

Saint Paulinus Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School, Guisborough

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111681
Local Authority	Redcar and Cleveland
Inspection number	325431
Inspection date	6 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Gianna Ulyatt

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	0
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	Canon Michael Bayldon
Headteacher	Mrs Elizabeth Huntley
Date of previous school inspection	5 July 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	The Avenue Guisborough TS14 8DN
Telephone number	01287 637978
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Age group	3–11
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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:

- the differences in attainment between boys and girls in both Key Stages,
- the school promoting community cohesion,
- the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Evidence was collected from observations of lessons and scrutiny of relevant documents. Discussions were held with pupils, staff, senior leaders and governors. Pupils' work, key documents and data including the school's self-evaluation were scrutinised. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors 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 where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This school is about the same size as most primary schools. The school is situated within a socially advantaged community. It is the only Catholic primary school in Guisborough; consequently, children who attend come from wider socially mixed areas. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for a free school meal is well below average. The percentage of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. Very few pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. No pupils are at an early stage of learning English. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage receive part time provision in the Nursery and full time provision in the Reception class.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good and rapidly improving school. It has many outstanding features. Standards are well above average and have been so at both Key Stages over a number of years. Pupils' personal development and the care, guidance and support they receive are exceptional. The school has made several significant improvements since the last inspection. A new extension to the original building means pupils now learn in spacious, bright, impressive classrooms. The outdoor areas, which are almost complete, are stunning. Due to the strong leadership of the headteacher, who is well supported by the senior team, standards in English and, in particular, writing have improved year on year. Parents are exceptionally pleased with the strong, caring and academic influence the school has on their children. This is evident from the high return of questionnaires and the numerous positive comments. As one parent wrote, 'Teachers use their imagination and enthusiasm and this is passed on to the children.'

When children enter the school, their attainment is broadly at the level expected for their age. They make exceptional progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1. Achievement is good in Key Stage 2. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, as well as those from minority ethnic groups, thrive in this caring environment and make rapid gains in progress. This is mainly due to close monitoring and strong adult support. Test results show that pupils in the 2008 cohort reached the challenging targets set for them. Overall, pupils achieve best in science where over two thirds reach the higher levels. In English, around half reach the higher level. In mathematics, just over one third reach the higher level which means that pupils of above average ability do not achieve as well as in other subjects. A major strength of the school is the way it tracks the progress of every pupil. School assessment data shows that current year groups are expected to reach their targets and that boys and girls are expected to achieve equally well.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy school. One parent commented, 'My young child asks why he can't go to school on a weekend and gets upset when we drive past, and the gate is closed.' Pupils develop close friendships within the purposeful learning environment. They particularly enthuse about writing and love the way teachers turn learning into a sociable and enjoyable event. They feel well prepared for their next school. They especially enjoy sporting challenges and Shakespearian drama productions. They know they are very well cared for because teachers offer high levels of support when they need it and the 'problem box' empowers them to express their worries in complete confidence. Pupils develop high levels of responsibility because the school values their ideas. For example, the school council organises and runs several popular lunchtime clubs for younger pupils. Pupils have a deepening awareness of ecological issues and are keen to grow vegetables, once the new outdoor planting equipment is ready.

Strong Christian values permeate all aspects of school life. Pupils are polite, well mannered and extremely courteous. Their behaviour is exemplary. They show high levels of compassion for those less fortunate and willingly raise money for overseas charities. Philosophy lessons instill strong and positive ideas in pupils. They contend that being healthy does not only concern the body, but also the mind. Pupils explain, 'Training the mind to be mentally fit means that we carry on going, even when it gets tough, and we will get there in the end.' Pupils' excellent personal development and understanding of their school, town and global communities ensure that the skills needed to become caring, tolerant and very responsible citizens are well embedded.

Pupils make good progress because teachers are very knowledgeable and provide work that challenges each individual. A particular strength in teaching is the way teachers mark pupils' work and provide learning targets in small stages that are clear to each individual. Pupils know exactly what they are doing well and what they next need to do to make their work better. Therefore they grow in confidence, secure in the good progress they are making. They are well coached towards evaluating their own work as well as the work of their classmates. In lessons, pupils' learning is accelerated because teachers focus on the learning objective and expect high levels of concentration. The work ethic in classes is very good because teachers encourage pupils to formulate their own ideas and share these with classmates. This makes learning both interesting and purposeful. Teachers support pupils well towards becoming independent and provide good prompts, particularly in vocabulary and grammar. Pupils are very well supported by able assistants. They are competent with technology and are developing good skills to use in other subjects. The school has begun to develop strategies to improve achievement in mathematics by ensuring a consistent approach to teaching specific numeracy skills. Pupils enjoy a broad and varied curriculum. They particularly enthuse about creative activities where stories or art work are used as a major influence. They especially enjoy visitors to the school and school outings, all of which broaden their horizons. The school offers very high levels of care. Appropriate systems and procedures to protect and safeguard pupils are in place and well adhered to. Staff are very vigilant and well informed about protecting pupils. Consequently, pupils feel very safe in school and know how to be adventurous, but careful at the same time.

Leadership staff at all levels work as a united team and are very focused on improvements and developments. Data is used well to evaluate the school's needs to inform strategic planning. Key staff rigorously monitor their specific areas. Through strong leadership, standards in English, and in particular writing, have improved rapidly and managers are now focused on using similar strategies including increased use of monitoring and evaluation to improve mathematics. Strong leadership has ensured that staff are very well supported and all work together for the benefit of the pupils. Detailed and accurate assessment systems inform staff about the progress of every pupil ensuring none are left behind. The school knows itself well and uses this accurate knowledge of strengths and areas in need of improvement to produce comprehensive action plans that are very relevant to the needs of the school. Governance is extremely strong. Knowledgeable governors play a full and active part in the school's strategic leadership. Governors challenge and support the work of the school very well to ensure it continues to provide a good education for its pupils.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding. Most children enter Nursery with standards broadly typical of those expected for their age but lower in some aspects of personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy. Children make very good progress and by the end of Reception, standards in all areas of learning are above national averages. These excellent outcomes are the result of high expectations, clear routines, sensitive support for younger children and a clear focus on developing social skills, early literacy and problem solving, reasoning and numeracy. Space is extremely well used indoors and the attention to detail is exceptional. Children are provided with exciting places to play and learn such as the space travel agents. Information and communication technology (ICT) is interwoven into various activity areas. The recently developed outdoor environment provides a wealth of opportunities for children to explore and learn through all areas. Opportunities for reading and

writing through play challenge the most able children who, for example, make their own star maps of the constellations. The balance of child initiated and adult led activities is very well planned and meets children's needs. This is underpinned by strong assessment based on direct observation. Adult led activities are innovative with clear learning intentions. Behaviour and dispositions for learning are very good. Children are encouraged to be independent and to have ownership of their own learning. Children are safe and secure throughout the provision. Welfare requirements are met. Parents are welcomed and are very positive about the unit. Leadership is excellent and team work is strong with a clear vision for future improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Extend the monitoring and evaluation systems for mathematics to ensure that pupils of above average ability achieve as well in this subject as they do in English and science.

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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?	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?	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?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
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	1

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?	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	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	1

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?	1

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	1
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	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

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Saint Paulinus Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School, Guisborough, Redcar and Cleveland, TS14 8DN

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave to me and Mrs Waugh when we visited St Paulinus. It was a pleasure to see so many of you enjoying the breakfast club, sitting round chatting amicably to each other and tucking in to a healthy fruit, yoghurt and cereal breakfast. You are very well mannered and extremely helpful. Your behaviour in school and outside is outstanding. I know you truly care about your school and each other. You show high levels of responsibility. I was impressed with the work of the council and the range of activities you organise and provide for younger pupils. I was also very impressed with your half-termly newspaper where you encourage all pupils to contribute. This is a very good way of linking with your community. You have very mature ideas and a very positive outlook on life. You show true respect for each other in the way you listen and share good ideas.

You go to a good school that is rapidly improving because everyone is working for your benefit. Teachers know you all very well and make sure you have all the help you need to get better at your work. You are very good at concentrating when the teacher is speaking. Your writing has improved very much over the last few years and nearly all of you say it is your favourite subject. I noticed many of you using the exotic vocabulary displayed on your classroom walls to help make your writing so lively and interesting. Your books are stunning and I am not surprised that you are very proud of your work. You all know exactly what you are doing well and what needs to be improved, because teachers mark your work so well. You even help to evaluate the work of your classmates. How clever is that! School assessment shows that some of you do better in English and science than you do in mathematics. I have asked the school to make sure you all do equally well in all subjects. You must therefore try harder, even if you find some of the work difficult. Remember the determination you are developing in your philosophy lessons, 'Training the mind to be mentally fit means that we carry on going, even when it gets tough...'

I was delighted to see the excellent way you behave in school. My discussion with older pupils led me to understand that everyone in school feels safe because pupils look after each other well. I was pleased to see pupils selling fruit at playtime and to know that many of you keep fit by joining the after-school sport and gymnastics clubs.

You show real enthusiasm about the improvements to the school building, the spacious classrooms, atrium and outdoor areas. The all-weather pitch is fabulous. However, you have also worked hard to contribute to the new developments and have held events to raise money for new play facilities. Your school and parents must be truly proud of you.

I hope you continue to enjoy your time at school and that you continue to work hard and try your very best so you are ready for the next school.

Gianna Ulyatt

Lead inspector (on behalf of the team)