

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

## Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 114270            |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Durham            |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 311541            |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 26 September 2007 |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Sue Hatton 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>                     | 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                                    | 185  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>              | The governing body   |
| <b>Chair</b>                              | Rev Canon Richard Davison  |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                        | Mrs Jane Katsambis   |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b> | 1 March 2003   |
| <b>School address</b>                     | Renny's Lane<br>Gilesgate Moor<br>Durham<br>County Durham<br>DH1 2HZ |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                   | 0191 3847451   |
| <b>Fax number</b>                         | 0191 3750176   |

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|--------------------------|-------------------|
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## Introduction

The school was visited by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors for one day.

The overall effectiveness of the school and the following issues were investigated: the standards that pupils reach and the progress they make; the quality of teaching; and the effectiveness of self evaluation. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation document, national published assessment data, the school's records and procedures, observation of the school at work, parents' questionnaires and discussions with staff and pupils. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector 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.

## Description of the school

St Hild's College Church of England Primary School is situated close to the centre of the city of Durham. It is slightly smaller than the average primary school and the number of pupils has recently begun to fall, in common with other schools in the area. The number of pupils joining and leaving the school other than at the normal times is relatively high in some year groups.

Pupils' families are from diverse social and economic backgrounds. On the whole, the balance is towards families from less advantaged backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is above average but not distributed evenly through the school. In some years, the proportion is high and in others low. The proportion eligible for free school meals is slightly above average. There are fewer pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds than in most schools. There is a small number of children with Gypsy/Roma heritage.

The school has achieved a number of awards including the Healthy Schools Award, Activemark Gold, Artsmark Silver and Eco-schools Bronze.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

St Hild's College Church of England Aided School is a good school. It fulfils its aim of providing disciplined learning in an inclusive, caring and Christian environment. The school works effectively with outside agencies and services to meet the needs of all pupils, particularly those with learning difficulties and disabilities. Parents like the ethos of the school and appreciate that their children feel safe and well cared for by the staff.

Although there is a wide range of attainment on entry to Nursery, many children begin with skills that are below those typical for their age. They make good progress in the Nursery, at the end of which many higher attaining children transfer to other local schools. Those that remain continue to make good progress in Reception, entering Key Stage 1 slightly below the levels expected nationally. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 vary from year to year depending on the ability of pupils within each year group. Overall they are slightly below average and this represents satisfactory progress.

In Key Stage 2, pupils make good progress and usually reach standards that are at least in line with and often above national averages. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make equally good progress because of early identification, timely intervention and skilful support. The school is aware that over time pupils perform slightly less well in mathematics than in English and science, and is taking steps to tackle this. There was an unexpected dip at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2006 when a relatively small number of children did not achieve their predicted standards. The school took steps to prevent this happening again and in 2007 almost all pupils reached or exceeded their challenging targets with two-fifths reaching the higher level in English and mathematics.

Pupils' personal development is good. Their spiritual, moral and social development is outstanding. Cultural development is good and has improved significantly since the last inspection. Pupils respond positively to a well planned range of opportunities to experience dance and drama, and to perform and work with professional artists. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and behave well. This is because they are well taught, very well cared for and well served by a curriculum that matches their needs, extends their interests and promotes their enjoyment. For example, pupils appreciate the many opportunities they have to learn about other countries and languages.

Pupils know what is expected of them and recognise their responsibilities to treat each other with kindness and respect. They have a very mature attitude to bullying, recognising that 'it happens in all schools'. They are confident that it is rare in St Hild's and say that school is a safe place to be. The school places much emphasis on its anti-bullying work. Pupils who help others as mediators, buddies and mini-buds are well trained to deal with such incidents. If their strategies do not work, pupils know that adults can be trusted to intervene effectively. Pupils also demonstrate an excellent understanding of how to live a healthy life through, for example, their involvement in physical activities and the queue for fruit at break-time.

Pupils clearly enjoy coming to school. One boy echoed the views of many when he said, 'I have so many friends here!' Pupils are eager to accept responsibility in class and throughout the school. Their understanding of citizenship and of human rights is well developed through, for example, the work undertaken to achieve the Impetus Award. Their understanding of aspects of the democratic process is developed through the election of school councillors and the way in which the council provides feedback to each class.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive and contribute to an effective environment for learning. Good use is made of the skills and expertise of teaching assistants. Teachers know their pupils well and lessons are planned to take account of the wide range of ability in each class. Lessons have specific objectives which pupils understand. However, some pupils are confused by the number and type of targets for improvement that they have. Work is marked regularly and teachers often make useful comments and suggestions for improvement. However, these are not followed up consistently enough and pupils cannot always say what it is that they have done or need to do to improve.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and staff have a common sense of purpose and a strong and effective commitment to inclusion and equality of opportunity. They work well as a team to put the school's mission statement into practice. They take into account the views of pupils and whenever possible act on their suggestions about how the school could be an even better place. Work is in progress to take account of pupils' views on how they prefer to learn. These are being gathered through the Pupils' Voice project. There are rigorous procedures in place to safeguard pupils and ensure their health and safety.

Improvement since the last inspection and the school's capacity for further improvement are satisfactory. Self-evaluation identifies accurately the school's main strengths and areas which need improvement. However, leaders do not consistently make good enough use of data and information about performance. They are not always able to evaluate the success or otherwise of improvement plans or initiatives because they cannot demonstrate the effect that these have had on pupil performance. The exception to this is the evaluation of interventions to support those pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Procedures for tracking pupil performance are in place and their use is improving. They lead to challenging targets being set for individual pupils to achieve at the end of Key Stage 2. However, the school does not analyse the information produced rigorously enough to be able to evaluate the comparative performance of different year groups as they pass through the school.

Governance is satisfactory and provides valued support to the headteacher and staff. Governors are becoming increasingly involved in the work of the school but they do not yet hold the school to account rigorously enough for its performance. Resources are of high quality and are well used. Given the progress that pupils make, the school provides good value for money.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

The quality of provision in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception) is good. Leadership and management are good. Children quickly settle into the carefully planned routines of the day. After just a few weeks in both Nursery and Reception, children are secure with daily routines and very comfortable with members of staff. Teaching is good and shows a good understanding of how young children learn. Staff use songs, rhythm and movement to reinforce learning. Children are attentive. For example, they listened very carefully to a story about a child's first day at nursery which was well chosen to help them cope with their own experiences. The work of support staff is well co-ordinated and makes a positive contribution to the progress that children make. Children generally enter Nursery with skills that are below those typical for their age. They make good progress so that by the end of the Foundation Stage they are slightly below national expectations.

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

- Improve the use of information about pupil performance in order to evaluate the impact of initiatives and guide future decision-making.
- Analyse performance data more rigorously so that the comparative progress of different year groups can be evaluated.
- Ensure that pupils understand how to improve their work by consistently following up comments and suggestions made by teachers when they mark pupils' work.

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**Annex A**

## Inspection judgements

|  |                       |
|--|-----------------------|
| <b>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</b> | <b>School Overall</b> |
|--|-----------------------|

### Overall effectiveness

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| <b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b> | 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  | 3   |

### Achievement and standards

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>How well do learners achieve?</b>   | 2 |
| The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners   | 2 |
| 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

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>                           | 2 |
| 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   | 2 |
| How well learners enjoy their education   | 1 |
| The attendance of learners  | 3 |
| The behaviour of learners   | 2 |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community                                    | 2 |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 2 |

### The quality of provision

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

<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  | 3   |
| 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  | 2   |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities  | 3   |
| 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  |

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**Annex B**

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

27 September 2007

Dear Children,

Inspection of St Hild's College CE Primary School, Durham, DH1 2HZ

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school recently. I learned a lot about the school by talking with you in class, in the playground and over lunchtime. I also had a really interesting meeting with members of the school council. All of this helped me to understand how your school works and I am pleased to say that I agree with you – St Hild's is a good school! You make good progress with your work because of the good care and teaching you receive.

I could see that you get on well with each other and with all the adults in school. You told me that you feel safe and that mediators, buddies and mini-buds look after anyone who is unhappy or having a problem with other children. I could see how well adults care for you and support you when you need advice or a little extra help with your work.

I was very impressed that you were able to listen to the story of the Enormous Turnip in French – and that you could join in! The older children were able to tell me about how the school got the Impetus Award and all the work they had done on human rights and citizenship.

I am asking your school to:

- make better use of information that they have about your achievements when planning initiatives and projects;
- make sure that different year groups make similar rates of progress; and
- make sure that you understand what you have to do to improve your learning further.

I really enjoyed being in your school. Please thank your parents for returning the questionnaire they received – they made interesting reading.

With very best wishes for your future

Sue Hatton

Her Majesty's Inspector