

St Aidan's CE Memorial Primary School

Loyalty Road, Hartlepool, County Durham, TS25 5BA

Inspection dates 30 September–1 October 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- The quality of teaching is not always good enough to enable pupils to make good progress. Too often tasks set for pupils of different abilities have unclear expectations and all begin at the same level of difficulty. For some the work is too easy and for others too difficult and this can limit the progress of some pupils.
- Work in books can be untidy and for some pupils the formation of letters and numbers is incorrect.
- Expectations of the quality of work in other subjects, such as history and science, are not as high as in English and mathematics. As a result, pupils do not always produce work at the level of which they are capable in other subjects.
- Skills in writing are below those in reading and mathematics. The achievement gaps between boys and girls, disadvantaged pupils and those who are disabled or have special educational needs vary greatly between year groups and key stages.
- The school presently depends upon support from the acting headteacher and executive headteacher, and from the local authority. The roles and responsibilities of other leaders in the school, although developing, are not fully embedded.
- Many systems are new to the school. As yet, there has not been enough time for these to show an impact on all achievement and teaching across the school.

The school has the following strengths

- There is an harmonious atmosphere in classrooms and around the school. Pupils work hard and try their best to please their teachers.
- Pupils feel safe in school and behaviour is good. They know who to turn to if they are worried and say that staff are always ready to help them.
- Attendance is high Pupils enjoy coming to school.
- Children settle quickly into the warm and welcoming early years. They rapidly develop good relationships with their teachers and key workers.
- There are clear signs of improving standards by the end of Years 2 and 6 in reading and mathematics. Reading is taught well and pupils are now making good progress. .
- Staff morale is high. Staff understanding of their roles, what their next steps need to be and how to develop their levels of responsibility are all positive motivators for the school to improve further.
- Governors and the present acting headteacher and executive headteacher have led the school well over recent months. They have identified the correct priorities and actions are now in place to lead the school forward.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 20 lessons and parts of lessons and, in addition, made short visits to see the teaching of small groups and individual pupils being taught. They also listened to pupils reading. The acting headteacher took part in the observation of two lessons with inspectors.
- Separate discussions were held with the acting headteacher, the executive headteacher, the local authority assistant director, staff, eight members of the governing body, a representative from the local authority and the new school advisor. The opinions of 22 members of staff were also considered from their questionnaire responses.
- Inspectors observed the school's work, looked at children's learning journals and staff planning journals. They considered the school website data on children's progress, planning and monitoring documentation and information relating to the welfare of children and safeguarding.
- Inspectors took account of the 16 responses to the on-line parent questionnaire (Parent View), the results of the school's own questionnaire to parents and discussions were held with a number of parents and carers over the two days.
- Inspectors observed pupils during morning playtime and lunchtime. They attended a whole-school collective worship and class worship.

Inspection team

Kate Pringle, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Alison Aitchison

Additional Inspector

Graeme Clark

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, who are supported through the pupil premium funding, is well above average. This additional funding is allocated to those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those children looked after by the local authority.
- The vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is well above average.
- The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school runs a breakfast club each morning.
- Since Easter 2014, the school has been led by the headteacher and the head of school from West View Primary School as executive headteacher and acting headteacher. The acting headteacher has been fully in post since June 2014.
- Governors have begun the process to appoint a new permanent headteacher for the school who is expected to take up responsibility in January 2015.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, including within the early years, to be at least good by:
 - making sure that activities match the different learning abilities of pupils and provide good challenge
 - improving presentation in books, including the formation of letters and numbers
 - making sure that the expectations of what pupils can achieve are as high in topic work and other subjects as they are in English and mathematics
 - recognising when pupils have achieved success in their learning and increasing the challenge so that they make faster progress.
- Ensure pupils' progress in writing is always at least good , especially for those groups whose work is below the standard of others, by:
 - providing boys with opportunities to write which interest and motivate them to share their thoughts and ideas
 - using information about the progress of disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs more rigorously so that support is more effective in narrowing the achievement gaps between these pupils and others.
- Ensure the present rate of improvement continues during the change in headship, by:
 - embedding new systems to make sure that these developments have a positive impact upon the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- There have been a number of changes to leadership recently and this is set to continue over the months to come as the school moves towards appointing a permanent headteacher.
- Since the last monitoring visit, a number of new systems and actions have been put in place by leaders. Many changes have taken place. However, not all of these have had the time to show their full impact upon the consistency in the quality of teaching or on pupils' progress. Although there is clear evidence of change, as yet, there is still too much variation in quality across the school.
- Staff support the changes and show high levels of motivation, increased commitment and a real sense of ownership of their responsibilities. There is a genuine willingness to improve and be part of the improvement of this school. The acting headteacher has a very good grasp about what areas need to be developed and the school's action plan is well written with timed actions to check success. This is helping the school to move forward.
- The roles of other senior and middle leaders in the school are extending and these staff are developing their skills to check the performance of teachers and the outcomes for pupils. Leaders have formulated action plans for their areas of responsibility and are busily putting them into action. However, as yet the impact of those actions on pupils' performance or the quality of teaching is not yet fully effective.
- A new tracking system is enabling school leaders and teachers to check closely on pupils' progress. Information is identifying which pupils need further challenge or additional support. Presently, not enough checks are made on the progress of different groups of pupils in writing from their previous level of attainment at the last national assessment to their current level of attainment so as to ensure they are making enough progress in this subject.
- The evaluation of teaching is improving. However, expectations of the quality of teaching are not consistently high enough. As a result, accuracy in matching skills to pupils' needs is not yet secure across the school. This restricts the progress for all groups from being consistently good.
- The link between the quality of teaching, pupils' outcomes and progression in teachers' pay has been strengthened recently. All staff now have clear targets to work towards and reviews are planned throughout the year for all members of staff. There are now clear expectations of different levels in performance to move up the salary scales.
- Since the last monitoring visit, there is a greater focus on planning for the use of pupil premium funding to best direct support and to measure the impact of this support in small steps in order to pick up any pupil who is not progressing as well as they might.
- Despite the variations of pupils' progress, the school makes every effort to promote equality of opportunity by including all pupils whatever their need or disability. It makes every effort to ensure that pupils are happy in school, that they care for each other without discrimination and they know well the difference between right and wrong. All these facets contribute to the positive relationships in the school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is developed effectively through worship and lessons.
- The primary school sports funding is used effectively to support additional lunchtime and after-school activities. A sports coach is also employed to further staff expertise and develop the teaching of physical education. The school is able to demonstrate the wider range of sport on offer, greater participation of pupils, success at sports and the improvement to the quality of teaching.
- The new curriculum is broad and balanced and is fully in place. Pupils experience the wider world and extend their skills through visits and visitors to the school. This prepares them well for life in modern Britain. Pupils access a range of additional activities during lunchtime and after school, including hockey, tag rugby and archery.
- Work to determine assessment of pupils within the new curriculum without levels is at a very early stage of development through links with the local authority and local schools.
- The strong links with West View Primary and the local authority have been instrumental in helping to move the school forward over recent months. In addition, the increased links with other schools, which demonstrate best practice, are widening the horizons of staff and raising their expectations.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Since the last inspection, the governing body has been restructured. All members now take on individual roles and responsibilities and two specific committees monitor the raising of achievement and use of resources. In addition to being highly committed and supportive of the school, governors have increased their level of challenge, as their understanding of their roles and responsibilities has developed. They are unafraid to take difficult decisions for the benefit of the school. Governors recognise the strengths of the school and where improvements are required. They are working with

senior leaders to achieve this. Data on achievement is reviewed and governors are aware of the quality of teaching. This enables them to contribute to the school's assessment of its effectiveness, including pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching, and to understand the priorities for improvement identified in the school action plan.

- Governors are aware of how the pupil premium funding is allocated and know the impact on progress in mathematics and reading is stronger than in writing. They are aware of the allocated funding for primary sports and report knowledgeably on the impact it has had upon pupils' health and activity rates and how it is improving the teaching of physical education. Governors have worked closely with the acting headteacher to link teachers' performance to pay and arrangements are in place to monitor this closely. They ensure that the school fulfils its statutory responsibilities for safeguarding, including the training of staff, to keep pupils safe from harm.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well in class and around the school and are polite, thoughtful, considerate and caring of others. They share and take turns as they work and play together.
- Pupils believe behaviour in the school to be good. They say that there are few instances of bad behaviour because everyone understands the rules of the school and the consequences of bad behaviour. On the rare occasions when poor behaviour does occur, pupils say that staff address it quickly and effectively. There have been no exclusions over four years.
- In lessons, pupils are enthusiastic learners and listen carefully. They have good attitudes to learning, however, not all take enough care to present their best work at all times.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and take increasing responsibility for this, in school and at home, as they grow older. This is because school draws attention to the dangers that exist and helps pupils to learn about safe places to play and dangerous situations. Pupils have good relationships with staff and readily take their cares and concerns to them because they are sure that someone is always ready to help.
- Similarly, pupils understand the different forms bullying can take. They say there is little in school and should it happen staff are quick to address the problem successfully.
- Attendance is high and the majority of pupils attend regularly. There is considerable support for those families who find getting their children to school difficult.
- Only a small proportion of parents took part in Parent View, so inspectors took note of a school survey from parents conducted in September and talked to parents as they dropped off and collected their children. Parents were very positive about the school. They believe that their children are safe, well looked after and say that behaviour is managed well. Inspectors agree with their views.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Pupils enjoy good relationships with their teachers and teaching assistants. They try their best to achieve what is asked of them and many show considerable resilience as they try to understand what is required of them.
- Teaching requires improvement because work provided for pupils does not always help them to achieve as well as they might. This is because teachers do not always use their understanding of what pupils can do to set new work at the correct level to provide the best challenge. This means that not all groups make best progress because expectation is not high enough.
- In the wider curriculum, such as history and science, there is often not the same high level of expectation of work as in English and mathematics. This limits the opportunities for pupils to work at a level that challenges them and to use their skills in wider learning experiences.
- Too few teachers recognise when pupils have achieved success in their learning and move the challenge to the next level for these pupils to make best progress. This is particularly so for the most able.
- For other groups, including boys, disadvantaged pupils and those who are disabled, or who have special

educational needs, there are not enough focused actions to support specific needs at the right level to accelerate progress. Progress for these pupils in writing is not rapid enough for them to catch up to others in their year groups.

- The teaching of writing requires improvement. Tasks do not always capture the interest of boys and disadvantaged pupils. This can lead to a lack of motivation and hinders faster progress. Therefore increasing the achievement gaps with other pupils.
- The teaching of mathematics is improving with most pupils now making expected progress.
- Reading is taught well. Phonics (letters and the sounds they make) is taught successfully and used well by pupils to tackle new words. The impact is clear in the raised attainment at Year 2 and the vastly improved progress in Year 6.
- Throughout the school, pupils' presentation in their books is improving but some do not take enough care in their work. For some pupils, letters and numbers are poorly formed.
- Pupils enjoy school and settle quickly to tasks. They work successfully with their friends in pairs and small groups and enjoy the growing opportunities to discuss their learning. In one literacy lesson, pupils considered the teacher's tortoise, its needs and how to care best for it. They raised questions to put to the teacher and listened carefully to the answers, so that they could use information in their writing the following day.
- A new marking scheme is in place and teachers mark pupils' work regularly. Teachers show where pupils have been successful and highlight where improvements are needed. There are increasing opportunities for pupils to return to previous work and to correct or amend it. This helps pupils to understand where they have gone wrong and to learn from their mistakes. Most teachers identify what pupils need to learn next, but these are not always carried forward to challenge learning at the right level.
- Teaching assistants work closely with teachers. They use their developing skills effectively in class to help pupils understand and achieve.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Across the school, progress varies and overall requires improvement. Children enter the early years at levels which are below those typical for their age. A small proportion with special educational needs enter with skills lower than those expected for their age. By the time they move to Year 1, most children are working at the expected levels for their age, although not all have achieved these. Most children in the early years make the progress expected of them in all of the areas of the curriculum.
- Most recent information indicates that pupils now leave Year 2 at levels which match the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. Many make the progress expected of them but few make more than this.
- By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in reading is now above average and broadly average in writing and mathematics. Pupils make good progress in reading with expected progress made in writing and mathematics.
- Unvalidated test results in 2014 showed an improvement in mathematics and reading. Writing standards fell due to a widening of the gap between disadvantaged pupils and non disadvantaged pupils and the lower attainment of boys.
- Boys generally underperform compared to girls, especially in writing. Boys are not enthusiastic writers and tasks do not always motivate them. However, boys' achievement is improving. The most recent outcomes at Year 6 show boys performance to be broadly in line with that of girls in reading, above that of girls in mathematics and well below in writing.
- Disadvantaged pupils at the end of Year 6 have made largely expected progress. The gap between their attainment and that of non-disadvantaged pupils in the school has narrowed in reading and mathematics but has widened in writing. Achievement for disadvantaged pupils is variable over year groups. The most recent data indicates that by Year 6, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils, when compared with other non disadvantaged nationally, is broadly similar in reading, but is below these pupils in mathematics by 12 months. In writing, the gap is wider, with disadvantaged pupils being 18 months behind other pupils nationally. When compared with other pupils in the school, disadvantaged pupils are six months behind in reading, 12 months in mathematics and 18 months in writing.
- The most able pupils make expected progress. They are not always sufficiently challenged and this limits their progress to higher levels of performance, especially in writing.
- Pupils who are disabled or with special educational needs make broadly similar progress to other pupils overall. Again there is variability across the school depending upon the quality of teaching.
- Information from the phonics screening checks carried out at the end of Year 1, indicates that pupils

reached higher levels than the national average. This is because of effective teaching, which is raising pupils' attainment in reading across the school.

- Progress in reading is good. Pupils attempt to sound out new words using their phonic skills. Those in Year 1 use these skills effectively to sound out new words. By Year 6, many read confidently, although a few struggle when meeting new words. Most pupils enjoy reading and use their skills successfully to locate information.

The early years provision

requires improvement

- Children quickly gain in confidence as they quickly settle into nursery and their new Reception class. Named staff who have direct responsibility for groups of children work closely with them to develop their personal and social needs and extend their speaking and listening skills.
- Overall children make the expected level of progress. This includes the proportion of children who start learning in the early years with lower skills than those typical for their age in speaking, listening and mathematical skills. Children who have individual needs are quickly recognised and appropriate support is put in place for those children who are disabled or who have special educational needs to ensure they make the expected progress. Staff successfully develop children's language, vocabulary and understanding skills so that children achieve expected levels by the time they enter Year 1.
- Children across the early years understand daily routines and are responsive to teachers' requests.
- Behaviour is good. As they use the different equipment indoors and outside, children show clear progress to develop skill in sharing and taking turns as they play and learn together.
- Children are safe. Every opportunity is taken to help children understand the importance of washing hands, especially before taking meals or drinks.
- The quality of teaching varies across the early years and requires improvement because is not yet consistently good. Children's progress slows when activities do not match their learning needs. In these cases, teachers do not take enough notice of what children can do to plan activities which challenge them further. This especially restricts the progress of the most able who do not always make rapid enough progress.
- Links with parents are established and learning journals, showing what children have achieved, are shared with them regularly.
- The early years leader manages provision well and has correctly identified the strengths and actions are in place to address the areas requiring development. Leadership requires improvement because there has not been enough time to show the impact of these actions on the quality of teaching or improving outcomes for children.

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	111690
Local authority	Hartlepool
Inspection number	442234

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	334
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Taylor
Acting Headteacher	Charlotte Haylock
Date of previous school inspection	16 January 2013
Telephone number	01429 273695
Fax number	01429 284567
Email address	admin.staidans@school.hartlepool.gov.uk

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