

St Aidan's CofE Memorial Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111690
Local Authority	Hartlepool
Inspection number	356966
Inspection dates	15–16 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Janet Bennett

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	295
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Harry Horner
Headteacher	Mr Ian Railton
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They visited 14 lessons observing 12 teachers and held meetings with pupils, members of the governing body and staff. They observed the school's work, and looked at documents related to the school's self-evaluation, safeguarding, tracking information, teachers' planning and assessment. They scrutinised pupils' work and analysed 82 questionnaires from parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The use teachers make of assessment to promote the learning of pupils, particularly those who are middle or higher attaining.
- The extent to which leaders use monitoring to identify underperformance and to determine priorities for improvement.
- The effectiveness of action taken by leaders to improve teaching and raise achievement.

Information about the school

St Aidan's is larger than the average primary school. Nearly all pupils are from White British backgrounds, with none who speaks English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well-above average. The proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. Staffing has now largely stabilised following significant changes since the last inspection. The school has achieved a number of accreditations in recognition of its work promoting healthy lifestyles and sustainable development, including Healthy School status, Activemark and the Eco Award. The governing body works in partnership with a neighbouring school to provide access to a daily breakfast club and after-school care.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

The school provides satisfactory education. Parents and carers value the good care and support their children receive in this friendly school. Pupils appreciate the many opportunities they have to take responsibility and feel safe in school because they have trusted adults to look after them. The school's strong Christian ethos promotes a sense of community and contributes well to pupils' personal development and good behaviour.

Pupils get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They make satisfactory progress from Year 1 to the end of Key Stage 2. In recent years, progress has been uneven because teaching has been too variable. As a result, some pupils have not made the progress they should. Effective partnership working with the local authority and another headteacher has led to improved systems for tracking pupils' progress; therefore, those pupils at risk of underperformance are now being identified accurately. The use of monitoring to ensure that provision is well matched to the learning needs of these pupils, in order to accelerate their learning, is not yet effective enough.

Teaching is satisfactory and improving. Teachers plan lessons that interest pupils and involve them actively in learning. In the majority of lessons, tasks are matched appropriately to the differing abilities of learners and pupils work productively because tasks are explained clearly. However, pupils do not always receive sufficient information to help them to evaluate and improve their work in lessons and the use of marking to identify next steps in learning is inconsistent. This is because monitoring by leaders does not result in clear advice to teachers to help them to improve their practice and to ensure that the most effective approaches are embedded across the school.

Strong partnerships with other agencies and services and good management systems ensure that those pupils who are potentially vulnerable due to their circumstances are identified accurately and action is taken to secure their safety and well-being. The curriculum is enriched well by opportunities for music, sport and performance which contribute significantly to pupils' enjoyment of school.

Leaders and members of the governing body understand the school's main strengths and areas for development. Action taken has been successful in improving attendance, addressing inadequacies in teaching and involving all staff in monitoring the work of the school. The governing body is well involved in the life of the school and is supportive of its work. Its role in evaluating the success of leaders in improving pupils' progress is not sufficiently well developed. For these reasons the school has satisfactory capacity to further improve.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make greater use of monitoring by leaders to reduce underperformance and accelerate progress across the school by:
 - identifying the factors impacting on learning so that the best practice is extended to all classes
 - providing clear guidance to teachers to help them to improve their practice
 - ensuring staff have consistently high expectations of pupils and plan activities that build well on the prior learning of all pupils.
- Improve the use of assessment by teachers and pupils so that:
 - marking identifies what pupils do well and the next steps they need to take in their learning
 - the information is used consistently to match activities to pupils' needs and is referred to in lessons to consolidate and extend learning
 - pupils understand what they are learning and how to evaluate and improve their work in lessons.
- Extend the range and frequency of the governing body's monitoring activities so that they can accurately evaluate the effectiveness of actions taken by leaders, to improve learning and progress.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils' good behaviour in lessons contributes well to their learning. They listen carefully to their teachers and try to do their best. Pupils appreciate the opportunities they have to work with others and say that this contributes to their enjoyment of learning. When working in this way, pupils are keen to share their ideas and opinions and they show respect and courtesy to one another. Despite these positive aspects of learning, pupils' progress is satisfactory rather than good, because they do not consistently receive the advice they need to help them to improve their work.

Children's attainment on entry to Nursery varies, but is generally below that typical for their age, significantly so in their language acquisition and social development. In recent years, the proportion of children identified with delays in their development of speech and communication skills has increased. Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is adjusted well to take account of these needs. Children make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes and their attainment is broadly average by the time they enter Year 1.

Teaching has improved; therefore, pupils make satisfactory progress from Year 1 onwards. Attainment is average by the end of Key Stage 2 and the achievement of all pupils, irrespective of their starting points, is satisfactory. Action is being taken to accelerate the learning of those pupils who have fallen behind their peers because of prior weaknesses in teaching, in order to get them back on track to achieve the targets they have been set for the end of Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress because their needs are identified accurately and they receive the support they need to contribute fully in lessons.

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Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and enjoy taking part in sport and in the development of the school garden. They are proud of their many charity fund-raising events and the contribution they make to the life of the school as 'playground friends' and school council members. Members of the eco-group talk enthusiastically about the contribution they make to sustainable development. Pupils say they enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in their above-average attendance.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
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?

Good relationships and well-established routines contribute to good behaviour in lessons and a positive classroom climate that is conducive to learning. Pupils enjoy the interesting activities that teachers plan and make a positive contribution to lessons when role play, demonstrations and group work are features of the teaching. In the most effective lessons, modelling and questioning by teachers extends and embeds learning, explanations are clear and lessons progress at a brisk pace. In these lessons, activities are well matched to pupils' prior learning, therefore all pupils make good progress. However, these features are not consistently embedded in all classes. Teachers ensure that pupils understand the tasks set for them, but they provide insufficient information to assist pupils in evaluating and improving their work during lessons and marking does not consistently identify the next steps they need to take.

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The curriculum is appropriately matched to pupils' learning needs and contributes well to their personal development and well-being, particularly their understanding of keeping safe and staying healthy, and their ability to work effectively with others. Improved opportunities for writing and a greater focus on applying mathematics skills in problem solving are strengthening the curriculum, but are not sufficiently embedded to secure good progress across the school. Well-planned use of visits and visitors enrich the curriculum and contribute well to pupils' enjoyment of learning.

The school works well with a wide range of agencies to support pupils and their families, particularly those pupils who are potentially vulnerable due to their circumstances. The school's parent support adviser works effectively with all staff to ensure that parents and carers in need of help or advice receive the support they need, either through referral to specialist agencies or planned programmes provided in school. Parents and carers appreciate the high priority given by staff to keeping pupils safe and as a result, the school is a welcoming and friendly place to be. Effective transition arrangements ensure that children get off to a good start in the Nursery and transfer smoothly to secondary school at the end of Year 6.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Leadership has been strengthened by a recent review of roles and responsibilities. These are now clearly defined. Partnership working with other professionals has increased the confidence of leaders to undertake a range of monitoring activities, which are being used to identifying the school's main priorities for improvement. Action taken by the headteacher and governing body has successfully addressed inadequacies in teaching and appropriate professional development has improved the accuracy of teacher assessment throughout the school. A programme of lesson observations provides teachers with regular feedback on their work, but the guidance they receive does not clearly identify the actions they need to take to improve learning. As a result, the most effective practice has not yet been extended and embedded in all classes. Good partnerships with parents and carers have contributed well to pupils' improved attendance.

Members of the governing body are regular visitors to the school and therefore understand its strengths and main priorities for improvement. They are increasingly involved in monitoring its work, but their role in evaluating the impact of action taken by leaders to improve learning and progress has yet to be developed fully.

Procedures for safeguarding pupils are good. Safe recruitment practices are well established and adhered to rigorously. Close attention to site security contributes well to

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pupils feeling safe and the school integrates issues regarding safety into the curriculum. For example, in a Year 6 literacy lesson, pupils constructed arguments for and against the use of internet social networking sites, during which the dangers were explored and reinforced. Parents and carers are confident that their children are safe in school and the strong partnerships that exist with other services and agencies contribute well to the schools work.

Equality of opportunity is promoted satisfactorily. Positive action is taken to involve all pupils in lessons and the broader life of the school. The school has precise information about the attainment of pupils so that those at risk of underperformance are identified. However, monitoring by leaders to ensure that all pupils make good progress is not yet fully developed. The school's work in promoting community cohesion within the school is strong, therefore relationships are good and respect for others is evident within and beyond lessons. However, links beyond the school and local community, although improving, are less well developed.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children grow in confidence and independence quickly because adults are caring and supportive. The strong role models they provide promote children's respect for others and the skills needed to play cooperatively together. Adults intervene sensitively in children's play, encouraging involvement and extending learning.

Space is used well to provide a wide range of interesting and imaginative activities which stimulate children's enthusiasm for learning and their curiosity about the world around them.

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Observations of children are used well to plan activities that are matched to children's needs and interests. Good leadership ensures that adults are deployed effectively to support learning through activities that children choose for themselves, as well as those led by adults. Staff have a good understanding of the way in which young children learn, in particular how early language skills develop. Recent improvements to the environment have created spaces which encourage talk and skilful interaction between staff and children ensure that good progress is made in all aspects of communication, language and literacy. The involvement of parents and carers in the work of the school is promoted effectively. Systems for sharing important steps in children's learning are developing, but have been identified by the leadership as a current priority.

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	2
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

Approximately a quarter of parents and carers made comments about the school's performance by completing questionnaires, which is a smaller-than-average response. Those who did respond were very positive about the work of the school, in particular the extent to which the school keeps their children safe, the quality of teaching and the way in which the school is led and managed. The inspection evidence, broadly, supports these positive views and has identified ways in which teaching and aspects of leadership and management could be strengthened further.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Aidan's CofE Memorial Primary 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 82 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 295 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	43	52	37	45	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	53	65	28	34	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	33	40	40	49	7	9	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	36	44	38	46	4	5	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	39	48	42	51	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	33	40	45	55	3	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	30	37	48	59	4	5	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)	28	34	47	57	3	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	39	48	36	44	4	5	2	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	36	44	39	48	3	4	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	21	26	52	63	5	6	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	32	39	44	54	3	4	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	41	50	36	44	1	1	3	4

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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



17 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Aidan's CofE Memorial Primary School, Hartlepool, TS25 5BA

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when we inspected your school. We enjoyed the time we spent with you and were pleased to see how well you behave and how keen you are to take responsibility, for example as 'playtime friends'. You told us that you enjoy school and we were glad to learn that you attend regularly. Keep up the good work! Your school is satisfactory. These are some of the positive things we found.

- The adults care for you well and you told us this makes you feel safe in school.
- The youngest children have interesting things to do which help them to learn new things each day.
- The adults in school work well with other people to improve your school and to ensure that you receive special help if it is needed.
- The teachers plan interesting things for you to do and give you lots of opportunities to work together so that you can learn from each other.

We have asked your headteacher and the people who work with him, to do the following things to make your school even better.

- Find out the things that help your learning most and extend these approaches to all classes, so that you make better progress and everyone achieves the targets set for them.
- Improve the way teachers mark your work so that you understand your next steps in learning.
- Ensure the activities teachers plan always build well on your prior learning and you understand how to check and improve your work in lessons.

We have asked the governing body of your school to check that these things happen and that your learning gets better and better. We hope that you continue to enjoy your learning and wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Janet Bennett

Lead inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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