

# St Bede's RC Voluntary Aided Primary School, South Shields

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	108715
<b>Local Authority</b>	South Tyneside
<b>Inspection number</b>	324821
<b>Inspection date</b>	2 July 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Sue Brown HMI

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 on roll</b>	
School	203
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Michael Wales
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Nicole Park
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 November 2005
<b>School address</b>	Claypath Lane South Shields Tyne and Wear NE33 4PG
<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 456 0108
<b>Fax number</b>	0191 427 1694

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## Introduction

The school was visited by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors for one day.

The overall effectiveness of the school and the following issues were investigated: the standards that pupils reach and the progress they make; teaching and learning; and improvement since the last inspection. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation document, national published assessment data, the school's records and procedures, observation of the school at work, parents' questionnaires and discussions with staff and pupils. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

St Bede's is an average-sized voluntary aided Roman Catholic primary school. Most pupils live close to the school but some come from further away. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is currently about average. There are fewer children from minority ethnic backgrounds and fewer with learning difficulties and/or disabilities than in most schools. The school has achieved a number of awards including Activemark Gold, Healthy Schools status and the Football Association Chartermark.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

St Bede's RC Primary is a good school. Since the last inspection, in 2005, the high quality of provision has been maintained and further improvements made in the standards reached by pupils. Some aspects of pupils' personal development are now outstanding. The headteacher and staff work effectively as a team to put into practice the school's aim of being 'a caring developing community which reflects God's love for us and meets the needs of each individual as fully as possible'. There is a strong commitment to equality of opportunity for all pupils. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and recognise the outstanding professional care and commitment of all staff. One parent echoed the views of many when writing, 'The school has an excellent family feel to it and I feel privileged to have my children attend'.

Pupils reach high standards during their time at St Bede's and make good progress. These standards, together with pupils' very positive attitudes to learning and problem solving, their good behaviour, and their ability to work independently, in pairs and in groups, prepare them extremely well for their move to secondary education and on into the world of work.

Although there is a wide range of attainment on entry, many pupils begin Nursery with skills that are below what would be expected nationally. This is particularly the case in aspects of their personal, social and emotional development and in their use of language for communication. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage. By the time they start Key Stage 1 the majority are reaching standards that are broadly average with a significant minority achieving above this. They make satisfactory progress and by the age of seven attain standards that continue to be broadly average. In 2007, a greater proportion of pupils achieved the higher levels in reading than was the case nationally but fewer did so in writing and mathematics. Evidence from pupils' books, lesson observations and the school's own assessments indicate that current standards remain broadly average with the proportion of pupils achieving the expected level in writing increasing significantly.

In 2005 and 2006, standards at the end of Key Stage 2 were at least in line and often above national averages. In 2007 the proportion of pupils achieving Level 4 was above the national average in mathematics and well above in English and science. Furthermore, a greater proportion of pupils than is found nationally achieved the higher Level 5 in all three subjects. This was good progress. Evidence from this inspection indicates that this good progress has been maintained. Pupils are on track to exceed the challenging targets set by the school.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Their spiritual, moral, social and emotional development is outstanding. Pupils show sensible and mature attitudes to any rare incidents of bullying and low level poor behaviour. They have productive and comfortable relationships with other pupils and with adults in school. They demonstrate a good understanding of how to live a healthy life through their involvement in physical activities and their knowledge of healthy eating. Pupils feel safe in school and recognise that members of staff can be relied upon to help them. The school council provides a forum for pupils' views to be shared but is only just beginning to provide opportunities for pupils to participate in decision making.

The enjoyment that pupils show in their learning is outstanding. Their positive attitudes and very good behaviour in lessons together with their regular attendance make a significant contribution to the standards they reach and the good progress they make. They show pride in their work and in their school.

The quality of teaching and learning is good and promotes high standards. It ensures that all groups of pupils make good progress and contributes to their enjoyment, positive attitudes and good behaviour. Teachers know their pupils well and take into account the needs of all pupils when they plan lessons, devise interesting activities and provide resources and support. Good use is made of the skills and expertise of teaching assistants both in the classroom, with groups and individuals requiring extra support, and also in midday 'catch-up' activities. There are some outstanding elements within the teaching when pupils are challenged, for example, to 'up-grade' their vocabulary or think of alternative ways of tackling a mathematics problem.

The school provides outstanding care for its pupils and good support and guidance. Parents recognise the professional care and commitment of all staff. Arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils and ensuring their health and safety are robust.

Pupils' progress is well monitored. The rigour with which pupils' work is marked and assessed is often good and occasionally outstanding. It helps pupils to understand what they must do to improve further. Some older pupils speak knowledgeably about what they need to do and how having targets helps them to focus on key skills. This is particularly apparent in English where, since the last inspection, the school has focused much of its efforts to raise standards and improve progress. Pupils throughout the school are able to assess their own use of punctuation. Younger pupils are able to talk about their writing using technical vocabulary such as 'connectives' and 'openers'. Older pupils talk enthusiastically about the need to use a wide range of vocabulary in their writing and are keen to think of alternative words and phrases. They understand the need to consider the audience for and purpose of a piece of writing. Some older pupils commented that they would welcome similar developments in target setting in mathematics.

The school provides a good curriculum which makes a significant contribution to pupils' achievement, personal development and enjoyment. Provision for literacy, numeracy and ICT (information and communication technology) is also good. Pupils appreciate the many extra-curricular activities provided. These include a wide variety of out-of-school clubs and opportunities to work with other schools, for example during a local music festival, and with local organisations such as cricket and rugby clubs. Participation rates are high and some older pupils establish long term hobbies and interests as a result. Pupils also benefit from visits to places of interest.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher, staff and governors share a common sense of purpose and are focused upon achieving high standards and promoting the well-being of pupils. Leaders have an accurate picture of the school's performance: they know its strengths and also what it could do better. Procedures for tracking pupil performance are securely in place in Key Stage 2. They enable staff to identify any pupils at risk of underachieving at an early stage and ensure that prompt steps are taken to tackle this. In Key Stage 1, these procedures are less well developed. This contributes to the satisfactory, but not yet good, progress, made by pupils in this key stage. Recent developments in target setting for individual pupils were introduced into Key Stage 2 first. They are having a very positive effect on pupils' performance and aspirations.

The school has a track record of improving performance and the capacity for further improvement is good. Resources are used effectively and, given the progress that pupils make, the school provides good value for money.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

The quality of provision in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception) is good. Children make good progress in the development of their knowledge, skills and understanding and in their personal development. Children enjoy their time in the Foundation Stage. They relate well to adults and to each other. They show interest and enthusiasm for the wide range of activities on offer. Teaching is planned effectively to meet the needs of all children. Parents say that they are well informed about their children's progress. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are good. Leaders have an accurate understanding of the effectiveness of provision and how they can improve further. Many children begin Nursery with skills that are below what would be expected of most children their age. They make good progress and, by the end of the Foundation Stage, reach broadly average standards with a significant minority achieving above this.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Ensure that the increasingly effective systems and procedures for tracking pupils' progress, marking pupils' work and setting individual pupil targets are implemented consistently across the school.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

### The quality of provision

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

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

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

3 July 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of St Bede's RC Voluntary Aided Primary School

I really enjoyed visiting your school recently. Thank you for making me feel so welcome. I learned a lot about St Bede's by talking with you in class, in the playground and at lunchtime. I hope you noticed that I got a 'clean plate' sticker!

St Bede's is a good school. The headteacher and all members of staff work hard to keep you safe and to make lessons and other activities enjoyable and interesting. You reach high standards in your work and make good progress during your time at school. By the time you leave you have lots of skills that will help you in the secondary school – especially your ability to listen to each other and work together to solve problems. You are very sensible and well behaved in lessons and this helps you to learn. You get on well with each other and are friendly and kind. You and your parents told me that you enjoy school very much – and I could see that for myself. Please thank your parents for returning the questionnaires they received – they made interesting reading.

I was very impressed with what you know about punctuation and I was amazed by the exciting vocabulary used by the older children in their writing. I was also really pleased that the pupils who took part in the 'spelling bee' went on to win the competition. It was very interesting to hear the older children talk about how the comments teachers make when they mark your work and the targets in the front of your books help you to improve your work.

I have asked your school to:

- help all of you to understand more about how you can improve your work.

With very best wishes for your future

Sue Brown HMI