

# Blessed John Duckett Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114283
<b>Local Authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	311548
<b>Inspection dates</b>	21–22 November 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Graeme Clarke

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	82
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr John Flynn
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss Catherine Mullen
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 January 2004
<b>School address</b>	Smith Street Tow Law Bishop Auckland County Durham DL13 4AU
<b>Telephone number</b>	01388 731082
<b>Fax number</b>	01388 731082

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

This smaller than average size primary school serves a small West Durham town and the surrounding rural locality, which is an area of socio-economic disadvantage. All pupils are of White British heritage. An above average proportion of pupils are eligible to receive free school meals. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The school has the Healthy School, the Activemark, the ICT Quality Mark, and the Artsmark awards.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Blessed John Duckett Roman Catholic Primary School provides a good education for its pupils. The effective leadership, good governance, the strong team spirit, and the commitment from staff very successfully promote an ethos of care and consideration. Strong Catholic values underpin the school's work and a philosophy that every child does matter and each should do as well as they can. Pupils make a significant contribution to the community it serves. The school successfully strives to get the best from its resources and gives good value for money. In their plan for improvement, the headteacher and governors rightly share a top priority of raising standards, particularly in writing and mathematics, and a commendable desire to develop the skills and expertise of their new teachers. Their well thought through strategies to raise attainment further, and improvement in writing in Key Stage 2 since the previous inspection, indicate a good capacity for further improvement.

An overwhelming majority of parents are delighted with the school and have confidence in it. Many said that their children enjoy school and are safe and well cared for. One parent's comment sums up their views, 'Our son has been very happy at Blessed John Duckett. He has always been well supported and had an excellent education which has prepared him well for leaving next September. ...an excellent primary school which gives its all to their pupils and parents'.

Good quality teaching helps pupils to achieve well. Teachers' personal knowledge of each child is being used to help identify those at risk of falling behind. These approaches lead to most pupils making good progress from the time they begin in the Nursery until they leave. Targets do challenge them to aim for higher levels of attainment. Visits and visitors, exceptionally effective links with the local community, and partnerships with schools nearby enrich the curriculum and enhance support for all pupils. Learning in literacy and numeracy are the main focus of morning sessions, but there are not enough opportunities for pupils to consolidate and apply these skills in subjects across the curriculum, including science.

Pupils' achievement is good because they make good progress throughout the school. In the 2007 national tests for Year 2 pupils, most reached the nationally expected levels in reading, but not as many pupils reached these levels in writing and mathematics. Because group sizes throughout are very small, general conclusions in relation to national averages cannot be secure. Most pupils sustain good progress in Key Stage 2 and reach broadly average standards by Year 6. In the 2007 Year 6 national tests, standards were above average in English, average in mathematics and below average in science. Pupils presently are achieving well in reading, where most attain levels above those expected for their age. Effective support from teachers and teaching assistants helps pupils with learning difficulties make good progress.

The school successfully prepares pupils to be good citizens through good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They are polite and very well behaved, and are particularly considerate towards each other. Pupils know how to stay safe and have a good awareness of health and fitness. Many take part in after-school activities and use playground equipment to foster exercise. They clearly enjoy school. They make an exceptional contribution to school life and particularly to the local community. Their secure basic skills and good social development, together with good liaison with local secondary schools, prepare them soundly for their future.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Children begin the Nursery in the Foundation Stage with abilities that are very low compared with those typically found for their age, especially in speaking and communication skills, mathematical development, and knowledge and understanding. Parents are pleased with the way their children settle into the Nursery. Well planned activities and good teaching successfully foster children's development. Children are helped to learn well through a wide range of good first hand activities and experience, both inside and outdoors. As a result of a skilful and well managed blend of direction, supervision and opportunities to explore themselves, they develop confidence and show interest in what they do. All make good progress. Overall, their knowledge and skills when they leave the Reception Class are below those expected of most children of their age, especially in developing their communication and social skills.

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

- Raise standards further in mathematics, writing in Key Stage 1, and science in Key Stage 2.
- Take more opportunities for pupils to consolidate and apply their learning in literacy and numeracy to different subjects, including science.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' achievement is good. Children join the Nursery, with abilities that are well below those typical of many children of the same age and by the end of Year 6 they reach average standards overall. They learn to read particularly well.

Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2. In the 2007 assessments, most pupils reached the nationally expected levels in reading, but not as many pupils reached these levels in writing and mathematics. Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 3 to 6. In the 2007 national tests for Year 6 pupils, standards in English were above average; almost all pupils reached the nationally expected level and half of them gained the higher Level 5. Their results in mathematics were closer to average, but science results fell below average and not enough pupils reached the nationally expected standard. Pupils made particularly good progress in improving their reading skills.

On the whole, boys do not do as well as girls in Key Stage 1, but there is little difference between them in Key Stage 2. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported by teachers and teaching assistants and they make similarly good progress to their classmates.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good, and the school ensures their overall personal development and well-being are good. Nationally recognised awards reflect the school's success in promoting health and fitness, and cultural development. Pupils are particularly caring and considerate towards others. They behave exceptionally well, and are polite and confident as they go about their work. Their evident enthusiasm and endeavour seen in lessons and other activities show much they enjoy school life. Attendance is average, mainly because of holidays taken by a few in term time. Pupils know how to keep safe and healthy. They know about healthy eating, and many willingly take part in physical activities, in

visits to outdoor activities centres, and in the after-school clubs. Pupils play a major part in the school's outstanding contribution to the local community. They contribute really well to their own community by promoting safe behaviour through the playground pals and buddy systems. These make sure pupils that are befriended when needed, and importantly, that incidents of bullying are very rare. In an effective partnership with the church, they help raise money for charity. Pupils' secure basic skills prepare them soundly for their future.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Many aspects of the quality of teaching provided by the teaching team are good and are primarily responsible for pupils' good achievement. Overall teaching and particularly learning are good. Lessons are designed well, and with support aligned to individuals, the work often suits pupils' different abilities. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together and foster a good rapport with pupils which, with the activities they provide, captures pupils' interest so they are attentive, behave exceptionally well, and willingly contribute when asked. Teachers help pupils by sharing learning goals at the start so they know what they will be learning. Pupils know what is expected of them, and how well they are doing, but on occasions their learning is not sufficiently reinforced at the end of lessons. They receive praise and encouragement for their accomplishments, and marking often, but not consistently, offers them direct help towards the next steps in their learning. Teachers and teaching assistants provide effective support for pupils with learning difficulties or particular needs, which helps them to make good progress.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

A well designed programme of National Curriculum subjects, religious education and personal, social and health education is clearly based upon the school's Catholic values and enables pupils to become good learners. Learning in literacy and numeracy is the main focus of morning sessions although class organisation in the afternoon gives fewer opportunities for consolidation and application of literacy and numeracy skills in subjects across the curriculum.

Educational outings, such as to outdoor centres, the theatre, art galleries and museums, make a big contribution to their social and cultural development. Visitors add to pupils' personal development and well-being, for example increasing their safety awareness and physical skills. Of special note is the extent to which the many and varied local initiatives which involve pupils, often with others from nearby primary and secondary schools, strengthen their spirit of community and enhance life in their town. Many pupils participate in after-school activities, including sport, art, music, and gardening, which further enrich their experience.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

The outstanding way staff are concerned for the welfare of their pupils and help them enjoy school fosters the atmosphere in the school of welcome, care and purpose. This pastoral care leads to good personal development and well-being of all pupils. Routines for child protection and health and safety are thorough. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are in place and meet government requirements. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are quickly identified, and effective support helps them make good progress. First class links with outside

agencies and parents are very successful. Close and very effective partnerships with local secondary schools ensure pupils are well prepared for a smooth transition into Year 7. The school diligently and rigorously collects information about pupils' attainments and progress each term to track their overall progress. This is increasingly used to help teachers identify and support anyone at risk of falling behind, but its use is not yet fully consistent across the school.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The positive climate for learning that all pupils thrive in and enjoy stems from good leadership and management throughout the school. In this very inclusive school everyone promotes the principles of 'Every Child Matters', both in relation to pupils' personal development, and in fostering good achievement. Governance is good. The headteacher and governors work harmoniously together to ensure the school is well led and managed. They diligently monitor and review all aspects of school life. As a result, resources are used well. The effectiveness of leaders is seen in their accurate self-evaluation and prompt response to the dip in the results in 2007. The highest priority to raising standards is apparent in their well thought out development plan and the resulting actions taken. Statutory targets for pupils' performance are challenging, and were met in 2007. The senior leadership is working effectively to enable teachers to use information about pupils' performance well to help them reach higher standards.

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**Annex A**

## Inspection judgements

<b>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</b>	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	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	3

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	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	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

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**Annex B**

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

23 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Blessed John Duckett Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary, Co Durham, DL13 4AU

I really enjoyed my visit to your school this week. Thank you for helping me when I came into your classrooms to see you at work. You were exceptionally polite and really helpful. I did enjoy talking with those of you on the school council whom I met. It was great to see how confident you are, and how much you enjoy coming to school. I was especially impressed with how much you contribute to school life and to the life of the town. I know the headteacher and the staff are all very proud of you.

Your school has a very warm and welcoming atmosphere and is well organised. I'm pleased that you feel safe and happy because all the adults in the school look after you very well. Many of your lessons are good. I like the way your teachers often share what you are going to do in lessons, and how they let you know how well you are doing when they mark your work. I was impressed with the way you work hard and like to take part in lessons, and in all the other activities arranged for you. I am very pleased with the progress many of you are making in reading. I have asked the school to help you improve other aspects of your work; in writing and mathematics for those of you in Years 1 and 2; and in mathematics, and especially in science, in Years 3 to 6. It will help if you have more chances to practice your literacy and numeracy skills in different subjects, including science.

You have very many opportunities at Blessed John Duckett Roman Catholic Primary School to learn about life and these should stand you in good stead for the future. I hope that you all do really well.

Yours sincerely

Graeme Clarke

Lead inspector