

St Bede's RC Primary School

Howlett Hall Road, Denton Burn, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear, NE15 7HS

Inspection dates 6–7 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- This is a very caring school where pupils achieve well and reach standards that are well above average by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils' behaviour is excellent. They are very polite and respectful towards each other and adults. They thoroughly enjoy school and this is reflected in their high levels of attendance.
- Pupils read widely and enthusiastically. The school promotes the enjoyment of reading exceptionally well.
- Teaching is consistently good. There is some outstanding teaching. Teachers are skilled at identifying the needs of all pupils and are effective at ensuring that work set closely matches individual pupils' needs.
- Pupils with special educational needs, those who speak English as an additional language and those supported by extra funding, achieve well because they are given the right kind of help and guidance in lessons.
- Pupils' learning is enhanced by a rich variety of memorable experiences. This helps build on their eagerness to learn and contributes very well to outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The inspirational headteacher is supported by the highly effective deputy headteacher and strong governing body. Together they have rapidly improved the quality of teaching and outcomes for pupils in this improving school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In some lessons, the pace of learning is inconsistent and the level of challenge drops for all groups of pupils.
- In some instances, when teachers mark pupils' work, they do not make it clear to pupils how to make their work better next time or allow for pupils to act upon advice given.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 13 lessons or parts of lessons. One observation was conducted jointly with the headteacher. The inspectors also observed pupils being taught in small groups and listened to pupils from different year groups reading.
- Discussions were held with a range of pupils, the headteacher and deputy headteacher, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of 11 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), and eight responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The inspectors observed the overall work of the school and looked at a number of documents including the school's data about pupils' current progress. In addition, the inspectors looked at documents relating to safeguarding, governance, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors looked at a range of other evidence, including school displays, the school's website and evidence representing the school's wider achievements beyond the classroom.

Inspection team

Margaret Armstrong, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David Wilson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is lower than average. (The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children that are looked after by the local authority).
- The large majority of pupils is of White British heritage. The remaining pupils are from a diverse range of minority ethnic backgrounds. The number of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is well above average.
- The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is lower than the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
 - sharing the outstanding practice that is already evident in school in planning work that offers consistent and appropriate pace and challenge to all groups of pupils
 - ensuring that the marking of pupils' books consistently gives sufficient guidance to pupils about how to improve their work and time to act on advice given.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- When children start in the Reception class their skills and knowledge are below those typical for their age. They settle quickly in the happy, caring and supportive atmosphere. Good teaching and effective classroom support ensure that children make good progress in developing their speaking, listening and early reading, writing and number skills.
- The recent introduction of a phonics programme (learning about letters and the sounds they make) for younger pupils is highly effective and is improving abilities to read and spell well. Year 1 pupils are good at phonics. As a result, standards in the national screening check for reading at Year 1 are above average.
- Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1 so that standards are in line with the national average in all subjects. This is because of the positive action taken since the last inspection to improve reading, writing and calculation skills. Pupils make rapid progress in Year 2 because teaching builds very well upon previous learning and this quickly extends pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- Pupils continue to make good progress in Year 3 and Year 4. Progress accelerates in Year 5 and Year 6 because teaching is outstanding and this inspires pupils to learn. Consequently, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are well above the national average by the time pupils leave in Year 6.
- Pupils enjoy reading and younger pupils make good and sometimes rapid progress sounding out unfamiliar words confidently, accurately and fluently. Skills are broadly typical for their age and standards are average by the end of Year 2. Older pupils in Year 6 are very keen to talk about their reading, excitedly recalling their favourite themes and authors. The most-able pupils attain standards which are much higher than expected.
- Improvements in writing have been effective and pupils now make consistently good progress from their starting points. This is because the teaching of writing has improved and pupils have more opportunities to write at length across a range of subjects.
- The school actively promotes equality of opportunity well and has high expectations of all pupils. The progress of pupils supported at school action and school action plus and for those pupils learning English as an additional language is good. This is because of the carefully tailored support they are given in lessons, in small groups and individually.
- Pupil premium funding is used well to ensure that pupils who are eligible for free school meals achieve as well as other pupils do. Funds are used to give access to a wide range of extra-curricular activities and visits and to provide additional resources when they are needed. As a result, in 2012 this group of pupils performed better than other pupils in mathematics.
- The use of the new sports funding is providing additional opportunities for pupils to engage in a wider range of sporting opportunities including competitive sports, and this is encouraging pupils to develop healthy lifestyles.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good and on occasions it is outstanding. Teachers are enthusiastic about helping pupils to learn and they plan lessons carefully with work that is matched well to the different needs of their pupils.
- In the best lessons where progress is fastest, teachers use questioning skilfully to stretch and test pupils' knowledge and understanding. This excellent practice was seen in Year 5 when the class teacher made very effective use of quick-fire questioning to assess pupils' understanding about diagonals of quadrilateral shapes. By the end of the lesson, the most-able pupils used specific mathematical language very confidently to describe the similarities and differences between pairs of quadrilaterals.
- Adults have good subject knowledge. As a result their teaching is precise and expectations are

high. For example, in one lesson, where pupils were writing a diary extract about a boy who was adrift at sea, the teacher insisted on the correct use of grammar and punctuation to enhance the quality of their writing.

- In the Reception class, children are provided with numerous opportunities to develop self-confidence and independence. This ensures they are self-assured when exploring and finding things out for themselves. Consequently, children are well-prepared for the move to Year 1.
- Teaching assistants effectively support disabled pupils and those with special educational needs by adapting the work carefully and by questioning the pupils expertly to check their understanding. Additional support and interventions are also used cleverly to challenge the thinking of the most-able pupils and move their learning on. This good practice was seen in a Year 6 'mathematics booster lesson' when pupils were skilfully supported to develop their skills in mental agility. Pupils worked productively, concentrated earnestly and made good progress.
- Occasionally, teachers misjudge the pace of learning and allow some activities to go on too long or introduce activities which add little to pupils' learning. As a result, the level of challenge drops and pupils' progress slows.
- Marking is positive and helpful, constantly informing pupils when they have done well. However, marking does not consistently suggest how pupils can improve and there are not enough opportunities for pupils to make the improvements that teachers have identified.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The school is warm and welcoming with a very supportive ethos. In the words of one pupil 'Everyone acts as a good shepherd in our school' while another spoke of the 'happy, friendly school where learning is fun'. Pupils thrive in an atmosphere where everyone is valued.
- Pupils show outstanding attitudes within lessons. They are fully engaged and excellent relationships with staff and friends secure a very positive climate which enables them to concentrate on learning. All of these features were seen in a physical education lesson for pupils in Year 2 where outstanding teaching stimulated pupils to work very closely together and share ideas when involved in the 'Beans Game'. Consequently, pupils made excellent progress in learning how to work effectively as part of a team.
- Behaviour in and around school is outstanding which makes an excellent contribution to high-quality learning and personal development. Children in the Reception class, for example, make rapid progress in learning how to work together cooperatively because adults set very clear boundaries. Lunchtime is a sociable event as pupils quietly engage in conversation with their friends and adults. During breaks children play happily, sharing, taking turns and looking after each other.
- Pupils say they love coming to school and feel valued as members of the school community. Those spoken to during the inspection were very polite, keen to talk about their school and felt their views were valued, respected and taken into account.
- Pupils say they feel extremely safe at school. They have a very secure awareness of the different forms bullying can take and say bullying would not be tolerated in their school. Pupils talked very sensibly about the importance of Internet safety and the risk of cyber-bullying.
- There are ample opportunities for pupils to take on responsibility. Many pupils have special jobs and all are proud to do them. Pupils act maturely as 'school councillors' and 'playground buddies' and take their responsibilities very seriously. For example, pupils spoke confidently of the success they have had in helping to establish St Bede's as a 'Fair Trade School'.
- Pupils' highly positive attitudes, excellent manners and pride in their school are reflected in their consistently high levels of attendance and excellent punctuality.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher believes passionately in giving all children the opportunity to achieve as much as they can. He expects the highest standards and achieves this through sensitive and encouraging leadership that involves all staff, including governors, in school improvement. As a result, pupils thrive in a warm, caring environment.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher work in close partnership and provide strong and purposeful leadership. Their success in communicating high expectations is demonstrated in the strong team spirit which pervades the school.
- Senior leaders regularly check on the quality of teaching across the school and take effective action through the management of staff performance to improve any areas of weakness. As a result, teaching is consistently good and in some instances, outstanding.
- Leaders regularly check on pupils' progress in lessons and by looking at their work. This has ensured that the school's view of itself is accurate. The information has been used effectively to identify the school's key areas for improvement. The school sets challenging targets for all staff. Salary awards are not made unless staff members have achieved their targets. All staff have access to high-quality training and support which has improved teaching considerably over time.
- The curriculum is exciting and imaginative and contributes strongly to pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. While it is focused on developing pupils' basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics, it also provides very many opportunities for pupils to develop their love of history, art, science and geography. Pupils say there are many reasons why they like their school so much. They talked excitedly about their preparations for singing in St Mary's Cathedral, about the visits of storytellers, artists and theatre groups and about their experiences at Dukeshouse Wood Activity Centre. Many opportunities support pupils' growth into thoughtful young people.
- There is also a strong focus on developing pupils' physical and sporting skills. Pupils thoroughly enjoy participating in an extensive range of sports clubs including 'Boxercise', 'Multi-Skills', swimming and football. The sports premium funding has been used very effectively to develop competitive sports with other schools, as well as encouraging physical activity in lunch-time and after-school activities. All of these are contributing well to pupils' physical development.
- Parents have many opportunities to be involved in the life of the school through curriculum information events and 'Family Fun Days'. Newsletters and an attractive and informative website keep parents up to date with events.
- The local authority works very effectively with the school. It has offered high-quality training and helpful advice that has led to improvements in the quality of teaching across school.
- The school has been successful in establishing effective partnership arrangements with a number of local schools. For example, close working with St Cuthbert's Catholic High School has enabled the school to provide additional opportunities for older pupils to develop their skills in computer programming.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The strong governing body has an accurate view of school performance. It has a clear insight into the quality of teaching and pupils' progress and achievement, because of the thorough checks it makes. Resources are managed effectively, including making certain that those pupils who are known to be entitled to pupil premium funding achieve as well as their classmates do. Governors are also clear about the impact of the sports premium funding. The governing body skilfully manages the budget and has successfully improved the Early Years Foundation Stage outdoor learning area. Governors monitor the performance of all staff and ensure that they receive appropriate training, for example, to ensure that pupils are kept safe from harm through safeguarding systems which meet current guidelines.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	108505
Local authority	Newcastle Upon Tyne
Inspection number	425931

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	213
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr D McShane
Headteacher	Mr M Scurr
Date of previous school inspection	15 October 2008
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