



Inspection report

St Bede's RC Primary School

Unique Reference Number 108725
LEA South Tyneside

Inspection number 269349
Inspection dates 23 - 25 November 2004
Reporting inspector Mary Harlow HMI

Inspection carried out under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996, and was deemed section 10 under the same act.

Type of School	Primary School	School address	Harold Street
School category	Voluntary aided		Jarrow
Age range of pupils	3 - 11		Tyne and Wear
			NE32 3AJ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0191 4898218
Number on roll	179	Fax number	0191 4203603
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Roy Smith
Date of previous inspection	April 1999	Headteacher	Mrs Joan Neil

Age group	Published	Reference no.
3 - 11	December 2004	269349

Introduction

The inspection was a pilot of the new arrangements for inspection announced by Ofsted in its consultation paper of February 2004. It was carried out with the support and co-operation of the staff of St Bede's RC Primary School and of the local education authority.

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an independent inspector.

Description of the school

St Bede's School is an average sized primary school in central Jarrow in an area of some deprivation and high unemployment. There are 179 children on roll and a further 13 attend the nursery part time. Almost all of the pupils are from white ethnic backgrounds and over one third of pupils are eligible for free school meals. This is quite high, and many start school with below average standards. The number of pupils identified with special educational needs is broadly in line with the national average.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

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Overall effectiveness of the school

St Bede's is a good school which gives good value for money. The school sees itself as a harmonious, nurturing place where pupils and adults like to be, and this view is shared by the inspection team. The school is well led and managed, and senior staff know its strengths and weaknesses. Everyone is valued, and relationships throughout the school are exceptional. The staff are dedicated and they teach well. Pupils make good progress and do a range of interesting work, although tasks in science could be more exciting. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. The governors provide effective support and are highly committed. The indoor environment is aesthetically pleasing and well maintained.

Grade: 2

Improvement since the last inspection

There has been good progress since the last inspection, particularly in information and communication technology (ICT). The quality of teaching has also improved.

Grade: 2

Capacity to improve

All the staff are doing the best they can for the children. They are not complacent and are very keen to make learning better. The leadership and management have an accurate picture of the school's performance, and know what to do to improve standards.

Grade: 2

What the school should do to improve further

In order to build on its strengths and improve standards, the school should:

- raise standards in science
- sharpen the priorities in the school development plan.

Achievement and standards

In comparison with the national average and similar schools, standards are average in English and mathematics and below in science. Children enter the school with below average standards. They make good progress from the nursery up to the age of seven due to some very good teaching particularly in the reception class. In the juniors, progress slows a little in science, but improves dramatically for the older pupils. In most junior classes pupils do not receive sufficient opportunity to investigate for themselves. In ICT pupils achieve well due to the innovative, imaginative developments currently taking place.

The learning ethos is a strength of the school. This helps pupils of all abilities make good progress. In English, mathematics and ICT more able pupils are set challenging work, and lower attaining pupils are given skilled support so that they are fully included in all lessons. They make good progress towards targets in their individual education plans.

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being

Pupils love coming to school. They are encouraged to do their best and work hard. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. Staff give high priority to making pupils feel good about themselves and, as a result, they are responsible, considerate and courteous. Even when they cannot play outside, they get along well under the sensitive care of the midday assistants. Pupils arrive promptly to lessons, and the way they settle down to their learning is impressive. Year 6 pupils set an excellent example to younger pupils. They enjoy taking responsibility for new children in the reception class, and often care for them at playtime.

The school actively encourages pupils to think carefully about healthy eating and the need to keep safe. Pupils respond well to choosing a balanced meal at lunchtimes because the food is tasty and nicely presented. They enjoy opportunities to be active and play games, and are encouraged to contribute to charities such as Cafod and Operation Christmas Child. Pupils appreciate the role they can play in the development of their local community, through visits to the local surgery and St Bede's Church.

Attendance is above the national average, but unauthorised absence rates are too high. This is largely due to the poor attendance of a few pupils. The school works strenuously with outside agencies and parents to encourage regular attendance and to combat any problems that arise.

Pupils' personal development is very good. Significant strengths lie in social, moral and spiritual development. Pupils' cultural understanding is enhanced through the opportunity to learn French and Italian. There are also attractive displays of their project work for example, 'tasteful tiles with a Mediterranean eastern flavour', papier-mâché vessels depicting different religious customs and Chinese printing blocks.

Grade: 1

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Teaching is good. It is always satisfactory and in several classes it is very good. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and pupils work hard to do their best. Adults manage the children's behaviour skilfully and this ensures that they listen attentively and concentrate. They know their pupils well and most work is planned carefully to meet the pupils' needs. However, in some science classes and in the foundation subjects, work is not sufficiently well matched to individual pupils. There is no agreed approach to teaching investigative science, which the newly appointed co-ordinator recognises. Marking across the school is a little inconsistent and plans are in place to address this.

Relationships between adults and pupils, and between pupils themselves are exceptional. Teachers use praise and encouragement effectively, and pupils respond by taking great pride in their work. The best teaching is creative and stimulating and the resources capture the pupils' imagination. For example, the use of video as an introduction to 'Macbeth', and masks for children to act out the 'Chicken Licken' story were particularly stimulating and interesting for pupils.

Pupils' enthusiasm for learning is particularly enhanced by the inspired use of ICT: interactive white boards, digital cameras and the internet are an integral part of school life. Year 6 pupils use the internet for research, and communicate by e-mail to each other and staff. Plans are in place to develop this throughout the school.

There is a strong emphasis on speaking and listening in lessons. Teachers use questioning very well to get pupils to explain their thinking. They involve pupils in the assessment of their work and the setting of targets. Pupils know their targets for literacy and numeracy. This enhances the progress pupils make and is good practice.

Grade: 2

Curriculum and other activities

Overall, the pupils do a broad range of interesting work. Teachers try hard to plan stimulating experiences but these are limited in science in the junior classes. Classrooms are vibrant places where pupils want to be. Further enriching opportunities, such as lunch time clubs, recycling initiatives, visits to local theatres and museums, and the annual residential camp to Holy Island contribute well to pupils' development.

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support

The guidance and support given to pupils are good. The school takes great care to ensure that pupils are happy and content. Pastoral systems are very good and staff know the personal circumstances of pupils very well. This was an important factor in the successful way the school helped parents to acquire places for their children at local Catholic secondary schools. Parents are given good guidance on how they can help and support their children in completing their regular homework tasks; this includes holding sessions to explain new teaching approaches. The arrangements for inducting new pupils and their parents, into the nursery and the main school, are good. Child protection procedures and health and safety policies are in place.

Grade: 2

Leadership and management

The headteacher and her senior staff provide good leadership. The school runs smoothly. The headteacher manages the school well and ensures day to day routines are well organised. She delegates appropriately and has created a dedicated team of teachers, teaching assistants and support staff, who enjoy the full confidence of parents. Everyone is valued and consulted, including the pupils. Care, mutual respect and support permeate the life of the school. The English and mathematics subject leaders make a significant impact in improving the rate of progress made by the pupils. They set high expectations for staff, and they know what to do to make standards better. Due to unforeseen staffing difficulties the science co-ordinator's post has only recently been filled. This has prevented science from making the same rate of improvement.

Senior managers have an accurate picture of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching throughout the school. Monitoring procedures are well established and the management of subjects is good. The school development plan is a useful document which outlines the improvements for the next year. However, it does not pin-point the major areas for improvement over time, and there has not been enough emphasis on raising standards in science.

The governors support the school very well. They visit to monitor on a regular basis, and are gaining a good oversight of standards. There are good levels of highly skilled teaching and support staff. Classrooms are attractive places where pupils want to be, and resources are of a high quality. The indoor accommodation is very good and exceptionally maintained by the caretaker.

Grade: 2

Dear Children at St Bede's Primary School.

Thank you for receiving us so warmly into your attractive, spacious classrooms during our recent visit to your school. We thoroughly enjoyed talking to you about your work and watching you learn.

What we liked most about your school

- Your behaviour is outstanding. You are kind to each other and respect the adults who help you. We appreciated the way you said "hello" to us and greeted us with a lovely, friendly smile!
- You move around the school sensibly and arrive promptly to lessons. The way you settle down to work and concentrate, often for quite long periods of time, is impressive. We think this is because you find learning fun, and you wish to please your teachers and support staff.
- Relationships between you and all the adults who help you are fantastic! You all get on so well together. This is helping you to make good progress.
- You try hard to make sure that your work is neat and well presented and you are very responsible at helping to tidy up classrooms.
- We think that your teachers are doing their best to challenge you and they listen to your ideas and opinions.
- The teachers and governors who run your school know what to do to make your school even better.
- We were pleased to see you eating very healthy meals at lunchtimes which we enjoyed too. You are very lucky to have such wonderful cooks!
- Your parents and carers think you go to a good school and we agree!

What we have asked your school to do now:

- Make sure you learn more in science
- Think a little bit more about how to make your school even better.

Please keep up the good work.

With very best wishes for a continued happy time at school.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Harlow, Mr Thompson and Mr Norris
The Inspection Team

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