

St Oswald's RC Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108718
Local Authority	South Tyneside
Inspection number	356417
Inspection dates	22–23 September 2010
Reporting inspector	David Shearsmith

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	265
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr A Brewster
Headteacher	Mrs M Lightfoot
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 20 lessons and 10 teachers and held meetings with the governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including that relating to tracking pupils' progress and to special educational needs and/or disabilities; safeguarding policies; inclusion documentation; and the school improvement plan. They also analysed questionnaires completed by 99 pupils, 16 staff and 94 parents and carers.

- It investigated standards in English and mathematics.
- It considered how effectively and consistently teachers use assessment to promote pupils' progress.
- It looked at how well the curriculum contributes to the engagement of pupils and enables them to use their basic skills in other areas of learning.
- Given the recent development of the senior leadership team and the development of all leaders in the school, it judged how effectively all leaders and managers get involved in identifying areas of weakness and making improvement.
- It looked at whether teaching and learning are consistent enough to have a positive impact on pupils' progress.

Information about the school

This school is much larger than average. It serves St Oswald's parish and also takes pupils from elsewhere. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and with a statement of special educational needs is average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The Nursery takes children part time from the age of three years. The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of a Nursery and one Reception class. The school holds the Healthy Schools status and Activemark award and has won various sporting awards over the past three years. The school has recently appointed a new headteacher and deputy headteacher.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory and improving school. This school takes good care of its pupils and provides a welcoming learning environment. It gives good support and guidance to all, and so pupils feel safe, happy and secure. Pupils say the best things about the school are that they really enjoy their learning, and the many out-of-school clubs the school provides. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, especially their spiritual development, where they show considerable maturity and sensitivity, as exemplified in the way they respond in assemblies.

The school makes good provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children are given the opportunity to learn from a range of imaginative activities which take their interests fully into account. As a result, they make good progress in their learning and development. Progress slows in Key Stage 1. This is because pupils are taught too formally too soon for their stage of development. They have relatively few opportunities to learn actively and through discovery. The quality of teaching, though satisfactory overall, varies considerably from class to class across the school because assessment and target setting is not used consistently enough to promote pupils' progress. Pupils make the best progress in classes where teachers match work more closely to pupils' needs and abilities and the pace is good. In these classes pupils work hard and catch up. In other classes pupils' learning fluctuates. Leaders and managers do not monitor the quality of teaching sufficiently to ensure that all teaching is equally effective.

Standards at the end of Year 2 are average. They are average in Year 6. They are improving steadily, with standards in English showing signs of improvement in the 2010 national tests. Writing has particularly improved due to the introduction of a system to improve it. Results in mathematics have also improved due to support from the local authority. The school met its targets this year but they were only moderately challenging. The school's curriculum is satisfactory. It does not sufficiently meet all pupils' needs, particularly with regard to the application of basic skills. The headteacher has a very good understanding of the school's current position and is ambitious for the school to improve. Self-evaluation is becoming accurate and the school knows what it needs to do next; however, middle leaders are insufficiently involved in raising standards. The school has coped well with major staffing changes since the last inspection and is now set to improve due to a new senior leadership team that is determined to raise standards. These factors demonstrate the school has a satisfactory capacity to continue to improve. The satisfactory governing body is very supportive but needs to provide greater challenge to ensure that pupils make good progress.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in English and mathematics by introducing:
 - a more rigorous approach to target setting and tracking pupils' progress
 - regular reviews of pupils' progress to ensure that they are making good progress.
- Improve the consistency of teaching quality across the school by:
 - establishing effective monitoring systems so as to carry out more regular and rigorous checks on the effectiveness of teaching
 - increasing challenge and pace where necessary
 - improving assessment so that teachers match work more closely to pupils' needs
 - involving pupils in setting targets and assessing their learning so that they have greater awareness of how to improve their work.
- Improve the role of middle leaders by:
 - ensuring that they are an integral part of the school's self-evaluation and raising standards.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspections.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils behave well because they like and respect their teachers. Learning is satisfactory overall. Pupils are very keen to do well and so they really strive to improve their work and to catch up on what they have missed. The pace of learning varies between classes. Pupils learn best in the lessons which challenge and interest them. In less effective lessons pupils' concentration slackens because the work is too easy or teachers talk for too long. More-able pupils tend to make less progress in these lessons as they can do the work easily. Standards in Key Stage 1 are average, indicating satisfactory progress from pupils' average starting points. Pupils' progress slows in comparison with progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage because teachers expect them to learn from listening rather than developing and practising new skills through practical activities. Pupils' progress picks up again when teachers match work carefully to pupils' different needs and abilities. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress. Those who are eligible for help from external agencies make the best progress because they are given good quality support well matched to their needs. Pupils say that bullying does not happen in their school because everyone gets on well with each other. Pupils have a strong awareness of right and wrong and readily share and take turns. They speak proudly of their role as monitors and say this system of helping each other works well. The school council is active and has successfully secured improvements as well as organising charity fundraising. Pupils help and respect each

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other and get on well together. They are well aware that it is important to lead healthy lives and lots of pupils take up the many extra-curricular and sporting opportunities the school offers. Pupils also know how to stay safe in a range of contexts. Attendance is average, although the school has a range of strategies planned to make further improvements.

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?

Teaching quality varies from good to satisfactory. In the best lessons teachers ensure that pupils build on what they know and understand. Work is well matched to different ability groups with challenge for those who are more able. Lessons move at a good pace and teachers make sure that pupils fully understand new learning. Pupils are encouraged to ask questions and to say when they do not understand and teachers ask questions that move pupils' learning on. In less effective lessons the work is not sufficiently well planned and the pace of learning is slow. Expectations are not high enough and insufficient account is taken of pupils' different needs. In satisfactory lessons the lesson objectives are shared but are not used well to promote learning.

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

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Teachers' marking of pupils' work is variable. The best marking gives praise and clear points for improvement, whereas the less effective marking does not show pupils exactly how to improve their work. It is a similar picture with target setting. Some pupils are aware of their targets and others are not. This is because pupils are not sufficiently involved in setting their targets or in assessing their own learning and so they are not fully involved in improving their work.

The curriculum is satisfactory. Sport in particular is a strength, with a good range of activities in and out of school. The provision for literacy and numeracy is satisfactory but it is more variable for information and communication technology. The school has made a start on linking subjects together so as to enliven and enrich pupils' learning. A range of educational visits is used to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world. The curriculum in Key Stage 1 does not take into sufficient account the needs and readiness to learn of the youngest pupils.

Pastoral care, support and guidance are significant strengths of the school. These aspects are given a high priority and pupils know that help, support and guidance are always available. The school makes good use of its links with external services to support its good care for pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are given good support and guidance when they work in small groups. Transition arrangements to the local secondary school are satisfactory, with further links being planned.

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	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has got off to a very positive start. She has a very good understanding of the school's strengths and key areas for development and recognises that teaching and learning is not being sufficiently monitored. Pupils have a satisfactory equality of opportunity. Staff are being directed to become more accountable for the standards pupils reach. The school's engagement with parents and carers is satisfactory. Several parents and carers have reported that they do not feel sufficiently engaged in their children's learning. Members of the governing body are keen supporters of the school and take their duties seriously, but are not rigorous enough in ensuring that safeguarding policies and procedures are regularly updated. Safeguarding is satisfactory and all staff have been suitably trained and vetted. The school has links with the local community and extensive links across the Catholic community. It has developing links

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with communities overseas, but has yet to promote community cohesion beyond the school in this country and to evaluate the impact of initiatives. The school is a cohesive and inclusive community with no racial or gender discrimination.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
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	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children get off to a good start. They learn well because activities are matched well to their needs. They are keen to start learning because there is so much to do. Outside, children discovered what happened to water when poured down various channels. Others were engaged in gardening activities and constructing a new wheelbarrow together. Children make good progress as they 'write', reason and solve problems in a range of learning opportunities. From below expected starting points, especially in communication, language and literacy, children make good progress to reach expected levels at the start of Year 1. This is because they are well taught and the Early Years Foundation Stage is well managed. Planning is a growing strength, with recent developments ensuring that children's interests are taken fully into account. Assessment is not as well developed or embedded, although staff use observations of what children know and can do to help them plan the next steps in their learning. As a result, children have a large say in what goes on and their progress is good. All welfare requirements are fully met.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The response from the very large majority of parents and carers agreed that the school is well led and keeps their children safe. They were happy with their children's experience at the school. A very small number of parents and carers were concerned about having more information about their children's learning and progress. These concerns were investigated during the inspection. Evidence confirmed that the school is now taking the right action to make sure that all pupils are achieving as well as they can.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Oswald's RC Voluntary Aided Primary School 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 94 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 265 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	63	67	29	31	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	64	68	29	31	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	43	46	44	47	6	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	45	48	43	46	2	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	55	59	34	36	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	46	49	41	44	4	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	49	52	40	43	2	2	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)	38	40	47	50	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	47	50	40	43	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	41	44	41	44	5	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	35	37	46	49	4	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	45	48	42	45	2	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	54	57	37	39	0	0	1	1

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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.



Dear Pupils

Thank you very much for your warm and friendly welcome when my colleagues and I visited your school. We really enjoyed meeting so many of you. I should like to say a special thank you to the members of the school council who spoke with my colleague. Your school gives you a satisfactory education. This means it does some things well and there are some things it needs to improve.

This is what it does well.

- Your school takes good care of all of you and so you feel happy, safe and secure.
- You behave well and get on well with each other and your teachers.
- You do lots of sports and have interesting out-of-school clubs.
- Children in Nursery and Reception make the best progress because they are well taught.

This is what I have asked your school to do next.

- Help children in Key Stage 1 to learn in the same way as children in Nursery and Reception so that they make faster progress and improve what they achieve.
- Keep a very careful check on lessons to make sure that every teacher sets work that is at the right level for everyone in the class.
- Ensure that all staff use assessment well to improve your learning.
- Make sure that all the staff help to improve the school.

Yours sincerely

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