

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

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114245
<b>Local authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	378822
<b>Inspection dates</b>	2–3 February 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Kate Pringle

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

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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 of pupils on the school roll</b>	203
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Father Joseph Park
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Jill McBride
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5 July 2007
<b>School address</b>	Front Street Stanley DH9 0NP
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## Introduction

### Inspection team

Kate Pringle  
Belita Scott

Additional inspector  
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 14 lessons and eight teachers were observed. They also observed shorter sessions of support interventions for pupils and listened to pupils reading. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at pupils' books, assessment information, policies and procedures, school development plans and updates of pupils' progress. The views of pupils and staff were considered, together with those of parents and carers in the 89 questionnaires returned. There was one view recorded on the online parent questionnaire (Parent View) but too few online submissions had been received to aid inspection planning.

## Information about the school

This is an average sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than the national average. There are few pupils from minority ethnic groups or who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is lower than average. The school provides a breakfast club for pupils. The school meets the current government floor standards. The school presently holds the International School Award and the Financial Management of Standards in Schools certification.

**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

<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key Findings

- This is a good school. Outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development underpins pupils' exemplary behaviour, their respect for others and a great keenness to learn. Pupils are well prepared for their next stage in learning. The headteacher and the deputy headteacher provide inspirational leadership to ensure that pupils thrive in a happy, safe and friendly environment. The vast majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire are highly supportive of the school.
- Achievement is good. Pupils make good progress overall and leave Year 6 with above average attainment, although there was a dip in 2011. However, the challenge and pace of learning are variable over different year groups and this makes pupils' progress uneven through the school. Different groups of pupils progress equally well, including those disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. By the time pupils leave for secondary school, any attainment gaps between groups have narrowed considerably in most cohorts.
- While teaching is good overall, there are inconsistencies across the school. Examples of outstanding teaching were observed but also practice which is satisfactory. Improvements to the teaching of writing and mathematics have been successful and resulted in improved attainment, in particular at Key Stage 1. Where teaching is less challenging, there is insufficient account taken of pupils' differing abilities and marking is not used effectively to make it clear to pupils how to improve and learn from past mistakes. The effective deployment of staff and the positive action taken to share best practice are increasing the proportion of good or better teaching and accelerating progress. Pupils thrive best in those classes where learning is fun.
- Leaders and managers are effective. The headteacher and deputy headteacher understand the school's strengths and weaknesses well. Thorough monitoring and accurate evaluation of the strengths in teaching and learning are leading to more consistently good progress as pupils move through the school. Tracking of their progress is well recorded. However, there is insufficient focus upon the termly progress pupils make towards their targets. This means that action is not always taken quickly enough to rectify the variability in progress evident in different year groups.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Secure above average attainment by:
  - ensuring consistently good progress across all year groups
  - extending opportunities to involve teachers further in the analysis of pupils' termly progress towards targets
  - developing a regular analysis of the termly progress made by individual pupils and by groups.
  
- Improve the quality of teaching to be consistently good or better by:
  - ensuring that activities are closely matched to pupils' abilities
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to correct previous work
  - sharing next steps in learning more immediately when pupils have achieved a particular goal.

## Main Report

### Achievement of pupils

Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills which are largely in line with those expected for their age. They make good progress and children enter Year 1 with above average attainment. The exciting environment in which children learn in the Early Years Foundation Stage has a positive impact on the quality of their speaking and listening skills. This is reflected in children's progress, which is at least good in all aspects of learning. Children make excellent progress in writing because teaching focuses sharply on developing pupils' understanding of phonics (the links between sounds and letters).

Progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 is variable between year groups. Overall, it is good with rising attainment at the end of Year 2. In reading, pupils attain above average levels by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Over the last three years, attainment at the end of Year 6 has been above average, although it dipped slightly in 2011. Lesson observations and scrutiny of work show that most pupils currently in the school make good progress overall. However, the variations in progress show that not all year groups are on track to secure above average attainment. Although staff have a good understanding of the attainment and progress pupils make, analysis of this information is not frequent enough to detect changing patterns and then initiate appropriate intervention.

Pupils want to please their teachers, they are very keen to learn and work hard to complete tasks. As a result, learning is good overall, especially in those classes where pupils' individual abilities are challenged well. Learning slows in classes where teachers' expectations for different groups are not high enough, which limits the pace of pupils' progress. Progress in writing at Key Stage 1 is improved and a greater focus upon practical and problem-solving activities in mathematics has resulted in improvement at Key Stages 1 and 2. Teachers regularly assess pupils and identify any underachievement. Interventions are effective for those pupils of lower ability, those who speak English as an additional language, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Progress for these groups is usually better than for similar groups nationally.

## Quality of teaching

Teaching is good overall. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, there are examples of outstanding practice. Resources and imaginative activities greatly support children's development in all aspects of learning. This is particularly evident in the confident manner in which children engage in tasks which are highly motivating, stimulating their speaking and listening skills, and these contribute significantly to their overall good progress. For example, children excitedly handled a range of fish, squid and shellfish, discussed their properties and took photographs as they watched how the different 'fish' slithered down the drainpipe.

Elsewhere, when teaching is good or better, teachers have high expectations and provide activities which are matched accurately to pupils' abilities. Practical tasks are well matched to pupils' abilities and this challenges their thinking. In such lessons, pupils engage with great enthusiasm and enjoyment. This was evident in a Year 5 lesson in which pupils competed to find alternative words for the synonyms given. Pupils enjoyed the competitive challenge, and their outstanding learning was a result of considered discussions which extended their understanding of new vocabulary. Occasionally, where teaching is less effective, slower progress is made when there is a lack of challenge and activities fail to engage and motivate pupils. A clear marking policy exists, but this is not used consistently across all subjects. For some pupils, there are too few opportunities to return to past work and correct errors and insufficient guidance as to the steps to progress to their next goal.

The creative curriculum is developing well, with increasing opportunities for pupils to use their skills in reading, writing and mathematics to support learning in other subjects. The vast majority of parents and carers feel that their children are taught well. However, there were some specific years groups in which they felt progress slowed. The findings of the inspection reflect this. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. Excellent relationships exist between pupils and their teachers. Pupils are considerate, polite and demonstrate great respect themselves and for others.

## Behaviour and safety of pupils

There is great harmony in this school. Pupils are extremely well mannered and highly considerate towards others, helping each other through the school day. Calm, sensible behaviour, coupled with excellent attitudes, make an exceptional contribution to the very positive climate for learning in classrooms. All pupils thrive in this highly positive atmosphere. Attendance is rising. The most recent data indicate that attendance is now well above average with very few pupils who are persistently absent. Pupils are adamant that there is no bullying in any form. They describe behaviour as very good with any minor disagreements in the playground being dealt with quickly. Parents and carers have highly positive views about pupils' behaviour. A small number of parental concerns regarding misbehaviour in class were followed up by inspectors, who found that the school has provided additional support for pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable and those who find it hard to behave well at all times. Many parents and carers highly commend the school and comments, reflective of many, refer to, 'a wonderfully secure and structured environment' and 'the school is very responsive to the children and their families'. Pupils report that they feel very safe because all staff 'care for us'. They say that there is always someone to share any concerns with. A high proportion of parents and carers agree that this is a very safe place to be.

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## Leadership and management

The school is very effectively led by a visionary headteacher who, together with the deputy headteacher, is resolute in her drive to move the school forward. A successful focus on specific areas has resulted in improved attendance, higher attainment at Key Stage 1 and much improved provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage. There have been improvements in the quality of writing and increased opportunities for a more investigative approach to mathematics are improving performance. Thorough self-evaluation rightly identifies areas for further improvement and plans detail focused actions. Consequently, the school has good capacity to sustain improvement.

Recent changes to leaders' roles mean that, although those staff new to their role have already identified areas for development and implemented actions, there has been too little time for any impact in the form of improvement in their designated areas. Leaders and managers set clear targets and rigorously track the progress of pupils. However, they do not analyse the data frequently enough to secure an understanding of how successfully all pupils and groups of pupils are moving towards school targets to secure high attainment. A well embedded system of monitoring and evaluation of teaching has effectively supported staff through focused professional development. This is contributing much to the improving standards at Key Stage 1.

The curriculum is good with numerous opportunities to extend pupils' first-hand experiences through a range of visits, visitors and clubs. This provides lively learning opportunities through which pupils can practise their skills in reading and writing across the different subjects and greater opportunities for pupils to investigate and solve problems. The curriculum contributes extremely well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development which is outstanding. National and international links promote excellent awareness of global issues, for example, through pupils' 'skype' links with a school in France. Pupils enthusiastically participate in a variety of social settings and readily take on responsibilities which contribute greatly to the school and the wider community.

The governing body has a detailed understanding of the community the school serves. It works closely with the headteacher and senior leaders, readily challenging and holding the school to account. Close attention is given to safeguarding pupils and ensuring that all requirements are met so that the school is a safe place in which to learn. Child protection procedures are exemplary. Any evidence of discrimination or inequality is tackled rapidly. Staff work successfully to ensure that all groups progress equally well which is having a positive impact in narrowing gaps in attainment between different groups. Excellent communication with parents and carers, strong links with external agencies and successful partnerships with the high school contribute greatly to the positive ethos and atmosphere of this happy school.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**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.**



6 February 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Joseph's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School, Stanley, Stanley, DH9 0NP**

Thank you for the lovely welcome you gave to inspectors when we visited your school. We found yours to be a good school, where your teachers work hard to help you feel very safe and happy. Thank you for talking with us and to those of you who completed questionnaires. We were very impressed by your excellent behaviour and the high levels of care and respect you show to each other. We found that your attendance is improving with fewer of you taking time out of school. Your parents and carers feel that the school looks after you well and we agree.

Children in your school get off to a good start in the Reception class. We know that in Years 1 to 6 you enjoy school more when you are actively involved in your learning, being creative and solving problems. We think that teachers could help you to achieve even more highly, and always make good progress, by providing challenging activities for each one of you. We would like all the teachers to give you feedback about how well you have met your targets and what you need to do next. We believe you would benefit by more opportunities to correct marked work so that you can see where you need to improve.

Your teachers track your attainment in English and mathematics well. We would like them to use this information better by comparing how well you are progressing towards your individual targets.

We enjoyed our time with you and hope that you continue to enjoy learning.

Yours sincerely  
Kate Pringle  
Lead Inspector

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