

St Chad's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114263
Local Authority	Durham
Inspection number	357505
Inspection dates	21–22 September 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	79
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Brian Jones
Headteacher	Mr Dominic Brown
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 eight lessons taught by four teachers. They held discussions with the governors, staff and groups of pupils. They also took account of views expressed through surveys of pupils and staff's views. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation including the school improvement plan, records of pupils' progress, teachers' planning and assessments, information on pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, safeguarding documentation and 40 questionnaires returned from parents and carers.

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

- The attainment, learning and progress of current pupils to determine the effectiveness of leaders and managers in driving improvement in the quality of teaching.
- The impact of assessment information on learning to determine the success of the school in addressing this key priority.
- The achievement of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and higher-attaining pupils at both key stages to determine whether the adaptation of curriculum provision results in good progress.

Information about the school

This is a much smaller than average primary school, where the majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than the national average, but the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is higher. The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. From 2007 until September 2010 the school was without a substantive headteacher. The current headteacher was appointed to the school in September 2010 on a part-time basis having supported the school as an associate headteacher one day per week during the previous 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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. Pupils thrive in the caring, nurturing atmosphere of the school where everyone is treated equally and fairly. Most pupils say they enjoy all that the school offers. Consequently, they achieve well, are lively, energetic and well behaved. Children get off to a good start to their education in the Reception class and make good progress. This good progress is now being maintained throughout the rest of the school. By Year 6, pupils' attainment, although average overall, is improving strongly. As a result, current pupils are on track to reach above average standards. Pupils' progress in class is almost always at least good because an exciting curriculum generates pupils' enthusiasm and teaching is good. In most lessons teachers tailor tasks to pupils' needs and abilities so that they are well challenged and those who need extra help are effectively supported. Occasionally, when questioning and the information from the monitoring of pupils' work is not used well enough to amend activities as lessons proceed, the pace of learning slows and progress is satisfactory rather than good. Pupils say that when given personalised targets they find these a useful guide as to how to improve their work. This is especially the case when teachers help them to understand how these are relevant to their learning across a range of subjects. This practice, however, is not yet consistent in all classes and is stronger in literacy than in numeracy. The curriculum is well organised and brings together a broad range of opportunities and experiences for pupils. It is tailored well to meet the needs and aspirations of pupils whatever their ability. The school is increasingly effective in identifying, and through amended provision removing, barriers to learning. As a result, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. Opportunities for pupils to practise their basic skills by linking subjects together are developing well but are currently more effective in literacy, and information and communication technology (ICT) than in mathematics.

The calm and purposeful leadership of the headteacher sets a clear direction for the school's improvement. Self-evaluation is accurate and is used well to identify priority areas for development. Consistent monitoring of teaching, including the identification of clear points for development, has helped staff to improve their practice and raise achievement. The success of leaders and managers in bringing about pupils' consistently good progress confirms the school's good capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve pupils' achievement by:

- using effective questioning and information gained from the monitoring of pupils' work during lessons to reshape tasks effectively and maintain pupils' good progress
- providing pupils with personalised targets which can be used across all subjects to improve their work
- ensuring that pupils are given regular opportunities to develop and practise their numeracy skills across a range of subjects.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils' positive attitudes, good behaviour and above average attendance contribute well to their good achievement and enjoyment of school. Although there is some variation from year to year, most pupils are working at the levels expected for their age when they start school. Pupils make good progress because, in the main, activities are challenging and matched well to their range of abilities. They are keen to learn, tenacious in their effort and are rightly proud of their achievements. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson the faces of high-attaining pupils shone with pride when their endeavours to solve a challenging problem were rewarded when they arrived at the correct answer.

Pupils are polite, sensible and thoughtful. They increasingly adopt healthy lifestyles. The uptake of healthy school meals is high and all pupils participate in at least one inter-school sporting festival. Pupils say they feel safe and have a good understanding of their rights and entitlements as well as their responsibilities as democratic citizens. Close links with the local church support pupils' spiritual development well. Pupils show a good concern for the needs of others by raising funds for charity and they are able to reflect on the needs of those living in difficult situations. They develop a good understanding of global issues by studying life in other countries. They can reflect sensitively when discussing moral issues. Pupils contribute satisfactorily to the school by taking on simple responsibilities. The recently formed school council is beginning to provide pupils with a voice which enables them to contribute to change and improvement. Pupils secure basic skills, good levels of independence and strong collaborative skills leave them well placed for the next stages of their lives, in education and beyond.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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

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

How effective is the provision?

The steadily improving quality of teaching is a major factor in the good achievement and personal development of pupils. Key strengths in teaching are consistent and include effective classroom management. Lessons are lively and interesting. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' work and attitudes, and make these clear. Pupils like and trust their teachers and are keen to please them by working hard and behaving well. Pupils know what they are expected to learn and are provided with some good opportunities to evaluate their own performance, although this is not yet a consistent practice in all lessons. Assessment information is mostly used well to plan a range of tasks linked to pupils' varying levels of ability. In the main, questioning and discussion is used well during lessons to ascertain pupils' understanding and to correct misconceptions. Occasionally, however, opportunities are missed during lessons to use the information gained to amend tasks in order to ensure that a good rate of progress is maintained. The strong focus on providing a more creative curriculum has helped pupils to recognise the relevance of learning and increased their active involvement in lessons. Good links with other providers, such as sports and music specialists, add a further exciting facet to the curriculum which the school alone could not provide. Those pupils who find some aspects of learning difficult fully appreciate how well activities are adjusted so that they can play a full part in school life and make the same good progress as their peers. Higher-attaining pupils relish the added challenge incorporated into lessons in order to meet their needs.

Good care, guidance and support ensure that pupils are known and valued as individuals. Staff work successfully to provide good-quality pastoral care. Pupils are

comfortable in seeking help and guidance from adults working with them. There are good links with outside agencies to get extra help for pupils when it is needed. Transition arrangements into the Early Years Foundation Stage and to secondary education are thorough and enable pupils to settle quickly.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
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 good leadership of the headteacher provides a focused educational direction and a clear vision for the school's improvement. All involved in the life of the school share this vision and a strong team ethos is evident. Tracking of pupils' progress is thorough and its analysis is accurate. This provides a clear insight into how teaching needs to improve and what the school needs to do to raise pupils' attainment further. Good attention to providing equal opportunities and tackling discrimination ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those whose circumstances have made them vulnerable are fully provided for and have an equal chance to succeed personally and academically.

The governing body is very supportive of the school. Its members have helped the school to run smoothly during the absence of a substantive headteacher and have worked diligently to make an effective appointment. However, currently they remain too reliant on staff and external support to ensure that all statutory requirements are met. Nevertheless, safeguarding procedures are good. The school adopts recommended good practice for its procedures and policies and good attention is paid to risk assessment. Staff's training is regular and of good quality.

Good links have been established with outside agencies to provide specialist support for those whose circumstances make them the most vulnerable. The school works effectively with a variety of partners to improve outcomes for pupils. Its work to involve parents and carers is particularly strong. It is very good at engaging them in the life of the school as well as the education of their own children. This is exemplified by parents' and carers' involvement in the programme used to accelerate pupils' reading skills which makes a significant contribution to pupils' consistently good progress in this area of their learning. The school promotes community cohesion well. It has a good perception of the need for pupils to understand that they are growing up in a culturally diverse society and recognises that pupils' knowledge of the range of cultures and beliefs found nationally is a weaker aspect of their understanding.

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

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	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle happily in the Reception class. They show good levels of confidence and feel safe and secure. This is evident from the way they eagerly enter the classroom and chatter to adults. An exciting and good range of activities mean that children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. There are good procedures to monitor and record children's progress. Analysis of the information recorded is used well in planning future activities, taking good account of children's differing needs. Adults are particularly adept at intervening at just the right time to move children's learning on. However, children's progress can slow when, occasionally, due to limited staffing, opportunities are missed to extend skills when children are working independently.

Children benefit from a good range of resources and learning in the classroom is well linked to that experienced outdoors. Staff ensure that children are able to work and play in a secure and caring environment. They know the children well and all procedures to support the welfare of children are fully in place. The leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage has a very good understanding of how young children learn. She has a clear vision for future improvement and knows what needs to be done to maintain and build upon children's good achievement.

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 rate to the questionnaire was higher than usual. Over half of parents and carers expressed their views with the overwhelming majority of these being very happy with all aspects of the school. Many parents and carers wrote individual supportive comments, such as how well the school has helped pupils settle in when transferring from other schools and what a happy and safe place the school is. As one parent put it: 'St Chad's provides a safe and very caring environment. The Catholic ethos is at the heart of everything that they do.' In the main, inspection evidence supports parents' and carers' positive views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Chad's Roman Catholic 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 40 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 79 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	26	65	13	33	0	0	1	3
The school keeps my child safe	28	70	12	30	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	20	50	18	45	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	24	60	11	28	3	8	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	24	60	13	33	1	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	21	53	17	43	1	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	19	48	19	48	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)	17	43	19	48	1	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	20	50	18	45	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	18	45	21	53	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	16	40	20	50	2	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	20	50	17	43	1	3	2	5
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	25	63	13	33	1	3	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

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.



27 September 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Chad's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School, Bishop Auckland, DL14 0EP

Thank you for all your help when I came to inspect your school recently. Special thanks go to those of you who met with me and shared your work and your ideas. I agree with you and your parents and carers that you go to a good school. It was good to see your good progress in lessons and how much you enjoy what you are learning.

Your good behaviour helps everyone to feel safe in school. You know how much the staff care about you and you benefit from all the links they make with your parents and carers and other organisations to keep making the school even better.

All the adults in your school want it to keep improving. I have suggested that one of the most important things to do next is to make sure your teachers know exactly how well you are doing during your lessons so that they can make changes to the tasks they have given you when they see that you are ready to move on to new learning. Also, you told me how much the personal targets you have for literacy help you to improve your work. I have therefore asked the school to provide you with the same good-quality targets to be used in all other areas of your work.

It was clear that the opportunities you have to practise your writing and ICT skills in subjects such as history have helped you to make good progress. I have asked your school to provide the same regular opportunities for you to develop and practise your numeracy skills.

You can all help to bring about these improvements by continuing to work hard. I wish you every success in the future and hope you always enjoy learning so much.

Yours sincerely

Linda Buller

Lead inspector

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