

# St Aidan's C of E Memorial Primary School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	111690
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hartlepool
<b>Inspection number</b>	310664
<b>Inspection dates</b>	6-7 March 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Nigel Cromey-Hawke

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3-11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	368
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Harry Homer
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Mark Atkinson (Acting)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 June 2003
<b>School address</b>	Loyalty Road Hartlepool TS25 5BA
<b>Telephone number</b>	01429 273695
<b>Fax number</b>	01429 284567

---

<b>Age group</b>	3-11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	6-7 March 2008
<b>Inspection number</b>	310664

---

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

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.

## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a larger than average school with Church of England and Wartime Memorial status serving an area of social deprivation. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is broadly average and the proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is low. Almost all pupils are from White British families. There are no pupils who are at an early stage of learning English. The movement of pupils in and out of the school is broadly average. The headteacher was on extended absence during the inspection and the school is being led by the long-serving deputy headteacher. The school has various curriculum based awards.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school. Significant improvements over the last two years in the way the school checks on the progress of groups and individual pupils have had a major positive impact on pupils' progress. These excellent practices enable the school to identify those at risk of underachievement quickly, provide them with the good support they need and set challenging targets for improvement. Children enter the school with skills that are below those typical of their age and achieve well overall through the school. Overall standards by the time pupils leave the school are broadly average and school data clearly indicates an improving trend. Current pupils are performing well with most reaching and many exceeding the challenging targets the school has set. Past differences between the progress of boys and girls have been significantly reduced as a result of the school's effective actions.

The new assessment and strategies for setting targets are being effectively used by teachers to ensure a high proportion of good teaching across all areas of the school. Effective use of marking, for example, often gives pupils a clear view of what they need to do to improve further. Precise matching of work to the needs of pupils with different abilities is promoting good learning and raising standards. New approaches to developing literacy skills are having a positive impact, notably in developing pupils' writing. Reading has been less well promoted, particularly in Key Stage 1, where standards fell recently.

Pupils' attitudes to learning and behaviour are good and they respond well to teachers' raised expectations. Parents are overwhelming in their support for the impact the school has upon the personal development and well-being of their children. Pupils have a good understanding of safety and health issues and have especially well developed skills in information and communication technology (ICT) that will stand them in good stead for future learning and entering the world of work. Exclusions are low, bullying is minimal and dealt with promptly and well. Pupils take good responsibility for aspects of school life. The recording of unauthorised absence has been clarified and levels are now in line with national expectations. Pupils' good personal development has been helped by the outstanding levels of care, guidance and support provided by the school. One parent commented that St Aidan's is 'a lovely, caring, well managed community that always involves the parents/carers in everyday school life'.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and reflects the schools' spiritual and memorial status well. Like many other aspects of school life it is robustly reviewed. The school is thus aware of the need to extend its access to and provision for outside education in the early years, but has not yet been able to bring this about. The range of extended activities offered and taken up by both pupils and parents is good. The school has very strong links with the community and the church, especially in the areas of drama, music and worship.

Leadership and management of the school are good, with the acting headteacher continuing to lead the drive for improvement, helped by many good subject coordinators and staff. This is underpinned by high quality self-evaluation so that all understand what is happening, what progress is being made and what needs to be done to move the school forward. Governors are well informed about the strengths and needs of the school and carry out their support and challenging functions well. This common purpose provides good capacity for further improvement.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

When they begin Nursery, most children's skills are below those typical for this age group, particularly in relation to reading, writing and early mathematical skills. They make good progress and, as there is a smooth transition between classes, this continues throughout their time in Reception. Despite this progress the standards when children leave the Foundation Stage are below what is expected. Children's confidence grows because of well established routines, a high standard of care and an attractive and stimulating environment which promotes independence. Teaching and learning are good with some outstanding features. These include physical exercises at the start of the session to make children alert, interesting activities with well chosen resources and a stimulating environment. Children enjoy school, feel safe and know how to keep themselves safe. Assessment is very effective. It identifies individual needs quickly and appropriate strategies are put into place. Links with parents are excellent with well planned induction, regular information and vibrant workshops. Parents appreciate the welcome they receive and praise the recently refurbished accommodation, revitalised curriculum and enthusiastic staff team. Leadership and management are good. Recent initiatives have accelerated progress and many children are now on track to reach the levels expected nationally by the end of reception. The school has plans to develop the outside area, but currently there is little access from classrooms and resources are limited. Opportunities for development across the curriculum are therefore restricted.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in reading, especially in Key Stage 1.
- Improve the quality and accessibility of outside resources for Foundation Stage children's learning.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Achievement is good and standards are broadly average. More accurate assessment and better tracking of pupils' progress is helping to match teaching to individual needs and promote greater achievement. There is appropriate support for learners with difficulties and/or disabilities and the more able pupils are effectively challenged. As a result, these pupils make good progress and there is now clear evidence of more pupils working at the higher levels of attainment and standards rising throughout the school.

Children begin school with a range of skills below those typical of their age. By the end of Reception most have made good progress but have not reached the levels expected nationally. By the end of both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 standards are broadly average although there are clear improvements over time. Many current Key Stage 1 pupils have already reached the nationally expected level for their age. There are increasing numbers in Key Stage 2 on track to exceed the level expected of them. The school's recent results of national tests have mirrored these broadly average levels although the 2007 Year 2 reading assessments fell. Differences in the current overall performance of boys and girls are not significant, reflecting the considerable work undertaken by the school to remedy past imbalances.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils' overall social, moral and cultural development is good. It is well linked to planning, robustly monitored and well supported through the curriculum. As a church and memorial school spiritual development is appropriately well developed. The relationships between pupils and adults are good. Overall, pupils are well behaved in lessons and around the school, showing consistently positive attitudes. Exclusions are low. Systems for identifying and recording unauthorised absence are now more accurate. As a result, levels of attendance are satisfactory and improving. Pupils are confident in lessons and in discussions with adults. They say they feel safe, there is very little bullying and any is dealt with rapidly and well by the school. Pupils are willing to accept responsibility within the school, and both the School and Eco Councils are effective in putting forward ideas for improving facilities. Pupils know what it means to lead healthy lifestyles and are involved in many outdoor activities and healthy pursuits. Links with the community are especially strong and are an outstanding feature of the school's provision. These contribute very well to the emotional well-being of pupils and help create an atmosphere of enjoyable, purposeful learning for all in the school. Pupils are developing personal and academic skills that will be valuable to them in adult life and at work.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are consistently good across the school. The school has introduced a very efficient system to track pupils' progress. This enables setting to be refined and teaching to be accurately targeted with an appropriate level of support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. As a result, progress has accelerated in both key stages. Writing initiatives have also had a beneficial effect, particularly when marking informs pupils clearly about the features needed to improve their work. Teachers' praise and recognition of achievement further enhances pupils' self esteem. Learning is effective because relationships between staff and pupils are good and most lessons have good pace, a variety of strategies and stimulating resources. In the best lessons, pupils of all abilities were challenged and a good range of skills was developed simultaneously. The school recognises that it still has work to do to embed improvements and so raise standards across all subjects, especially in reading.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and meets the needs of learners well. The response of different groups of learners to the curriculum is carefully monitored and all statutory requirements are met. There is good provision for numeracy and ICT is well used by teachers and pupils alike in support of learning. Video conferencing is a strength of the school and brings the wider world into the classroom. There is a good range of enrichment activities, visits and visitors to the school. Recent reviews of the curriculum have introduced national developments before they have become statutory, enabling the school to become familiar with their workings. As a result, the Foundation Stage has benefited from up to date resourcing and a focus upon targets and a new approach to teaching writing has moved literacy skills forward well. However, reading skills have been less well promoted, particularly in Key Stage 1. Speaking and listening work has been a focus across all areas of the school and has begun to impact upon standards. Provision

for developing pupils' personal, social, health, economic and citizenship awareness is good and opportunities to contribute to the community are very well provided for and tracked. These support the good personal development of the pupils.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

High quality care for learners is seen in the levels of commitment of staff to encourage enjoyment and achievement and in promoting learner's health and safety. There are effective strategies for developing pupil's economic and social well-being and these are well monitored by the school. In this supportive environment pupils are now reaching increasingly challenging targets and progress is much improved. Rigorous assessment and tracking of pupils' academic progress informs planning. Any learners at risk are identified early and effective arrangements put in place to keep them engaged. Parents are almost universal in their support of the school and its exemplary impact upon the personal development of their children. The school utilises external agencies very well, especially in support of those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the more able. Teaching assistants and other adults are highly effective in their support for learning. Child protection, health and safety and safeguarding requirements are fully met.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The leadership and management of the school are good. The substantive headteacher initiated significant and effective staffing changes two years ago, including restructuring the leadership team. A clearer and more urgent focus upon improving standards and achievement is now bearing fruit. The acting headteacher has effectively developed and introduced detailed assessment, tracking and reporting systems. Monitoring has become more frequent and rigorous, giving detailed information to managers, teachers, pupils and parents about the progress that is being made. Subject leaders have introduced key developments and interventions into lessons that are improving learning. The role of governors in supporting the daily life of the school and challenging its improvement activities has also become more effective. Targets are suitably challenging and used effectively in the good teaching. The school has benefited from a recent refurbishment but has also used its staffing and resources imaginatively to build momentum to its drive for improvement and the creation of a stimulating learning environment. This is especially evident in ICT, which was the main area for improvement in the last inspection.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**



## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

### Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

10 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Aidan's C of E Memorial Primary School, Hartlepool,  
TS25 5BA

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave me and the other inspectors when we visited your school. You were very friendly, polite and enthusiastic about what you do. You told us a lot of interesting things about your school and you are clearly very proud of it. We spent a lot of time finding out how you learn in your lessons, looking at your work and talking to your teachers and the acting headteacher. We think that St Aidan's C of E Memorial Primary School is a good school and you make good progress.

These are the main things we found that are good about your school:

- you have a staff who carefully look at and measure everything that goes on in the school and so they know what needs to be done to help you learn
- the quality of care and guidance is very good and shows how well everyone in the school is looking after you
- the school has very good links with the community and your parents and carers are highly supportive of it
- you say you feel safe, valued and happy at school. This is very important.

These are the things your school is going to do to make it an even better place to learn:

- raise standards in reading, especially at Key Stage 1
- improve the outside learning area for Foundation Stage children.

You can help by telling your teachers how you learn best and if you have any difficulties. You can also help by continuing to attend school every day, behaving well and working hard, as you do at the moment.

Yours sincerely

Nigel Cromey-Hawke

Lead inspector