

# St Oswald's RC Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	108497
<b>Local Authority</b>	Newcastle upon Tyne
<b>Inspection number</b>	324782
<b>Inspection date</b>	23 January 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Joan Elton

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)	207
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>	Mr Nick Nolan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Karen Holmes
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 July 2006
<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>	Hartford Road Gosforth Newcastle upon Tyne Tyne and Wear NE3 5LE
<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 2852437
<b>Fax number</b>	0191 2852437

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- the quality of teaching and learning
- the quality of care, guidance and support.

Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspection found no evidence to suggest that the school's assessments were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation document, national published assessment data, the school's records and procedures, observation of the school at work, parental questionnaires and discussions with pupils, staff and governors.

## Description of the school

This is an average sized voluntary aided Roman Catholic school, where almost all pupils are of White British origin. There are few signs of economic hardship and very few children are eligible for free school meals. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well below average and only a few of these have English as an additional language. Very few pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school has an Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), comprising of one Reception class.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. It ensures excellent pupil achievement, both academically and personally. This is the result of very effective teaching and learning, a vibrant curriculum and exemplary care, guidance and support. The leadership team of headteacher, staff and governors is highly successful in providing pupils of all abilities and backgrounds with every opportunity to make excellent progress. The school richly deserves the respect and praise it receives from an overwhelming majority of parents, who comment enthusiastically about all aspects of school life. They remark on 'the warm, friendly and enjoyable place of learning'; the 'staff dedicated to the well-being of the children, focused on improvement'; 'the excellent range of activities provided'; and 'the real partnership between teachers and parents, which encourages academic success'.

Children enter Reception with skills broadly typical for their age. Excellent EYFS provision ensures nearly all children reach the nationally agreed Early Learning Goals, with many exceeding them. By Year 2 standards are above national averages in reading, writing and mathematics, with a quarter reaching the higher levels. This excellent progress continues to Year 6, where current pupils are on track to reach exceptionally high standards in English, mathematics and science. Pupils' with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar progress to their peers, as do pupils with English as an additional language. This is because of the school's highly successful inclusion policies. These overall standards mirror the school's national test results at Key stages 1 and 2, which have been consistent over a number of years.

Pupils' personal progress is outstanding and they leave school with excellent basic skills and the ability to relate effectively to others. Pupils really enjoy school. This is seen in their highly positive attitudes to learning, their exemplary behaviour around the school, their high up-take of extra-curricular activities and their excellent levels of attendance. Pupils describe lessons as 'fun and easy to understand.' They appreciate that experiencing responsibility and very effective advice from staff are helping them become independent. They also recognise how well teachers match work to their ability. They love the meals and snacks the school provides, and are most knowledgeable about healthy and safe lifestyles. In discussions about relationships, pupils feel the school has taught them respect for all and the determination 'to keep bullying out of school.' Pupils' work with the sick and the elderly also adds to their understanding of their role in society. Pupils enjoy their regular involvement with church and community projects and talk enthusiastically about recycling projects, fund-raising and partnerships with schools in other countries. It has been awarded the International School Award.

Teaching and learning are outstanding across the school and most pupils are making very good progress. Some staff are relatively new to the school but by well targeted training, effective monitoring and a supportive staff ethos, new ideas have been absorbed and consistency has been achieved. All staff, including teaching assistants, use time, resources and a wide range of strategies very effectively to extend all pupils interests and abilities successfully. Staff are very enthusiastic; their explanations are very clear to pupils and they organise imaginative activities to consolidate learning. As a result, pupils feel very secure in their learning and this gives them confidence to ask further questions and try out their own ideas in lessons. The curriculum rightly gives priority to basic skills but extends their application in research skills across the curriculum. In this way, pupils' vocabulary and general knowledge are extended and they encounter more opportunities to use literacy, mathematics, and information and communication technology. The curriculum is exciting and there is something for all pupils: it has specialist

teaching in music and French; there is a well developed programme to enhance personal development; and enrichment includes visits, themed weeks, drama productions, residentials and plenty of sporting opportunities. Accurate assessment and easily accessible progress tracking enable staff to identify suitable catch-up programmes for individual pupils and personal targets for all. As a result of this and staff's very constructive marking, pupils know what they do well and how they can reach their targets.

Care, guidance and support are outstanding: all statutory requirements for safeguarding, child protection, general health and safety are met; efficient systems ensure policies and practice are appropriately updated; and staff receive the correct training to meet pupils' needs. Parents' comments illustrate the exemplary provision the school gives to pupils in particular need. As one parent writes 'all staff are willing to go the extra yard, to make life much smoother for their pupils and families.'

Leadership and management are outstanding. The school is exceptionally well run. It makes an excellent contribution to community cohesion which is reflected in the school's successful inclusion policies, its effective links with the community and other schools and promotion of pupils' awareness of cultural diversity. The headteacher is an inspirational leader to staff and pupils, setting the tone of working hard, achieving one's best, respect and consideration for others at all times. She is never complacent and sets high standards. She empowers staff to do the same through training, monitoring, general support and encouragement. As a result, staff work very effectively as a supportive team, sharing ideas, leading initiatives and focusing on pupils' individual improvement. Through such shared commitment pupils benefit from catering staff, who contribute to school projects, and a site manager who helps with residential visits. Governance is outstanding. Governors have a very secure knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for development. They are equally committed to continuous improvement and have effectively worked with the headteacher and staff to resolve recent staffing issues, successfully restoring the school's momentum and family ethos. By their monitoring work with staff and their constructive relationships with parents and community, governors contribute exceptionally well to the school's self-evaluation. Inspectors found their monitoring to be accurate, if rather modest in grading. The school has made excellent progress since the last inspection and is currently in a very strong position to make further improvements. It provides excellent value for money.

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

### **Grade: 1**

The effectiveness of EYFS is outstanding. Although children enter Reception from many pre-school settings they quickly settle because of the vibrant learning environment. Their skills on entry are typical for their age but they make such very good progress that the overwhelming majority reach the nationally agreed Early Learning Goals, with many exceeding them. Children enjoy school and feel safe. They respond very positively to the exciting opportunities both indoors and out, which develop their interests and learning across the curriculum. Staff work particularly well as a team, providing good role models and consistency of approach. Their excellent teaching, high expectations and outstanding quality of care ensure all children feel valued and special. Staff have been organised and methodical when identifying key workers for children and this has led to rigorous assessment. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are quickly identified and supported, and staff monitor continuously to ensure all children's needs are met. Easier access to a stimulating outdoor classroom has considerably broadened children's experiences. Teaching staff have a clear vision of how they would like

the EYFS to develop and are passionate about wanting the best for their children. There are clear pathways for development, for example in phonics, and children's personal development is successfully nurtured. EYFS is exceptionally well led and staff are always seeking improvement. They prepare children exceptionally well for the transition to Year 1 so that their progress continues smoothly. They also establish excellent parental relationships, through effective induction and regular communication.

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

- There are no areas for improvement that the school has not already identified.

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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?	1
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	1

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
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?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

<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>	1
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?	1

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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**

23 January 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Oswald's RC Primary School, Newcastle upon Tyne,

NE3 5LE

Thank you for the welcome you gave me during the recent inspection of your school. I enjoyed meeting you and enjoyed reading your parents' comments. They were most useful. Please thank them on my behalf.

I was most impressed with your excellent behaviour, your enjoyment and your determination to succeed. I saw some outstanding teaching and learning. Your books show most of you have made excellent progress since September. Teachers' marking is very clear. It gives you praise for achievement and precise instructions on how to improve your work. You are particularly successful in English, mathematics and science but are also learning so much more. You know how to research a project and your general knowledge has much improved. No wonder you write so imaginatively and confidently! You are practising your skills throughout the day and your lessons are so interesting. Your teachers explain things very clearly and always check that you understand. All staff take great care of you. They make sure you feel safe and secure. They show you how to be a responsible and considerate person and are very keen that you develop all your talents and abilities. I think your school is outstanding. It is so well run and managed. Your headteacher, staff and governors are very successful. They make sure improvements are made and are always keen to learn about new ideas.

Congratulations on your attendance. It is so high. You really enjoy school and are achieving so well. Please continue to enjoy your learning and to do your homework. I am confident your school will continue to succeed because it is always striving to be better. I have not identified any new area for improvement because the school is very clear and accurate about its own areas for improvement.

My very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Joan Elton

Lead inspector