

St Oswald's Church of England Aided Primary and Nursery School

Church Street, Durham DH1 3DQ

Inspection dates

19–20 September 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The newly appointed headteacher has quickly developed an accurate understanding of the school's effectiveness. She exudes high aspirations for pupils and staff.
- Pupils attain above-average standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 1.
- Current pupils make good progress across Years 3 to 6, although their outcomes have yet to be formally tested at the end of key stage 2.
- Children enjoy the planned activities in the early years provision. They collaborate well, and achieve well in all aspects of learning.
- Staff work hard for the benefit of all pupils, and are proud members of the school.
- Governors are ambitious for further improvement, and provide good levels of support and challenge.
- Overall good teaching ensures that pupils make good progress from their starting points in English and mathematics, and across the wider curriculum.
- Pupils are well looked after in the school, and benefit spiritually, morally, socially and culturally from the many visits and experiences.
- Pupils attend regularly and behave well. They show positive attitudes to their learning.
- Safeguarding procedures are effective. A culture of vigilance permeates the school.
- The school's curriculum is well planned to provide a range of subject experiences, and to enhance well pupils' personal development.
- The use of additional funding makes a positive difference to pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, those who are disadvantaged, and those at an early stage of learning English.
- Physical education and sport premium funding is also used well to develop pupils' awareness of the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle.
- Parents are positive about the work of the school. Almost all would recommend the school.
- On occasions, some teachers' expectations are not high enough, especially for the most able. A minority of pupils lose concentration in some lessons, and do not learn as well as they could.
- Not all leaders share the same confidence in accurately checking the quality of teaching.
- While overall early years provision is good, the shared leadership does not result in the highest quality of teaching and learning throughout.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all teaching, learning and assessment are consistently good or better in the school, and result in at least good progress, in all subjects, across all years, by:
 - meeting better the needs of some of the most able pupils with more challenging work
 - checking regularly on the learning and progress of pupils in lessons, and revising work and the timing of activities so that they learn well.
- Ensure that all leaders, especially those with subject responsibilities, are equally confident and accurate in regularly checking the quality of teaching across the school.
- Ensure consistently high expectations of the different leaders in the early years to minimise variation in the quality of teaching and learning in the Nursery and Reception classes.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher, newly appointed at the beginning of the academic year, is already showing high expectations of all pupils and staff. In a small amount of time, she has developed an accurate view of the strengths of the school, and priorities for further development.
- While the quality of teaching is of a good standard, resulting in good overall pupils' achievement, the headteacher has already identified that not all teaching is as effective as it should be. She has also spotted that the school's website does not meet requirements on the publication of specified information. She is taking steps to eradicate these inconsistencies.
- Leaders at all levels, in this small school, share the headteacher's aspirations. Leaders are particularly keen to develop further their expertise and accuracy in checking the quality of teaching, and the impact that it has on pupils' learning. This is especially the case for those leaders with subject responsibilities.
- Systems for managing the performance of staff are well organised. These systems ensure that all teachers are held to account for developing the quality of their teaching, and for making sure that the pupils they teach make good and better progress. Senior leaders recognise that some teachers' individual targets could be sharper.
- The pupil premium funding is used efficiently. Funding is reviewed by senior leaders and governors to ensure that it supports individual pupils' needs. As a result, differences between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and that of other pupils nationally have diminished over time.
- Leaders have also used the additional physical education (PE) and sport funding to increase the range of sports that pupils can participate in, and to purchase specialist equipment. Professional coaching enhances staff's confidence in planning for, and delivering, meaningful PE experiences. Pupils participate in a wide range of activities and competitions, including gymnastics, dance and athletics.
- The use of discrete funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is checked carefully for impact. Bespoke learning arrangements ensure that these pupils make good progress.
- The well-planned curriculum engages pupils' interests and fosters their curiosity. Teachers work hard to ensure that pupils enjoy their learning and that they broaden their knowledge of life beyond their own community. For example, in Years 5 and 6, pupils design and learn how to make a torch; in Years 3 and 4, they use online technology to create a class blog; while in Years 1 and 2, pupils learn about the weather and climate features.
- Displays and photographs around the school celebrate pupils' artistic, musical and performing skills. Assemblies uphold key school and British values such as respect and tolerance for family differences, and the concepts of freedom and equality.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Opportunities to learn about different religions deepen pupils' spiritual and cultural awareness. Pupils develop an understanding of democracy through assembly themes, and in the annual election of school councillors and house captains.
- Pupils' adherence to the school's code of conduct, and eagerness to take on roles as buddies and play leaders, epitomise the school's Christian values. Pupils' regular participation in sporting activities enhances their social skills.
- The local authority and Diocese of Durham provide the school with good support and challenge to enhance the quality of teaching, and develop further leadership capacity at all levels.

Governance of the school

- Governors are ambitious for all pupils and families, and are determined to provide high-quality teaching and learning experiences for all.
- Governors receive regular information about the school's performance. They are clear about the school's strengths and priorities for further development.
- Governors are confident in holding school leaders and managers to account, and achieve an appropriate balance of challenge and support.
- Governors place a high priority on keeping pupils safe. Governors ensure that the recruitment of staff is extremely thorough, and that staff and governors' training is up to date and relevant.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding meet requirements.
- Staff have a good understanding of the implications of the latest version of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (September 2016). They use the advice and information they receive to constantly guide their work.
- Leaders strictly adhere to the school's safeguarding procedures, and liaise closely with the relevant external organisations, including the local safeguarding children's board.
- Leaders ensure a safe environment for pupils through regular and detailed risk assessments. Staff are vigilant in keeping pupils safe.
- The school's links with individual families, where pupils live in particularly vulnerable circumstances, are well established. Staff are dedicated to minimising the degree of risk associated with these situations. They make themselves available throughout the school day, and beyond, to ensure that pupils and families receive the support they need.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching is good, not only in English and mathematics, but also in other subjects. Teachers and support staff plan learning that generally enthuses pupils and develops their resilience.

- In Years 5 and 6, for example, inspectors saw pupils solving some challenging mathematical problems. Year 4 pupils talked animatedly about how they were enjoying writing letters from the points of view of mice, while Year 3 pupils said how much they were looking forward to writing computer programs and learning about life in the Stone Age.
- In the vast majority of lessons, teachers show a good understanding of pupils' needs and interests. Teachers plan activities that ensure that learning is relevant. They expect pupils to apply their learning in different contexts. Most teachers use probing questions skilfully to elicit pupils' understanding and extend their thinking.
- The teaching of mathematics across the school is good. Teachers encourage pupils to explain approaches to solving problems and to reason why they succeed and sometimes fail. Opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills have developed since the last inspection, alongside the basic skills work.
- The teaching of writing is equally successful. In many classes, pupils write confidently in a range of formal and informal contexts, and for different audiences and purposes. Teachers encourage pupils to write in detail, and to consider punctuation, and vocabulary that makes a real impact on the reader.
- Reading is taught well. Pupils enjoy reading for pleasure. Younger pupils are taught effectively to continue to use their phonics knowledge to read unfamiliar words accurately. Older pupils appreciate the importance of reading and read regularly in school and at home.
- Most teaching assistants provide pupils with effective support which heightens their learning from their different starting points.
- The school's website contains suggestions and links for home-learning opportunities. Pupils say that they use these to practise and develop their skills in reading, writing and mathematics, as well as in other subjects.
- Good relationships exist between teachers and pupils. This fosters positive attitudes to learning and encourages pupils to try their best.
- On occasions, some teachers' and teaching assistants' expectations are not high enough. They do not check regularly the learning and progress of all pupils in lessons, and revise work and the timing of activities so that all learn well. This results in some pupils losing concentration, and completing work in a superficial manner that does not reflect their true abilities. Not all teachers set tasks for some of the most able pupils that consistently challenge them.
- The new headteacher is already taking action to address these shortfalls.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils' welfare is a priority. Leaders work successfully with other agencies, including the local authority and social care, when they identify any pupils that may be at risk.

- Many lessons, and the wide array of educational visits and extra-curricular opportunities, stimulate pupils to think about the world around them. As a result, pupils develop a good appreciation of the beliefs of people from different backgrounds, faiths and cultures, as an essential part of their preparation for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils have a good awareness of the concepts of freedom and democracy and of Britain's parliamentary system. They talk enthusiastically about their responsibilities as play leaders, buddies, house captains and school councillors. They understand how well these opportunities enable them to contribute to the school's community.
- Pupils and adults mix happily with each other and enjoy each other's company. Pupils are well mannered and welcoming to visitors.
- Pupils feel safe in the school and well cared for. They are confident that staff will help them with any problems that may arise.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. They are aware of the importance of keeping safe online, the precautions they need to take when using a mobile phone, and the vigilance they need to show about people they do not know beyond the school's gates.
- Pupils understand about different types of bullying, and that bullying is something that is repeated regularly, and try to prevent it from happening. Pupils say that when rare incidents of bullying occur, they are dealt with quickly and successfully by staff.
- The school's personal, social and health programmes ensure that pupils are aware of the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle, including regular exercise and a balanced diet.
- The school's records show that a small minority of pupils show signs of challenging emotional and behavioural traits, at times. These are well dealt with by all of the adults.
- Pupils in all years benefit from well-organised opportunities to meet their new teacher, visit their new classroom and learn about their new learning experiences, as they move through the school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils show a good awareness of the expectations that leaders and their peers have of their behaviour. This was seen consistently in all years.
- The vast majority of pupils show positive attitudes to learning and work cooperatively in most lessons. They listen to each other's points of view, and help one another with their learning.
- Older pupils are keen to act as role models for their peers. They are proud to be nominated as school council representatives and house captains. They understand the important role they play in ensuring that all pupils' views are valued, and that all pupils are included in the school's work.

- Leaders promote rigorously the importance of regular attendance and quickly follow up extended absence. As a result, attendance is above average and the vast majority of pupils attend regularly.
- On occasions, particularly where teachers' expectations are not high enough, some pupils lose concentration in some classes. On these occasions, some pupils do not make the most of their learning opportunities.
- Overall, the responses of parents, pupils and staff to school questionnaires and parents' views on the Ofsted online questionnaire indicate that the school operates as a cohesive community. Inspectors agree.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' achievement is good. This is because the vast majority of teaching makes demands of pupils' levels of concentration and commitment.
- As a result, overall key stage 1 attainment over time is above average. Unvalidated 2017 outcomes appear to have sustained this picture. These outcomes represent good progress.
- Pupils' reading skills are well developed. From different starting points, pupils read fluently and with understanding to inspectors. They used acquired phonics skills to pronounce unfamiliar words accurately. Many pupils could answer questions confidently about key characters and storylines. Older pupils could talk about their favourite authors, giving reasons for their preferences.
- Pupils' mathematical skills are also well honed. In most classes, pupils willingly practise their basic mathematical skills, and are keen to use them to solve mathematical problems. Many pupils are eager to explain how they have worked out calculations, and why they have chosen certain approaches to solving problems.
- The vast majority of pupils develop confidence in writing at length for different purposes and audiences. Pupils are increasingly adept in using a range of language and punctuation for effect. They sequence their ideas skilfully in well-constructed sentences and paragraphs. Many spell accurately and use grammar correctly.
- Pupils' progress is gathering momentum across key stage 2, particularly in Years 5 and 6. Although Year 6 pupils have yet to take the national tests for the end of key stage 2, the school's assessment information confirms that they are achieving well, and this also evident in pupils' books.
- Pupils develop good skills and understanding in science. By the end of key stage 1, they reach above national standards. Their good achievement continues across key stage 2 where they explore confidently issues such as the ageing process, water and air resistance, and magnetic forces. Pupils develop strong musical appreciation through playing a range of instruments, listening regularly to music from different world cultures, and enjoying regular singing opportunities. Good-quality physical education experiences develop levels of teamwork, stamina and physical agility.

- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, as well as those who join the school from overseas and with little English, make good progress. This progress is the result of well-planned support and well-targeted activities.
- The progress made by the small numbers of pupils eligible for support funded by the pupil premium is also good. Differences in the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and others nationally have narrowed in all subjects over time. School information shows that the vast majority of current disadvantaged pupils, including the most able, are also making good progress. This is because the school is aware of their needs and generally ensures that support for them is effective.
- The most able pupils generally make good progress. Many of the daily activities challenge them to think for themselves, apply their skills to solve problems, and deepen their understanding.
- In some classes, however, some pupils do not make consistently the progress of which they are capable. This is particularly the case for some of the most able. This is because some teachers' expectations are not consistently high enough. Work is not pitched at a high enough level to sustain pupils' interest and consistently develop their skills and understanding.

Early years provision

Good

- The vast majority of children make good progress in the early years. By the end of Reception Year, the proportion reaching a good level of development is above the national average. Children are well prepared to start Year 1.
- Children settle quickly in Nursery and become confident learners because routines and expectations are well defined. They behave well and quickly show respect for and patience towards one another.
- Children are encouraged to help each other with all of the planned activities. They confidently explore all of the stimulating resources, indoors and outdoors, collaborating enthusiastically to carry out garage repairs to cars with spanners and hammers, and sharing scissors to make personal identity cards. Provision in the Reception environment, while good, is less stimulating and well organised than in the Nursery.
- The vast majority of the adults ask questions that encourage children to think for themselves and develop confidence in communicating with each other. For the most part, adults check regularly on how well children are doing, and identify quickly how they can develop further. Such assessment practices are of a particularly high standard in Nursery.
- The regular modelling of sounds and actions by most of the adults particularly lends confidence to children who are new to learning English to catch up with their peers. Those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported effectively alongside their peers. Pupil premium funding is used successfully to provide disadvantaged children with additional support and resources.

- Not all of the most able children are challenged consistently to ensure that they develop their skills to the full. Over time, few children exceed a good level of development by the end of Reception Year.
- The leadership of the early years is shared. Staff and children in the Nursery and Reception classes work separately. Although children benefit from overall provision in the early years that supports their good progress and development, the very high-quality teaching and high expectations in Nursery are not as prevalent in the Reception class.

School details

Unique reference number	114228
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10036582

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	150
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sue Pitts
Headteacher	Alice Hassall
Telephone number	0191 386 8029
Website	www.stoswaldsdurham.net
Email address	stoswalds.ce@durhamlearning.net
Date of previous inspection	8–9 July 2014

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- There is no published evaluation of the impact of government pupil premium funding 2016/17, or a strategic plan for the deployment of this funding during 2017/18. Several school policies are undated, and do not contain a date for the next review of the policy. The school's prospectus is also not up to date.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are White British. Similar proportions to those seen nationally are from a range of different minority ethnic backgrounds. A growing number of pupils, at an early stage of learning English, join the school during the academic year. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is similar to the national picture.

- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is well below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average. The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is below the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Since the last inspection, a new headteacher and new governors have been appointed. The school has admitted junior-age pupils, and changed character from an infant and nursery school to an all-through primary school. The present academic year includes the first Year 6 cohort.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited a wide range of lessons across the school, looking extensively at pupils' work in all lessons. A large number of visits to lessons were made with the headteacher.
- Alongside school leaders, inspectors reviewed pupils' progress data and pupils' work in books, information about the performance of teachers, documents pertaining to safety and behaviour, and information pertaining to safeguarding.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils in lessons and at breaktimes, and met with a group of pupils separately.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, governors, and the director of education for the Diocese of Durham. Telephone conversations were also held with the chair of the governing body, and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of 36 replies from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire. No Ofsted pupil or staff questionnaires were completed. However, inspectors considered school surveys of the views of pupils, staff and parents on the work of the school.

Inspection team

Andy Swallow, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Tim Scargill

Ofsted Inspector

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Manchester
M1 2WD

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