

St Bede's RC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108505
Local Authority	Newcastle upon Tyne
Inspection number	324784
Inspection dates	15–16 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Moira Fitzpatrick

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.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	217
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
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David McShane
Headteacher	Mr Michael Scurr
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Howlett Hall Road Denton Burn Newcastle upon Tyne Tyne and Wear NE15 7HS
Telephone number	0191 2743430
Fax number	0191 2747919

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	15–16 October 2008
Inspection number	324784

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

- This is an average size school, where almost all pupils are from White British heritage. A small but growing proportion of pupils are from Asian heritages. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language has grown since the last inspection and is now broadly average. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is average. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The school makes provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).
- The school has an impressive array of awards including: the Healthy Schools Award, the Activemark, Sportsmark, Enviro Schools Gold Award, Investors in People and the Basic Skills Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

St Bede's is a good school where pupils make good progress in their learning and personal development. They are happy, confident and enjoy school very much. Parents are highly supportive of the school and praise staff for the way they care for their children.

Pupils join the school with levels of development slightly below what is typical for their age. By the end of Year 6, standards are above average and this represents good achievement for pupils. All groups of pupils make similar good progress. Following a dip in results in 2007, when for the first time standards in Year 6 were below average, the school took effective action to improve standards. Unvalidated results for 2008 show a dramatic improvement in all subjects. The proportion of pupils gaining the expected and higher levels was much higher than the previous year and among the school's best ever results. All pupils met and many exceeded their challenging targets.

The quality of teaching and learning is good, although there are some pockets of satisfactory teaching. The school is aware of the need to increase the monitoring of teaching, and the contribution of support assistants, to get consistently good teaching at all times. Pupils work hard in lessons. They enjoy learning and are proud of their achievements. The curriculum has developed well since the last inspection and provides a good basis for extending learning. For example, there are good links with Newcastle Eagles and other sporting organisations. Year 5 pupils are proud to take part in a local authority project which has provided the opportunity to be members of a working saxophone band. There is a good range of well planned visits and visitors to enrich pupils' learning.

Pupils' good personal development shows in their excellent behaviour and their respect for each other. They are keen to take on responsibility and enjoy the opportunities provided through the school council to improve the school. They are generous fund-raisers, who understand the need to extend their care for others to the wider community locally, nationally and overseas. Pupils have a good understanding of health lifestyles and are enthusiastic about exercise and sport. They feel safe and well cared for in school because of the outstanding care provided by all staff, who know them very well and are alert to any changes in performance or mood. Guidance for learning is developing well, especially in writing where pupils are increasingly able to set themselves areas for improvement.

The school is well led, managed and governed. The headteacher provides very good leadership for the pastoral work of the school and is very well supported by all staff in this and in his vision for good achievement for every pupil. He is well supported by the deputy headteacher, who gives a good lead to developing pupils' personal qualities. The school promotes community cohesion through the many parish and community activities. There are some inconsistencies in the quality of subject leadership, which have led to a dip in standards in some subjects since the last inspection. The school has recognised this and has already begun to take action to raise standards.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

The quality of provision is satisfactory. Indoor learning activities are well planned and fully meet the children's needs but restrictions of the accommodation holds back children's learning outdoors. Children join the Reception class from a high number of different nurseries. On entry

their skills are slightly below what is typical for their age, especially in language and communication. They settle quickly and are happy coming to school. They make satisfactory progress overall, with good gains in their personal, social and emotional development, their mathematical development and their communication language and literacy skills. By the end of Reception they have broadly typical skills for their age in these areas of development. Progress in other areas of learning is hampered by the cramped classroom and the lack of a suitable space outside for learning outdoors. Staff plan thoroughly and do their best to overcome the restrictions imposed by limited space. Indoors a good balance of adult-led and child-led activities. The scope for planning for learning outdoors is restricted. This limits access for children to have access to energetic physical play and exercise and some creative activities. Leadership and management of the EYFS are good and it does its best to make the best of the accommodation available.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve provision for outdoor learning in the Reception class.
- Improve the proportion of good and better teaching, including that undertaken by learning support assistants.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are above average and pupils' achievement is good. Pupils make good progress to the end of Year 2 and reach above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Results in national assessments at the end of Year 2 have been consistently above average since the last inspection. Inspection evidence and the school's tracking data indicate that Year 2 pupils are on course to reach challenging targets by the end of the year. Results in national tests for 11 year olds in 2007 showed a dip in standards to below average. The school responded quickly and effectively to this disappointing performance. Provisional results for the 2008 tests saw a steep rise in attainment with nearly all pupils reaching the expected level in English, mathematics and science. Pupils now in Year 6 are on course to reach similar high standards in national tests at the end of the year, because the effective systems introduced last year are being maintained. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those who have English as an additional language make the same good progress as other pupils and many reach the standard expected for their age in national tests.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good. So too is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils understand the benefits of adopting a healthy lifestyle; many take advantage of the activities on offer such as 'Kids Get Fit Before School' and skipping workshops. Pupils know how to stay safe and who to ask for advice and support. They enjoy school very much, have good relationships with their teachers and are 'happy' with their friends. This is reflected in their good attendance. Behaviour, both in and out of lessons, is exemplary. Pupils are polite and courteous, and proud of their school. They like to help and support each other. Playground buddies and monitors ensure that younger children feel safe. They also show great concern for people less fortunate than themselves both in the local community, nationally and globally. Pupils raise funds for a number of charities such as the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD), the Red Cross and Barnardo's. Within school, there is a well organised,

active school council whose members are elected. They are proud of their achievements, particularly the way they have helped to transform the school's playgrounds. Pupils' good personal qualities together with their good basic skills prepare them well for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers plan well to meet the needs of different groups in their classes. They have good subject knowledge and use a range of methods to make learning interesting for pupils. For example, new methods of teaching writing have proved popular with teachers and pupils alike. Pupils enjoy the opportunities to discuss ideas, learn from real writers and are pleased to be able to assess their progress in writing. Relationships are good; both teachers and support assistants have a good understanding of pupils' needs and make sure they feel secure and well supported in lessons. Pupils report that most lessons are interesting and they are confident that they will get plenty of help. They work hard in lessons because they want to please their teachers. Not all teaching is good. Occasionally it is satisfactory because pupils are expected to listen for longer periods than necessary. This reduces learning. While teaching assistants mostly make a good contribution to pupils' learning, they are not involved enough at certain parts of the lessons so give direct support to those who need it.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum and puts great emphasis on pupils having a healthy lifestyle. Provision for English and mathematics is good and the curriculum is well adapted to meet the need of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or who speak English as an additional language. Provision for personal, social and health education is very good. Time is allocated so that pupils benefit from a very good range of physical activities, both in and out of school. The school provides a stimulating range of extra-curricular activities such as swimming, basketball, choir, football and dance. A wealth of visits and visitors enrich children's experiences and enhance their learning. Themed events, such as 'Good Manners Week' and 'Careers' Day' further develop personal and academic progress. Good links with the local secondary schools ensure a smooth transition and good support for pupils to learn Italian. The curriculum makes a good contribution to developing community cohesion.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Pastoral care for pupils and their families is outstanding. At St Bede's all staff know and support pupils and their families very well. Parents are overwhelmingly in their praise for the way the school cares for their children. Comments such as, 'teachers are always available if you need to talk to them', are typical. Child protection procedures and arrangements for safeguarding pupils are in place and secure. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with English as an additional language are good. Strong links with outside agencies and the good work of the parent support advisor ensure that needs are identified and dealt with promptly. The school has an efficient assessment and tracking system, used by all staff to monitor pupils' progress. In some classes

pupils are clear about what they need to do to improve but this is not yet consistent across the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management, including governance are good. The school has made good progress since the last inspection in maintaining above average standards. Links with parents and other schools have been strengthened so that pupils now benefit from many more out of school clubs and visits and a wider curriculum in school. School self-evaluation is accurate, though a minor weakness is in the regularity of the monitoring of teaching and learning. There are some inconsistencies in the quality of subject leadership, which the school is aware it needs to tackle to ensure continued improvement in standards. Outdoor provision in the EYFS has developed since the last inspection but has not gone far enough in providing staff and children with easy access to regular, appropriate outdoor learning. The school has already begun to look at ways of improving this further, so that Reception children have their full entitlement to outdoor provision. The school's capacity for improvement is good.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

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?	2
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?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
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 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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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

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 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**

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Bede's RC Primary School, Newcastle upon Tyne,
NE15 7HS

Thank you for your warm and friendly welcome and the help you gave me and my colleague when we inspected your school recently. Please pass on our thanks to your families for returning their questionnaires. These showed us how much they value your school and are pleased and proud that you attend St Bede's.

We agree with you and your parents that you go to a good school. You receive a good education because your teachers prepare lessons that are interesting and fun and give you work that helps you to succeed every day. They also make sure you have plenty of visits and visitors so that you learn about the wider world and are able to find out about all the things that really interest you. You told us that you feel safe and happy in school because your teachers know you so well and are always there to help no matter how big or small the problem. We agree and think that they set an excellent example of how to care for everyone and help them if they have a problem. We were delighted to see that you copy their caring ways and show good respect and support for each other. All of this has helped you to have good personal qualities and confidence in your learning. It has also helped you to learn well and reach above average standards. Your excellent behaviour, enjoyment of learning and the generous way you help each other and those less fortunate than you are a credit to you and your teachers. We were impressed by the work of the school council in bringing your good ideas to life with improvements to the playground and school life in general.

Even though your school is a good one, we know that the headteacher and teachers want it to be even better. To help with this we have suggested that the children in the Reception class would learn better if they had more space outside for their learning, so you may notice some changes in the playgrounds in the future. We also agree with you that learning isn't always lively and interesting and have asked the school to look at what happens in lessons so that the best ideas and methods can be shared so you have good lessons all of the time. You may notice that you have teachers visiting your lessons to see how you learn best. You can help by working as hard as you do now and showing your teachers what are the best ways for you to learn.

We wish you every success in the future and very happy year in your good school.

Moira Fitzpatrick

Lead inspector