

## St Oswald's CofE Infant & Nursery School

### Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114228
<b>Local Authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	311523
<b>Inspection date</b>	13 September 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Christine Inkster HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3-7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	121
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ms Sue Pitts
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Patricia Griffin
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 June 2003
<b>School address</b>	Church Street Durham County Durham DH1 3DQ
<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 3868029
<b>Fax number</b>	0191 3832243

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

## Description of the school

St Oswald's Church of England (Aided) Infant and Nursery School is situated in the centre of Durham. It is smaller than average. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below that found nationally. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slightly higher than the national average, although the number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is below that found nationally. There is a higher proportion of pupils from a minority ethnic background than that found nationally and the majority of these pupils do not have English as their first language. Many do not have experience of formal education in their home country. Pupils attend the school from a wide area, often because their parents work in the city centre. The school has gained several awards including the Basic Skills Quality Mark, PE Active Mark and the School Achievement Award on two occasions.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

The school was visited by one HMI for one day. The HMI evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the progress of pupils; some aspects of personal development and well-being; the quality of teaching and learning; the curriculum; aspects of care, guidance and support; and leadership and management. Evidence was gathered from the school's own self-evaluation; national published assessment data and the school's own assessment data; policies and minutes of meetings; observations of the work of the school; interviews with pupils, staff and governors; and the parents' questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the HMI found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

St Oswald's C of E (Aided) Infant and Nursery School is an outstanding school. It has a strong Christian ethos in which all pupils are valued. Pupils say they enjoy school very much and that they always feel safe and secure. The quality of provision and leadership and management are excellent and pupils flourish in terms of their personal development and academic achievement. The vast majority of parents are delighted with the quality of education the school provides. One parent echoes the views of many when they say, 'The commitment of the staff, caring environment, excellent teaching and Christian ethos of the school combine to make St Oswald's unique.'

Standards are well above average and pupils make very good progress during their time in the school. Most pupils enter the school with skills which are broadly typical for their age, although a few pupils are at the very early stages of learning English and some pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have less well developed language skills. Evidence in lessons show pupils achieve very well in the Foundation Stage mainly because of the excellent teaching they receive. The excellent outdoor curriculum and the development of integrated care and education are enabling current pupils to make very good progress. In Key Stage 1, pupils make very good progress and by the end of Year 2, standards are well above average. There was a slight dip in writing results, particularly those of the more able pupils in 2006, but school records show a much better performance this year. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with English as an additional language make good progress due to the excellent support they receive from both teaching and support staff.

The care, guidance and support of pupils are outstanding because there are extremely rigorous procedures in place for safeguarding pupils and ensuring their health and safety. Child protection procedures are extremely thorough and all staff are highly aware of their responsibilities. There is a warm, caring atmosphere in the school, in which pupils thrive. The school is extremely rigorous in monitoring the progress of pupils and are quick to identify areas where pupils need support and address them immediately. Pupils are very aware of what they have done well and what they have to do to improve their work.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils have very high self-esteem, they are very keen to learn and take great pride in their work. The majority of pupils are mature, sensible and caring towards one another. Pupils are very confident in expressing their views and opinions, but a few do not always listen carefully enough to their teacher or to the views of others in some lessons. Pupils are very aware of healthy lifestyles and know how to keep safe. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of learning are excellent and the school

takes every opportunity to celebrate the diversity of different cultures and faiths. Attendance is well above the national average for Key Stage 1, but the attendance of pupils in the Foundation Stage is below the rest of the school.

Teaching and learning are outstanding and this is the main reason why pupils achieve such high standards. Pupils are confident learners who respond very well to exciting opportunities for learning offered to them. Pupils make very good progress because teachers know their pupils very well and ensure that work closely matches their needs. Teachers and support staff give excellent support to small groups of pupils to ensure that they make as much progress as they can. The excellent questioning skills of all staff challenge pupils' thinking and enable them to develop a deeper understanding in their learning. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent and this creates a very positive atmosphere for learning.

The curriculum is outstanding. This greatly contributes to pupils' enjoyment and achievement. Pupils achieve highly in core subjects because they are able to use their skills and knowledge across the curriculum and develop their skills even further. There are very good opportunities for speaking and listening including drama. Pupils achieve highly in information and communication technology (ICT) and the school has excellent plans in place to develop ICT even further. There are high participation rates in extra-curricular activities and pupils greatly value opportunities to visit places of interest.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The school's self-evaluation procedures are accurate and rigorous. The school has made many excellent improvements since the previous inspection, for example, within the curriculum and in the quality of teaching and learning. Therefore, capacity for further improvement is outstanding. Challenging targets are set and all staff and governors have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. The leadership of the headteacher is excellent and she is very well supported by a strong leadership team, as well as very efficient administrative support and excellent site management by the caretaker. Subject leaders are highly effective and say they feel empowered and confident in leading their subjects because of the excellent training they receive. Many governors support the school in practical ways, using their own skills and act as link governors for different subjects and areas. They very effectively monitor and evaluate the performance of the school and provide appropriate challenge. They are highly committed to ensuring that each child reaches his or her full potential.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 1**

The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is excellent. Highly effective teamwork amongst staff ensures that children have an excellent start to their education. Children achieve very well because of the excellent teaching they receive. Staff are extremely aware of the needs of every child and provide a warm, caring environment in which children thrive. Children are highly motivated and show great interest in the excellent opportunities for learning, which are provided for them, both indoors and outdoors. The behaviour of children in the Foundation Stage is excellent. They are able to listen carefully to stories and they are confident in offering their views and opinions. Staff take every opportunity to build up the self-esteem of children and encourage them to cooperate and share with one another. The leadership of the Foundation Stage is excellent demonstrating particular skill in successfully integrating the provision for education and care for children through links with the Sunshine Club, which provides wrap-around care.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Encourage children in the Foundation Stage to attend regularly to ensure that they do not miss important aspects of learning
- Encourage pupils to listen more carefully to the teacher and to one another.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

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

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
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	1

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
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>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
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	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

14 September 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of St Oswald's CofE Infant & Nursery School, Durham, DH1 3DQ.

Thank you for making me feel so welcome in your school when I came on a short visit to see how well you are all learning. I enjoyed talking to you and listening to your views. Please thank your parents for returning the questionnaires and tell them I took all their views into account.

I think you have an outstanding school. You told me that you enjoy coming to school and that you like your teachers. Your teachers and support staff are excellent because they help you to achieve your very best during your time at the school and help you reach high standards. They make sure that learning is fun and they provide many exciting things for you to learn. You work very hard and are very confident in answering questions and giving your views. I was very impressed with the way you joined in all the activities with such enthusiasm and enjoyment. I particularly loved the songs, which the Nursery children sang so well and was delighted to see how quickly they had settled into Nursery. It was wonderful to see the excellent learning taking place outdoors in the beautiful area created by staff and parents.

I also liked the warm, friendly atmosphere in your school. The staff take excellent care of you and always ensure that you are safe. You are very aware of what is right and wrong. Many of you explained to me how you can lead a safe and healthy lifestyle and that you enjoy helping other children.

Your headteacher, the governors and all the staff have done an outstanding job in making sure that the school continues to improve and help you to make such good progress. You can help by listening carefully to your teachers. In the Foundation Stage you can try more to come to school every day, so that you can learn all you can.

I wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Christine Inkster, HMI