

Inspection of a good school: St Aidan's Church of England Memorial Primary School

Loyalty Road, Hartlepool TS25 5BA

Inspection dates:

25 and 26 January 2022

Outcome

St Aidan's Church of England Memorial Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school's values of love, trust, compassion and togetherness sit firmly at the heart of the school. Pupils are proud of their school values and how they are celebrated. Pupils have an enthusiasm for school that greets you when you step through the school gates.

Pupils are safe, happy and enjoy coming to school. They have good friends and show respect for each other. Classrooms are calm and purposeful. Pupils study hard and want to do well. They listen attentively to their teachers and follow advice they are given.

Pupils have strong relationships with the adults in school. There is mutual respect and trust. Pupils have been taught to manage their own behaviour. They move around school with independence and maturity.

One pupil commented how he 'appreciated that there was no bullying or racism as people just get on with each other'. Pupils know that there are different types of bullying. They are confident that an adult would always be there to help if any poor behaviour or bullying ever happened.

Leaders have developed positive relationships with parents and carers and the school community. The strong links between home and school directly benefit the pupils. Leaders expect pupils to achieve as well as they can. Pupils consistently meet and go beyond these expectations.

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

Leaders have a clear and straightforward vision for the school. They know their pupils and school community well. Decisions are based on what will have the most impact for pupils here and now. Leaders identified that the impact of COVID-19 resulted in many pupils

falling behind with their reading. Additional reading sessions have been put in place for pupils in Years 3 to 6 to help them catch up.

The curriculum has been reviewed and significant improvements have been made. The content and coverage within the curriculum are now more detailed. Pupils have opportunities to learn specific knowledge that was previously lacking. This means that pupils are developing a more secure foundation of knowledge in each subject area. For example, in art, there is a clear sequence of learning linked to printing. Children acquire age-appropriate knowledge from Nursery and progressively deepen this as they move through the school to Year 6. However, there are times when pupils find it hard to apply the knowledge they have previously studied to new learning.

Leaders are determined that all pupils receive a broad and ambitious curriculum. The curriculum is designed to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers adapt the curriculum by using appropriately matched resources, plus additional adult support. Pupils with SEND achieve well. They access the full curriculum and receive precise, focused support from teachers and teaching assistants.

Children are taught to read from the moment they start Nursery. Adults quickly introduce children to nursery rhymes, songs and letter sounds. Teachers regularly check what children know and do not know. Letter sounds and words are then taught in a structured, planned sequence. Adults accurately pronounce the sounds that letters represent and children reflect this precision. As children develop reading knowledge, they are given books that carefully match their reading knowledge. Leaders see reading as a priority across the school. Pupils across the school like the wider range of reading books that have been available more recently. They like to read for enjoyment.

Leaders give pupils opportunities to prepare for their next steps in education and life outside school. The personal, social and health education curriculum supports pupils in a range of ways. They learn about relationships, opinions and beliefs. The curriculum is helping pupils to develop tolerance and understanding, and to have an awareness of how people might choose to live their lives.

All leaders, including members of the academy council and trust, share the same vision and ambition. School leaders are held to account for the performance of the school. Trust and academy council members play an active part in the life of the school. They know which decisions about the curriculum have been made, and why. They ensure that resources are appropriately used to have the biggest impact for pupils.

In discussion with the headteacher, the inspector agreed that ensuring that pupils can apply previous knowledge to new and more complex learning may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The designated safeguarding leads provide exemplary support for pupils and families. They provide targeted help and advice, but also ensure that vulnerable families access the right agency support when required. Early identification, detailed record-keeping and monitoring ensure that all reported concerns are taken seriously. Staff have received up-to-date training so they are aware of all procedures to keep pupils safe.

Leaders ensure that pupils are taught about how to keep safe. This includes online safety, as well as specific work on water safety, given the school's location.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum does not consistently help pupils to remember the knowledge they have learned. As a result, pupils cannot fluently apply and use what they have been taught in the past. They cannot rely on this knowledge to solve problems, to complete more complex tasks, or to understand more difficult concepts. Leaders should review and refine the curriculum, so that the core knowledge pupils require is deeply embedded.

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 a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, St Aidan's Church of England Memorial Primary School, to be good in October 2016.

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	144902
Local authority	Hartlepool Borough
Inspection number	10212319
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	335
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	John Taylor
Headteacher	Lynn Chambers
Website	www.staidansschool.info
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school opened provision for two-year-olds in September 2021.
- The school joined the Durham and Newcastle Diocesan Learning Trust in November 2017.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders, and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.

- The inspector did deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics and art. The inspector spoke to leaders about the curriculum and met with teachers from the lessons visited. The inspector looked at pupils' work and spoke to pupils.
- The inspector listened to a range of pupils read from different year groups.

- The inspector met with the special educational needs coordinator and members of the trust board, as well as speaking to a diocesan school challenge partner who supports the school.
- The inspector looked at the single central record of recruitment and vetting checks, and spoke to leaders, teachers, trustees and pupils about safeguarding.
- The inspector considered the 12 responses made by parents to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, plus 12 free-text responses. The inspector also considered the 26 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

David Milligan, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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