

# St Charles' RC Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	108496
<b>Local Authority</b>	Newcastle upon Tyne
<b>Inspection number</b>	324781
<b>Inspection date</b>	23 September 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Linda Buller

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	208
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Dr Peter Mitchell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Victoria Lindsay
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 November 2005
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Regent Farm Road Gosforth Newcastle upon Tyne Tyne and Wear NE3 3HE
<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 2852553
<b>Fax number</b>	0191 2840690

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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:

- how well activities in other subjects are contributing to raising standards in writing?
- how well pupils understand the next steps in their learning?
- how well the school's contribution to community cohesion is developing pupils' understanding of the diversity of their local community, the United Kingdom and the world?
- the impact of outdoor learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage on children's achievement.

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 size primary school situated in an area of Newcastle upon Tyne, which is above average in terms of social and economic advantage. Most pupils are of White British heritage. There are fewer pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities than usual. There is a smaller proportion of pupils whose first language is not English compared to the national average, although this proportion has increased in recent years. A smaller proportion of pupils than nationally claim a free school meal.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

St Charles is a good school where an outstanding curriculum results in confident, articulate learners who thoroughly enjoy their education. Pupils achieve well to reach consistently above average standards. An extensive range of exciting activities has a very positive impact on the pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Levels of attendance are high, and behaviour is excellent. The school is outward looking and develops excellent partnerships both locally and nationally. This is a key feature in the good contribution which the school makes to community cohesion. Pupils explain that they have a real voice in the school, and are consulted in many important matters central to the school's effectiveness. Initiatives, such as support for local charities to help asylum seekers and support for global charities such as the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development, are helping pupils gain a good understanding of the diversity of society and their place in the local and worldwide communities. The great majority of parents hold the school in high regard, although a small number express concern with how well the school keeps them informed. The school has introduced several new systems to address these concerns and continues to look for alternative ways to meet parents' needs.

Pupils' self-confidence, very well developed social skills and their extremely good basic skills means they are exceptionally well prepared for their future lives. They have a very good awareness of why it is important to lead healthy lives. This is demonstrated in their keenness to access the school's very well developed outdoor area. There are also many opportunities to take part in sporting competitions, and there is an increasing number of pupils who take advantage of healthy school meals. The school's commitment to caring for pupils as individuals results in pupils who feel safe, know who to go to for help, and receive good support whenever they need it. The school's safeguarding procedures fully meet current government guidelines.

The majority of pupils enter Year 1 with skills just above those expected for their age. Standards by the end of Year 6 have consistently been well above average overall for several years, and in English and mathematics are often exceptionally high. National assessment and test results in writing at Key Stages 1 and 2 dipped slightly in 2007, with fewer than expected pupils reaching the higher levels. School leaders recognised that standards in writing could be higher throughout the school, and a range of successful strategies have been put in place. These provide pupils with a real purpose for their writing in all subjects, particularly religious education, and enable pupils to develop and apply their skills even further. These improvements are already bearing fruit, as teachers' 2008 assessments show standards in writing to be closer to the very high standards consistently attained in reading and mathematics.

Good leadership and management have resulted in highly effective systems to check on the progress that pupils make. Rigorous analysis of the information gained from regular monitoring provides the leadership team with an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas to develop. For example, they are aware of the increasing number of pupils who join the school for whom English is not their first language, and a greater number of pupils who join the school with complex learning needs. The school's caring ethos plays a significant part in nurturing these pupils who as a result achieve as well as their peers.

Good use of information from the assessment of pupils' learning forms the basis of good teaching throughout the school. In the main, the information gained from regular assessments is used well by teachers to provide pupils with the level of challenge needed to make good

progress. Occasionally, when the whole class is engaged in the same activity, not enough thought is given to how the activity can be adapted to ensure that pupils of all abilities make good progress. At such times the learning of a few pupils is satisfactory rather than good. Teachers skilfully help pupils to understand what is required of them in lessons. They have worked hard since the last inspection to put in place a variety of methods to help pupils understand the levels at which they are working and the next steps they need to take to improve further. This has met with some success, though a significant minority of pupils still do not have a clear picture of how they can take responsibility for their own learning or reach the goals for which they are aiming.

Senior leaders create a strong sense of purpose among the staff team. They encourage all to use their gifts and talents to the full. Governors bring a variety of expertise into school. They play an active role in school life and offer challenge as well as support to the school. Through well planned use of resources the school provides good value for money and has made good improvement since the last inspection. The school has shown in its actions that it is not complacent about its high standards and has demonstrated a good capacity to improve further.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Children receive a good start to their education in the Reception class. They enter school with the knowledge and skills generally above those typical for children of their age. Many already have well developed social skills and mature attitudes to new learning. Children achieve well as a result of good provision for their learning and development. Through a wide range of carefully planned activities children are provided with good opportunities to learn through play and develop independence. The outdoor area has developed well since the last inspection and is used effectively as part of the curriculum for all six areas of learning. Its continued development remains an ongoing priority for the school. Children are encouraged to explore and use their imagination, whilst the intervention of adults adds significantly to the development of speaking and listening skills. Children's welfare is promoted well through the sensitive support of all adults. Children settle happily in the secure and exciting world that they discover in and out of the classroom. They are helped to develop an effective understanding of good hygiene routines, and to consider the safety of themselves and others. Good leadership and management including excellent channels of communication have ensured that children's needs continue to be met effectively during the absence of the substantive class teacher.

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

Improve the effectiveness of strategies used to help pupils understand how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their work.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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/or disabilities make progress	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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
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	1

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

## 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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

**Annex B**

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

24 September 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Charles' RC Primary School, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE3 3HE

Thank you for making me so welcome when I inspected your school. It was a great privilege to be able to see how hard you work and just how much you really care for one another. I found talking to you very helpful, and I was impressed by your good manners. It was very clear how much you enjoy coming to school and how keen you are to learn from the excellent way in which you behave. It was good to see you choosing healthy foods for lunch and to hear how confident you are about how well your teachers listen to your suggestions.

I agree with your school that it is providing you with a good education. You do very well in your English and mathematics and you are well prepared for moving to secondary school. It was good to hear that some of you in Year 6 are starting to understand some of the things which you need to do to reach even higher standards. However, many other pupils were still unclear about how well they were doing and what they needed to do next to improve their work. I have therefore asked your teachers to talk to you and gather your ideas about the best ways to help you have a clearer understanding so that you can fully play your part in improving your learning.

All of your teachers want the very best for you and I am confident that you will continue to play your part in helping your school to improve even further.

With all best wishes for your futures.

Yours sincerely

Linda Buller

Lead inspector