

# St Wilfrid's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School

## Inspection report

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Unique Reference Number	108400
Local Authority	Gateshead
Inspection number	324763
Inspection dates	4–5 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Mrs Gillian Salter-Smith

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	111
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Phil Cunningham
Headteacher	Mr Alan Murray
Date of previous school inspection	April 2006
School address	Old Fold Road Gateshead Tyne and Wear NE10 0DJ
Telephone number	0191 4771909
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Email address	AlanMurray@gateshead.gov.uk

Age group	3–11
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## Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector visited 11 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and the school improvement partner. She talked to a number of parents as they brought their children into school. The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at the school's raising achievement plans, their analysis of pupils' performance and progress and 18 parental questionnaires.

The inspection reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- learning and progress and personal development of pupils, especially for pupils from Traveller families, those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those learning English as an additional language
- consistency in the effectiveness of teaching and learning across the school, particularly the use of assessment to support pupils' learning
- the impact of new developments in the curriculum on pupils' learning, progress and attitudes
- the effectiveness of the unit in supporting pupils' achievement, enjoyment and personal development
- the planning, development and evaluation of the school's approach to community cohesion.

## Information about the school

This is a small primary school. The proportion of pupils eligible for a free school meal is well above the national average. The number of pupils entering the school at times other than the usual start in Nursery is much higher than in most other schools. A well above average proportion of pupils is identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There is a higher proportion than in most schools of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, and of pupils for whom English is not the language of the home. A high proportion of pupils are from Traveller families. A specialised unit for pupils with moderate learning difficulties currently supports five pupils. Its future is under review by the local authority. The school has the Activemark Award.

## Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

3

Capacity for sustained improvement

3

### Main findings

St Wilfrid's RC Primary is a satisfactory and improving school. It has good features which include the drive and ambition of leaders, the effectiveness of the curriculum, and assessment, and the care, support and guidance provided for all pupils. Consequently pupils enjoy school, behave well and have positive attitudes to learning. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Most pupils make good progress from their very low starting points in Nursery and, although overall attainment is low, it is improving. Attainment in English, mathematics and science is rising and is better than at the last inspection.

Effective self-evaluation has ensured that the school is focused determinedly on improving weaker areas. Strengthened systems of assessment, improved deployment of staff, small teaching groups and a more exciting curriculum well focused on improving basic skills, have all helped to accelerate the rate of pupils' progress. There have been several staff changes in recent years and teaching is not yet consistently good. Well focused professional development and close monitoring of teaching by senior leaders is supporting improvements in the effectiveness of teaching. These improvements alongside a strong determination to raise standards that is shared by the headteacher, leaders, governors and staff, demonstrate a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

The good care, support and guidance pupils receive are underpinned by very positive relationships between pupils and staff. Staff know every pupil very well. They ensure that all pupils, including those from Traveller families, those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those learning English as an additional language, receive the support they need to overcome any difficulties they face so that they feel safe, secure and ready to learn. The school does a great deal to try to involve parents in supporting their children's learning but there is a limited response from many families. Pupils' attendance, though improving, is well below average. Pupils are usually punctual to school. For some pupils from a small number of families, attainment and progress are hindered by persistent absence or frequent spells away from school.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science across the school by:
  - further developing opportunities to apply basic skills in different contexts and subjects
  - by providing even more focused additional support for more able pupils to increase the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels of attainment.
  
- Achieve consistently good teaching and learning by:
  - ensuring that tasks are well matched to pupils' prior learning and abilities in all classes so that all pupils, including the more able, are fully challenged
  - ensuring pupils' learning is consolidated and secure before moving on
  - ensuring lesson activities are well structured and varied to enable pupils to make small steps in learning in every lesson
  - providing well structured opportunities for pupils to discuss their work and develop their ideas
  - developing more ways to involve pupils in assessing their own and each other's work.
  
- Improve attendance by:
  - making the rewards for good attendance even more effective
  - developing further the work carried out by the school and other agencies to support the small number of families with poor attendance.
  
- Provide the support needed to enable more parents to become involved in their child's education.

## How good is the overall outcome for individuals and groups of pupils?

3
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Pupils are enthusiastic and interested in their work and keen to improve its quality. In a science lesson, Year 6 pupils were fascinated to find out how different rocks are formed and in a Reception lesson children really enjoyed using a story map to retell the story of *The Jolly Postman*. Pupils concentrate well in lessons and take pride in what they are doing. Their written work is usually crafted with care and their project work such as that on 'Cat Walk', 'France' and 'Chocolate' is especially well presented.

By Year 6 most pupils reach the nationally expected standards in mathematics and science but none reach the higher levels, and standards in English are weaker. Because the numbers of pupils in each year group is small, standards fluctuate from year-to-year. Nonetheless, from their starting points, most pupils make good progress.

Pupils learning English as an additional language make rapid progress because they

settle into the school quickly and receive well targeted specialist support. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because they are well supported both in the specialised unit known as the Bridges and through individualised programmes designed to ensure that basic skills are reinforced. When in school, pupils from Traveller families enjoy learning and make good progress in many lessons. The school finds ways to make sure that they catch up on work that has been missed. However, their overall attainment is more variable and often lower in relation to the amount of time they spend in school.

Pupils understand the need for exercise and a balanced diet. They are very active at playtimes and enjoy using the extensive play areas and equipment alongside their friends and adult supervisors. The school council is an effective group that has made improvements to play areas and school lunches. Pupils enjoy raising funds for a wide variety of charities and they are aware that there are many people less fortunate than them. Pupils take their responsibilities seriously. Many enjoy being reading 'buddies' to younger pupils and others like to help lunchtime supervisors clear up in the dining area. Pupils are sensitive to each other's needs and are keen to help and support one another. Pupils cooperate well with each other in lessons and are developing many social, key skills that prepare them adequately for the next stage of their education.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	2
How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	3
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	2
How well do pupils behave?	2
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	2
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	2
Pupils' attendance	4
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	3
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	2

## The quality of the school's work

Good systems to assess and track pupils' progress in literacy and numeracy are helping to identify underachievement quickly and ensure that support is well targeted towards individual needs. Class teachers keep a close eye on individual progress and are able to identify where gaps in knowledge and understanding need filling or new knowledge needs consolidating. As a result of this improved assessment, teachers set challenging yet realistic targets for pupils in literacy and numeracy which are

<sup>1</sup> Grades for attainment are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; 4 is low

helping to accelerate progress. Pupils like having targets and are pleased when they achieve them.

In most lessons relationships are very positive and pupils' behaviour is well managed. Staff give pupils plenty of well deserved praise that builds up pupils' self esteem. Pupils are usually set tasks that are well matched to their different abilities and prior learning. However, this is not always the case and some pupils, particularly the more able, are not fully challenged. Lessons are well structured and purposeful, and pupils know what they are expected to learn. Many lessons include clear small steps in learning, but not all. In some lessons, one activity can go on for too long and some pupils lose concentration and the thread in their thinking and learning. Teachers give useful guidance to pupils when they mark their work and pupils are beginning to take more responsibility for assessing, marking and correcting their own and each other's work.

A well planned curriculum focuses on promoting good progress in the basic skills and ensures that pupils follow a programme tailored to their needs. A recently introduced programme for improving literacy skills is leading to accelerated progress especially among the younger pupils, although there are times when pupils are not given enough opportunity to talk about their work before they write about it. Recent improvements to the curriculum are bringing greater excitement to learning and more opportunities to improve basic skills in subjects across the curriculum.

The special unit known as The Bridges provides well for the pupils with a statement of special educational need. Other pupils in the school benefit from working in small groups within the unit. Pupils have especially enjoyed taking part in and writing about cross-curricular projects such as 'Catwalk', when pupils took part in a fashion show at a local high street store and some pupils designed and made their own T-shirts. Pupils enjoy taking part in the satisfactory range of sporting and other extra-curricular activities that support their personal development well.

The good arrangements for care, support and guidance help pupils, including those from Traveller families and those learning English as a second language to feel happy, safe and secure in school. Staff know the pupils very well and the monthly chats that every pupil has with their class teacher help teachers to understand pupils' personal and academic needs. Pupils at risk of underachieving are closely targeted and detailed educational plans help teachers to manage their learning and personal development effectively. More vulnerable pupils, including those identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are very well supported. The school makes every effort to involve the appropriate agencies in supporting individual pupils.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

High quality teaching and purposeful learning	3
Effective assessment	2
An appropriate curriculum which meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, provision through partnership with other organisations	2
Support, guidance and care	2

## How effective are leadership and management?

The leadership of the school, including the headteacher, other leaders and governors, is well focused on raising every pupil's achievement within a caring and supportive atmosphere. A good commitment to equality of opportunity is demonstrated in the support provided to ensure every pupil, whatever their background or circumstances, makes good progress. The governing body, with an active core of governors, has made a satisfactory contribution to planning and evaluation but there is not yet a full complement of governors. Safeguarding, child protection and risk assessments are securely in place.

The school works hard to keep parents and carers informed about its work and to involve them in supporting their children's learning. Although meetings with teachers about their children's progress are attended by a majority of parents or carers, only a small number of parents are regularly involved in other activities provided by the school.

The school is a cohesive community. Pupils have a good understanding of the diversity of their school and the local community through impressive projects such as their involvement in naming new local streets and finding out more about the history of the area. Through raising funds for various charities and curriculum activities such as the 'Chocolate' project, pupils are developing an understanding of people from the wider national and global communities. The school is in the early stages of developing a strategic overview of its contribution to community cohesion.

### *These are the grades for leadership and management*

Communicating ambition and driving improvement	2
Promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination	2
Ensuring that safeguarding procedures are effective	3
Ensuring that the governing body provides effective challenge and support so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities are met	3
Promoting the school's relationship with parents and carers, including their involvement in decision making about matters relating to learning and well-being	3
Developing partnerships with other providers, organisations and services	2
Ensuring the school contributes to community cohesion	3
Deploying resources to achieve value for money	2

## Early Years Foundation Stage

By the time children leave the Reception class they have made good progress, although the proportion of children reaching the early learning goals expected for their age is much lower than the national average, especially in communication, language and literacy.

Parents appreciate the good level of care and support provided by staff that helps



their children settle into Nursery quickly and enjoy the activities. Learning is well planned and usually takes account of pupils' prior learning and development. Occasionally, it is not clear how adults intend to challenge more able pupils. Children adapt quickly to well established routines for learning. They enjoy a good variety of activities that encourage development in all areas of learning, both indoors and in the outdoor area. There is a good balance between activities led by teachers and those chosen by the children. For example, children played happily with each other in the outdoor role-play area using a checkout for shopping at the supermarket. Staff encourage pupils to communicate their ideas and talk about what they are doing. Effective leadership has ensured that teaching and learning are correctly focused on developing children's weaker communication, language and literacy skills.

How good are the outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
What is the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
How effectively is the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
Overall effectiveness: how well does the setting/school meet the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2

## Views of parents and carers

Although the number of responses from parents and carers, at 17%, was relatively low, they were overwhelmingly supportive of the school. Parents feel that they are well informed of their children's progress and they are happy with the progress of their children. They feel the school keeps their children safe, healthy and well prepared for the future. They consider that the school is well led and managed, and that their views and suggestions are listened to. They say that the school meets their children's needs well and helps them, as parents or carers, to support their children's learning.

## What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. In 2007-8, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2007-8, 49% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007-8, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2007-8, 5% of schools were judged inadequate.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a Key Stage with their attainment when they started.
Achievement:	an overall measure of the pupils' success in their academic learning. The term combines attainment and progress. Pupils might make good progress, for example, but if their attainment remains low, inspectors may judge that their achievement is only satisfactory.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.



6 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Wilfrid's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School,  
NE10 0DJ

Thank you so much for the welcome you gave to me when I inspected your school. I enjoyed meeting and talking to so many of you and seeing you all hard at work in lessons and enjoying learning.

St Wilfrid's is a satisfactory and improving school. Most pupils make good progress while you are at the school, because your teachers and other staff work hard to make sure you feel happy and secure in school and ready to learn. You have challenging targets to aim for and most of you like knowing what these are and what you need to do to reach them. Some of your project work is impressive and shows how much you have enjoyed writing about new and exciting activities, such as the fashion show. You behave well in lessons and around the school. You know what you need to do to stay safe and healthy, and it was good to see how much you enjoy playing with each other and the adults in the playground. Your school council is doing a good job in improving the play areas and lunches. You are doing a good job in your local community. The project where you named new streets and found out about the history of the area sounded fascinating. Well done!

Your school is well led and managed, and the staff and governors work well together to help you to do your best. There are a few things that your school has agreed need to be done to help you to achieve even better standards.

- Improve your attainment in English, mathematics and science and encourage more pupils to reach the higher levels.
- Make sure that even more lessons are good.
- Improve levels of attendance.
- Find more ways to encourage parents and carers to support and help you with your learning.

You can help by making sure that you attend school on every day that you can and that you continue to enjoy learning and doing your best.

I wish you all the very best for your futures.

Gillian Salter-Smith  
Additional Inspector

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