

St Mary's Church of England Aided Primary School, Long Newton

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111712
Local authority	Stockton-on-Tees
Inspection number	378341
Inspection dates	25–26 January 2012
Lead inspector	Janet Bennett

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	81
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Taylor
Headteacher	David Moorfoot
Date of previous school inspection	7 November 2006
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Introduction

Inspection team

Janet Bennett

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed eight lessons or parts of lessons, taught by four teachers. She also observed a range of activities for small groups of pupils and the support provided by additional adults within lessons. She talked to different groups of pupils about their learning and scrutinised the work in pupils' books. In addition, discussions were held with staff and the Chair of the Governing Body. A range of documentation was scrutinised, including records relating to pupils' achievement, monitoring by leaders, behavioural records and safeguarding. Account was also taken of the 55 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, and the 70 received from pupils. The inspector took account of the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection.

Information about the school

This school is much smaller in size than the average primary school. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage with none learning to speak English as an additional language. A small proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, including those requiring a statement of special educational needs, is average. The school meets the current floor standard. Childcare is provided on the school site by a private company.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate
 Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall Effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school. Staff know pupils well and ensure that every child is fully included in the life of the school. Parents and carers appreciate the school's family ethos which is securely underpinned by strong Christian values. Pupils' spiritual development is promoted exceptionally well through opportunities for reflection, and through the wide range of activities which encourage creativity and imagination.
- Pupils achieve well by Year 6 reaching high standards in English and mathematics. Although progress from pupils' starting points is good, there are variations between classes. Progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory and improving securely. Progress is good overall in Key Stages 1 and 2 and accelerates in Years 5 and 6 where lessons consistently build well on pupils' prior learning.
- The quality of teaching is good. Relationships between staff and pupils are strong, effectively promoting pupils' confidence and involvement in lessons. Where teaching is most effective assessment is used consistently to match work precisely to pupils' learning needs, and marking provides clear guidance to help pupils to improve their work. However, these approaches are not securely embedded in all classes. Individual targets are set for pupils but these are not used as effectively as they could be to ensure pupils always know how to improve.
- The quality of leadership and management of the school is good. School self-evaluation is accurate and action taken is improving progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and outcomes in reading and writing in Key Stage 1. However, monitoring of lessons is not yet sufficiently rigorous to address variations in teaching. High priority is given to safeguarding pupils therefore pupils feel safe in school and behave well.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure consistency in pupils' progress and improve the quality of teaching by:
 - checking that assessment is used consistently to match work to the needs of learners
 - ensuring marking regularly provides precise steps for improvement
 - referring to pupils' individual targets in lessons and checking pupils' understand the progress that they are making towards achieving them
 - monitoring the quality of teaching more rigorously.

- Build further on improvements in learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage by ensuring that:
 - expectations of what children should do are made explicit
 - staff intervene quickly to extend or redirect play when learning slows.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Learning in lessons is good because pupils are interested and motivated learners who are keen to involve themselves actively in lessons. Their progress increases when they are encouraged to articulate their views and many have informed opinions and are thoughtful in response to questions and when working collaboratively with others. They try hard to do their best and respond positively when staff give helpful feedback on ways to improve their work. Pupils' high standards are seen in their work in class, especially in Key Stage 2. This is notable in their reading skills. They are avid and discerning readers who turn to books for pleasure and to answer the questions they pose about the world around them.

Children enter Nursery with skills that are broadly typical for their age and sometimes better, although there are variations from year to year because some cohorts are small. Pupils make good progress from their respective starting points and by the end of Key Stage 2 attain standards in English and mathematics which are much higher than those seen nationally. Recently, action has been taken to improve the teaching of reading, particularly in the Reception class and Key Stage 1. The standards reached in this subject area are average and improving by the end of Year 2, and above average by the end of Year 6.

Although all pupils achieve well by the end of Key Stage 2, progress across the school varies. Achievement is satisfactory and improving securely in the Early Years Foundation Stage with children working at the level expected for their age. In lessons children make satisfactory progress although it is not always clear what children are expected to learn. Pupils' skills are built upon securely in Years 1 and 2 and progress accelerates in Key Stage 2, particularly in Years 5 and 6, where assessment is used successfully to match work precisely to pupils' learning needs.

Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well. This is because their needs are accurately identified and additional adults are deployed effectively to support individual pupils and focused group work.

Questionnaires returned by parents and carers endorse the inspection findings that their children are making good progress. Pupils appreciate that staff help them to do well. By the time pupils leave the school in Year 6 they are able to apply their reading, writing, communication and mathematical skills confidently in a range of contexts, ensuring that they are very well prepared for their next stage of learning.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is good overall but there are variations between classes. In the Early Years Foundation Stage teachers now make better use of their observations to plan activities that reflect children's interests. Investment in new resources has enhanced opportunities for children to learn through play both indoors and outside. Although children generally use their time productively, learning slows when staff do not make their expectations of children clear or fail to intervene swiftly to extend play. The teaching of reading is started effectively in the Early Years Foundation Stage and is good throughout the school. Regular teaching of letters and sounds enables pupils to apply them confidently in their reading and early writing.

Teaching is good in Key Stages 1 and 2 and is strongest in upper Key Stage 2 where lessons are sharply focused on pupils' next steps in learning. All staff provide strong role models, showing respect for pupils' views and genuine interest in the ideas they express. A range of strategies is used to involve pupils actively in lessons which ensure that pupils remain interested and motivated to learn. Support staff are informed thoroughly about their role and deployed effectively, making a positive contribution to learning. In the best lessons teachers use assessment well to ensure activities fully extend pupils' learning and marking provides clear guidance to help pupils to improve. This highly successful practice is not fully embedded in all classes. Pupils have individual targets to help them to evaluate and improve their work but these are not consistently referred to in lessons and pupils do not receive sufficient feedback on the progress they are making towards achieving them.

Teachers extend pupils' mathematical and literacy skills by providing ample opportunities to apply them in other subjects. Teachers make explicit links between reading and writing. This helps pupils to draw upon the features of differing text types in order to improve the effectiveness of their own writing. This was evident in a Year 5/6 lesson in which pupils worked together to identify the 'hooks' used by authors of short stories in order to improve the opening paragraph of their own narrative. This engenders an enthusiasm for learning which successfully promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Parents and carers who expressed their views by returning questionnaires agree that their children are well taught and this was borne out by evidence seen during the inspection.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils say they feel safe in school because they know that the building and outdoor areas are secure and well supervised by staff. Responses from parents and carers

indicate their confidence in staff to keep their children safe. Although most parents and carers expressed the belief that behaviour in school is good, a few expressed concern about behaviour in lessons. During the inspection behaviour observed was good. Pupils were polite to staff, visitors and each other, and understood the behaviour expected of them. As a result, the school has a calm and well-ordered atmosphere conducive to learning. In lessons, pupils demonstrate positive attitudes ensuring that lessons flow without disruption. A small number of children occasionally became engaged in informal discussions during time allocated for independent work. If left unchecked this could have reduced the quality of their work and those around them. However, timely prompts from teachers ensured that these pupils were quickly re-focused on the task they had been set. The views of pupils indicate that the behaviour observed during the inspection is typical of that demonstrated over time. Pupils reported that there was no bullying of any type in school and were confident that if any problems arose they would be dealt with swiftly by staff.

A range of activities such as 'neighbourhood watch group' and 'crucial crew', help pupils to identify risk. They understand potentially dangerous situations and the action they need to take. For example, they have a good understanding of road and fire safety and the action needed to protect themselves when involved in community activities such as 'litter-picking'.

Leadership and management

The headteacher provides effective leadership and is supported by a team who know individual pupils well and who are committed to their well-being. Leaders are involved in the school's self-evaluation which provides them with a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Precise action plans are developed to tackle priorities. Members of the governing body provide good levels of support and challenge to leaders through their regular monitoring of the progress that is being made. Monitoring of teaching is used to provide staff with appropriate advice and training which is improving practice. This has led to improved provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Although there are many strengths in teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2, monitoring has been less successful in ensuring that the best practice is fully embedded in all classes. Nevertheless, effective management has ensured that high standards at the end of Key Stage 2 have been maintained. Successful action has been taken to improve the curriculum for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The school has good capacity for further improvement.

Leaders and governors effectively promote equality of opportunity and discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. Leaders carefully track the progress of all pupils and swift action is taken if concerns arise. Partnership working with other agencies and well planned support ensure that all pupils receive the help they need. Safeguarding arrangements are secure because staff and governors give high priority to protecting pupils and routine checks of safety are regularly made.

The school provides a good curriculum that meets the needs of most pupils. The wide range of clubs, visits and visitors ensure that pupils have a wealth of experiences which extend their individual gifts and talents. The effective promotion

of partnerships with the church and local community makes a strong contribution to the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, 'God Zone' provides a regular opportunity for staff, pupils and their families to work together to learn about and reflect upon values, belief and faith.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



27 January 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mary's Church of England Aided Primary School, Long Newton, Stockton-on-Tees TS21 1DL

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when I inspected your school. I enjoyed the time I spent with you. I was impressed by how well you all get along together and how hard you try to do the best work you can. You talked to me about the many activities staff plan for you which showed me how imaginative and creative you are. I was also impressed by how carefully you think about your own values and beliefs and the strong connection that you have with the local church.

You attend a good school and I was impressed by the high standards reached by the oldest pupils in school. You make good progress because your teachers plan interesting things for you to do and in some classes lessons help you to learn new things quickly. Some of your teachers give you very clear advice that helps you to improve your work but these things are not happening consistently in all classes. The youngest children in school enjoy opportunities to play indoors and outside but they do not learn as well as they could in some activities because they are not clear about what they are expected to do.

You talked to me about the targets that the teachers have given to you. I think these could help you to make even better progress if you used them more in lessons and if your teachers told you how well you are making progress towards achieving them. I have asked the headteacher, staff and governing body to do the following things.

- Ensure that the really good things that some teachers do to help your learning are used by everyone.
- Ensure that the youngest children know what is expected of them so that they make even better progress in their learning.

I hope that you continue to work hard and to enjoy your learning. I wish you great things for the future.

Yours sincerely
Janet Bennett
Lead inspector

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