

St Oswald's CofE Aided Infant and Nursery School

Church Street, Durham City, Durham, DH1 3DQ

Inspection dates 8–9 July 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Standards are high in reading, writing and mathematics by the time pupils leave the school.
- The progress pupils make from their different starting points between Nursery and Year 2 is consistently outstanding in all subjects and has been so for several years.
- Pupils who arrive at the school from overseas, often speaking little or no English, make outstanding progress and leave speaking English fluently and confidently.
- The quality of teaching is first-rate. Work is challenging and fun, irrespective of pupils' abilities. In mathematics, however, teachers do not provide many opportunities for pupils to apply their skills to real-life problems.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary, both in class and during break times. Even the youngest children show good manners and are polite to each other and to adults.
- Children are kept very safe by exceptionally caring adults in the school. Pupils' understanding of how to stay safe when using the internet is particularly good.
- The school's use of data to track pupils' progress is simple, but highly effective, ensuring no pupils slip through the net.
- The headteacher provides an inspirational level of leadership. She constantly strives for excellence through her complete dedication to ensuring pupils receive nothing but the best education and care.
- In turn, teachers constantly strive to improve their teaching and are helped to do so through expert advice and support when it is needed.
- Members of the governing body have an impressive understanding of pupils' achievement and hold school leaders very well to account, while also offering high-quality support.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed seven parts of lessons, of which four were observed jointly with the headteacher. Additionally, pupils' work in each year group was reviewed to check on the progress they had been making over time, and the inspector listened to pupils reading.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other staff, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. The inspector spoke to numerous pupils during lunchtimes and break times.
- The inspector analysed the 41 responses that had been submitted to the online questionnaire for parents (Parent View).
- The inspector scrutinised a number of documents including school improvement plans, minutes of the governing body meetings, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Robert Jones, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- A below-average proportion of pupils is eligible for the pupil premium. The pupil premium provides additional funding for pupils in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and supported through school action is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is growing and is now above average.
- At the time of the inspection, the school was undergoing major building works in preparation for the school admitting junior-age pupils in September 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve mathematics teaching further still by ensuring pupils have more opportunities to use and apply their mathematics skills in real-life situations.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Children begin in the Nursery with skills and abilities that are generally expected of their age. They make very fast progress in each year and leave at the end of Year 2 having reached standards that are above average in all subjects. This impressive pattern of achievement is consistent and has been sustained for many years.
- Those children who arrive in Nursery or Reception from overseas speaking little or no English make outstanding progress. No opportunity is missed to develop their speaking, listening, reading and writing. They make friends quickly and, as a result, their standards of written and spoken English improve at a swift pace.
- Very few pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, so any comparison in standards between them and other pupils has limited value. However, over time there is no evidence that these pupils are disadvantaged compared to their peers.
- The most able pupils are helped to do their very best and so make outstanding progress and reach the highest standards.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make outstanding progress in all subjects. Their progress is very regularly checked and teaching assistants have an impressive understanding of the different kinds of special educational needs and how to get the best out of pupils.
- The high-quality tracking of pupils' achievement means that boys do as well as girls and no group of pupils is left behind. This means that the school promotes equal opportunities to the highest level.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- The quality of teaching is outstanding in all subjects. Teachers constantly shape and reshape their teaching to enable all to understand. They use data well to make sure work is neither too difficult nor too easy. Teachers carefully question pupils so that they give full answers to their questions and so improve their speaking skills.
- In the Nursery, no time is wasted in making sure children learn the basics of working together and recognising simple letters and numbers. The excellent outdoor area is very well used to reinforce these skills. For example, in one lesson outside, children threw bean bags to each other, counting the number of times they caught them successfully.
- No ceiling is placed on what pupils can achieve. In Reception, pupils confidently add and subtract from numbers as high as 200 because teachers constantly increase the challenge. Pupils learn new things all the time rather than going over old ground.
- Teachers place a lot of importance on pupils getting their basic knowledge right in mathematics. This enables them to quickly calculate numbers and use their times tables confidently to solve problems. However, pupils sometimes struggle to use these skills when they are given a real-life situation and they have to decide for themselves what calculations to do to solve it.
- Phonics (how sounds relate to letters) is very well taught and gives pupils the essential skills they need to start reading independently. Even the lowest ability read well and, when they come across an unfamiliar word, they can use the skills they have learned in phonics lessons to read it well. By the time pupils reach Year 2 therefore, they become skilled, confident and prolific readers.
- Writing is taught very imaginatively. Topics are studied throughout the year, which takes in science, history, geography and religious education. In each of these subjects teachers make sure that there are exciting opportunities for pupils to improve their writing, for example through writing diary entries or letters.
- The quality of feedback that teachers give pupils has recently improved as a result of work done with the local authority. This is now giving pupils improved advice on how they could make their

work even better.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- In class, teachers constantly reinforce the importance of good manners. The inspector had a memorable conversation with a four-year-old about how saying 'please' and 'thank-you' are important but that if you say them too much, it slows down the pace of the conversation.
- Pupils' behaviour in class is impressive. They present their work neatly, look after their books, take responsibility for tidying up and concentrate hard on the challenging work teachers provide for them.
- In the playground, pupils say, 'Everybody's your friend here.' and, 'There's always someone to play with.' The school's records of behaviour show that this is normal and poor behaviour is a rarity.
- Pupils say that bullying 'doesn't happen at all' but that they know who to go to if they feel frightened. They understand about the different kinds of bullying and have a particularly impressive understanding of how to stay safe on the internet. This is because the deputy headteacher, who has expert understanding of e-safety, has trained all staff to a high level.
- The building works in school provide a considerable challenge for pupils moving around the school, since corridors are very narrow. However, they do so very sensibly and are well aware of the potential dangers of going near the building site.
- The ample opportunities pupils have to sing, play sports and study different cultures, often at first hand by learning about each other's backgrounds, means that pupils have an excellent awareness of spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues.
- The school has worked hard with parents to ensure attendance improves. This has paid dividends because attendance is now above average.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher inspires all the leaders, staff and pupils and leads by example. She sets the bar appropriately high in her expectations of achievement and behaviour but has been immensely successful in creating a happy, welcoming school community.
- Subject leaders are very rigorous in how they check on the quality of teaching. At the end of the year they had compiled an impressively detailed report on their subjects, which gave them an excellent understanding of what needs to be done to improve the school even further. Subject leaders very regularly scrutinise the work pupils have done, giving teachers detailed advice on how to improve.
- This incisive, detailed self-evaluation is a key reason why the school has not rested on its laurels since its previous inspection. There is no hint of complacency. Training and support for teachers is first-rate which enables them to learn from each other and be at the top of their game.
- Despite the school's small size, the systems to track pupils' progress are used extremely well to ensure any underachievement is picked up early and dealt with. This means no pupils are left behind.
- While the school is very successful in ensuring pupils reach the highest standards, the school ensures that the curriculum and experiences it provides for them is interesting and varied. There is much emphasis on tolerance and mutual respect. Pupils learn where in the world their peers come from and develop a good understanding of different cultures. As a result pupils develop quickly in confidence and maturity and they are in an excellent position to begin the next stage of their education.
- The government sports funding is carefully used to buy in expert coaching from sports professionals. This has given pupils a taste of different sports, such as judo, but more

importantly, it is used to train staff so that they are in a good position to continue this good work once the funding stops.

- The local authority has given appropriate light touch support to the school, but has supported it well to improve teachers' marking and feedback to pupils.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body has an excellent understanding of the school's strengths but equally are acutely aware of the dangers of complacency. As a result, they constantly support and challenge school leaders to ensure standards and the quality of teaching remain the best they can possibly be. Its members receive regular high-quality information from the headteacher on how well pupils are doing and any weaknesses that have been detected. This puts them in an excellent position to ask challenging questions to check on the progress of these weaknesses so they are ironed out quickly. They keep a close watch on the rigorous system of managing teachers' performance but, because the system is so meticulous, there is no need for governors to intervene. Governors all subscribe to the view that, for pupils, the experience of school should go well beyond reaching high standards, and so support the extensive programme of extra-curricular activities and visits that brings learning to life for pupils.

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	114228
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	442660

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	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	86
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sue Pitts
Headteacher	Gillian Harrison
Date of previous school inspection	13 September 2007
Telephone number	0191 386 8029
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