

# St Begas RC Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	111697
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hartlepool
<b>Inspection number</b>	325436
<b>Inspection dates</b>	9–10 February 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	John Heap

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	155
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>	Mrs Pat Carroll
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Michael Cooney
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 June 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>	Thorpe Street Hartlepool TS24 0DX
<b>Telephone number</b>	01429 267768
<b>Fax number</b>	01429 267768

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a below average-sized primary school that serves an area with above average disadvantage. A broadly typical proportion of pupils are entitled to free school meals. Most pupils are White British and a very small number of pupils come from other ethnic backgrounds. None are learning English as an additional language. An above average proportion of pupils are identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school provides for children's learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage in the Nursery and Reception classes. Recently, the school has undergone significant changes to both staffing, including the development of a new senior leadership team, and the premises.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Inspectors agree with the school's evaluation that it is satisfactory and gives sound value for money. Pupils and their parents are clearly satisfied with the school's work and particularly the happy, caring atmosphere. Typical comments include 'My husband and I are very proud that our daughter received a place in the school' and 'I am really happy the way my son has been looked after.' Recent changes in staffing have meant that improvement has been slower than expected, particularly in making management more rigorous and developing assessment procedures. Recent initiatives have not had enough time to bring about sufficient improvement for the school to be judged good, as it was at the previous inspection.

Pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good because of the school's caring atmosphere and the strong parts in the otherwise satisfactory curriculum. Pupils' strong moral and social development leads to both very good behaviour and attitudes to school and work. Pupils show a good knowledge and understanding of how to lead healthy and safe lifestyles. Pupils and parents agree that schooling is enjoyable and pupils' regular attendance supports this view. Pupils make a good contribution to school and local life through their links with the wider community, the established school council and the way they carry out day-to-day responsibilities.

Satisfactory teaching, learning and academic development promote average standards and sound achievement through the school. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with a range of skills and abilities that are overall below those expected at their age. Despite satisfactory progress in Nursery and Reception, pupils join Year 1 with skills and abilities that remain a little below average. Pupils make satisfactory progress from Years 1 to 6 and reach overall broadly average standards, although the proportions of pupils reaching higher levels of attainment are relatively lower than they could be. Progress in Key Stage 2 could be stronger in English, mathematics and science, particularly for the more able pupils. The combination of very good attitudes and satisfactory academic progress mean that pupils are soundly prepared for their future.

There are strong elements to the teaching and learning in teachers' effective relationships that give pupils confidence to take part and enjoy lessons. Teachers' organisation and management of classrooms are good and this enables lessons to flow smoothly, in the best cases with brisk pace and clear challenge. However, there are also areas for improvement, particularly the ways in which pupils are guided and supported in their learning, and the use of assessment and tracking of pupils' achievements to match work and challenge to their individual needs.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has shown good leadership in stabilising the school after a period of significant staffing disruption. However, there is a lack of rigour and sharpness in maintaining the focus on improvement. Improvement planning identifies the right priorities but the indicators of success are not always clear or measurable. Key staff provide satisfactory, and improving support. Governance is satisfactory. Governors monitor teaching and learning to a degree, but their formal evaluation of the school's work lacks sufficient independence to hold the school fully to account.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

Provision is satisfactory and gives children a secure start to their education. Children enter the Nursery class with skills and abilities that are below what is typical for their age. Their personal, social and emotional development and communication and literacy skills are relatively weak areas of development. They settle well because of strong parental involvement and caring support from staff. This is further enhanced by the much appreciated 'wraparound care' provision which ensures consistent adult support. Personal development and well-being are good. Children behave very well and are keen to learn. Children quickly gain confidence, learn to play together, follow routines and start to take care of themselves. All children, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make satisfactory progress but they begin Year 1 with skills and abilities that are still a little below average. Staff promote a secure environment and children's progress is beginning to be checked regularly. They also offer the children a range of activities within the classroom, but sometimes these activities do not have a sufficient range of resources to allow children to make the progress they are capable of. Staff still lead too many activities rather than allow children to choose for themselves and sometimes the best use is not made of adult support which would help children make more progress. The outdoor learning area is not yet used to support all areas of learning equally well. Leadership and management are satisfactory and ensure that the new enthusiastic team of adults plan together and have a clear understanding of what needs to be done to improve.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Increase progress in English, mathematics and science, particularly for the more able pupils.
- Make teaching, learning and assessment consistently good, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 2.
- Improve the rigour and sharpness of monitoring, evaluation and planning for all aspects of school improvement.

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 the next section 5 inspection.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Pupils' overall achievement is satisfactory. From below the expected levels of development on entering the Nursery, pupils reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 6. However, the proportions of pupils reaching the higher levels of attainment are below the national average.

By the end of Year 2, standards are broadly average. This is confirmed by the results in the 2008 national tests although reading and writing scores were generally stronger than mathematics. There is no significant difference between the results of boys and girls. The pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are generally performing better than such pupils nationally. At the higher Level 3, writing results were average, but reading and mathematics scores were below average.

By the end of Year 6 standards are broadly average, in line with the school's own data and current standards in lessons and pupils' work. Analysis of national test data shows that although

there have been some variations, progress in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory. There was an improvement in the school's 2008 results in comparison to those in 2007. However, results for the higher attaining pupils were below the national average, particularly in science. The school's targets for the current Year 6 are challenging and the school's data shows pupils to be on target to meet them. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the few from minority ethnic backgrounds make satisfactory progress.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Moral and social development are particularly strong. Pupils enjoy coming to school and say the best thing is the friendships they make in this caring and secure environment. Relationships are good and pupils play and work together in harmony. They say there is very little bullying and they can turn to the teacher if needed. Initiatives such as playground buddies help provide reassurance. Behaviour is very good. Attitudes to learning are positive and attendance is satisfactory. Pupils' spiritual development is strong and enhanced by the strong Christian ethos of the school. However, pupils' knowledge and understanding of a multicultural society and its diverse nature are much less secure. Pupils have opportunities to take on responsibilities such as being a school councillor, dinner monitor or table monitor in class. They make charitable collections at regular intervals throughout the year. Links with the local community, are strengthened through involvement in projects such as 'Groundworks', and carol singing at the local supermarket. Pupils know about staying healthy by eating well and taking exercise. They say they feel safe and know how to keep safe. Average basic skills and good social skills provide a satisfactory preparation for the next stage of learning.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The quality of teaching and learning in Key Stages 1 and 2 is satisfactory with some good features. Typically, teachers and learners have good relationships which means that pupils are confident to contribute by asking and answering questions; lessons are managed well and there are few disruptions to the flow of lessons and learning; and teaching assistants make an effective contribution for those pupils who have additional learning needs. Where teaching is stronger the pace is brisk and the challenge is clear. For example, in a Year 5/6 English lesson, more able pupils took charge of their own learning by making decisions about how they would present their work about the 'Jabberwocky'. Pupils with additional learning needs were well supported by staff and made good progress as they learned about the meaning and use of onomatopoeia. Nevertheless, on too many occasions, teachers do not have sufficiently challenging expectations and some pupils do not make consistent progress. This is because the effective use of assessment information and the quality of marking is patchy. Where marking is effective, it is obvious to the pupil what they have done well and what they need to do to progress further. Too often, clarity in this guidance is lacking.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The promotion of pupils' academic development is satisfactory. The range of learning opportunities and activities broadly meets the needs of most groups of pupils, including those

with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However, opportunities to apply and use their developing basic skills are more limited, resulting in restrictions on pupils' independent learning, particularly for higher attaining pupils. Partnerships with outside bodies enhance teaching and learning in music and physical education. Gifted and talented pupils also benefit from extra programmes run by the local authority, such as mathematics with a local secondary school. The promotion of personal development is good, particularly through the wide range of sporting and exercise activities. Pupils enjoy a range of visitors to school such as those from the local credit union who promote financial and economic training and the police who support the citizenship curriculum. Enrichment of the curriculum is satisfactory and out of school activities enhance pupils' spirituality, health and enjoyment.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

Pastoral care is good and pupils are well cared for. Relationships throughout the school are supportive and encouraging; for example, pupils and teachers take lunch together. Links with outside agencies provide sound support to vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Safeguarding procedures meet requirements. Health and safety issues are adequately addressed, such as risk assessments. Procedures for monitoring attendance and behaviour are good. The breakfast and tea clubs run by the school add to the sense of belonging and security that children feel. Improved assessment systems have been established that are giving an accurate picture of how well pupils are doing and are being used to set challenging targets for pupils. These are helping to steer teaching and are beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' learning. However, the quality of guidance to pupils remains inconsistent and assessment information is not always used to its full potential in monitoring and promoting academic performance.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The headteacher and senior staff are effective in promoting satisfactory academic achievement, good pupils' personal development, and strong pastoral care and support. The action taken to promote community cohesion is satisfactory. Analysis of local needs has identified ways to provide appropriate initiatives such as 'wraparound care' and ways to give guidance to adults seeking a 'signpost' to other services. Pupils are involved in a range of initiatives at local and wider level. The need for the effectiveness of the actions to be reviewed is established. There is also a growing recognition of the need for greater rigour in monitoring, self-evaluation and improvement planning within the school's work, particularly in the provision of academic guidance and support. Satisfactory progress is being made in developing assessment processes and their use, and is beginning to have a positive effect on pupils' progress in learning. The senior leadership team has only recently been constituted. Nevertheless, its members are working hard to bring about improvements, for example, in developing academic target setting and good marking practices. Consequently, the capacity to improve is satisfactory. Governance is satisfactory. The governing body supports the school well, but there is not sufficient independence because governors are too reliant on the headteacher for their information, rather than developing the means to find out for themselves.

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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?	3
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?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### 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?	3
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

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<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>	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	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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**

11 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Bega's RC Primary School, Hartlepool, TS24 0DX

Thank you for your part in the two very enjoyable days the inspection team spent in your school this week. Your warm welcome, happy smiles, courtesy and the help you gave us made our job easier to do and gave us a clear picture of the strengths of your school. Yours is a satisfactory school. It is not easy to describe all that is going on in a school in a short letter, but below are some of the main findings.

We particularly liked:

- your very good behaviour and attitudes to school and work and the strong support you give to each other
- the way that you and your parents appreciate the work the school does and the enjoyment you get from your time in school
- the good opportunities that you have to learn French and music and the good work of coaches who are improving your sporting skills
- the good knowledge and understanding that you have about the advantages of leading healthy and safe lifestyles
- the way that staff are trying hard to improve the school, particularly the use of targets in your writing and mathematics work and the better checking of the progress you make.

To improve the school further, staff are going to help you to do better in English, mathematics and science, especially the more able pupils. They will regularly teach good lessons in the Nursery, Reception and Key Stage 2 that challenge you to learn well. Part of this will be the better way that staff use marking and the results of your work to give you good guidance on how well you are doing and what you need to do next. You can be a great help by always doing your best work and by continuing to show great attitudes to your work and school. Finally, staff and governors will improve the way they check and judge how well the school is doing and produce a good plan for improving what the school does. The school council may be able to play a part in this work.

The inspection team wishes you well and good luck for the future. Make sure you continue to enjoy school life and the opportunities provided.

Yours sincerely

John Heap

Lead inspector