

St Aloysius RC Voluntary Aided Infant School

Argyle Street, Hebburn, Tyne and Wear NE31 1RZ

Inspection dates

22–23 January 2019

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The headteacher and his senior team have inspired a culture of high expectation that infuses all aspects of the school's work. Teachers and teaching assistants have sustained high standards of care and academic progress for pupils over time.
- Senior leaders provide staff with training and leadership opportunities that continually reinforce the quality of leadership at all levels across the school.
- Pupils show strong and purposeful attitudes to learning. Teachers have developed an exciting learning environment where pupils thrive in their work and play.
- Leaders and teachers use training and research highly effectively to inform and improve the quality of teaching.
- Leaders ensure that the quality of teaching is consistently effective. Teachers plan and pitch work sharply to enable pupils to make very strong progress from their starting points.
- High-quality teaching is complemented by customised interventions for individuals and small groups that are deftly managed to meet pupils' needs.
- Governors are passionate in their commitment to the school's values. They have developed thorough and distinctive systems to check school performance.
- The arrangements for safeguarding pupils are effective. Teachers are attuned to pupils' welfare needs and their social and emotional well-being.
- Teachers provide highly effective support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). As a result, these pupils make very good progress.
- Teachers have developed high-quality provision in the early years. Children develop interests in reading, writing and numbers and gain confidence through the stimulating activities on offer.
- Subject leaders provide a broad and rich curriculum, enabling pupils to acquire knowledge and skills across a range of subjects.
- Thoughtfully planned systems are in place to support the progress of disadvantaged pupils. As a result, they make good progress, although differences in attainment and attendance remain.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further enhance the effectiveness of leadership and management, by:
 - continuing to diminish any remaining differences in the attendance and attainment of disadvantaged pupils.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The headteacher and the leadership team have inspired a culture of high expectation for pupils and staff. They work with their team to continually review and improve the quality of teaching. These high standards of teaching enable pupils to become keen learners who make excellent progress.
- Leaders build leadership capacity by giving teachers new responsibilities and access to training to develop their expertise in their roles. As a result, the school has strengths across all levels of leadership, contributing to consistently high standards in so many aspects of the school's work. These strengths in leadership are recognised in the support leaders provide to other schools and in the school's status as a teaching school.
- This commitment to training and development characterises much of the school's work. Teachers and teaching assistants receive regular training to refine their teaching expertise. Teachers are supported in studying for additional qualifications. Teachers are reflective practitioners who value this training, which has a markedly positive effect on pupils' progress and welfare.
- Leaders have introduced transparent and highly effective systems of accountability. Governors and leaders jointly attend regular meetings with the school improvement partner. At these meetings, governors use the expertise of the improvement partner to ask questions on attainment and progress. Governors and the improvement partner have access to pupils' books and folders so they can see in practical terms what progress looks like.
- As a result of thorough monitoring and accountability systems, leaders have a clear picture of school strengths and areas for improvement. They use this knowledge effectively to support individual teacher and whole-school improvement.
- Leaders and teachers use the thorough checks on pupils' progress to inform changes to teaching and offer customised interventions that are supporting pupils in making extremely strong progress.
- The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has a thorough understanding of the needs of pupils. Pupils and parents are appreciative of the considered support that is put in place. Pupils benefit from the precise targets outlined in their support plans. Leaders provide clear evidence of how this support has improved pupils' progress and their wider engagement with school life. Leaders utilise the additional funding for pupils with SEND well.
- Through English and mathematics cafes, 'stay and play' sessions and volunteer reading programmes leaders do much to help parents support children's learning.
- Leaders monitor the progress of disadvantaged pupils assiduously. They closely track pupils' progress and use additional funding for targeted interventions to accelerate progress in reading, writing and mathematics. They share examples of pupils' work in assessment folders to provide tangible evidence of the progress pupils make over time.
- Leaders provide pupils with an exciting curriculum. Pupils are enthused by studying

topics such as castles, in history, and animal habitats, in science. They have access to outdoor learning in 'the secret garden' where they learn about nature, the environment and how to manage risks.

- The actions of teachers to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are strong. Pupils explore a range of faiths and reach out to their community in their visits to care homes and also through their work to support food banks. Parents are appreciative of the range of experiences their children access. One parent wrote: 'Teachers give up a lot of their free time to ensure the pupils excel, whether that be through sports, singing or science.'
- Funding from the government to promote sport and increase physical activity is being used successfully. Pupils have increasing access to competitions and sporting activity. During the inspection, pupils were seen working with specialist physical education providers and enthusiastically developing their coordination with a dance teacher.

Governance of the school

- Governors have a good balance of specific expertise and community awareness that enable them to hold leaders to account. As a result, they provide well-judged support and challenge. They share the headteacher's commitment to securing the highest standards of care and academic progress for pupils.
- Governors have developed effective systems to check school performance. They receive 'live' progress information at curriculum meetings that enables them to check the progress of current pupils. The headteacher provides governors with accurate information that they can trust because of the rigour and accuracy of assessments.
- Governors know their school and their community well. They are regular visitors to school and explore focused areas about which they subsequently report to the governing body.
- Governors have a thorough awareness of school finance and the effect of additional funding. They value the transparent way in which the headteacher shares evaluations of school performance with them and with parents via the school website. Governors have distinctive opportunities to review progress at regular meetings where leaders at all levels are present. At these meetings, they can also view samples of pupils' work to gain tangible insights into progress.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders have developed a strong culture of safeguarding and ensure that all staff are mindful of pupils' welfare. Safeguarding is a regular agenda item at staff and governor meetings.
- Leaders carry out thorough checks to ensure the suitability of adults working on site. They also ensure that staff and governors receive up-to-date training on a range of safeguarding issues.
- Leaders are proactive in supporting pupils' welfare. They have developed a number of initiatives to support pupils' social and emotional welfare. Staff have received specific training as counsellors so that they can support the mental well-being of younger children in appropriate ways.

- Leaders pursue any concerns over pupils' welfare swiftly and follow these through to ensure that pupils are safe. Leaders document any concerns in a detailed and timely manner.
- Pupils feel safe in school and value the support of teachers and other adults. Pupils who talked with inspectors show a good awareness of the actions they can take to keep themselves safe online.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teachers plan lessons that regularly capture pupils' interests and imagination. They model and explain tasks well before inviting pupils to share their own thoughts. Teachers have developed highly effective routines that provide scaffolds for productive learning, while giving the space for pupils to contribute their own ideas.
- Teachers have developed strong systems to develop pupils' writing. They help pupils to build story structures using movement and symbols before prompting them to use more ambitious vocabulary. These approaches help pupils to make very good progress in writing. They write effectively at length in English and across the wider curriculum.
- Teachers develop pupils' reading skills from an early age and children engage with the library from Nursery class onwards. In key stage 1, pupils of all abilities read to inspectors with clarity and understanding. Teachers and teaching assistants teach the links between letters and sounds very well, with the vast majority of pupils reaching the required standards in the phonics screening check. Pupils have regular opportunities to read with teachers and volunteers, increasing their enjoyment of books.
- Teachers successfully help pupils to develop their mathematical understanding. Pupils build their awareness of number through regular practice and by using apparatus that helps them to understand place value. As they progress through school, they have increasing opportunities to solve problems and explain their answers.
- Teachers use questioning to gauge pupils' understanding and to encourage them to think more deeply. They invite pupils to share their thoughts and this increases their self-confidence as learners.
- Teachers provide helpful feedback that supports pupils' progress. Through regular moderation, teachers have developed an accurate view of standards.
- Teachers manage learning well. They have developed consistent classroom routines. Pupils are quick to settle and move effectively from carpet time to activities at their tables.
- The provision for pupils with SEND is extremely strong. Leaders and teachers have a clear understanding of these pupils' needs. They train colleagues to provide customised support that helps pupils make very good progress.
- The exciting opportunities to learn at key stage 1 are reflected in the early years. Children develop their understanding of reading, writing and number work while developing creativity and curiosity through the many stimulating learning opportunities.
- Teaching assistants receive specialist training to support pupils' reading, motor skills and their social and emotional development. They have close and supportive

relationships with pupils which help pupils' academic progress and personal development.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Teachers have established an ethos whereby the uniqueness of each child is valued. The school has a warm and caring atmosphere where pupils feel safe.
- Pupils show high levels of respect and courtesy towards each other and adults. They treat everyone equally. From an early age, teachers raise pupils' awareness of equality and of the importance of having high aspirations.
- Pupils feel that bullying is extremely rare and are confident that adults would address any unacceptable behaviour. All pupils who spoke with inspectors said they had an adult they could talk to if they had a concern.
- Leaders help pupils to develop healthy lifestyles. They ensure that healthy food and snacks are provided and encourage pupils to take regular exercise. They are particularly aware of the importance of supporting pupils' mental well-being. Several staff are trained to provide counselling specifically for younger children. In addition, the school has a number of mental health champions offering support.
- Leaders work with pupils to develop an awareness of personal safety. In discussion, pupils spoke about some of the hazards they could face online and how to avoid them. In the secret garden, pupils learned about risks and how to manage them.
- Parents' responses to questionnaires show that they are highly appreciative of the support and care of all staff. They frequently describe their children as flourishing in self-confidence through exciting learning and caring relationships with staff. One parent captured the views of many in writing: 'All of the teachers and staff genuinely care about the children and want them to strive to achieve the very best.'

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Teachers encourage positive behaviours from the early years onwards through clear and positive behaviour systems that run consistently throughout the school. Pupils are considerate in their learning and their play. They work very well together to discuss their thoughts with their talk partners.
- Pupils demonstrate a pride in their achievements through the excellent standard of work in books and the displays of their accomplishments on walls and corridors.
- Pupils enjoy their learning and work with enthusiasm and purpose. Incidents of low-level disruption are extremely rare. Teachers and teaching assistants work sensitively with any pupils with behavioural needs. The school is a highly inclusive community. There have been no uses of any form of exclusion.
- The vast majority of pupils attend well. Over time, attendance has been better than average. Absence rates rose slightly in 2017/18, largely through term-time holidays. As a result, governors are balancing their support for families with firmer measures when

school guidance is not followed. Current attendance rates are once again good. Attendance has improved for disadvantaged pupils, although they remain more likely to be absent than their peers.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- At key stage 1, pupils achieve levels of attainment that are consistently above those seen nationally in all subjects. In addition, the proportions of pupils achieving greater depths of understanding are above average. This represents outstanding progress for the vast majority of pupils.
- A thorough review of work in books across all year groups showed that current pupils are continuing to make outstanding progress and attain high standards.
- The quality of pupils' writing is a significant strength. From the early years onwards, pupils show confidence in forming letters and writing sentences. By Year 2, the majority of pupils are confident, expressive writers who can write accurately at length across many subjects. Handwriting is neat, and pupils take a demonstrable pride in their work.
- Pupils are keen and avid readers. The overwhelming majority of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, achieve the required standard in the phonics screening check and go on to read with fluency and understanding in Year 2.
- Pupils are making strong progress in mathematics. As they develop their understanding of operations such as subtraction and multiplication, they are becoming increasingly effective in solving more-demanding problems.
- Progress in the early years is also improving and this is improving children's readiness for key stage 1. In Nursery, teachers provide a stimulating and nurturing environment that enables children to develop fully and make good progress. This process continues into Reception, where the proportion of children achieving a good level of development has increased over time and is above that seen nationally. In addition, the proportion of children exceeding early learning goals is consistently above national figures.
- Pupils access a rich and rewarding curriculum. In lessons and in books, there is evidence that they are acquiring detailed knowledge and understanding in a range of subjects, including history, science and religious education.
- In case studies and in their books, there is much evidence that pupils with SEND are making very good progress through effective teaching and well-planned interventions.
- Leaders track the progress of disadvantaged pupils extremely closely. They use assessment information to modify teaching and provide a range of supportive interventions. Through this effective teaching and support, disadvantaged pupils make very good progress from their starting points, although on occasions differences in their attainment remain.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Leaders and teachers have developed a stimulating and purposeful learning environment that helps children to make outstanding progress in their personal

development and their progress in literacy and numeracy.

- Teachers and teaching assistants know their children well. Children thrive because they receive continual care and encouragement. A number of parents described how their children had developed confidence as a result of the experiences they accessed in the early years.
- Children are provided with a wide range of interesting experiences that help them to understand the wider world. They have regular opportunities to explore and experiment. Adults are skilled in using questions to help children think more deeply about their play and learning. Children are highly motivated and able to sustain attention due to the high-quality provision on offer.
- Teachers have an accurate view of children's knowledge and abilities and these have been validated in local authority moderation. They use training and links with external partners to provide specific support for children who require additional support. This helps to overcome the barriers in speech and language that some children face and does much to support their emotional development. This is a significant strength of the school's work.
- Leaders are mindful of the needs of disadvantaged children from an early age. They track their development and progress closely and use additional resources thoughtfully to help these children to make very good progress from their starting points.
- Teachers develop close links with parents to enhance their children's learning. Families have opportunities to contribute to learning journals and attend specific training events so that they can better support learning at home.
- Teachers and teaching assistants develop children's enthusiasm for reading from an early stage. There is a rich reading culture across the school. Children are also keen to form letters from Nursery onwards and writing in the early years is proudly displayed on walls and corridors.
- Children across the early years are happy and confident in their play and learning. They were particularly excited by their learning outdoors, where they made potions and built dens. They learn to manage risks thoughtfully from an early age and were extremely attentive to the safety guidance when baking bread outdoors.
- The strong systems to check progress and quality that characterise much of the school's work are equally apparent in the early years.
- Safeguarding practices in the early years are highly effective. Leaders have risk assessments in place to check the safety of the learning environment. The school's strong safeguarding culture extends to the early years. There are no material breaches of welfare requirements as the children are safe and well supported.

School details

Unique reference number	108720
Local authority	South Tyneside
Inspection number	10059081

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 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	245
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Eddie Watson
Headteacher	Nick Conway
Telephone number	0191 4832274
Website	www.st-aloysius.co.uk
Email address	info@st-aloysius.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	19–20 September 2013

Information about this school

- The school is federated with a nearby junior school. It shares the same headteacher and governing body. A number of staff have leadership responsibilities, including subject leadership, that are carried across both schools.
- The headteacher, a national leader of education, has been providing support as executive headteacher at St Michael's Roman Catholic Primary School in Newcastle since March 2017. The deputy headteacher carries out additional responsibilities as head of school.
- The school has teaching school status and is a lead school within the Carmel Teacher Training Partnership.
- The school is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is below average.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is average.

- The vast majority of pupils are White British and the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below average.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning in a wide range of lessons and in all classes. The headteacher and deputy headteacher joined inspectors on a number of these observations.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, senior leaders and subject leaders.
- Inspectors met with five members of the governing body, including the chair and the vice-chair.
- The inspectors met the school improvement adviser from the local authority.
- The inspectors met a group of pupils and talked to pupils about their learning and experiences at the school in lessons and at lunchtime.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read in different year groups.
- The inspectors carried out an extensive review of pupils' books.
- Inspectors looked at the school's development plans, self-evaluation and a range of documents providing evidence and case studies of pupils' progress. They also considered arrangements for safeguarding and records relating to attendance and behaviour.
- Inspectors took into account 54 responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire and 28 free-text responses from parents. They also considered 33 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Malcolm Kirtley, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Dawn Foster

Ofsted Inspector

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