

St Wilfrid's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114262
Local Authority	Durham
Inspection number	311535
Inspection dates	18–19 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Margaret Armstrong

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	246
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Simon Kellett
Headteacher	Mr Simon Rudd
Date of previous school inspection	1 January 2004
School address	Murphy Crescent Bishop Auckland County Durham DL14 6QH
Telephone number	01388 603451
Fax number	01388 451500

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average sized primary school which is situated in an area of considerable social and economic disadvantage. 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 number of pupils who have a statement of special educational need is average. The large majority of pupils are from White British families and the remainder are from a range of minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils learning English as an additional language is lower than that found nationally. The school provides breakfast and after-school clubs.

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. The headteacher and his staff know the pupils very well. This has resulted in a good level of care and support provided for pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Most parents are very supportive of the school and speak highly of the 'exceptionally well run school' where their children feel 'relaxed and happy'. 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.

The personal development and well-being of pupils are good. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding, demonstrating the success of the school's shared principle of 'Care, Courtesy and Concern'. As a result, pupils behave exceptionally well and display mature attitudes to learning. Pupils feel well supported and cared for. They enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in improving attendance levels. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay healthy and keep safe. They make a good contribution to the community through involvement in fundraising for a range of charities and through their involvement in events in local churches. The good grounding pupils receive in their social and basic skills prepares them well for the next stages of learning.

Standards are above average and pupils achieve well. When children start school their level of development is usually below that which is typical for this age group. The good provision in the Foundation Stage means children quickly become active learners and achieve well. Pupils build on this good start in Years 1 and 2 and continue to make good progress because teaching builds well on their prior learning. Achievement is good throughout the rest of the school and, by the time pupils leave Year 6, standards are above average. However, boys tend to achieve better than girls in mathematics and science and girls achieve better than boys in English. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, those who come from minority ethnic groups and those new to learning English make good progress. This is because teaching assistants provide high quality, targeted support which helps them improve.

Teaching and learning are good. This promotes good achievement for all pupils. Relationships are excellent and lessons are lively, therefore pupils work hard and enjoy learning. A good curriculum is planned well to meet the needs of all pupils. They report that learning is interesting and fun. The partnerships the school has with outside agencies are outstanding. As a result, the curriculum is enriched by a very good range of high quality activities that are available both inside and outside of lesson time.

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher leads and manages his staff well. As a result, teachers and support staff work well together as a team to maintain a sharp focus on raising standards and achievement. However, this has not yet ensured systems for tracking pupils' progress are used consistently across the school. In addition, pupils do not always know how successful they have been or what they need to do next to improve.

Governance is good. Governors are well informed and well involved in the life of the school. They support the school well through new initiatives. The school provides good value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

When children start school their skills and abilities are generally below what is typical for their age; many have delayed language development and/or speech difficulties. Children make good

progress and achieve well in the Foundation Stage. The outstanding care and support given to children helps them to settle quickly so they learn to work and play together in a safe and stimulating environment. The thorough induction procedures and home visits, for example, ensure teachers and support staff know each child very well. By the end of the Reception year children have made good progress to reach standards which are close to national expectations. Good assessment procedures help teachers plan activities which take account of children's prior experiences. As a result, teachers provide a good balance of activities led by an adult and those initiated by children and they keep a close check on how well they are doing. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because of the effective adult support. Leadership and management are good and ensure that adults are well trained to plan and deliver an exciting curriculum. 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

- Ensure that assessment systems are used consistently to monitor pupil's progress and inform pupils about what they need to do to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are above average and pupils achieve well. In 2006, standards were average for Year 2 pupils, except in mathematics where they were below. Pupils in Year 6 made good progress to reach above average standards. Higher attaining pupils performed very well in mathematics and science. In 2007, standards at the end of both key stages reflects steady improvement in English. However, although higher attaining pupils performed very well in science, their achievement in mathematics was below expectations. A key factor in the school's success in English and science has been the use of a well-planned programme of 'Booster Support' which has resulted in boys, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, those from minority ethnic groups and other vulnerable groups making good progress. Pupils who have English as an additional language are well supported so they soon play an active part in lessons and achieve well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. By the time pupils leave the school in Year 6 they are confident and articulate individuals who show empathy and concern for others. They behave very well because relationships are exemplary and they know what is expected of them. Pupils enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in improving levels of attendance. The school promotes healthy lifestyles well. This enables pupils to make informed choices about the food they eat and to take regular exercise. Pupils say they feel safe in school because they know adult support is readily available. They are a credit to the school and take a great deal of pride in their contributions to the community. For example, they act very responsibly as 'playground friends' and are actively involved in fundraising activities. Pupils have a very clear understanding of right and wrong. They respect themselves and value the opinions of others. Pupils have regular opportunities to explore other cultures through events such as Faith Weeks and they are pleased to receive 'I think globally' badges as part of their work in considering world wide issues. The good grounding pupils receive in their social and basic skills prepares them well for the next stages of learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers' planning is thorough and takes careful account of pupils' previous learning so that work set is challenging and enjoyable for all groups of pupils. Relationships are very good and, as a result, pupils are keen to work hard and do their best. Teachers create a strong feeling of security for pupils who willingly respond with confidence to challenging questioning. This gives them opportunities to show how well they are learning. Teachers make good use of computer whiteboards to provide interesting and exciting learning experiences. This approach has been particularly successful in increasing boys' engagement in their learning. Teaching assistants are well briefed to ensure that vulnerable pupils, and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are provided with tasks which cater well for their individual needs. Although work is closely tailored to the full range of learners' needs, teachers do not yet make sufficient use of assessment information to track progress and pinpoint exactly what pupils need to do next to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It fully meets national requirements and responds well to the learning needs of pupils with a wide range of abilities. The curriculum is lively and engaging and promotes good achievement in pupils' personal and academic development. It is enriched well through strong links with the parish and wider community. For example, pupils talk eagerly about the residential visit to Belgium and the visit from the Lions of Zululand performance group. The school has excellent links with other providers. For instance, the school's involvement in the Bishop Auckland Excellence in Clusters Initiative has resulted in improved provision for gifted and talented pupils. The opportunities for learning beyond the classroom are good and pupils are very keen to attend the wide range of sport and creative activities offered by the school. There is a systematic approach to the development of pupils' skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology which helps them prepare well for future life.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Procedures for child protection, risk assessment and health and safety are in place. Expectations for the behaviour and development of pupils are set very high within a caring climate in which all feel valued and supported. The school has a good partnership with parents and the innovative use of 'parent support advisers' for instance, supports learning well and has resulted in improved attendance. The very good links with outside agencies ensure that the needs of pupils, especially those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and other vulnerable pupils are met. Procedures for welcoming pupils new to the school are excellent and help them settle in and quickly become part of the school community. Guidance is satisfactory. Strong links with the local secondary school ensure a smooth transfer as pupils move to the next stage of their education. However, systems for tracking pupils' progress are not yet used consistently across the school to check pupils are not making enough progress. Pupils are not fully aware of the progress they have made and do not always know exactly what they need to do to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and deputy headteacher work together effectively and this has helped them develop a good team spirit in the school. The school's self-evaluation procedures are comprehensive and provide an accurate picture of what is working and what needs attention. Teaching and learning are monitored regularly and support is provided when required. This has resulted in the improved performance of higher attaining pupils in science at the end of Year 6 because teaching has increased the level of challenge for these pupils. Senior leaders analyse data carefully and set challenging targets for improvement. Governors know the school well and play a full part in its development. They have ensured there is a good range of quality resources to support pupils' learning. The school has good capacity for further improvement.

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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	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?	2
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	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
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

22 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Wilfrid's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School, Durham, DL14 6QH

I am writing to thank you for the part you played in the inspection of your school. We really enjoyed spending time with you and listening to your views about your school and why you enjoy learning.

You go to a good school. Many of you told us how much you enjoy school and that you think you are getting on well. We agree with you! We enjoyed visiting your classrooms and we were very pleased to see how hard you work with your teachers and other adults. Your work is good quality. This is because you receive good teaching, are keen to learn and work hard. We were very impressed with your excellent behaviour and how well you take responsibility for looking after each other. You develop into thoughtful, kind and sensible young people with a strong awareness of right and wrong. Well done to the playground friends! You look after the younger children in school very well. You told us you really like the after-school clubs, and we can understand why. Your school works very closely with outside groups like the Sports Partnership to make sure there are lots of interesting things for you to do.

We particularly liked the family atmosphere in school and the Christian values that influence all you do. The headteacher and staff take very good care of you and they want you to feel safe and secure in school. 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 helps you make good progress. We have suggested that the staff make sure they track your progress carefully and teachers tell you exactly what you need to do next to improve. 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