

Inspection of a good school: St Oswald's Church of England Aided Primary and Nursery School

Church Street, Durham DH1 3DQ

Inspection date:

21 September 2022

Outcome

St Oswald's Church of England Aided Primary and Nursery School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending this school. They feel safe and love learning with their friends. Pupils like their teachers because they are caring. They know who to speak to when they have worries. Pupils say adults listen and know how to help.

There are respectful relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils listen well to adults. This means lessons proceed without disruption. Pupils are helpful and polite, holding doors open for adults and each other. They enjoy breaktimes and playing with their friends.

Pupils learn about healthy relationships. They understand what bullying means and know how to build and restore friendships. Pupils say that bullying rarely happens at school. If it does, pupils know to tell a trusted adult who will sort it out and help them.

Staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school's Christian values of 'courage, compassion and thankfulness' underpin the curriculum. Pupils say the values help them to be resilient and learn from their experiences. They know the values will help them in school and later in life.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders and governors have given careful consideration to the content of the curriculum. They are mindful that many pupils join the school mid-way through the year. Some pupils arrive from different countries. Therefore, leaders have developed a curriculum to make sure pupils gain a sense of place and identity. In art and design, pupils study the works of the British sculptor Anthony Gormley. Pupils learn about the Angel of the North. For each foundation subject, such as geography and history, leaders have created 'take aways'.

These end points highlight to pupils the knowledge leaders want them to understand in detail. Leaders have designed specific curriculum plans for each subject from Nursery to Year 6. The plans show the order of learning and the knowledge pupils must develop year on year. In most subjects, staff build knowledge in a way that helps pupils achieve well. However, in art and design, leaders have not identified the specific knowledge and skills pupils need to help them build on prior knowledge. Sometimes, teachers teach the same knowledge and skills to different year groups. They do not adapt the curriculum to build on what pupils already know and can do. This means that some pupils do not have the opportunity to apply what they already know to something new. As a result, some pupils do not develop knowledge and skills over time.

There is an ambition for all pupils in most subjects. Pupils with SEND are well supported. They do not miss out. Teachers explain and model learning clearly. Some pupils with SEND have extra time to ensure they keep up. This prepares them well for new learning. As a result, in mathematics, pupils with SEND remember their learning from last year well. They make connections to new learning.

Reading is a priority in the school. Pupils say they enjoy starting the day reading. Books are chosen to reflect pupils' interests and to support pupils' learning in other areas of the curriculum. In the early years, adults read to children from books they come to know well. In Reception and Year 1, pupils enjoy favourite stories such as 'The Squirrels who Squabbled' by Rachel Bright. Pupils say the books are interesting and encourage them to read widely. Older pupils talk with enthusiasm about reading 'The Explorer' by Katherine Rundell. Phonics is well taught. All staff have been trained to teach phonics. They follow the chosen phonics programme well. Teachers use assessments to make sure pupils only read books that contain the letters and sounds they know. As a result, pupils learn to read fluently. Working in smaller groups helps some pupils to catch up when they need help.

In mathematics, teachers revisit the knowledge that pupils have learned in past lessons. This helps them to remember previous learning and make connections to new learning. Older pupils say, 'Practise and practise to get better.' Pupils in Year 3 talk confidently about using larger numbers to at least 1000 to solve problems. Teachers make checks on what pupils learn to help plan what pupils need to learn next.

Children behave well right from the start in the Nursery. Clear routines and expectations ensure children are kind to each other. They stay focused on the activities adults provide for them. In the early years, children recognise quantities without counting. They explore patterns, using the correct vocabulary for common shapes such as 'square'. Older pupils say they love achieving golden certificates in recognition of good behaviour. They say this encourages them to behave well. Pupils are rarely distracted in lessons. This helps them learn well.

Pupils participate in opportunities to develop responsibility by being on the school council. The school council took action to introduce 'worry boxes' in each class. Parents who have expertise in curriculum areas visit the school to talk to pupils. This helps pupils to learn about a variety of careers and to deepen their knowledge of subjects such as geography.

Governors and senior leaders are considerate of staff's workload. Teachers appreciate recent changes to feedback and marking to reduce their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know the safeguarding issues that could affect their pupils. Regular safeguarding training is provided for all staff. This helps to ensure staff have the knowledge they need to identify pupils who could be at risk of harm. Leaders act on safeguarding concerns quickly. They work with external agencies when appropriate. Record-keeping is detailed.

Appropriate safer recruitment procedures are in place in the school. Checks are made on new staff to make sure they are suitable to work with children.

Pupils are taught about a variety of risks to their safety, including online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In art and design, the curriculum does not show the specific knowledge and skills that pupils must acquire at each stage of their learning. As a result, pupils do not have the detailed knowledge and skills to prepare them for the next stage of learning. Leaders should ensure the curriculum is clearly sequenced to build on what pupils already know from Nursery to Year 6.
- In art and design, some teachers have not had professional development opportunities to give them the knowledge they need to teach lessons that build on what pupils already know and can do. This means that some pupils are not introduced to new learning. Leaders should explore ways to offer subject-specific training to enable teachers to help prepare pupils to learn new knowledge and skills.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in September 2017.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	114228
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10240897
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	140
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Martin Clarke
Headteacher	Alice Hassall
Website	www.stoswaldsdurham.net
Date of previous inspection	19 and 20 September 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A new deputy headteacher and a new chair of the governing body have been appointed since the previous inspection.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school had its last section 48 inspection in March 2018.
- The school runs a governor-led Nursery, before- and after-school club and holiday club for pupils who attend the school.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and subject leaders. An inspector also met with the special educational needs coordinator. The lead inspector held a discussion with five governors, including the chair and vice-chair of the governing body.

- The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and art and design. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils read to a familiar adult and visited reading and phonics lessons.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of safeguarding documentation. The lead inspector checked the school's single central record to make sure all staff had the appropriate checks to work with children. The lead inspector met with the headteacher, who is also the designated safeguarding lead, to check how leaders record and respond to safeguarding concerns. Inspectors checked the safeguarding and welfare requirements for children in the early years. Inspectors spoke with staff about safeguarding and child protection. Inspectors spoke to pupils about how they learn to stay safe.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour throughout the day, including visits to before- and after-school clubs and lessons and at breaktimes and lunchtimes. Inspectors also spoke to pupils about their views on behaviour in school. Meetings were held with groups of pupils to discuss how the school is supporting their personal development.
- An inspector spoke to parents during the inspection. The responses to Ofsted Parent View, including written responses, were considered.

Inspection team

Kathryn McDonald, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Nichola Irving

Ofsted Inspector

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