



# St Columbas Roman Catholic Primary School Aided

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 108625  
**LEA** North Tyneside  
**Inspection number** 278014  
**Inspection dates** 28 September 2005 to 29 September 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Iain Rodger

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Station Road
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Wallsend
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11		Tyne and Wear, NE28 8EN
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 2007235
<b>Number on roll</b>	245	<b>Fax number</b>	0191 2007235
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr M Ronan
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	1 October 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr R Meek

<b>Age group</b> 3 to 11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 28 September 2005 - 29 September 2005	<b>Inspection number</b> 278014
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

The school serves mainly Roman Catholic families in Wallsend on Tyneside. There is little serious deprivation in the area although unemployment is high. The proportion of pupils entitled to a free school meal is below average. The number with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also below average. No pupil speaks English as an additional language.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 1**

This is a highly effective school that achieves very high standards and has done so for a considerable period of time. The pupils enjoy their schooling a great deal and they are very well cared for; their personal development is outstanding. The pupils' attitudes to their work and their behaviour are exemplary and their attendance is good. The first rate teaching enables pupils of all abilities to make very good progress. The school is extremely well led and managed and it has made steady progress since its last inspection. It is well placed to make further improvement. The school gives very good value for money.

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

- Simplify the assessment system to make it more accessible and helpful for the teachers.
- Ensure that all developments are rigorously monitored and evaluated.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

Standards and achievement are excellent. From average attainment on entry, the pupils make very good progress overall and reach above average standards by the end of Year 2 and well above average results by the end of Year 6. The 2004 national test results were very impressive and the unconfirmed 2005 results were of a similarly high standard although fewer Year 6 pupils reached the higher level in mathematics than in the previous year.

The school judges its standards to be good but they are better than that. Pupils do particularly well in English and make above average progress between Years 2 and 6 because the school has put a lot of effort into improving the teaching of writing.

Lower ability pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make as much progress as their peers. Higher achieving pupils do particularly well with an above average proportion reaching the higher levels in all subjects at both Year 2 and 6. Girls slightly outperform boys, which is in line with the national picture.

Standards are at least average in information and communication technology (ICT). This is an improvement since the last inspection when this subject was identified as an area for improvement.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

The school's evaluation of the pupils' personal development and well-being as outstanding matches the findings of the inspection. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. They have a very firm sense of the difference between right and wrong. Assemblies and masses have a strong spiritual element to

which the pupils respond well. The strong Catholic ethos pervades all aspects of school life. The pupils get on extremely well with each other and the buddy system has been particularly successful in helping new pupils settle into the school.

The pupils' behaviour is exemplary and their attendance and punctuality are good. They enjoy school enormously and speak with enthusiasm about their teachers and their work. 'Our teachers are brilliant; they give us interesting things to do'.

The school teaches very effective safety practices which the pupils follow conscientiously. It teaches excellent attitudes towards healthy eating; some parents spoke of the pressure they come under from their children to make their packed lunches suitably healthy.

The pupils are encouraged to make a significant contribution to their school and local community. There are regular charity events and the school council has an impressive impact on the life and work of the school. Its members take their duties very seriously and there are many features around the school, such as a secret garden, that have been developed as a result of their discussions. Pupils regularly join in enterprises, such as making and selling toast at playtime, which help them develop economic skills which will be of use in later life.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 1**

Teaching and learning are excellent overall because of the very impressive outcomes achieved by pupils of all abilities. The pupils like the way their teachers make learning fun and help them when they do not understand something. Explanations, demonstrations and instructions are very clear and effective in fostering learning. Teachers use questions very effectively to draw the whole class into discussions and to make all the pupils think. They are very skilled at capturing and holding the attention of the pupils. Lessons are very well planned and prepared and the teachers make considerable use of modern technology to enliven their presentations. The pupils have become comfortable and skilled users of computers.

The school gathers a great deal of assessment information about its pupils which is used to track their progress, to identify those who need extra support and to set individual and class targets. At present, the information is stored in a variety of forms and places and is not as manageable as it could be. The teachers mark the pupils' work very conscientiously but comments tend to be about effort rather than about learning and do not always show the pupils what they need to do next in order to make progress.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 1**

The school judges its curriculum to be good but it is better than that. There is a strong emphasis on the core skills and on ICT. The personal, health and social education

programme is comprehensive and very effective. The teaching of French to pupils in Years 4 to 6 enables strong links to be forged with the local high school, one of whose teachers teaches the subject to two year groups. Other links with the high school have improved the teaching of physical education. Large numbers of children participate in the broad and extensive range of extra-curricular activities. There are also many visits and visitors which the pupils enjoy a lot and remember fondly.

The Foundation Stage curriculum covers all the required areas of learning although limited space inhibits the teaching of all aspects of physical development. This was an issue at the last inspection and has still not been fully resolved due to a series of external factors.

The leadership of the school has taken an innovative approach to workforce reform, which has enabled specialist teaching of music and religious education to be provided throughout the school. The issues of healthy and safe lifestyles and preparing children to make a contribution to wider society are addressed very effectively in all aspects of the curriculum.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The inspectors agree with the school that it takes exceptionally good care of its pupils and takes proper action to safeguard their health, safety and welfare. Regular checks are made and child protection procedures are securely in place. The pupils are confident that there is always an adult they can talk to if they are in any difficulties. Parents are very supportive of the school and find the headteacher and staff extremely approachable. Very effective support and guidance are given to pupils who find learning difficult. There are excellent arrangements for inducting new pupils into the school.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

The leadership and management of the school have been extremely effective in achieving very high standards and the excellent personal development of its pupils over a sustained period of time. The headteacher is reflective and has been very successful in leading the school to its present exemplary quality; he also has clear ideas about the next stages of its development. The views of the whole school community are regularly sought and acted upon. The head makes sure that everybody in the school has some leadership responsibility, and all those with responsibilities discharge them conscientiously and very effectively. Subject leadership has been very successful in securing the current high standards.

The school is managed very well, with a strong sense of purposefulness. The well-planned routines and procedures in place for all aspects of school life are understood and followed by all. Some systems, such as the assessment arrangements, have become cumbersome over time and need to be simplified. School improvement planning is detailed and well focused but gives more priority to the monitoring of developments, such as the new arrangements in the nursery, than to their evaluation.

The governors, the parents and pupils, and the local community have a very well-founded confidence in the leadership of the school and they are rightly very proud of its many achievements.

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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>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	1	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	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

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

### Personal development and well-being

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

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	1	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	1	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1	NA

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	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	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
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	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

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

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30 September 2005

Dear Children,

Mrs Richardson and I would like to thank you very much for the welcome you gave us when we inspected your school and for the very helpful way you talked to us about the work you do there. We agree with you that you have an outstanding school. The things we particularly liked about it are:

- the very high standards you achieve and the very good progress you make
- the excellent teaching you receive
- the way the school cares for you so well
- the exciting and interesting work and activities your teachers prepare for you
- the way you all look after each other
- the very good contribution your school council makes to the life of the school
- the excellent way the school is led.

We have asked Mr Meek and his teachers to look at two things that we feel will make it easier for them to make your school even better than it already is:

- the way they collect information about the progress you are making
- the way they make sure that changes in the school are as good as they want them to be.

Many thanks once again for welcoming us into your school. We really enjoyed our time with you and wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Iain Rodger  
Lead inspector

Annex B