

Inspection of St Aidan's Church of England Primary School

Derwentwater Road, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear NE8 2HQ

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 May 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

This school was last inspected 15 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

At St Aidan's Church of England Primary School, pupils are encouraged to 'shine like lights in the world'. Leaders ensure that the strong Christian ethos underpins the experience of everyone who attends or works at the school. Different cultures are embraced. Visitors are made to feel welcome. Leaders have high expectations for pupils. Pupils achieve well.

Pupils feel safe and happy at school. They are polite and courteous. There are strong relationships between staff and pupils. There is a calm and purposeful learning atmosphere. On the rare occasions when children fall out or there are concerns, staff are quick to address issues.

Leaders have ensured that there is a wide range of partnerships in place, both locally and internationally. For many years, the school has had effective links with China and Italy, including residential visits to China. Staff and pupils have benefited by learning about other cultures. Staff have also introduced teaching approaches they have seen abroad successfully.

Leaders are mindful of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The work of the recently appointed mental health and outdoor learning leads is having a significant, positive impact. Pupils particularly enjoy the opportunities to cook on an open fire, which has helped them to learn new skills, as part of their forest school work. They have been taught to assess risks thoroughly when learning outdoors.

Music is a strength of the school. Specialist teachers deliver music lessons in Years 3 to 6. The older pupils particularly enjoy the whole-class ukulele and guitar lessons. Many pupils relish the opportunity to receive individual instrumental teaching in piano, violin or guitar.

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

Leaders have created a well-planned curriculum for all subjects from early years to Year 6. They have identified the knowledge that they intend pupils should learn in every subject. However, some planned learning is too general. It has not been broken down into small enough detail. In some subjects, such as music, leaders have identified the vocabulary they would like pupils to learn. During lessons, pupils use their prior learning well. Pupils produce work of a high standard, for example in mathematics and history.

Teachers address most misconceptions during lessons. Pupils reflect on their own learning maturely by completing end-of-unit self-assessments. Pupils' knowledge is assessed across the curriculum. Teachers use the assessments effectively to inform their planning.

Pupils are very well behaved. They know the behaviour system well and enjoy earning rewards, such as house points and certificates. Pupils and staff know and

refer to the three rights: to learn, to feel safe and valued, and to be respected. Leaders reward pupils' regular attendance with certificates and badges. Leaders ensure that parents and carers know whether their child's attendance is at the expected standard each term. A minority of pupils, 7%, do not attend school regularly enough. They miss out on too much vital learning.

Leaders have recently introduced a new phonics scheme. Staff have been very well trained. They are teaching phonics consistently. Pupils are regularly assessed. Those who are falling behind are helped to catch up quickly with daily support. Books are closely matched to pupils' phonics ability. Pupils read accurately, fluently and with confidence. Pupils share a book from the school's phonics reading scheme and a book chosen from the school's library with their parents at home. Reading has a high priority in the school. Pupils enjoy daily story time and weekly library visits. Leaders provided a whole week of activities based on World Book Day recently.

In early years, detailed and effective planning is in place for all seven areas of learning. Children access a variety of exciting activities, both indoors and outdoors. At the time of inspection, the Nursery teacher had only been in post for one week. This naturally meant that some routines and relationships with the children were in the early stage of development. Staff communicate with the children well. They model manners during snack time and at all other times of the day. Parents share their children's interests via a 'home school' book, so staff know the children well.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff are quick to identify pupils' needs. Pupils with SEND are fully included in all activities. Effective plans to meet pupils' needs are in place and regularly reviewed. Pupils with SEND are well supported. Pupils with SEND are making pleasing progress.

Planning for pupils' personal development covers all aspects of keeping healthy and staying safe. Pupils have a thorough understanding of fundamental British values, such as democracy and mutual respect. However, pupils are less aware of some of the protected characteristics, such as lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) issues.

Pupils benefit from a rich range of experiences, such as educational visits and themed days or weeks, for example 'Keeping ourselves safe week'. The Year 6 pupils are developing their leadership skills effectively on the Archbishop of York's Young Leaders Award programme. Most pupils enjoy a wide range of clubs, such as karate, art and dance, which help them to develop a range of skills effectively. Pupils value their roles of responsibility as house captains.

Staff value the support from leaders for their well-being and workload. Parents, staff, governors and officers from the local authority and the diocese speak highly of the school. This is summarised by one parent, who wrote: 'I am comfortable that my children are taught well and looked after by confident, professional and experienced teachers.'

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff are well trained. Staff know their pupils and families well. Concerns are identified quickly and addressed effectively. As a result, pupils receive the help they need.

Leaders have carefully considered the local risks to pupils, such as road safety, and included these in the curriculum. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe, including online.

The necessary checks are completed to ensure that adults in school are safe to work with the children. Leaders addressed gaps in the school's single central record of recruitment checks during the inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In most subjects, curriculum planning is sufficiently detailed. However, in some subjects, leaders have not clearly specified the knowledge and vocabulary they want pupils to retain. Nor is the learning broken down into the small steps that will build pupils' knowledge over time. Teachers are not consistently sure what pupils should learn and remember. Leaders should ensure that planning, from Nursery to Year 6, is sufficiently detailed so that staff know precisely what to teach and assess.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	132145
Local authority	Gateshead
Inspection number	10211846
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	228
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair of governing body	Joseph Merritt
Headteacher	Lesley Steele and Cheryl Lain
Website	www.staidansprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	5 and 6 July 2007

Information about this school

- The school is led by co-headteachers.
- A section 48 inspection to evaluate the distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Aidan's Church of England Primary School as a church school took place in March 2018. The timing of the next section 48 inspection will be determined by guidance in the National Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Framework. A date has not yet been set.
- Leaders run a breakfast club.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- 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.
- The lead inspector held several meetings with the headteachers during the inspection.
- The inspectors met with the early years leader and leaders responsible for pupils' personal development.
- An inspector met with four governors and spoke with an adviser from the local authority and the diocesan director of education.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history and music. 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. An inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- In addition to the deep dives, inspectors looked at planning for geography, art and design, design and technology, physical education, science, computing and modern foreign languages.
- Members of the team spoke to pupils formally and informally about their learning and experiences at school.
- Safeguarding documentation and records for behaviour and attendance were checked.
- Inspectors spoke with some parents at the beginning and end of the school day.
- Inspectors reviewed the 10 responses received through the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, which included nine free-text responses. Inspectors considered the four responses received through Ofsted's staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour throughout the school day, including during lesson visits and at breaktimes and lunchtimes. Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils about their views on behaviour and the wider experiences they receive at school.

Inspection team

Kate Williamson, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Lucie Stephenson

Ofsted Inspector

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