

St Hilds College CE Aided Primary School

Renny's Lane, Gilesgate, Durham, DH1 2HZ

Inspection dates 26–27 September 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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.

- Pupils make good progress. Their attainment is above average in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils in Year 6 and those supported through school action plus make exceptionally good progress.
- Teaching is good with some outstanding practice in Key Stage 2. Teachers use interactive technology very well to enliven pupils' learning.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are good friends. They feel safe in school and are kind to each other.
- The school has improved significantly since the last inspection. Achievement and teaching have improved considerably. This is because the leadership of teaching is a strength and governance offers good levels of support and challenge.
- The majority of pupils make more than expected progress each year because teaching is much more effective.
- Members of the governing body expect an answer if specific pupils have not met their targets. They ask why it has happened and what the school is doing about it.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The teaching of a small group of younger pupils in Key Stage 1 is not suited to their age and stage of development.
- The transition arrangements between the Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 1 are not as good as they should be.
- Pupils tend to write more than they read in guided reading lessons. This means they do not have much time to read widely or to talk about books in depth.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 18 lessons or parts of lessons. They observed every teacher in the school.
- The inspectors heard pupils of different ages read and looked at their work with them in class.
- A third of pupils in Year 6 showed the work they had done this term in mathematics and English to an inspector and talked about their favourite authors.
- The inspection team checked the school's analysis of pupils' progress.
- The inspectors held meetings with pupils, staff, members of the governing body and the local authority.
- The team took into account the four responses to Parent View.

Inspection team

Lesley Clark, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Karen Holmes

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British. A very small minority of pupils come from ethnic minority groups. A few are at an early stage of learning to speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is high compared to the national average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards.
- There have been several staffing changes since the last inspection. The headteacher has been in post for just over two years.
- The school closed at the end of June because of extensive flood damage, including sewage and asbestos hazards. These affected the building, most of its learning resources, displays and pupils' work. Pupils were taught in schools across the city for the final three weeks of the summer term.
- The school reopened at the start of September 2012. There is restricted access to some parts of the building and limited learning resources at present.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching for a small group of younger pupils in Key Stage 1 by:
 - making sure that tasks and activities are practical and well suited to pupils' age and stage of development
 - ensuring that pupils spend less time listening to adults and more time learning actively through exploration and discovery.
- Improve the transition between the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 so that pupils who are not yet ready to access the National Curriculum have suitable learning experiences to meet their developmental needs.
- Ensure that guided reading lessons give pupils more time to read than write.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils achieve well. The large majority of pupils make better than expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' progress has accelerated over the past two years. Attainment is above average in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. At the end of Year 2 attainment is broadly average. Each year, an increasingly large proportion of pupils reach the higher Level 3 and Level 5 in national tests at the end of Years 2 and 6.
- Disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language make good progress. The pupils who are supported at school action plus make outstanding progress because they get the right support inside and, when needed, outside school to enable them to progress at a fast rate.
- The progress of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium has accelerated rapidly over the past year. The school has successfully closed the gap between this group of pupils and others. This has been achieved through focused support, small classes and good teaching. It confirms the school's successful commitment to tackling discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress from generally below average starting points. They settle in quickly and become confident, independent learners. Achievement is good because children have the chance to talk about their ideas and choose what to do. They keep trying even when tasks become difficult, persevering, for example, when sorting different shapes.
- Overall progress in Key Stage 1 is good, especially for the more-able pupils. However, a small group of younger pupils underachieve when they start in Key Stage 1 because tasks are too difficult for their developmental stage. They have problems adjusting to formal learning because they are not ready to listen for lengthy periods of time. Their learning slows when they are not actively engaged in activities that encourage them to explore and discover at the right pace for their needs.
- Across the school achievement is good in mathematics. Pupils have efficient strategies to enable them to calculate quickly and accurately. More-able pupils are encouraged to decide when to move on to harder tasks. Year 6 pupils explained, 'We learn really fast. We did two lessons on angles but some of us did only one because we were ready to move on.' They make exceptionally good progress as a result.
- Pupils read well. In Key Stage 1 pupils read new words confidently because they know how to sound out letters and use the context to help them. Year 2 pupils, for instance, confidently read words such as 'meddling' and 'flicked'. Older pupils talk knowledgeably about favourite authors they read at home. By contrast, reading tasks in guided reading lessons give pupils relatively few opportunities to read a wide range of texts and discuss them in depth.
- Pupils enjoy writing. They use their knowledge of phonics (how letters and sounds link together) well to help them to spell accurately. By Year 6, pupils use personification, alliteration and comparison very effectively to enliven their writing.

The quality of teaching is good

- A strength in the teaching which makes a real impact on progress is lessons that are interesting and motivate pupils. The success of this is in the pupils' positive attitudes to learning.
- Good, systematic teaching of phonics ensures that pupils build on what they know. The impact is seen in higher attainment each year in reading and writing. The teaching of reading is clearly successful in terms of the reading process. However, teachers give pupils relatively little time to read, especially in guided reading lessons where pupils often spend more time writing

answers to comprehension questions than actually reading.

- Teachers have good subject knowledge that allows them to ask probing questions which help to deepen pupils' understanding and encourage them to apply what they learn.
- Lessons are structured carefully and imaginative resources are readily available. Teachers use interactive technology very effectively to make demonstrations pacy, informative and lively.
- Teachers have good techniques to make learning fun. For example, pupils use mnemonics such as RUCSAC (Read, Underline, Choose, Solve, Answer) as a step-by-step checklist to help them to solve mathematical problems.
- Assessment is used effectively to target the needs of pupils. Teaching assistants are deployed successfully to work with different groups of learners. They make a significant contribution to the excellent progress of those being supported at school action plus.
- In the best lessons, teachers involve pupils in demonstrations and explanations so that pupils teach and learn from each other. As a result, pupils are keen to share their ideas, ask questions and are not fearful of making mistakes.
- In less successful lessons, staff misjudge the capacity of young pupils new to Key Stage 1 to listen, remember, follow instructions and work without help on prolonged tasks. They do not give them enough opportunities to learn through suitable, practical activities that build on what they know and understand.
- A strength across the school is the way that pupils grade their work for presentation, accuracy and effort. Teachers' marking modifies or agrees with pupils' perceptions. The impact is seen in pupils' neat presentation and clear understanding of what they have learnt and where they need further help.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils feel safe in school. They have confidence in the adults in school to help them if they need it. They understand different dangers and talk knowledgeably about e-safety, for example.
- Pupils behave well. They are polite and courteous to adults and to each other. Only occasionally is there the need for gentle reminders to behave sensibly.
- The start to the school day is calm and orderly. Pupils arrive on time ready to work. Their attendance is broadly average.
- Lunchtimes and breaktimes are happy occasions. Pupils make the most of playing outside with their friends.
- Pupils are sure that there is no bullying. They say, 'We fall out occasionally', but friendship is quickly restored, 'it doesn't go beyond school'. They are positive that there are 'no racist comments and no one says gay'.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength. Pupils know that it is important 'to tell the truth' and that 'help is its own reward'. This is reflected in their thoughtful prayers and compassion towards others.
- Pupils are very largely attentive in lessons. Younger pupils in Key Stage 1 become restless when the work is not closely matched to their needs.
- Adults listen to pupils' views and take them seriously. The school and eco-councillors and playground buddies make a good contribution to the school's happy, purposeful atmosphere.

The leadership and management are good

- Under effective leadership much has been achieved in a short time. Teaching is better and there is now much talented teaching with a degree of flair which makes lessons engaging and productive most of the time. This, in turn, has led to a fast pace of learning, above average attainment and accelerated progress for the majority of pupils. The school is well placed to build on these strengths.

- The local authority provides 'light touch' support for this good school. It gave effective initial support to help a new headteacher tackle weak teaching.
- Performance management is used very well to promote more effective learning and to increase teachers' accountability for the progress that pupils make in their classes.
- Self-evaluation is accurate and the school knows exactly where its weaknesses lie. It continues to tackle inconsistencies in teaching effectively, giving support, professional training and coaching. Current links between the Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 1 are being strengthened through this system, though there is still some way to go.
- An impressive feature of leadership and management is the extent to which all staff are involved as senior, middle or base-level leaders. This means that all staff, including support staff, play an effective part in shaping school improvement. The impact is seen in the higher achievement especially of those pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium.
- The system of extra group work, to support the learning of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, has been sharpened to ensure that pupils get the right sort of intervention at the right time. The current focus is on intervening early so that the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Year 1 get support much earlier than formerly.
- Senior leaders have ensured that pupils supported at school action plus have had timely help to enable them to catch up. The impact is seen in outstanding rates of progress for this group of pupils.
- Leaders, managers and governors worked tirelessly so that the school could open as normal at the start of term despite extensive flood damage. Although learning resources are limited, pupils' learning is not suffering because teachers make full use of interactive technology and inventive teaching methods.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - is very supportive and knowledgeable
 - confirms that the headteacher has brought rigour and clarity to data analysis and this helps them to know what questions to ask and what to check
 - ensures the school is more effective than at the time of the last inspection.

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	114270
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	405507

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	185
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Revd Canon Bartlett
Headteacher	Mrs Suzanne Lithgow
Date of previous school inspection	16 September 2010
Telephone number	0191 3847451
Fax number	0191 3750176
Email address	sthilds@durhamlearning.net

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2012

