

St John Vianney RC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111698
Local Authority	Hartlepool
Inspection number	325437
Inspection date	22 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Margaret Shepherd

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	0–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	357
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	55
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Bernard Robertson
Headteacher	Mr John Hardy
Date of previous school inspection	1 October 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	King Oswy Drive Hartlepool TS24 9PA
Telephone number	01429 273273

Age group	0–11
Inspection date	22 October 2008
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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 quality of pupils' personal development; the impact of the new curriculum and the quality of teaching and learning; the impact of the daycare and childcare provision on achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Evidence was gathered from the observation of lessons and daycare and childcare provision, collective worship and playtimes. Discussions were held with pupils, staff, the 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 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 where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

The school serves an area of some severe social and economic disadvantage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. There are a very small proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. Since the previous inspection the school has significantly extended its childcare and daycare provision. The daycare offers places for babies and toddlers in purpose built facilities and runs from 07.30 to 17.45. Not all of these children go on to the school Nursery, and some children join the Nursery who have not benefited from the daycare provision. There are breakfast and after-school clubs that cater from birth to 11 years and a holiday club. The Children's Centre caters for pre-natal and post-natal care and can provide crèche facilities. The school is in the process of organising the EYFS premises and resources to allow all children from this key stage to access the full range of facilities. The outdoor learning area has recently been extended and is now accessible to all children from two years of age to the end of the Reception.

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. The key strength of the school is the combination of an inspirational headteacher and a staff who are all working extremely efficiently together within clear principles. This results in a stimulating, challenging and caring context for every pupil to develop both academically and personally. The school greatly values its role in serving its families and local community. It creates strong and purposeful partnerships with parents and carers and with external specialists. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. A typical comment was, 'I feel privileged to have my children part of a safe, caring and well managed community. He (the headteacher) without doubt has high expectations of his staff, which in turn produces positive outcomes for the children in his care.'

Teaching and learning are outstanding. Lessons are superbly organised, with many opportunities for pupils to work independently, as well as carrying out purposeful and productive group work. Staff have a very clear understanding of each pupil's particular needs and progress through the very thorough assessment and tracking each half term. Teachers use these assessments efficiently to identify how pupils' needs have changed and then provide new programmes of work and adult support to extend their learning further. This results in outstanding achievement. Pupils enter Year 1 at levels below those typical for their age reach broadly average standards at the end of Year 2 and leave the school with significantly higher than average standards. Gifted and talented pupils greatly benefit from the local authority's weekly programme of working with pupils from other schools for a full day. A much larger than average proportion of pupils exceed the level expected for their age by the end of Year 6 with more than half reaching this higher level in mathematics and three quarters in science. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also reach higher than average standards at the end of both key stages. The school's principle of valuing personal development also supports these pupils' learning extremely well because they can excel at other aspects of the curriculum. This raises their self-esteem and they approach their academic learning positively.

The school has worked extremely hard to extend pupils' personal development and well-being since the previous inspection and has been extremely successful in achieving this aim. It is now outstanding. It is rooted in the very high quality care, support and guidance that pupils receive. Another key contributor to this success is the school's innovative and highly effective curriculum that is based on 52 'pearls' which include attributes such as generosity, risk and adaptability as well as aspects such as writing and oracy. The emphasis is on sensible, acquirable and transferable skills. The whole school work with these pearls as a basis for delivering the curriculum and pupils have a sophisticated understanding of when they can claim to have achieved a pearl. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Whole school strategies for spiritual development are embedded in daily practice, such as a representative from each class lighting a candle from a central one and then delivering it to their class. Pupils develop an excellent understanding of cultural issues through activities such as the imaginary journey they are taking around the world in whole school special days. In these, they have started by learning all about Beijing and will be finishing with London for the 2012 Olympics. Pupils have an excellent understanding of keeping healthy. They try hard to eat healthy foods and thoroughly enjoy the very wide variety of after-school activities that are available. They have a comprehensive knowledge of the importance of staying safe. They relish the opportunity to take on responsibilities, such as being peer mediators. Older pupils play sensitively with younger pupils, girls work comfortably with boys and there is racial harmony.

Their behaviour is outstanding and is based on mutual respect, which is modelled excellently by staff towards each other and each pupil. Individuals are proud of their place in the school, the local and the wider community. Pupils' preparation for their future lives is outstanding. They gain very good basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. These skills are complemented by high quality oral skills and a genuine understanding of economics through projects such as organising, running and costing the Café Vianney that was open to the local community. All of the key elements of personal development gained as pupils move through the school result in individuals developing into mature, self-motivated and self-critical individuals.

The headteacher sets the standard for leadership and management, which is excellent. He has an extremely clear vision of the role of the school in serving every pupil, together with the local community, and works consistently and imaginatively to keep making the school a better place for learning. The senior leadership team have very clearly defined roles and carry out their responsibilities with enthusiasm. The detailed monitoring of lessons and pupils' work results in outstanding teaching and learning. Welfare arrangements are carried out diligently and safeguarding systems are in place. Governors have a wide range of expertise and know the community very well. The school has made outstanding progress since the previous inspection, not least in establishing comprehensive daycare, childcare, and the children's centre. The whole school approach to tackling changes ensures that there is an outstanding capacity to improve in future.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The effectiveness of the EYFS is good with many outstanding features. The organisation of all of the daycare and childcare under the school's governing body and leadership of the headteacher works extremely well. There is a great commitment for all staff to work together to provide the best quality care for families in the locality. The particular allocation of responsibilities to the different managers within the Early Years team is very efficient and ensures that different children's needs are met well. The strategy of opening up the use of the facilities and resources across the different age range works very well for the younger children, and their achievement is outstanding because they benefit from the interaction from the older children. For example, toddlers are thrilled to join in the choices in snack time available outside the Reception area. Children start Reception with much lower standards than usually seen for this age. Although achievement is good, it is not as effective as that of the younger children. This is because the level of challenge in the shared independent activities is not consistently high enough to ensure excellent progress in early literacy and numeracy skills. This is not the case when children work together in a whole class group, where the challenge matches their needs very well. Staff across the unit are beginning to understand how to assess and extend Reception children's learning during an activity. Children's personal development is excellent across all ages and all staff are skilled in meeting children's different needs.

The planning and assessment of the care of babies and toddlers matches their needs very well and parents appreciate the records that staff keep, showing their children's progress. The full EYFS staff have exciting plans for using the recently extended outdoor learning areas to provide a wider range of learning opportunities for children, but this is in its very early stages of re-organisation. The welfare provision of the EYFS is excellent, with staff showing high levels of care for each child and detailed policies in place to ensure children's well-being. In many cases the policies are fully included in the whole school documentation to ensure that there is

consistency right through from birth to 11 years. The Children's Centre facility supports new mothers very effectively within very attractive premises. The determination to continue to extend and improve provision for each child is just as effective in the EYFS as it is in the rest of the school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that children in the Reception age group are sufficiently challenged in the independent reading, writing and numeracy opportunities.
- Implement the plans to re-organise the outdoor learning area to support the needs of the different ages in the EYFS.

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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?	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?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ 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

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	3
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?	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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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	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**

23 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St John Vianney RC Primary School, Hartlepool, TS24 9PA

Thank you for being so very welcoming to us when we came to your school. You were all so friendly and helpful in answering our questions. We are writing to let you know what we found out.

We think that you go to an excellent school. Your headteacher, the governors and all the staff work extremely hard to keep making it a better place. We were very impressed with how you work your way towards gaining a new pearl. You work really hard throughout your time in the school and by the end of Year 6 your standards are much higher than average. Your personal development is outstanding. There are so many different things that showed us how you are all maturing into sensible, caring and enthusiastic learners. You obviously thoroughly enjoy all the different activities that your school offers you. You take the initiative very confidently, like the pupils who organised the cheer leading club and the way that your Year 6 pupils organised and ran the Café Vianney for your local community. Your teachers work extremely well with your teaching assistants to support you in lessons and everyone treats each other with respect, like one big family.

Your childcare and daycare facilities are very effective and help you to make a very good start to your learning from a very early age. The staff there are working with your Reception and Nursery staff to extend the outdoor learning area and are planning to organise it to make it even better for all the children of different ages to use. We have also suggested that they look at the Reception children's learning when they join in with the younger children to make sure that the activities help them to learn even better.

We know that you are keen to make sure that you get as many pearls as you can by the time you leave your school and we wish you all the very best in achieving that goal.

Yours sincerely

Maggi Shepherd

Lead Inspector