.

Once again, thank you very much for your help and good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Armstrong

Lead inspector