

# St Johns Chapel Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114064
<b>Local Authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	325935
<b>Inspection dates</b>	23–24 April 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Gordon Potter

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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	39
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 Mark Oliphant
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Kerrie Eeva
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 February 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>	Burnfoot St Johns Chapel Weardale Bishop Auckland County Durham DL13 1QH
<b>Telephone number</b>	01388 537332

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector.

## Description of the school

This very small school serves a remote rural area. All pupils are White British and come from a range of social backgrounds. A very small proportion of pupils are eligible for a free school meal. An above average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school has Healthy School, Artsmark Gold and Sports Activemark Gold awards. Children enter the Reception class in the autumn term and are taught in a class which includes Key Stage 1 pupils. The acting headteacher has been in post since the beginning of this term.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

St John's Chapel Primary is a good school which is at the heart of its community. Pupils' personal development is outstanding because the school offers them outstanding care and an increasingly exciting curriculum. Pupils especially enjoy the wide range of activities which enrich their learning. Parents unanimously support the work of the school. They say that the school 'provides excellently for every child. The children thrive and enjoy the different activities, and develop academically, socially, spiritually and morally'. Highly effective target setting and marking allow pupils to know exactly what they need to do to improve their work and these are beginning to improve achievement.

Pupils benefit from a good range of interesting learning activities which are well matched to their age and ability. While standards vary because of the small year groups, the school's emphasis on developing literacy and numeracy has helped pupils to achieve well in English and mathematics. Strengths of learning are the ways pupils can focus on individual tasks as well as work collaboratively with others. Good teaching makes it very clear to pupils what they will learn, although pupils say that occasionally they could be involved in more hands-on activities which they really enjoy. Importantly, all groups of pupils achieve well and make good progress from their starting points. Since the last inspection, standards at Year 2 and Year 6 have been broadly in line with national averages. However, results of the 2008 assessments for Year 2 showed that standards were above average with some pupils making outstanding progress. Inspection evidence confirms the school's view that pupils currently in Year 6 are on track to achieve challenging targets and above average standards. This represents good achievement.

Outstanding relationships and sensitive support from a caring staff promote excellent levels of personal development. Pupils know that there is always someone to turn to if they need help. Attendance is good. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding and contributes to their enjoyment of school. They readily take on responsibilities, such as being school council members or playground helpers. They develop an outstanding understanding of how to keep healthy and stay fit, as the school strongly promotes these aspects. The school's strong focus on developing pupils' academic and personal development, including an impressive focus on information and communication technology (ICT) gives them a good preparation for their future economic well-being. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and is based on a love of the local environment and a very clear understanding of faiths and cultures other than their own.

Leadership and management are good. The very recent change of leadership in the school has been effectively managed and the acting headteacher has a very clear understanding of the school and what needs to be done to improve it further. Staff work together extremely closely to ensure that the needs of individual pupils are met. Governance is good because governors are supporting the school well through a period of change. Based on the improvements made since the last inspection and the clear focus on initiatives which have raised achievement, the school has good capacity to improve.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

The knowledge and skills with which children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage are below those typical for their age. They achieve well and enter Key Stage 1 and reach levels expected

of five year olds. There are very few children in this age group each year. Nevertheless, they benefit from being in a class with older children as this helps them to achieve outstanding personal development. Relationships are outstanding and engender confidence and a love of learning. Excellent induction and welfare arrangements help children to settle rapidly and thrive in the warm and supportive environment. Good leadership ensures that children learn in a vibrant and interesting environment. Teaching is good because it is securely based on the knowledge of how young children learn and develop. Observations and assessments are used effectively to support and extend children's learning and identify areas for improvement. Well planned activities indoors and out are based on children's own interests and help them to learn new things easily and confidently. However, the nature of the mixed-age class means that occasionally activities are too teacher-directed and opportunities for learning outside the classroom are not as available as they should be. A strong focus on developing sounds and letters enables children to make rapid progress in the development of early reading skills. Standards of behaviour and independence are outstanding and children are very focused on their activities which they enjoy. They are creative and are confident users of ICT.

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

- Develop the curriculum so that pupils are more actively involved in their learning of all subjects.
- Improve the range of activities in the Early Years Foundation Stage that children can choose for themselves both inside and outside the classroom.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Overall, pupils achieve well and attain standards that are average. Standards vary greatly on entry to school, because the numbers of pupils in each year group are small and therefore data needs to be treated with caution. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils achieve standards which are typically in line with the national average. Even so, the unvalidated test results in the 2008 tests for seven-year-olds showed that standards were above average and that some pupils had made outstanding progress from their starting points. The unvalidated test results in the 2008 tests for 11-year-olds showed that standards were broadly average, but this represents good progress for these pupils. Data held by the school indicates that the current Year 6 pupils are well placed to reach above average standards in English, mathematics and science. There is also substantial evidence of pupils' very good achievement in the humanities, arts and sport. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar progress to their classmates as a result of very effective intervention to meet their needs.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils show exceptional levels of joy in the world around them and excellent cultural awareness which starts with an appreciation of the beauty of the local area. They are encouraged to think deeply about social and moral issues so that they are very polite, helpful and supportive of one another. Accordingly, they feel extremely safe and well cared for. Pupils speak of their school with loyalty and pride, and this is reflected in high levels of attendance. They very much enjoy school, particularly the practical activities when available. Behaviour is exemplary in lessons and around the school. A range of external accreditation and awards reflect the high quality of personal development in

sport and health. Pupils make a significant contribution to the school community through the school council. They have a high profile in the local community through annual performances and work on the local sustainability project. Their enterprise skills are well developed through this work. These and the many other skills they acquire mean that pupils are well prepared for the next phase of their education.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Lessons are well planned so that work is well matched to pupils' ages and abilities. Teachers ensure that pupils know clearly what they are to learn and check that pupils are making good progress. Effective use is made of discussion so that pupils can help one another to analyse what and how they are learning. Excellent behaviour and relationships contribute to the productive working environment. Teachers use questions well to ascertain what pupils understand and to extend their thinking. Lessons generally have a good pace which allows pupils to consolidate knowledge well. Occasionally, though, the pace drops and learning is less effective. Teachers ensure that pupils use ICT well in their learning, although opportunities are missed to use interactive whiteboard technology as a teaching and learning tool. Teachers and teaching assistants support the learning of individuals and groups of pupils well.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum has a strong emphasis on the development of literacy, numeracy and ICT. The many opportunities for pupils to develop writing in subjects other than English are helping to raise standards in writing. Work is increasingly matched to pupils' interests and an extensive range of activities outside the classroom contributes significantly to pupils' enjoyment of school. There is a very impressive emphasis on using the local environment to develop skills in science, humanities and the arts, for example, in work done in the local peat bogs and in using the local steam railway so that pupils gained a greater understanding of the experiences of evacuees in the Second World War. The curriculum is increasingly planned so that pupils can learn actively, develop a range of life skills and become independent learners. However, this approach is not fully embedded and opportunities are missed to enhance pupils' basic skills through active learning. The school makes highly effective use of links with schools in France and Zambia to promote pupils' global awareness and the development of language skills.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 1**

Pupils benefit from the excellent quality of care and guidance by all staff. Pupils' safety is given the highest priority and all procedures related to maintaining their safeguarding and child protection meet current requirements. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive excellent support. In lessons, for example, staff are extremely good at promoting their self-confidence and reducing anxieties. Provision is well planned and progress is carefully monitored, resulting in these pupils making good progress. Highly effective transition arrangements ensure pupils are well prepared for their move to secondary schools which are some distance away. Assessment of academic progress is rigorous and helps pupils develop a

good understanding of their own strengths and areas to develop. The setting of clear targets for improvement is having a good impact on raising achievement.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The acting headteacher has used her clear understanding of the school to ensure that the very recent change to its leadership has been managed highly effectively. She is ably supported by the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 leaders so that recent initiatives in curricular development are continuing and new staff have been rapidly integrated. There is clear delegation of responsibilities and staff work extremely well together to plan and ensure that the needs of pupils in mixed-age classes are well met and that pupils have equal opportunities. The clearly defined school improvement plan is based on very effective self-evaluation and is used well to raise standards. The acting headteacher is very aware of what needs to be done to improve the school further. Challenging targets are set and these are raising pupils' achievement. Governors have supported the school well through a period of change, although they miss opportunities to be more involved in the academic side of school life. Governance is good. There is a very impressive commitment to community cohesion which has impacted well on the curriculum and very well on pupils' outstanding spiritual and cultural development. Accordingly, parents unanimously support the work of the school and the way it cares for the social, personal and academic needs of their children.

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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?	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?	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
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

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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>	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	2
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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**

27 April 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St John's Chapel Primary School, Durham, DL13 1QH

Thank you so much for making me welcome when I inspected your school. St John's Chapel Primary School is a good school. The staff care for you extremely well. They help you to enjoy your learning because they try to make your lessons fun and effective. They encourage you to know what you need to learn in each lesson.

I think that you are an outstanding credit to the school. I was pleased to see that you work very hard and do your best. I think that you behave extremely well and you look after one another admirably. You are very polite and helpful, and I enjoyed talking to you about your school. You told me that you look forward to coming to school because you enjoy your lessons and appreciate the activities the school provides for you, such as visits and sports activities. You particularly enjoy activities which involve you in the beautiful countryside around the school. Your parents and carers like the school very much, especially the excellent way in which your teachers care for you and help you to enjoy your learning.

The way your school, including the Early Years Foundation Stage, is led and managed is good. Leaders and staff know the school well and their work is making the school become increasingly effective. We have asked the school to do two things to make your school even better.

- Develop the curriculum so that the best practices in encouraging you to learn actively are applied across school in all subjects.
- Improve the range of activities in the Early Years Foundation Stage that children can choose for themselves both inside and outside the classroom.

You can help by continuing to do your very best and by continuing to attend regularly. I am sure you will.

Thank you for all your help and I wish you every success in all you do in the future.

Yours faithfully

Gordon Potter

Lead inspector