

St John's Chapel Primary School

Burnfoot, St John's Chapel, Bishop Auckland, County Durham DL13 1QH

Inspection dates

6–7 March 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Since her appointment in November 2018, the acting headteacher has taken swift, decisive and effective action to improve provision across the school.
- The acting headteacher has put in place strong systems to monitor the effect of teaching. She has used the resulting insights to focus staff training and their further development.
- Governors are skilled and know the school's needs well. They support and hold the acting headteacher to account effectively.
- The acting headteacher and the governors have a detailed knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses and evaluate its performance accurately.
- Disadvantaged pupils make very similar progress to their peers because of the effective, targeted work of staff.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is well led. These pupils make good progress from their starting points. They achieve well.
- Because of recent actions by the school, the quality and effectiveness of pupils' writing is improving. However, more needs to be done to ensure that these improvements are embedded, including for the most able.
- Pupils are very well behaved. They enjoy school and learning. They are kind and alert to the needs of others. They are well prepared for their next steps in learning.
- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Pupils feel safe and are safe. They are eager to learn. They are well prepared for their next stage of education.
- Parents are very supportive of the school. They appreciate the range of opportunities and care that the school offers their children.
- Reading is a strength of the school. Pupils across the school have many opportunities to enjoy and explore words and their effect. This aspect of the school's work is well led by the acting headteacher.
- The school is very well supported by the local authority.
- The school offers pupils a wide range of extra-curricular activities that help them understand their place in the world.
- The school offers an interesting and varied curriculum. However, pupils' knowledge and skills in subjects beyond English, mathematics and science need further development.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve outcomes for pupils, by:
 - providing more varied and carefully focused writing opportunities and challenges for all pupils, including the most able, so that they make stronger progress in writing across the curriculum
 - making sure that the curriculum, especially in subjects beyond mathematics and English, is increasingly challenging and that tasks are set that stimulate and stretch pupils.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- This school is very well led. Since her appointment in November 2018, the acting headteacher has taken swift and effective action to improve the quality of education across the school. She has also tightened up the systems that ensure all pupils are safe.
- The acting headteacher, working closely with the governing body, has put in place clear and effective systems for monitoring the quality and effect of teaching. These have been welcomed by staff because they help identify and build on strengths in teaching. They also help identify where action and training need to take place to improve further the service the school offers. Because of the acting headteacher's energy and clarity of vision, the school is now well placed to make rapid and sustained progress.
- The acting headteacher maintains a very inclusive ethos at the school. This ethos focuses on ensuring that all pupils' needs are carefully catered for. Parents and carers recognise this. They show very high levels of satisfaction with the school. They are particularly positive about the levels of care that the school shows to their children and the strong and open communications between school and home. Parents said that their children were safe and happy at the school.
- Staff morale is high. Because of the openness, quiet enthusiasm and drive of the acting headteacher, staff are eager to improve their practice. They share the acting headteacher's vision for local schools to work together. The sharing of good practice between staff at the school and at other local schools is leading to significant improvements in the quality of teaching. Recent appointments to the school staff have further strengthened the provision. The school is now well placed to make rapid improvement.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is carefully catered for. Pupils are reflective and concerned about the needs of others, both within and beyond the school. They are open and welcoming to all because of the work of the school and the support of parents. As a result of the work of the acting headteacher and staff at the school, pupils are well prepared to take up their roles as productive, reflective and open-minded citizens. Pupils told the inspector that the multi-faith days, where local schools gather with guests from a range of different faiths to explore aspects of belief, are interesting and thought-provoking. They said that these days help them understand other faiths and beliefs.
- Pupil premium funding is focused effectively by the school to ensure that barriers to learning are, as far as possible, removed. As a result, the relatively few disadvantaged pupils are making better progress than their peers at the school. Working with the pupil premium governor, the acting headteacher has used the additional funding to further extend the availability of high-quality reading books for disadvantaged and other pupils across the school.
- The acting headteacher ensures that the school uses its allocation of the physical education (PE) and sport funding successfully. It not only provides pupils with opportunities to develop their sports skills and experience, but also to further extend

staff's expertise in the teaching of PE. The three schools come together regularly to provide opportunities for pupils to engage in competitive sports, such as cross-country running. They also use a local adventure centre to offer a range of non-competitive, team-building activities to extend pupils' experience.

- The additional funding the school receives to support pupils with SEND is used effectively. The provision for pupils with SEND is well led. The acting headteacher is the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo). She is skilled and meticulous in her approach. Records are detailed and helpful. Links with outside agencies are strong. The SENCo works effectively to help all staff to develop their skills as teachers of special educational needs. This is having a positive impact on the overall quality of teaching.
- The school's curriculum is developing well. The 'core' subjects of English, mathematics and science are supplemented by other subjects such as geography, history, art and religious education. The acting headteacher and governors are clear that more needs to be done to develop and extend the richness of this broader curriculum.
- The 'formal' curriculum is underpinned by a wide and increasing range of after-school clubs and opportunities to develop musical, dramatic and other artistic skills. The first meeting of the school's after-school drama club took place during the inspection. It was enthusiastically and expertly led. It was attended by every pupil. They took obvious delight in exploring mood and facial expression.
- The school and the acting headteacher are well supported by the local authority and by an associate headteacher brokered by them.

Governance of the school

- The governing body is very effective. It is led well. Governors are now well informed and able to fulfil their roles in supporting and challenging the acting headteacher. This is because the acting headteacher, working with the local authority, has put in place effective, open and straightforward systems for monitoring the quality of pupils' education and well-being.
- Governors now play an active part in the school's work. They know its strengths and are accurate and realistic in their understanding of what still needs to be done to improve the school further. They visit the school regularly and, increasingly, individual governors are linked to aspects of the school's work such as safeguarding and pupil premium funding.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The systems for checking the suitability of visitors and staff recruitment are strong. There are rigorous checks in place to assure staff's suitability to work with children.
- The acting headteacher ensures that all staff and governors are well trained and skilled in safeguarding matters. There are regular training sessions to keep staff informed and up to date. The acting headteacher is well supported by the designated safeguarding governor in this aspect of the school's work.
- The acting headteacher has created, and maintains, a culture in the school where staff

have a clear understanding of their responsibilities and of the procedures that keep pupils safe. As a result, staff can promptly identify, and appropriately support, potentially vulnerable pupils. Where appropriate, the acting headteacher, as the designated safeguarding lead, engages very effectively with outside agencies to ensure that pupils and their families get the support that they need.

- Pupils have many opportunities to learn, and understand, how to stay safe through the subjects they study, class time and during assemblies. Pupils told the inspector that they regularly learn about how to stay safe online.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Staff demonstrate high levels of subject knowledge. They know the pupils very well. They generally plan learning that builds on what pupils already know and understand. They monitor their pupils' learning carefully. Those at risk of falling behind are quickly identified and given additional support.
- Staff are skilled in their use of questioning. The inspector saw many examples of staff using targeted and quietly insistent questioning to elicit detailed responses from pupils. Staff were explicit with pupils about the value of asking 'how' and 'why' rather than the duller 'what' questions, in order to get the most out of their learning.
- Phonics is very well taught. Staff make the sessions interesting and fun. The inspector saw staff picking up misconceptions quickly to ensure that progress was strong and sustained. The inspector, when reading with a pupil later in the day, saw him applying the knowledge of phonics he had gained earlier: decoding new words and taking real delight and pleasure in the sounds of words and his growing skill as a reader.
- Reading is a strength of the school. Pupils have many opportunities to read together to explore how writers create mood and effect in their writing. Pupils welcome this. They also like the structured approaches to individual reading that the school offers.
- Staff follow the school's feedback policy and, generally, pupils respond promptly and effectively to teachers' comments and advice.
- Classrooms are engaging and well cared for. They are comfortable and fun places to learn. Pupils recognise this and respect their learning environment. The walls of the school are enhanced by examples of pupils' high-quality work and other attractive displays that support and celebrate learning. Increasingly, there are 'learning walls' in the classrooms that give pupils hints and tips about how they can move forward in their learning if, for example, they are 'stuck' with a mathematics problem.
- Staff set regular homework in line with the school's policy. Most homework includes useful practise of spellings and tables to help give pupils confidence and quick recall. However, pupils are also encouraged to read regularly at home as part of the school's drive to encourage and raise the profile of reading. Pupils say they welcome this.
- Because of the school's recent actions, pupils' writing skills are now developing well across the school. Teachers plan a range of opportunities for writing and the quality of vocabulary and sentence structures are typically of a good standard. However, the inspector saw some examples of poor presentation that were not, apparently, challenged by staff.

- Inspection evidence in pupils' books suggests that the teaching of the curriculum beyond English and mathematics, although developing well, is not yet as advanced as it should be. Pupils are not being given enough opportunities to write at length in subjects such as geography and religious education. As a result, they are not developing their subject-specific knowledge and skills in these subjects. This is particularly the case for most-able pupils.
- Too often, the layout and quality of worksheets restrict opportunities for pupils, especially for the most able, because the spaces for writing are too small and, as a result, limit and do not encourage writing at length to extend and deepen learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are kind, polite and aware of the needs of others. They get on well together and with staff at the school. Pupils spoke with real pleasure about how much they enjoyed school and how well the staff care for and look after them. They know that staff at the school would be there for them if they ever had a problem. The school is inclusive and welcoming. Parents spoke warmly of the school and the ways in which staff, including the acting headteacher, make themselves available.
- Because of the school's diligent actions, pupils have a good understanding of the range of forms that bullying can take. Pupils say that there is no bullying at the school. They also say that, were it to occur, it would be promptly and well dealt with by adults at the school. Pupils told the inspector that they feel safe, and know how to keep themselves safe, in a range of situations including when online and on the roads.
- The school actively promotes a healthy lifestyle. Lunches are cooked on-site and are made from healthy ingredients. Pupils know what constitutes a healthy diet because of the work of the school and the skill of lunchtime staff. They enjoy being together around the school lunch table, with pupils from Year 1 to Year 6 chatting and at ease with each other. The inspector was made very welcome during lunch. He was asked about his reading and pet preferences.
- Despite the small size of the school and its rural setting, pupils are keenly aware of their place in, and responsibilities to, the wider world. Pupils told the inspector that because of their lessons, and other experiences at school, they knew about other lifestyles and ways of being. They also said that their work in supporting a range of charities helped them see what it is like to be somebody else.
- Displays around the school are lively and reflect the successes of pupils at the school. Displays also provide a positive picture of pupils' work in a wide range of subjects and the extra-curricular activities they access.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Staff have high expectations of behaviour and personal conduct. Pupils rise to these expectations. They are fully embedded into the life of the school. Relationships among pupils and between adults and pupils are marked by mutual respect and courtesy.
- Pupils behave very well in and around school. In the classroom and the playground, they are thoughtful and take care of each other. They collaborate well and show pride in their school. There is no litter. Pupils wear their school uniform with pride.
- Because of the efforts of staff and the attitude of pupils and parents, overall attendance is now at the national average and continuing to improve. Pupils like coming to school. They are very clear about why it is important to attend school regularly. Very few pupils come even close to being considered at risk of being persistently absent.
- The atmosphere around the school is calm and purposeful. Pupils enjoy learning together.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- This is a very small school. As a result, differences in the performance of small numbers of pupils have a significant effect on results year by year.
- Historically, children make good progress in early years. In 2018, the proportion reaching a good level of development was above that achieved nationally. This has been the case for the last three years. There are, currently, no children in the Reception Year.
- There were no pupils in Year 1 in 2018 to take the phonics screening check. However, historically, Year 1 pupils do well in the phonics screening check. The proportion meeting the expected standard is above the national average.
- The number of pupils who took the end-of-key-stage-1 tests in 2018 was very small. Historically, by the end of key stage 1, pupils achieve well in reading and mathematics. Writing outcomes have not been as strong.
- Historically pupils make generally good progress over key stage 2. However, over time, pupils do better in reading and mathematics than they do in writing. In 2018 the percentage of pupils who achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined was well above the national average. No pupils achieved at greater depth.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress from their starting points. All staff are aware of the needs and barriers to learning for disadvantaged pupils. Teaching is carefully focused on supporting them. Inspection evidence and the school's own information show that, over time, disadvantaged pupils make at least similar and often better progress than their peers.
- Pupils with SEND make good progress from their starting points. This is because the work they are given to do is carefully targeted on what they need to learn to succeed.
- Links with partner secondary schools are strong and carefully structured to suit the needs of pupils and parents. There is an extensive programme of visits and 'taster'

days to help pupils become familiar with their intended secondary school. Year 6 pupils told the inspector that they were already looking forward to moving on in their learning at secondary school and that they felt well prepared.

- An extensive scrutiny of current pupils' books in a range of subjects and years, across the school, shows that upper key stage 2 pupils, particularly the most able, make surer progress than those in Years 3 and 4. Also, across the school, but particularly in key stage 1, there is variability in the presentation of pupils' work. Staff expectations of what is acceptable are variable. However, overall across the school, pupils' progress in writing is improving because of recent actions by the acting headteacher and her staff. Pupils, increasingly, have more opportunities to write at length and extend their skills.

School details

Unique reference number	114064
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10059207

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	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	13
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair	Jo Simm
Headteacher	Ian Carroll Sarah Hodgkinson (Acting Headteacher)
Telephone number	01388 537332
Website	http://www.st-johnschapel.durham.sch.uk
Email address	stjohnschapel@durhamlearning.net
Date of previous inspection	4 February 2014

Information about this school

- St John's Chapel Primary School is much smaller than the average-sized primary school. As a result, there are very few pupils in each year group. There are two classes: a class comprising Reception and Years 1, 3 and 4 pupils, and a class comprising Years 5 and 6.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium is well below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average.
- The acting headteacher has been in post since November 2018. She is also acting headteacher of Forest of Teesdale Primary School and Rookhope Primary School. Each of these schools has its own governing body.

- The school has undergone significant changes to staffing over the last six months.
- Currently there are no children in the Reception Year and in Year 2.
- The school runs clubs after school on three nights a week.
- The school shares the site with a pre-school that offers part-time provision for children aged three to four years.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in all classes across the school. Almost all of these lessons were jointly observed with the acting headteacher. The inspector listened to pupils from Years 1, 3 and 4 read. He also talked with pupils across the school about their experience of reading, both in and out of school.
- The inspector observed a whole-school act of collective worship and an assembly.
- The inspector met with the acting headteacher, who is also the SENCo, and members of the governing body, including the chair and vice-chair of the governing body. The inspector met with an officer from Durham local authority. He also spoke with an associate headteacher who has been brokered by the local authority to support the acting headteacher.
- The inspector reviewed a range of the school's documentation, including that related to safeguarding, achievement, the quality of teaching, attendance and behaviour.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour and conduct at breaks and lunchtimes. He spoke informally with pupils about their experience and attitudes to school during these times. The inspector also spoke more formally with a group of Year 5 and 6 pupils about school and the range of opportunities it offered them to explore and enjoy learning.
- The inspector, alongside the acting headteacher, scrutinised a very wide sample of pupils' work from the current academic year from all year groups and in a range of subjects.
- The inspector spoke with parents and carers at the start and end of the school day to seek their opinions of the school's work and care for their children. He reviewed the 12 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. He also reviewed the school's own surveys of parents' views.

Inspection team

Mark Evans, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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