

St Aidans Church of England Voluntary Aided First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107744
Local Authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	356227
Inspection dates	18–19 October 2010
Reporting inspector	Kathryn Dodd

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	4–10
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	134
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Alwyn Cooper
Headteacher	Mrs Evelyne Barrow
Date of previous school inspection	25 June 2008
School address	Smithy Close Skelmanthorpe, Huddersfield West Yorkshire HD8 9DQ
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited eight lessons and four teachers were observed. The inspectors held discussions with staff, groups of pupils, with members of the governing body and with parents and carers. The inspectors observed the school's work, including a review of improvement plans, the systems for tracking pupils' progress, records demonstrating the arrangements for safeguarding and a sample of pupils' work. The inspectors analysed 55 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, 61 from pupils and eight from staff.

- Pupils' current attainment, particularly in Years 2 and 5, and the rate of pupils' progress, particularly in Years 3 to 5 in mathematics.
- How well teachers use assessment information to plan activities that match pupils' individual learning needs and to what extent pupils are involved in understanding how well they are getting on and their next steps, particularly in mathematics.
- How well the curriculum is adapted to boost achievement in writing and in mathematics.
- The effectiveness with which senior leaders, subject coordinators and the governing body review pupils' progress and monitor the quality of provision.
- Whether pupils have a good insight into the similarities and differences between their own and other cultures.

Information about the school

Almost all of the pupils at this smaller than average-sized primary school are White British. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average, as is the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. With the exception of Year 5, pupils are taught in mixed-aged classes, although wide variations in pupil numbers in each year group means that class structures are reviewed annually. Pupils transfer to middle school at the end of Year 5. The school has been accredited with a number of awards which include Eco-Schools Bronze Award, Activemark, Artsmark Gold, and it has achieved Healthy School Status. The breakfast, after-school and holiday club, which is run by a private provider and operates on the school site, was not part of this inspection. A separate report on this provision is available on the Ofsted website.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. Pupils' achievement is outstanding because they reach high levels of attainment, particularly in English, and make good progress from their usually broadly average starting points when children start in the Reception class. The exceptional way in which each child is cared for and nurtured reflects the real warmth and care that radiates from everyone. Pupils say they feel totally safe. Parents and carers say that, 'There is always a lovely, friendly, welcoming atmosphere.' and that their, 'children are put first'. Rigorous attention is given to making sure that safeguarding arrangements are outstanding. Pupils develop striking personal qualities. Their knowledge of how to lead a healthy lifestyle, for example, is impressive. They are particularly proud to contribute to their wonderful school community. They show good attitudes to learning, behave well and are extremely polite, courteous and respectful to adults and to one another. These wonderful attributes, along with their high attendance places them very well to succeed as young adults of tomorrow.

Children make good and sometimes outstanding progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and, after this successful start, continue to learn well until the end of Year 5. In English, progress is outstanding because teachers make excellent use of assessment information to provide well-matched activities for the pupils and to direct their questions so that individuals of all abilities are continually challenged. Pupils of all ages are very clear about what they need to do to reach their precise and challenging learning targets, such as in writing. From a very young age, pupils develop a real passion for reading books. This, along with the many opportunities provided across different subjects for them to practise their writing skills, such as when completing their 'theme' work or in other curriculum subjects, contributes to their excellent achievement. Such practices, however, are not consistently well embedded in mathematics, and, as a result, progress is steady rather than rapid.

Leaders and managers work effectively as a team to drive forward improvement and in doing so forge outstanding partnerships with both parents and carers and with others. Their successes are highly evident in tackling areas for improvement highlighted in the previous inspection report, such as promoting higher attainment. This, along with shrewd financial management is why the school provides outstanding value for money and demonstrates that there is a good capacity to improve further. Leaders evaluate accurately the school's effectiveness, recognising its many strengths and pinpointing precisely a few remaining weaknesses. This stems from a rigorous review of pupils' progress, steered carefully by the headteacher, which in turn pinpoints any variance in performance. Subject leaders are now keen to extend their skills in analysing such information and their role in monitoring the quality of provision so that the responsibility for shaping improvement planning and contributing to self-evaluation processes can be more effectively shared.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate progress in mathematics, by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to practise their mathematical problem-solving skills as part of work in other curriculum subjects
 - making sure pupils are clear about their precise learning targets and the next steps to attain them
 - ensuring teachers make consistently good use of assessment information to plan activities and tailor questions to challenge pupils of varying abilities.
- Extend the roles of subject leaders in reviewing pupil progress information and in monitoring the quality of provision.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Achievement is outstanding. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress. In most lessons, pupils are very attentive, keen to learn and behave well. Pupils work at a good pace, particularly when working alongside adults, in pairs or collaboratively. Most pupils respond very well to teachers' questions, although occasionally their concentration drifts when they sit as a whole group listening to their teacher, or when the activities provided are insufficiently challenging. Attainment at the end of Year 5 is well above average in English and science and above average in mathematics. In English, for example, the proportion of pupils reaching Level 4 already exceeds that expected nationally at the end of Year 6. In recent years, attainment by the end of Year 2 has been consistently high in reading, writing and in mathematics.

Pupils' enjoyment is reflected in their high rate of attendance and the enthusiasm with which they participate in and talk about all that is on offer. Pupils are very proud of their school and contribute extremely positively towards it. They relish opportunities to take on responsibilities, for example, as school councillors and as play leaders. Opportunities for pupils to mix with others from ethnically diverse groups within British society are still developing. Pupils' outstanding understanding of how to lead healthy lifestyles is reflected, for example, in their eagerness to take part in a wonderful range of sporting activities, cross country, dance and 'wake up and shake up' sessions. Pupils say they feel very safe and are confident there is always someone on hand to help them if they feel worried. They are extremely knowledgeable about how to keep safe, such as when using equipment in the food and design and technology areas. The confidence, ease and maturity with which pupils discuss their learning together, with adults and visitors, along with their high attainment and attendance demonstrates that they are particularly well prepared to be successful in the next stage of their education.

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Teachers' enthusiasm, good organisation, very positive relationships, effective use of praise and the careful deployment of very skilled support staff and numerous volunteer helpers, all make a strong contribution to pupils' good progress. In English, high-quality marking ensures that pupils are clear about how they can improve their work. In Years 1 and 2, learning is matched extremely precisely to individual learning needs. Daily assessments of pupils' small steps in achievements are used particularly well to influence teachers' planning and to make sure all the adults direct appropriate questions that challenge pupils thinking and 'keep them on their toes'. These best practices are yet to be seen consistently through all the classes in mathematics.

The curriculum places a strong emphasis on broadening and enriching pupils' everyday experiences. This includes an excellent range of extra-curricular activities, from baking and sewing to art and drama. Successful adaptations to the writing curriculum, such as providing more regular and exciting opportunities to write creatively and at length, including through homework projects, are helping to raise attainment even further. Recent curriculum adaptations to provide more frequent opportunities to develop pupils' mental calculation skills are starting to pay dividends. Opportunities to boost pupils' ability to use and apply their mathematical skills through problem-solving in different subjects are sometimes overlooked.

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Making sure that every child is nurtured and cared for is at the very heart of this school. Extremely high quality pastoral support is evident in day-to-day practice. Excellent partnerships fostered with parents, carers and with external support agencies, reflect the school's unrelenting commitment to helping pupils with additional needs, such as those in need of specific medical care and the few pupils who find behaving well difficult. Parents and carers say that, 'Staff ignite children's desire to learn.' This is reflected, for example, in the delight on pupils' faces when a 'treasure' is dropped into the 'accumulator pot' in recognition of their achievements.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

This exceptionally caring, safe and supportive school, which is underpinned by strong Christian values, is reflected in the commitment of everyone to promoting excellence. This stems from the outstanding leadership of the headteacher who ensures these aspects permeate all aspects of school life. This is why, for example, the school's safeguarding procedures are outstanding. The impact of thorough training of staff at all levels, along with the ongoing communication between staff, home and support agencies shows in the very detailed and meticulous written records evident. A strong emphasis is placed on the inclusion of pupils, particularly to eradicate any potential barriers to learning and to ensure all pupils can participate in everything the school has to offer. This demonstrates the school's commitment to providing equal opportunities and for all pupils to be successful.

In their quest to drive improvement forward, leaders forge excellent partnerships with parents and carers and beyond school. Many parental and community volunteers, for example, contribute significantly to pupils' high attainment in reading. Partnerships with external support agencies, with nearby schools and with the church, all help to strengthen the quality of provision on offer. The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion. Excellent links are established within the local community, such as through a recent 'intergenerational project'. Opportunities for pupils to learn about different cultures around the world have recently been extended. Even so, developing opportunities for pupils to engage with ethnically diverse groups further afield is already identified as an improvement priority and is developing at a good rate. Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Regular visits into school to observe the quality of provision, along with their good understanding of information about pupils' attainment and progress, places them in a good position to offer both effective support and also constructive challenge.

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Learning gets off to a successful start and children make good and sometimes outstanding progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. By the start of Year 1, the proportion of children reaching and exceeding age-related expectations is usually much higher than that seen nationally. The extremely warm and very caring relationships between adults and children, along with the bright, well organised and resourced learning environment, ensure that children enjoy learning and feel extremely safe. Rigorous attention is given to ensuring the welfare needs of children. The partnership between home and school is strong. This is reflected, for example, in the array of opportunities for regular communication, both written and verbal, to develop parents' and carers' understanding of what their children will learn and how they can provide support at home. Parents and carers expressed their particular appreciation of the arrangements for starting school in the inspection questionnaires. Children enjoy school a great deal. They quickly become eager and confident young learners who behave very well. They particularly enjoy the many opportunities they have to take on small responsibilities in their classroom and play an equal part in shaping school improvement as 'school councillors'. Adults work well together to assess children's progress. They record children's achievements carefully and plan future work based on this knowledge. Learning, therefore, builds effectively on what children can already do. Children's good progress is a result of effective leadership and management. Leaders are now focussing, correctly, on extending opportunities for learning outdoors, particularly so that children can choose for themselves when and what to play and learn outside.

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers who returned questionnaires and those that talked with inspectors are extremely supportive of the school's work. They overwhelmingly agree that they are well informed about how well their children are getting on and that the school helps them to support learning at home. Opportunities to get involved in their children's education, such as by attending collective worship and supporting homework projects, are particularly appreciated. Parents and carers acknowledge that a very small number of pupils can exhibit challenging behaviour. Although a very small minority expressed the view that this is not always dealt with effectively, inspectors found arrangements to promote good behaviour to be effective, especially in Years 1 and 2.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Aidans Church of England Voluntary Aided First School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 55 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 134 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	42	76	11	20	2	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	39	71	14	25	2	4	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	34	62	20	36	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	29	53	24	44	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	40	73	14	25	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	32	58	23	42	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	37	67	18	33	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	31	56	21	38	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	35	64	17	31	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	21	38	25	45	5	9	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	28	51	24	44	1	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	29	53	23	42	2	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	42	76	12	22	0	0	1	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



21 October 2010

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Aidans Church of England Voluntary Aided First School,
Huddersfield HD8 9DQ**

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we inspected your school. I would like to especially thank pupils who spent time talking to me. You answered my questions so thoughtfully and politely. I enjoyed finding out your views. Also, a very special thank you to those of you who made us a 'fruit kebab'. They were delicious. We were particularly impressed with just how much you know about how you can keep yourselves healthy, such as by eating plenty of fruit and vegetables. You also know how to keep safe, particularly when using equipment in your food and design and technology areas. Congratulations in achieving your 'Licence to Drill!'

You go to a good school. By Year 5, your attainment is well above that expected and you make good progress. I was pleased to find out just how well you do in reading and writing. It was easy to see why you told me you love reading so much. The work you are given in English and in your topic work is really exciting. No wonder some of you told me that you want to become authors when you are older! The effort that you put into your homework, like your research about the artist of your class name, was impressive to see.

So that your school becomes even better, I have asked that a few further improvements be made. These are to make sure that:

- you make faster progress in mathematics by giving you work that makes you think really hard, making sure that you all know your targets and by giving you more chances to practise your problem-solving skills
- adults with special responsibilities for subjects improve how they check on how well you are learning.

You can help by telling your teacher if your work is too easy and by checking all the time what you still have to do to reach your learning targets. Finally, I send my very best wishes to you all for a very bright future and hope that you are successful in achieving the Eco-School Silver Award in the near future.

Yours sincerely

Kathryn Dodd (on behalf of the team)

Lead inspector

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