

William Cassidi Church of England Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111720
Local Authority	Stockton-on-Tees
Inspection number	310672
Inspection date	8 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Linda Buller

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	199
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Bob Tingle
Headteacher	Mrs Julie Cornelius
Date of previous school inspection	1 April 2004
School address	Stillington Stockton-on-Tees TS21 1JD
Telephone number	01740 630270
Fax number	01740 630270

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and the following issues; whether the rate of pupils' progress in each key stage resulted in good achievement overall; the impact of curriculum changes on pupils' progress and the standards they reach; whether the targets set for improvement are challenging enough to raise standards.

Evidence was gathered from the school's records of pupils' progress and the assessments of the standards they attain, from observing teaching and learning, from analysis of pupils' work in books and from discussions with pupils, staff and governors. Parents' responses to the Ofsted questionnaire were also analysed. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation were not justified and these have been included in this report.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average sized primary school situated in the north of Stockton- on-Tees, an area which is average in terms of social and economic advantage. Most pupils are of White British heritage. A smaller proportion than nationally claim a free school meal. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also below average. Through the British Council, the school has developed strong links with a partner school in India. The school is an Investor in People organisation and has attained several awards including, the Healthy School Gold Award, Eco School Green Flag Award, the Artsmark Gold Award, the Activemark and the Financial Management Standard in Schools.

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 several outstanding features. The quality of care, guidance and support provided for pupils is outstanding, and pupils' personal development and well-being are excellent. The school's very strong Christian ethos underpins all that happens within the school. Parents are rightly proud of the experiences provided for their children and are very supportive of the school. As one parent commented, 'My three children love going to school and I feel the best is brought out in each of them – what more can a parent ask for?'

Following their excellent start in the Foundation Stage, pupils' good progress is sustained in Key Stage 1 and is built on well in Key Stage 2 so that overall achievement by all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, is good and standards are well above average. At the heart of the school's success are good leadership and management. All staff are encouraged to contribute to school improvement and many successful initiatives are the product of the staff's enthusiasm or interests. Self-evaluation is accurate and this enables the school to identify and prioritise appropriate areas for development. For example, a whole-school drive to improve pupils' writing skills has been particularly successful with the result that in the 2007 national assessments, standards in writing at the end of Key Stage 1 were exceptionally high when compared to the national average. The introduction of rigorous assessment and monitoring systems means that the school has a clear view of how well each pupil is doing and this facilitates the setting of challenging targets for further improvement. This is one of the key reasons why the rate of pupil progress is increasing and standards are rising.

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are outstanding. Pupils respond very positively to various merit systems and behaviour is excellent. Pupils love learning and this is demonstrated in their good levels of attendance. When they sing about their school during whole-school worship their faces shine with pride. Pupils have a good understanding of the benefits of adopting a healthy lifestyle through diet and exercise, although they are aware that this is not yet wholly reflected in the choices they make. There is a very strong community spirit in school; pupils willingly help others both in school and in the wider world. They carry out responsibilities, such as being members of the school council or Eco Warriors, with maturity and enthusiasm. These activities, together with good basic skills, prepare pupils effectively for future education and work.

Teaching is good and sometimes outstanding. Teachers know the pupils really well and work very effectively with support staff to ensure that the guidance and support that pupils receive is outstanding. One of the strengths of the good teaching and learning is the good range of imaginative methods that are employed to motivate pupils and encourage their independent thinking. Most lessons are planned effectively and build well on what pupils already know. The drive to provide pupils with a real focus for their learning by linking subjects together is, in the main, successful, occasionally, however, pupils are not always clear about what it is they are required to learn and this slows their progress.

The school has developed a rich and creative curriculum which develops pupils' enthusiasm for learning and their understanding of how to take responsibility for the well-being of themselves and others. Staff have worked hard to ensure that resources and activities meet the needs and interests of all pupils. This has been particularly successful in the development of boys' early literacy skills. The curriculum is further enhanced by a wide range of after-school activities and an outstanding partnership with other providers such as a local high school. Whether it is music,

sport or learning Spanish, pupils say they appreciate the opportunity to have fun and learn new skills.

The improvements made since the last inspection together with the success of recent initiatives to raise standards show that the school has a good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Outstanding provision in the Foundation Stage enables children to make a flying start to their education. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Children's attainment when they enter the Nursery is typical for the age group; they make good progress and enter Key Stage 1 as enthusiastic and well prepared learners with skills and knowledge above national expectations. Children make good progress in gaining early literacy and numeracy skills. This is the result of high quality teaching and the rich and imaginatively planned curriculum which takes its lead from children's natural curiosity. As a result, excellent opportunities are provided for children to learn through investigation and discovery. Children's progress is monitored carefully by the Foundation Stage leader who has a very good knowledge of the requirements of the early years curriculum and ensures that all children receive the appropriate support or challenge to do as well as they can.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that in all lessons pupils are clear about what it is they are required to learn.

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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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
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	2
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

12 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of William Cassidi Church of England Aided Primary School, Stockton-on-Tees, TS21 1JD

Thank you so much for the very warm welcome you gave me when I inspected your school recently and the time you took to share your thoughts and ideas with me. Your school is a good school. Your teachers and all the other adults who work with you care about you a great deal and want you to do well. They help you to make good progress and to reach standards that are well above those reached by other pupils nationally.

Your behaviour is excellent. I was impressed by your politeness to others and how willing you are to help. In lessons you work hard and clearly enjoy coming to school. It was lovely to see the pride you have in your school and how much you appreciate the wide range of activities which are provided for you. I know you enjoy those lessons which have exciting topics and that this helps to give you a real focus for your work. To make sure you learn as well as you can in these lessons I have asked the school to make sure that as well as having fun you are also clear about what it is your teachers want you to learn.

Please thank your parents and carers for returning their questionnaires which show that most think the school is doing a good job and thank you again for all the help you gave me during my inspection.

Yours sincerely

Linda Buller

Lead inspector