

# St Joseph's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School, Ushaw Moor

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114272
<b>Local Authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	325980
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 June 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	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.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	86
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 Mary Everett
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Mary Lightfoot
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 April 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>	Durham Road Ushaw Moor Durham County Durham DH7 7LF
<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 3730355

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 June 2009
<b>Inspection number</b>	325980

**Fax number**

0191 3739214

<b>Age group</b>	4-11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an additional inspector.

## Description of the school

The school is smaller than most schools and is situated in an ex-mining village community. The school serves an area of significant social deprivation. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. Pupil mobility is higher than the national average. The number of pupils from minority ethnic groups is low and very few are at an early stage of speaking English. The number of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The percentage of pupils who have a statement of special educational need is average. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage join the school from a number of pre-school settings. These children receive full-time provision during their Reception Year in the same class as a small number of Year 1 pupils. The school has a higher percentage of boys to girls.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory and rapidly improving school. At the heart of the school is the belief that when pupils are nurtured in a strong Christian community, they learn true respect and become confident to take their place in society. Personal development is good and behaviour is exemplary. Respect and confidence shine through the pupils. The determination and strong leadership of the headteacher is bringing about rapid improvements. Staffing difficulties during the past few years are gradually being resolved and the school is becoming more settled. All staff work together as a united team to ensure the best opportunities for pupils. Parents unanimously support the work of the school and a typical comment is, 'St Joseph's has vastly improved. My children look forward to school every day and I put this down to the enthusiasm of teachers and good management.'

Achievement is satisfactory and standards are broadly average, although they fluctuate from year-to-year because cohorts are very small. Progress in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory. Standards are average in reading and mathematics and below average in writing. In Key Stage 2 in 2008, standards were below average in English and mathematics and average in science. The school has worked very hard to address gaps in pupils' previous learning. Progress, especially in Key Stage 2, is improving and standards are now broadly average in English, mathematics and science. Writing remains a weakness. Pupils from minority ethnic groups progress well. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or pupils who have a statement of special education need make satisfactory progress. The progress of more able pupils is inconsistent. They do not always make enough progress because the teaching is not always challenging enough.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory with good features. Relationships are excellent so pupils have a very good work ethic. They collaborate well with their classmates. In the best lessons, pupils are very clear about what they need to do to improve their work. In some lessons, assessment is not used sufficiently to ensure that the work provided challenges all pupils. The satisfactory curriculum gives good priority to key skills. Enhancement activities widen pupils' horizons. The school offers good levels of care for its pupils. The recent introduction of a tracking system to monitor progress helps the school identify those who are not achieving as well as they should. The school offers good support for those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities or a statement of special educational need.

Leadership and management are satisfactory and improving rapidly. Since joining the school the headteacher has made significant improvements. In particular to the environment and to the way tracking is used to support teaching and learning. Senior leadership has a secure understanding of the schools' strengths and areas in need of improvement. Subject leaders are new to their areas of responsibility. They are enthusiastic and gaining in confidence. They are not yet making full use of the school's new systems to monitor and evaluate learning to identify, tackle and eliminate inconsistencies in pupils' progress between key stages and subjects. Governors are loyal to the school. They visit regularly and know the school well. They challenge its work. Community cohesion is satisfactory. The school has good partnerships within the parish, and the locality and is developing their links on the national and international scene.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

The effectiveness of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory and improving. Children start school in the Reception class and come from a range of pre-school settings. Some have had no pre-school experience. On entry, standards are below those that are typical for their age. Progress and achievement are satisfactory although standards remain below average in all six areas of learning. Pupils make good progress in their personal development as this is a daily focus for the staff. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Adults offer sensitive support as they play alongside children in small groups. They assess and guide their play. They encourage children's speaking and thinking skills. They support children when they are counting and encourage them to use their phonic knowledge when writing. Adults keep records of children's progress, but do not always use the information to challenge children sufficiently. The involvement in the Forest School programme has inspired children and has had a positive impact on their self-confidence and sense of adventure. As a consequence, adults are beginning to change the way the curriculum is taught in order to adopt a topic approach. When children work with adults, the learning objective is clear. However, activities which they can choose for themselves do not always lead to independent learning. The school has begun to develop the area outdoors but the range of activities on offer does not include all six areas of learning. Welfare of the children is good. They feel safe and secure and safety requirements are met. Parents speak positively about the provision because their children are settled and enjoy school. Leadership is satisfactory and the action plan identifies the correct areas for improvement.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation of learning and progress by subject leaders in order to help identify, tackle and eliminate inconsistencies between key stages and between subjects.
- Raise standards overall especially in writing.
- Improve the progress of the more able pupils.

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 their next section 5 inspection.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory. The school has very small cohorts, therefore standards fluctuate from year-to-year. On entry to Year 1, standards are usually below average. Teacher assessments in 2008 for Year 2 pupils were average in reading and mathematics and below average in writing. Progress in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory and standards remain similar to the 2008 assessment.

In Key Stage 2 progress is satisfactory. The 2008 Key Stage 2 national test results were below average in English and mathematics and average in science. Girls in this cohort achieved better than boys, particularly in writing. School data shows improvements to attainment in Key Stage 2 with standards now being broadly average in mathematics and science but below average in English, especially in writing which is a priority for the school. Girls and boys are now making better progress because new tracking and assessment systems are beginning to have an impact on how well pupils learn. In all subjects, more able pupils in both key stages do not make enough progress. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with a statement of

special educational need make satisfactory progress overall. Pupils from minority ethnic groups achieve well.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Pupils show high levels of spirituality and have regular opportunities for prayer and reflection. They show great pride in their school work and have a clear sense of right and wrong. Behaviour is excellent and pupils are polite, friendly and welcoming. They enjoy being at school and attendance is broadly average. Pupils feel safe because they know buddies are always on hand and adults are close by should they have any problems. They take a full and active part in the life of the school community. The school council has been involved with improvements to the school building and the painting of the school yard surface. Through a local nutrition group, they have worked hard to improve healthy eating in school. They willingly fundraise for those at home or abroad who are less fortunate than themselves. Pupils enjoy community activities, including singing at local events and for the elderly as well as taking part in parish activities. They participate enthusiastically in physical activity and enjoy the range of sport on offer. Pupils' standards in the key skills of English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) are broadly average and their future economic well-being is satisfactorily catered for. They are ambitious and many of them hope to enter a professional career.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. There have been a number of recent improvements. The school has placed strong emphasis on consistency in the use of teachers' knowledge about pupils' attainment when planning lessons. Consequently, in lessons there are some good and outstanding elements seen. The best lessons extend pupils' previous knowledge and understanding and good progress is evident because they are consistently challenged to think for themselves, work independently, and take on responsibility for their own learning. In other lessons, tasks do not match the learning needs of pupils sufficiently and the progress of more able pupils in particular slows. All lessons are characterised by excellent relationships between adults and pupils. Pupils have good attitudes to learning and show high standards of politeness and respect, which are expected throughout the school. Lessons move along at a good pace and demand sustained concentration because teachers expect pupils to listen and then discuss their ideas with a partner. Teaching assistants and other professionals are used well to support pupils. Pupils are becoming increasingly clear about their targets for improvement, particularly in English.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is satisfactory and provides a broad and balanced range of learning opportunities. It provides continuity from year-to-year and has some good features. Much time is given to the acquisition of literacy and numeracy skills throughout the school and pupils have increasing opportunities to develop speaking and listening through class discussions, role-play and drama.

English and mathematics are taught as discrete lessons. However, the school is aware of the need to increase writing opportunities for pupils to apply their skills in other subjects. This is still at the early stage of development. Pupils have opportunities to enrich their learning both during and out of school hours. Extra-curricular activities, including sport, music, art, dance and drama, are well-attended. Older pupils visit Holy Island which gives them chances to work in teams, develop self-confidence and meet pupils from other schools. Visitors such as the drama group give pupils first-hand opportunities to act out scenarios linked to the curriculum.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Care, guidance and support are good. The learning needs of individuals who need extra support are quickly identified and individual plans are carefully prepared to address their needs. The school has good links with a range of professionals to support pupils. The school complies with the requirements to safeguard children and child protection procedures are in place. Pupils say they feel safe and always have someone to talk to. Academic guidance has improved and is now good. The school uses tracking information to note the progress of pupils. The information is used to support pupils whose progress is faster or slower than the majority. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, a statement of special educational need or are from minority ethnic backgrounds are well supported. The school is aware of the need to pay closer attention to the needs of the more able pupils to make sure they achieve well. Further use is made of tracking information to set targets for pupils. These make a positive contribution to pupils' academic guidance, notably in English but less so in mathematics. The school has recently introduced a new system for marking pupils' work so pupils are very clear about what they next need to think about, especially in writing.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory and improving rapidly. Since joining the school the headteacher has had a powerful effect on the ethos of the school. She quickly assessed what needed to be done to improve standards and the learning environment. Monitoring and evaluation by senior leadership is rigorous and secure and underpins the written plans for improvement that provide a sound basis for moving the school forward. Construction work is complete and all pupils are now housed in the same building. The headteacher has gained the confidence of parents, governors and staff so that all share her high aspirations for the pupils' success. Parents' views can be summed up in this comment, 'The headteacher is always keen to listen to parents' opinions and takes on board what has been said.' Staffing problems over the past two years have caused difficulties in bringing about improvements to standards. Subject leaders are new to their areas of responsibility and have not yet fully developed their roles. They are developing skills of self-evaluation and beginning to use the school's new systems for monitoring and evaluating pupils' learning and progress. However, they are not yet fully effective in identifying, tacking and eliminating inconsistencies in progress between key stages and subjects. However, the new team is enthusiastic and gaining in confidence. Consequently, the capacity to improve is satisfactory. Community cohesion is satisfactory. The school has good links within the parish and the locality but few on the national and international scene. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are supportive and visit regularly to observe and challenge



the school's work. They are less involved in strategic planning. The school has made satisfactory improvements since the last inspection.

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**Annex A**

## Inspection judgements

<b>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</b>	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

<b>How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?</b>	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?	3

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	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	1
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?	2

## 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	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
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	2
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

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

5 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Joseph's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School, Ushaw Moor, Durham,  
DH7 7LF

I spent two very happy days in your school. Everyone was friendly and very helpful. Pupils came to talk to me in corridors, in the playground, in the dining hall and in lessons. You told me a lot about the way your school values each one of you and wants you all to succeed. It was very moving to hear you singing through the school corridors as you came into assembly. The extensions to your building are impressive. It is good to have Year 6 in the same building as everyone else, because you are such good role models for younger pupils.

This is a satisfactory and rapidly improving school. I was very pleased to see how hard you work in lessons. You have such interesting discussions with your talk partners, consequently your thinking and speaking skills are developing very well. It was wonderful reading your poetry and watching you learn how to use difficult mathematical terms. Your attainment is improving because teachers make sure you know exactly what you next need to learn. You all know your writing targets. I have asked the school to look carefully at all subjects but especially writing to make sure standards rise. I have also asked the school to see that your work is always challenging enough to enable more of you to reach above average standards. The school is also going to check your learning and progress carefully in all subjects and year groups to make sure your work improves at a regular rate each year. You in turn must always give of your best and try very hard even if the work appears difficult.

I hope you continue to enjoy the interesting activities the school plans for you. I wish you good luck for your future.

Yours faithfully

Gianna Ulyatt

Lead inspector