

St Columba's RC (A) Primary School

Station Road, Wallsend, Tyne and Wear, NE28 8EN

Inspection dates 24–25 September 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- This is a good school because the proportion of pupils who make better progress than would normally be expected is above average especially in mathematics and is increasing rapidly in reading and writing.
- Teaching is good because teachers plan interesting lessons that make pupils think hard.
- The headteacher has worked well with other leaders and the governors to secure improvements in teaching and learning and to pupils' achievement.
- The school attaches importance to developing pupils' academic skills, but also to their well-being by having a substantial number of popular sporting activities.
- The pupils' social, moral, spiritual, and cultural development is outstanding because pupils learn to care for others locally and internationally.
- Behaviour is good because 'respect' has a very strong emphasis in the school. Pupils feel safe in school.
- Pupils' behaviour when moving around the school is excellent because they are extremely thoughtful and considerate.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding.
- Pupils are not given time to respond to their teachers' marking so that they learn from their mistakes and improve their work.
- In a small number of lessons work is not well matched to pupils' different ability levels and this slows the progress of some able pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 19 lessons or parts of lessons taught by 11 different teachers.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and talked to them about how much reading they do as well as looking at their work in class.
- Discussions took place with members of the governing body, staff, groups of pupils and a meeting was held with a representative of the local authority.
- Documents were examined, including those relating to safeguarding, the school's improvement plan, and records of its checks on teaching and learning, as well as the school's own assessment data.
- The views of 61 parents who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View) were also taken into account, as well the school's own questionnaires, which surveyed 67 parents.
- Questionnaires about their views of the school were also completed by 13 staff.

Inspection team

Frank Cain, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Shirley Fall

Additional Inspector

Anne Humble

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those children in local authority care or for service families, is below average.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British background and the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is in line with the national average.
- The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school provides a breakfast club for pupils each morning.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and learning so that more is outstanding by:
 - giving pupils time to respond to teachers' marking so that they learn from their mistakes
 - providing all pupils, including the most able, with challenging tasks which are consistently well matched to their individual needs.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Historically, children enter the school with skills that are well below those normally expected for their age, but the time pupils left in 2012 their attainment was above average. On average these pupils were two terms ahead of pupils nationally. This represents good progress. The school has ensured that pupils in all year groups have the opportunity to do well.
- Children practise their literacy and mathematical skills well in the Early Years Foundation Stage. In a lesson in the Nursery, children were learning rhyming words and the letter that their name started with, after less than three weeks in school.
- School information shows that by the time children enter Year 1 they are at expected levels of development. In Key Stage 1 the school's detailed tracking shows that an increasing number of children are reaching levels higher than might be expected by the time they reach Year 3.
- Pupils' knowledge of the sounds that letters make (phonics) is good and the promotion of reading is strength of the school. The majority of pupils in Year 2 read fluently although some found problems with difficult words like 'wetsuits'. Pupils in Year 6 have their favourite authors and are good readers.
- Key Stage 2 pupils' progress has gone from strength to strength. Mathematics has been a strong subject in the school for a number of years with pupils frequently making more than expected progress. 2013 saw an improved proportion of pupils making more than expected progress in reading and writing. This is because pupils are provided with good quality teaching in literacy lessons involving the whole class and when they are working in small groups.
- Pupils' books show that pupils of all abilities make good progress and produce considerable amounts of good quality work. For example, in Year 5 mathematics books, pupils progressed from drawing simple angles at the start of the year to far more complex problems, working out the angles in a triangle, later in the year
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium are small in number in the school, but they do as well as other pupils in the progress they make. The school has made excellent progress in narrowing gaps in the performance of these pupils and others so that the attainment of pupils known to eligible for free school meals is now similar to that achieved by other pupils in both English and mathematics
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make progress comparable with other pupils across the school, especially in reading and writing. This is because they get good quality support which meets their needs well.
- Physical education is popular in the school and an extremely high proportion of pupils take part in activities after school from specialist teachers and coaches. Pupils' well-being is given a very high profile in school and rewards for good work are often healthy snacks or fruit.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good in the overwhelming majority of lessons and pupils learn well because lessons are well planned. In some lessons the teaching is outstanding. In a Year 6 English lesson pupils were well challenged to be creative and to share their ideas as a result of excellent teaching.
- Teachers create interesting and varied learning opportunities. In a Year 2 history lesson on Florence Nightingale, effective role play was used to capture pupils' interest and encourage good progress in literacy.
- Pupils make good progress because the work is explained to them well and it is made relevant to their needs. For example, in a Year 3 lesson on how much a chocolate cake would cost to make.
- Pupils become enthusiastic learners because of work associated with popular visits to Holy Island and to Woodhorn Colliery, where they studied their local cultural heritage in coal mining.

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are given a wide choice of learning activities, both indoors and outside. Children's interests are taken into account, which helps them to be enthusiastic learners and to develop good literacy and numeracy skills.
- Pupils respond well to other adults in class who often help small groups of pupils to progress swiftly. Support teachers and teaching assistants are well briefed about lessons. They do not do things for pupils, but get them to complete tasks, and explain 'what' they are doing, and 'why', to make sure that they fully understand what is being taught.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly and some indication is given by teachers on how an individual piece of work might be improved. Pupils, however, are not given sufficient time to respond and actually improve the work and so learn more effectively.
- In lessons where the teaching was best, the work was very well matched to pupils' abilities so that all were challenged appropriately. In a few lessons the work was less well adapted to pupils' needs, which slowed down progress, particularly for the higher-ability pupils.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour is good overall, but there are times when it is exemplary. When moving around the school, for example, pupils are courteous towards fellow pupils and to visitors and always say 'thank you' or 'excuse me' at the appropriate time.
- Behaviour in the Nursery is excellent, considering the very short time the children have been in school. Children are quickly given clear guidance on how they should behave and what staff expect. For example, 'super sitting' means sitting quietly, waiting and listening for their teacher.
- The school organises a popular and well staffed 'breakfast club' where good values and behaviour are encouraged.
- Overall attendance is average and few pupils are absent for prolonged periods. There have been no exclusions from the school in well over three years.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school, a view, which is reflected by parents and staff. Pupils understand about safety on the internet and possible dangers posed by using computers.
- A small number of parents expressed concerns regarding bullying, but pupils did not support this view. They said it was rare and problems were sorted out quickly. Inspection evidence confirmed this. Pupils are knowledgeable about different types of bullying and feel that teachers really listen to them when they have concerns.
- Older pupils act as playground 'buddies' and are extremely good role models for the younger pupils, giving advice on how they should behave and making sure that they understand the school rules. This promotes very good social development for both groups and responsibility for older pupils.
- In lessons where the teaching is best, pupils' attitude towards learning is very good indeed. In a few lessons a small number of pupils find it difficult to concentrate, but the behaviour of these pupils never affects the learning for the majority.

The leadership and management are good

- The leadership of teaching and learning is good. The headteacher makes regular checks on the quality of teaching and uses his records well to identify the strengths in teaching and where further improvements can be made. He has successfully managed significant changes in the school staffing recently as well as securing improvements to pupils' achievement, especially reading and writing.
- The improvements to the quality of teaching have been helped by good professional development and the monitoring by subject leaders of the quality of work that pupils produce in class.

- The local authority has not needed to intervene much in this good school, although they provide good support for newly qualified teachers and help with checking pupils' books to make sure that teachers accurately access the progress that has been made.
- The pupils' social, moral, spiritual, and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils are given opportunities to work in groups and to understand how they should behave towards one another. Children in the Reception class are able to confidently share their ideas about who is 'precious to them'. When asked to choose books from their school library all Year 2 pupils who read to inspectors chose bible stories.
- Pupils have their own internal radio station, which extends speaking and listening skills and pupils display a great deal of enthusiasm and enjoyment in music lessons. The school plans to take advantage of additional funds to further develop physical education and sports; these are well advanced. This all enhances the good curriculum.
- The school has good relations with the vast majority of parents. In the Early Years Foundation Stage the children's learning journals are shared with parents and the school has well attended progress days for older pupils. Nevertheless, a small number of parents indicated they could be given even more information on how their children are doing.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governors are highly committed and are very ambitious for the school. They question the headteacher on how well the school is performing, and are aware of the range of data available, including the 'dashboard' (a summary of how well pupils are achieving). They are aware of the improvements in pupils' performance, including how well pupils eligible for the pupil premium are doing as a result of the additional funding. They ensure that safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements. Governors are especially aware of the importance of linking teachers' pay to how well pupils are doing, so that good teaching is rewarded.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	108625
Local authority	North Tyneside
Inspection number	425932

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	245
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael Ronan
Headteacher	Robert Meek
Date of previous school inspection	10 December 2008
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