

St Hild's College Church of England Aided Primary School, Durham

Renny's Lane, Gilesgate, Durham DH1 2HZ

Inspection dates

19–20 January 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Teaching has not been consistently strong enough over time to ensure that all pupils are making good progress, particularly in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils supported through the pupil premium funding do not always make the accelerated progress required to move closer to the attainment of other pupils nationally.
- The quality of teaching in the early years provision is variable and learning opportunities are not maximised for two-year-olds and children in the Nursery class.
- Since the last inspection, leaders have not secured a consistently good quality of teaching. As a result, pupils' progress in reading and mathematics has slowed.
- The subject leader for mathematics is new to the role. While she has begun to put in place actions to improve teaching, these have not had time to make the required impact.
- A new subject leader for English is about to start at the school. Previous leadership has not fully addressed the weaknesses in the teaching of English.
- The governing body does not fully check and challenge aspects of the school's work, particularly the rate at which pupils make progress over time and the impact of the pupil premium spending.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher, governors and staff have created a supportive and nurturing culture. Pupils feel safe and cared for.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. Pupils are friendly, behave responsibly and work well together.
- The teaching of phonics is well structured. The proportion of pupils who achieve the expected standard is above that found nationally.
- A wide range of curricular opportunities, including specialist teaching in physical education (PE) and music, combined with after-school activities, enrich learning.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it becomes consistently good or better by:
 - sharing the strong practice which exists within the school
 - planning teaching that it is well matched to pupils' needs and abilities to move them quickly to at least the expectations for their age.
 - developing the recently introduced initiatives to develop pupils' mathematical reasoning and problem-solving skills
 - improving the quality of the teaching of writing, including the teaching of grammar, punctuation and spelling
 - continuing the work to improve the teaching of reading so that pupils' progress from starting points accelerates.
- Increase the impact of leadership and management and accelerate the rate at which the school improves, by:
 - completing the development of the school's assessment and pupil progress tracking information to provide teachers and leaders with accurate and up-to-date information on pupils' progress
 - ensuring that the recently appointed subject leaders for mathematics and English are provided with the support needed to drive improvements and to improve pupils' progress
 - making more effective use of the range of evidence available when evaluating the quality of teaching and pupil progress to arrive at more accurate school self-evaluation judgements
 - promptly completing the recently commissioned review of the school's use of pupil premium in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management can be improved
 - improving governors' level of challenge to school leaders, particularly in relation to pupils' progress.
- Ensure consistency of effective early years teaching and learning building on the strengths in Reception, in order to accelerate the learning of boys and disadvantaged children.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement. Over time, leaders, including governors, have not been effective enough in securing consistently good teaching and good progress for pupils. Their actions have not fully addressed a falling pattern of pupils' progress since the last inspection.
- Leaders have been too positive in their overall judgements of the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes. Recently introduced approaches to checking the quality of teaching and recording pupils' progress information are still developing. While leaders have analysed the school's pupil progress information and compared it to national outcomes, they have not used this information to come to accurate conclusions in their evaluations.
- The pupil premium spending has a variable impact on accelerating the progress of disadvantaged pupils. While there are improvements in the school's 2016–17 pupil premium strategy plan, previous plans have not provided specific detail of costings and the intended impact of actions, making evaluation of the impact of this spending difficult. The level of scrutiny by leaders and governors of the effectiveness of the pupil premium plans on accelerating the progress of disadvantaged pupils is not sharp enough.
- The subject leader for mathematics has begun to take appropriate action to bring about improvements in teaching. For example, the impact of training for staff in teaching mathematical reasoning and problem-solving skills and the timetabling of 'maths mission' lessons shows early signs of improving the practice in some classes.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher currently provide subject leadership for English on an interim basis. A new leader of English is due to start in the school the week following the inspection. Teachers have received training to improve the teaching of reading. Plans are in place for leaders to check that this has a positive impact on teachers' practice and pupils' outcomes. Previous leadership has been too slow to address the weaknesses in reading.
- The coordinator of provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities provides strong leadership of provision for these pupils. Effective use is made of special educational needs and/or disabilities funding, including for appropriate staff training. Consequently, these pupils succeed socially and academically.
- The school has an effectively planned curriculum based around the national curriculum subjects. Teachers start termly topics with a 'big bang' event, such as a visit or a visitor into school, to motivate pupils' learning. Pupils benefit from specialist teaching in PE and music. They also have access to a good range of after-school clubs, which enrich the curriculum.
- Leaders make effective use of the additional funding for sport and physical education in primary schools to increase the opportunities pupils have to enjoy physical activities and learn from specialist coaches. Opportunities for pupils to take part in competitive sports, develop healthy lifestyles and be involved with lunchtime and after-school clubs have improved.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Leaders and staff have created a culture of respect and tolerance in this welcoming and friendly school. The school prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. Opportunities such as

the school council develop pupils' understanding of democracy. Inspectors' discussions with pupils demonstrated that they have a clear understanding of the need for respect for others who may come from a different background to themselves.

- Performance management systems are in place. Leaders and governors ensure clear links between teachers' pay progression and their performance management objectives. Recently introduced systems are making better links between performance management, staff training and the school's priorities. However, checking of the impact of training on the quality of teaching is still at an early stage.
- The headteacher has been robust in her approach in tackling particularly weak teaching and has managed a period of turbulence in staffing effectively. The school now has a more settled staffing and leadership position.
- The school's improvement plans generally provide appropriate actions to address the school's priorities. However, timeframes for monitoring the impact of the actions in the plan are not sharp enough.
- Durham and Newcastle Diocese has provided appropriate support for leadership and the development of English. This is beginning to improve leaders' monitoring practice and the teaching of reading. The local authority has supported leaders in identifying relevant priorities for school improvement.

Governance of the school

- Governors are supportive of school leaders and staff. They have a good understanding of the community it serves.
- Some governors visit school regularly to increase their understanding of the quality of teaching, pupils' outcomes and safeguarding arrangements. However, they have not provided sufficient challenge for leaders in aspects such as pupils' progress and the impact of available resources such as the pupil premium funding.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The culture of safeguarding is strong and leaders and staff implement a thorough and determined approach to keeping children safe. Well-maintained records and systems for monitoring safeguarding are in place. Regular meetings of the safeguarding team ensure that leaders and staff know the needs of vulnerable pupils well and are active in seeking support for pupils and their families. Engagement with parents and other agencies is good. Leaders have updated the safeguarding policy to ensure that it meets current requirements and all staff understand the procedures and their own responsibilities. Staff and governors receive regular and appropriate training so they know how to keep pupils safe. This includes training to increase staff members' awareness of how to protect pupils from radicalisation and extremism.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is inconsistent. As a result, over time too few pupils make good progress, particularly in reading and mathematics.
- Where teaching is less effective, teachers do not plan work which is well matched to pupils' abilities. Consequently, some less able pupils struggle to complete the work successfully and most-able pupils do not progress quickly enough.

- Leaders have introduced assessment arrangements and pupil progress recording which are better linked to the national curriculum. Teachers' regular assessments and tracking of pupils' progress are beginning to provide useful information. However, some teachers are not recording this information in a consistent fashion, which makes monitoring of pupils' progress by school leaders difficult.
- Teachers are beginning to use a range of approaches to improve pupils' mathematical reasoning and problem-solving skills. This is starting to extend the range of pupils' learning across a wider range of mathematical experiences.
- The school has revised its approach to teaching writing. There are now increased opportunities for pupils to plan, write, edit and improve their work. Alongside this work, specific grammar, punctuation and spelling lessons help pupils to develop these key skills. However, pupils are sometimes unclear how to use their learning in these discrete grammar, punctuation and spelling lessons in their writing lessons or other areas of the curriculum.
- The school has done much to improve the profile of reading. There is an attractive library with the works of pupils' favourite authors on display. Training for staff is helping to improve the quality of teaching of reading and sharpening assessment practice. Younger pupils generally make effective use of phonics and word recognition skills when reading to adults. Older pupils demonstrate a love of literature and there is early evidence that they are now developing improved comprehension skills.
- Relationships in lessons are positive and the mutual respect between staff and pupils is evident in all lessons.
- Homework is appropriately targeted to improve pupils' English and mathematics skills. Pupils are enthusiastic about some of the online learning that they can access from home.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils develop self-confidence as they progress through the school. This is because staff provide a caring environment where there are positive relationships between staff and pupils. At the same time, high expectations are set for behaviour, which gives pupils clear guidelines.
- A wide range of opportunities develops pupils' physical and emotional needs effectively. For example, 'Golden Time' both rewards pupils for meeting the school's expectations and allows pupils to choose activities of interest to complete alongside their peers. During the inspection, pupils spoke enthusiastically about their Golden Time choices. The school's systems such as 'worry boxes' and lunchtime 'drop in' sessions help to meet the pupils' emotional needs.
- Pupils feel safe and valued as members of the school community. They know how to keep themselves safe, including when online. Pupils, parents and staff all agree that the school is a safe place to learn.
- Pupils understand the different forms of bullying, and while they report that incidents are rare, they believe that staff will address them appropriately. They also have

playground buddies and 'mini buds' who they can turn to for peer support. The school's records show that leaders and staff deal with the infrequent incidents of bullying promptly.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are generally attentive in lessons, keen to learn and work hard.
- During playtimes and lunchtimes, pupils behave well, socialise suitably and engage in lively, friendly games. Activities such as climbing equipment and skipping games encourage active lifestyles. At lunchtime, pupils benefit from more organised activities provided by a sports coach. Pupils move around the school in an exemplary fashion.
- The level of attendance is below that found nationally. Leaders are working hard with families where pupils' absence levels are too high. The provision of a breakfast club, diligent monitoring by the headteacher and the work of the parent support adviser are all having a positive impact. As a result, the attendance levels for the vast majority of these pupils are improving.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes for pupils require improvement because pupils' progress has been too variable since the last inspection. This has resulted from the quality of teaching not being consistently good enough over time and leaders not checking pupils' progress carefully enough.
- In 2016, pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6 was too low in reading, mathematics and grammar, punctuation and spelling. Consequently, some Year 6 pupils were not well prepared for starting secondary school.
- Disadvantaged pupils' progress from key stage 1 to key stage 2 is broadly in line with that which is found nationally in writing and mathematics. However, in 2016 the progress of middle-attaining disadvantaged pupils in key stage 2 was significantly below that found nationally. Similarly, in key stage 1, not enough disadvantaged pupils made good progress from their starting points, particularly in reading and writing. The school's pupil progress information shows that disadvantaged pupils are currently not making enough progress towards the school's own targets. Over time, school leaders have not checked the progress of this group carefully enough and ensured that the available pupil premium funding has been used to accelerate their progress.
- By the end of Year 6, the most able pupils do not achieve as well as they should in reading and particularly in mathematics. This is because teaching does not typically challenge them to make good progress. There is emerging evidence that the school's work to improve the quality of teaching and raise pupils' interest levels in reading is beginning to improve progress in this subject with the current most able pupils.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make progress broadly in line with that found nationally by the end of Year 6. This is because appropriate plans and support are in place to match teaching to their personal development and learning needs.

- Pupils achieve well in the Year 1 phonics screening check. The proportion of pupils working at the expected level has been above the national average for the last three years. This is because teaching is generally well matched to pupils' needs and interests. However, despite these strong phonics skills the proportion of pupils working at the expected standards in reading by the end of Year 2 is below that found nationally.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Since the last inspection, the school has introduced provision for two-year-olds. Suitable steps are taken to enable these children to settle into the routines and to advance their independence and personal development.
- Systems for the assessment and recording of observations of two-year-old children's development are not well embedded. As a result, planned activities do not take enough account of children's individual learning needs and their progress is variable. However, some activities build well on children's interests. For example, baking biscuits and shopping for the ingredients was stimulated from a child's home interest.
- Generally, the classroom is suitably adapted to meet the needs of two-year-olds. For example, lower seating and soft toys are provided. While there is an area for children who need a quiet time or a nap, this area is not always available for them if older children are using it.
- Children start in the Nursery with skills and abilities that are generally below and sometimes well below those typical for their age. From their starting points, many children make good progress through the early years classes. However, the progress of boys and disadvantaged children lags behind that of other children. Consequently, the proportion of these children who achieve a good level of development is below that of other children nationally. As a result, some of these children are not well prepared for starting Year 1.
- The quality of teaching is variable. In Nursery, expectations of behaviour when moving between activities are not high enough. Teaching does not ensure enough challenge for the most able children. In Reception, well-targeted teaching is improving children's behaviour and a focused effort to improve boys' learning is beginning to have a positive impact.
- Generally resources are well organised to support children in selecting activities to develop their learning. However, in the indoor learning area in Nursery resources for writing are not always readily available, which limits opportunities for developing independent writing skills. Similarly, the early years outdoors learning areas do not fully develop opportunities for children to develop writing and mathematical skills.
- A clear focus on children's personal, social and emotional development has a positive impact on children's development. Activities such as 'what's in the special box?', where staff use careful questioning to discuss with children items in the box that have a personal value, raise children's confidence and self-esteem.
- The early years leader has a clear understanding of the learning needs of the children. She has put in place initiatives to improve parental engagement and has reviewed opportunities to improve boys' learning. Additional funding for disadvantaged children has mainly been targeted to providing additional staff. However, checking the impact of this funding has not been sharp enough to ensure that it accelerates the learning of this group of children.

- Staff work hard to develop partnerships with parents. Parents are positive about communication with the staff and appreciate systems such as the home target books and online learning journeys.
- There are good partnerships with other professionals. This helps the school promptly address children's developmental or special educational needs.
- Children feel safe and secure. Safeguarding is effective and the school meets welfare requirements. However, staff working with two-year-olds do not follow up children's absence as promptly as happens in other parts of the school.

School details

Unique reference number	114270
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10023890

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	231
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Revd Canon Dr Bartlett
Headteacher	Alexandra Ryder
Telephone number	0191 384 7451
Website	www.st-hilds.durham.sch.uk/
Email address	sthilds@durhamlearning.net
Date of previous inspection	26–27 September 2012

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average primary school.
- Since the last inspection the school has introduced provision for two-year-olds.
- The majority of 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 eligible for the pupil premium funding is well above that found nationally.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities support is below that found nationally.
- The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is below that found nationally.

- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school receives support from the Diocese of Durham and Newcastle and from Durham local authority.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the structure and responsibilities of the governing body and committees on its website.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning in a range of lessons and part lessons in all classes. The headteacher joined the lead inspector and an Ofsted inspector for six of the observations of lessons.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour around school and reviewed the school's promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The inspectors observed pupils in the playground and during lunchtime.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the teachers responsible for leading mathematics and the early years, as well as the special educational needs coordinator. The lead inspector met with three governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- A group of pupils discussed their opinions about the school and their learning with an inspector. The inspectors listened to four pupils selected from key stage 1 and key stage 2 read.
- Inspectors took account of the 16 responses on Ofsted's online parent survey, Parent View, and held discussions with parents at the beginning of the school day. Inspectors considered the 14 responses in staff questionnaires and the two responses to the pupils' questionnaire.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including minutes from meetings of the governing body, information about pupils' achievement, the school's evaluation of its own performance and its development plans. Reviews were made of behaviour and attendance records and information relating to safeguarding. The inspectors scrutinised pupils' work in their books.

Inspection team

Michael Reeves, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Colin Lofthouse	Ofsted Inspector
Jane Langley	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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