

St Mary's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School, Wingate

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114279
Local Authority	Durham
Inspection number	338328
Inspection dates	8–9 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Linda Buller

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	57
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Margaret Greener
Headteacher	Mrs Jane Lewin
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited five lessons taught by three teachers. Meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior leaders, governors, members of staff, the School Improvement Partner and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work including the systems for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress, the school improvement plan, the school's records of the monitoring of teaching, documentation relating to the safeguarding of pupils, samples of pupils' work and 23 questionnaires from parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the impact of the school's current focus on improving writing
- the impact of what the school judge to be good provision on the rates of progress made by different cohorts and groups of pupils
- the accuracy and the effectiveness of assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage to improve outcomes for children
- the impact of leadership and management and whether this justifies the school's view that it has good capacity to improve.

Information about the school

The school is a much smaller than average size primary school. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is very low. The largest group of pupils is from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is high. The percentage of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is much greater than that found nationally, as is the proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs.

In September 2006, the school federated with a nearby Catholic Primary School, with the headteacher of the federated school becoming headteacher of both schools. The school has undergone a number of staff changes within the last school year.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. Due to significant improvement during this school year many aspects of its work are now good. The school has a strong ethos of care and support. This helps pupils to mature as responsible citizens with a good understanding of the responsibility they hold for their own well-being, that of others and the world in which they live. Effective partnerships with parents and carers, other schools and agencies help to raise pupils' aspirations and ensure everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed regardless of background or prior attainment.

Pupils have generally made satisfactory progress since the time of the last inspection and attained broadly average standards. Recent decisive action by leaders and managers has led to an increase in the amount of good teaching. Careful consideration has been given to matching curricular provision to pupils' need and interests. This is particularly evident in the improved writing skills demonstrated by most pupils. Regular opportunities to write at length for a variety of purposes linked well to subjects, such as science, history and geography, help pupils to make good progress in their writing, keeps them fully engaged in their learning so that they are rightly proud of their achievements. This good progress in writing is not yet secure in those lessons where teaching remains satisfactory. In the better lessons, teachers review learning regularly to ensure that pupils understand tasks and are appropriately challenged. This is not always the case in the satisfactory lessons.

The headteacher sets a clear vision for the school, which is shared by staff. Effective systems of self-evaluation have identified appropriate priorities for improvement based firmly on the regular monitoring of provision and detailed analysis of how well each pupil is doing. This has led to the setting of challenging targets for pupils to attain by the end of Key Stage 2, and to above average standards in the current Year 6.

The school has identified that some inaccuracies in the assessments of children's attainment in the Early Years Foundation Stage in the past, has led to inappropriate targets being set for pupils as they moved through the school. Training and support have now resulted in accurate assessments. The school recognises there is more to do in using information from these assessments to achieve consistently good provision and uniformly good progress. However, the actions taken by leaders and managers are leading to rapidly improving standards and progress in most year groups. Therefore, the school is demonstrating a good capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve the quality of teaching and learning to ensure that standards

rise, especially in Key Stage 1 by, ensuring that:

- accurate assessment information is used to set challenging targets and raise teachers expectations of what pupils can achieve by the end of Year 2
- progress in lessons is regularly reviewed to detect misunderstandings or provide additional challenge.
- Improve provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage to ensure that children make good progress in all areas of learning, by:
 - using the information gained from observing and assessing children's learning to plan activities which meet their differing needs
 - ensuring that all activities have a clear learning focus and that these are communicated effectively to children.
- About 40% of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils enjoy school because they have good relationships with staff and each other. They have positive attitudes to their work and collaborate enthusiastically in pairs and groups with sustained concentration. In the recent past, far fewer pupils in this school than in others nationally reached levels of attainment above those expected for their age. The school has worked hard and with increasing effectiveness in the last year to tackle this issue. As a result, school data and inspection evidence indicate that approximately half the pupils in the current Year 6 are working at the higher Level 5 in English, mathematics and science. Although most pupils in the school are now making good progress, this is a recent improvement and pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. Evidence from lessons supports the school's data that pupils with special educational needs and/ or disabilities achieve similarly to their peers because of the effectiveness of the targeted support that is provided. The school's focus on improving writing, particularly that of lower attaining boys, through changes in subject matter and the use of a variety of teaching and learning styles, has also met with great success. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe. Pupils of different ages show care and respect for each other through responsibilities, such as buddies, school councillors and eco leaders. They have a good understanding of right and wrong and can apply these principles to wider social issues, such as protecting the environment. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep healthy as evidenced by the school achieving the national Healthy Schools Status in 2009. The school's Roman Catholic ethos has a profound effect on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, in collective worship pupils respond very well to opportunities to reflect on the part they play in standing up for those in the world who may be treated unfairly, and in doing so demonstrate an in-depth knowledge of basic human rights. Attendance is broadly in line with the average and the number of pupils who have persistent absence has reduced

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

considerably. This, together with satisfactory basic skills, prepares pupils soundly for the next stage of their education and future economic well-being.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is satisfactory and improving strongly. In good lessons, teachers provide clear explanations that pupils fully understand. Assessment of learning in previous lessons is used well to challenge pupils at an appropriate level according to their needs. Teachers use targeted questions to assess how well pupils are doing as lessons progress. Consequently, they adjust tasks or review explanations to correct misunderstandings. In satisfactory lessons, these strengths are less secure. Although teachers have clear information regarding the different levels at which individual pupils are working, tasks given are not always adjusted well enough to take account of the good progress that pupils are making. Consequently, in these lessons, tasks more readily match expectations related to pupils' age, rather than the levels at which they are currently working.

Significant improvements have been made to curricular provision since the time of the

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

last inspection. Interesting activities help pupils to recognise how different areas of their learning can be linked together. As a result, they are enthusiastic learners who relish the opportunity to practise and improve their skills. This is particularly evident when pupils write with flair and imagination, while taking great care with presentation and other requirements, such as accurate spelling and punctuation. Staff in this small school are keenly aware of the need to extend pupils' horizons and do so through a good range of trips, events and activities often in partnership with their federated school and others in the local area and beyond.

Care and support are strong features in the school and this is endorsed by the positive response in questionnaires completed by parents and carers. There is effective provision to support those pupils who are vulnerable or have specific needs. Case studies provided by the school show successful outcomes for pupils as a result of good interventions and effective work with outside agencies. The school works painstakingly to promote satisfactory attendance. Attendance has improved significantly in the last school year. This is due to the good support given by parents and carers to the governors' recent decision to only authorise holidays in term time for those pupils who have at least 95% attendance.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and her deputy headteacher, together with support from their federated school, have worked hard to embed an ambitious drive for school improvement. They have set clear priorities for further improvement and have been proactive in promoting the sharing of good practice. For the most part, this has been successful, good curricular provision is firmly established and standards are beginning to rise by the end of Year 6. The quality of teaching has improved, through the provision of additional training.

The school's policy on equality of opportunity is effective. Pupils with a variety of backgrounds and needs mix well. Careful analysis of pupils' attainment ensures that any gap in the achievement of different groups of pupils is addressed through targeted support. Partnerships with other agencies benefit all pupils, including those who have specific needs. Good links with the church, other faith communities and schools, locally and internationally, enhance pupils' cultural awareness and contribute effectively to community cohesion. Participation in global diversity initiatives has effectively helped

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

pupils to increase their understanding of communities beyond their own. The school's leaders have rigorously evaluated the impact of their actions and have identified that more now needs to be done to improve pupils' understanding of similar issues within the national community.

Governors are very supportive of the school's work and play a valuable role in meeting statutory requirements, particularly those in relation to pupils' well-being. Consequently, the requirements for keeping children safe are in place and there is a good awareness across the school to ensure that any issues are identified and acted upon. Governors have been less proactive in ascertaining why, what they consider to be good provision, has not more rapidly resulted in consistently good outcomes for pupils.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Satisfactory provision results in satisfactory outcomes for children, with most making satisfactory progress and attaining average standards on entry to Year 1. Resources have improved and there is a suitable outdoor area, which is increasingly used to extend children's learning experiences. Teachers' planning covers all the required areas of learning and activities include a mix of teacher-led and child-initiated tasks, although planning does not always identify how the differing needs of individual children will be met. Children are happy and enjoy their learning. They generally get along well and are imaginative and creative when working together in role play situations. However, they make the best progress when adults are available to promote thinking and to help children understand what it is they are learning. Progress slows when children are working independently, because the learning activities do not have a clear enough

focus. This is particularly evident amongst more-able children, as they are not always challenged enough in their learning. A strength of provision is the close attention paid to the welfare and safety of each child. Risk assessments are fully in place and safeguarding policies and procedures are rigorously followed. Children who need specific help are supported sensitively by well experienced support staff. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Although provision has improved, the headteacher and governors have a clear understanding of what more needs to be done to enable children to make consistently good progress.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Almost half of all parents and carers responded to the inspection questionnaire. Those doing so expressed mainly positive views of the school. All those responding agreed that the school takes good care of their children and that the school is improving rapidly under the leadership of the headteacher. A very small number of parents and carers were of the opinion that the information they receive regarding their children's progress is not frequent enough. Inspection evidence supports the positive views expressed by parents and carers. The school is considering an increase in the number of opportunities they provide for parents and carers to discuss their children's progress.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Mary's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School, Wingate to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 23 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 57 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	14	61	9	39	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	17	74	5	22	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	10	43	10	43	3	13	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	12	52	10	43	1	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	12	52	9	39	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	13	57	8	35	2	9	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	15	65	8	35	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	13	57	8	35	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	11	48	12	52	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	12	52	8	35	2	9	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	11	48	11	48	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	18	78	5	22	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	18	78	5	22	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



13 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mary's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School, Wingate, TS28 5AN

Thank you for the friendly welcome that you gave to me and my colleague when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you in lessons, in meetings and around the school. You helped us to get to know your school and this letter is to tell you what we found on our inspection.

Your school is currently satisfactory and is improving quickly because of the successful changes made by your headteacher and other staff. It was great to see the progress you have made with your writing. I really enjoyed reading your work. You are looked after well and feel safe in school. You behave well in lessons and around the school and respect each other's views and opinions. Many of you take on responsibilities which help others. This is very important in making your school a happy place in which to learn. Despite the improvements, there are still a few things which we have asked the school to improve further. These are:

- to set challenging targets for pupils in Key Stage 1 and for teachers to have high expectations of what pupils can do
- to carefully check your progress in lessons, so that you can be provided with better explanations if you don't understand what you need to do or to have more challenge if you find work too easy
- to make sure that the activities which children choose in the Reception class help them to learn as well as they can.

We really enjoyed our visit and wish you success in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Linda Buller

Lead Inspector

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