



Our Lady and St Bede RC School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 111758
LEA Stockton-on-Tees
Inspection number 278771
Inspection dates 12 December 2005 to 13 December 2005
Reporting inspector Mrs Gillian Salter-Smith

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Bishopton Road West
School category	Voluntary aided		Stockton-on-Tees
Age range of pupils	11 to 16		TS19 0QH
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01642 890800
Number on roll	676	Fax number	01642 603559
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr John McGrother
Date of previous inspection	1 December 1999	Headteacher	Mr Edwin Sherrington

Age group 11 to 16	Inspection dates 12 December 2005 - 13 December 2005	Inspection number 278771
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average comprehensive school situated in an urban area of Stockton-on-Tees. Its pupils come from a full range of social and economic circumstances and many live in areas of significant social deprivation. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. Very few pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds with even fewer whose first language is not English. A very small number of pupils are from refugee or asylum seeking families, or from Traveller families. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. The number of pupils with a statement of need is above average. There is a designated resource base for pupils with moderate learning difficulties and/or disabilities and autism. Pupils' attainment on entry is broadly average but there are significant variations from year to year. The full range of ability is represented and there is often a high proportion of pupils of below average ability.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. This judgement is the same as the school's own evaluation of its work. Positive working relationships and good quality of care and support for individual pupils are rooted in Christian values. The school is committed to equality of opportunity. The school successfully raises pupils' self-esteem and confidence and promotes their good personal development. Achievement and progress are good, particularly in English, mathematics and science throughout the school. Standards are average overall. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good and they also progress well. Teaching overall is good, but practice is inconsistent in a small number of subjects. Some teachers, for example, are not giving pupils sufficient information on how well they are doing in lessons and what they must do to improve. Also, some learning activities lack variety, relevance and pace. The curriculum is good and provides for all learning needs. Most pupils behave well and enjoy their work. Leadership and management are good. The school has effective systems in place for evaluating its performance. Good partnerships with other schools, through the Excellence in Cities initiative in particular, enhance provision. The school has made significant improvement since the last inspection and its capacity for further improvement is good. It gives good value for money.

not applicable

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement in a small number of subjects by improving the variety, relevance and pace of learning activities in lessons.
- Ensure that pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve in all lessons.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good and standards are broadly average. Pupils make good progress in relation to their starting points. They achieve well in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science throughout the school. When compared with similar schools, GCSE results are above average overall and in the core subjects.

In Years 7 to 9, progress in mathematics and science is particularly good. Girls and boys progress equally well. In 2004 and 2005, Key Stage 3 test results were above average compared with similar schools. In 2005, the school exceeded its demanding targets and increased the proportion of higher levels significantly.

Pupils maintain good progress in Years 10 and 11. In 2005, girls gained higher results than boys though both make equally good progress. Results dipped a little in 2005 in line with pupils' prior attainment. The school's very challenging targets were not met in either 2004 or 2005. Through rigorous analysis of results the school recognised that some pupils were not achieving as well as they should in a small number of subjects.

The school responded rapidly and effectively, introducing new courses and staff and supporting teaching. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those in the support base, are well supported and make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They have good attitudes and enjoy school. They behave well in lessons and around the school. Attendance is good and pupils are punctual. Their relationships with teachers and each other are positive and pupils often work collaboratively in lessons. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good and are well supported by the school's strong Christian ethos. The school council enables pupils' views to be heard and pupils feel that they are taken seriously. Pupils develop a strong sense of social responsibility through, for example, peer mentoring and charity activities. Pupils understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle and many choose healthy menus and drink water regularly. They know the importance of physical exercise and appreciate the recently improved choice of physical education activities. Pupils understand the risks associated with drugs and have an understanding of sexual health. They are very aware of what to do if they are bullied and are confident of the school's supportive response. The school chaplain is appreciated as a source of personal support. Pupils are well prepared for their future. They develop good basic skills and understand the alternative routes they may take.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Good resources, staff training and regular checks on teaching are helping to make further improvements. There are many examples of good teaching and occasionally outstanding teaching, such as in French and music.

In the best lessons, teachers' good subject knowledge helps to challenge pupils' thinking. Pupils enjoy a good variety of learning activities and teachers use information and communication technology well to stimulate learning. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported in lessons. Relationships are positive and learners respond well to the positive atmosphere. In some lessons, progress is less secure as a result of learning activities that lack variety, relevance and pace.

Assessment systems are good overall. Most pupils know their targets and current levels. Teachers' careful marking and feedback to individuals help pupils to know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. However, this is not yet consistent in all lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school's curriculum is good. Statutory requirements are met. The way teaching groups in Years 7 to 9 are organised by ability develops pupils' self-confidence and enables them to receive an education with the right level of challenge. The school is now better placed to meet the learning needs of all pupils with the recent introduction of vocational courses in Years 10 and 11. Such courses also respond to the needs of the local community, for example in engineering, business studies and digital technology. There is an extensive programme of additional support lessons to prepare pupils for tests and examinations. The good provision of extra-curricular activities contributes to pupils' enjoyment and helps to encourage them to adopt healthy lifestyles. There is also good provision for the teaching of computer technology and for helping weaker pupils develop their literacy and numeracy skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. The commitment of staff to ensuring high quality care for all pupils is noteworthy. There is a strong pastoral system, which is further enhanced by the work of the school chaplain. The progress of vulnerable pupils is carefully monitored and they are well supported. Learning mentors work effectively with pupils to support the development of social skills and improve academic progress.

All pupils are involved in regular reviews of their progress and parents are kept well informed. In some lessons, pupils are not always clear how well they are doing and what to do to improve. Older pupils have good access to careers guidance and advice. Events such as the 'developing opportunities' days help pupils prepare for future employment and study.

Child protection procedures are well established and there are effective systems in place to ensure health and safety.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school's future direction and he has the support of able senior colleagues and competent subject and pastoral leaders. Christian values are at the heart of their work and they are committed to equality of opportunity for all pupils. The evaluation systems for deciding how well the school performs are good and there are appropriate strategies in place to improve test and examination results. Planning for the future is thorough and is correctly focused on raising standards. The recently introduced assessment system is being used effectively to identify and address areas of weakness and so speed the rate of pupils' progress. Governance is good. The governors know the school well and fulfil their role as critical friends but have not so far played a full part in strategic planning. The views of parents and pupils are taken into account. The school

is well staffed and has an appropriate range of high quality resources which are used well to achieve good value for money. There have been significant improvements since the last inspection in, for example, the arrangements for checking the quality of teaching. The school's capacity to improve further is therefore good.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

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Our Lady and St Bede RC School

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TS19 0QH

14 December 2005

Dear pupils

Thank you for the friendly welcome you gave us when we visited your school. It was a great pleasure to meet so many of you and talk to you about your school. We appreciated the opportunity to see you at work and to talk to your teachers.

It is important that you know what we think about your school. We think that Our Lady and St Bede is a good school. Most of you enjoy school and are keen to do well. You do well in your tests and examinations, especially in English, mathematics and science. This is because most of the teaching is good and the staff make sure that you are happy in school and well cared for. Your school makes sure that all pupils do well, especially those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Your school is a strong Catholic community and this helps you to make good decisions about your own lives and how to conduct yourselves. Many of you told us how much you appreciate the support you receive from your teachers and other staff, especially your chaplain. You behave well and work well with each other.

There are a few things we have asked the school to do to help you to do even better than you are doing now. We have asked the school to:

make sure that the learning activities in every subject are varied, interesting and relevant to your needs; and

to make sure that you know how well you are doing and what you need to do to improve in every lesson.

You can help by continuing to work hard and trying your best. We hope that you enjoy your time at school and that you all continue to do well.

Yours sincerely

Gillian Salter-Smith, Brian Dower, Carolyn Earlam and Kate Hinton

The Inspection Team