

St Hild's Church of England Voluntary Aided School

King Oswy Drive, West View, Hartlepool TS24 9PB

Inspection dates

20–21 June 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leadership, including governance, has been unstable since the last inspection. As a result, expectations have not been consistently high enough and so the quality of teaching is inconsistent.
- Leaders do not effectively evaluate the spending of additional funds to support pupils who are disadvantaged, those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those who need to catch up.
- The progress disadvantaged pupils make, including the most able disadvantaged, varies.
- There is variation in the quality of teaching in a range of subjects and across year groups. Too many pupils who do well in some subjects do less well in other subjects, because of these variations.
- Effective planning of learning to match pupils' needs varies across subjects.
- Leaders' recent robust actions to improve behaviour, including higher expectations of pupils, have resulted in an overall rise in exclusions. This has contributed to above-average rates of absence, particularly for those who are disadvantaged.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher and the chair of the governing body have introduced a more focused and structured approach to school systems and processes.
- The headteacher has brought about a much-needed stability to the school. As a result, there is a positive and optimistic outlook for the future among pupils and staff at all levels.
- Safeguarding is effective and pupils feel safe. Pupils' conduct in lessons and around school is positive. As a result, classrooms are calm and orderly.
- The school is beginning to see the 'green shoots' of the impact of the actions of leaders. Outcomes in English are improving quickly and there are small improvements in most other subjects. Pupils show strong progress in art and vocational subjects.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Take action to improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - developing and strengthening leadership at all levels so that all leaders effectively analyse and evaluate the success of their actions to improve outcomes for pupils
 - monitoring and evaluating the spending of additional funds to support disadvantaged pupils, those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who need to catch up, so that spending is precisely targeted and improves outcomes for these pupils.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning across the school so that all pupils make good progress from their starting points, by:
 - ensuring that teachers have the highest expectations of what all pupils can achieve
 - ensuring that teachers plan learning carefully to meet the needs of all pupils and work is set at the right level of difficulty for the different ability groups of pupils
 - embedding the revised target-setting system so that it is applied consistently by all teachers and informs effective planning of learning
 - ensuring that teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of assessment information to support pupils to make good progress from their starting points.
- Improve attendance, behaviour and pupil welfare by:
 - reducing the number of incidents of inappropriate behaviour, of fixed-term exclusions and of repeat fixed-term exclusions, particularly for those pupils who are disadvantaged
 - reducing persistent absence and improving attendance for all groups of pupils, particularly for those who are disadvantaged.

An external review of the school's use of pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Since the last inspection, there have been a number of changes in school leadership, including governance. As a result, leaders have not managed to ensure that teaching is consistently good and so there are wide variations in the progress and attainment of pupils in different subjects.
- Leaders have recently taken actions to eradicate weak teaching. These actions have been a contributing factor on staff turnover and long-term absence. In some subject areas, the long-term absence of teachers has meant that the progress of pupils has not been rapid enough.
- Over time, governors have not provided the necessary challenge to effectively hold school leaders to account and drive the necessary improvement in pupil outcomes. The new chair of the governing body has provided a much-needed focus and direction.
- There are inconsistencies in the effectiveness of middle leaders. Some subject leaders, especially for English and art, use progress information effectively to plan teaching, identify areas for improvement and evaluate the impact of interventions. Nevertheless, this is not the case for all subject leaders. Senior leaders' actions are beginning to bring about a more consistent approach to using progress information effectively and sharing best practice. However, leaders recognise there is still much to do.
- The headteacher has introduced a secure and more robust system of performance management in order to hold staff to account more effectively. As a result, professional development is now more targeted and focused and staff appreciate the additional time allocated for reflection and improvement. The vast majority of staff are very appreciative of the changing culture and ethos, based on trust and transparency.
- The curriculum is currently under review. Although the curriculum is broad and matches the needs of the majority of pupils, it provides limited opportunities for extra-curricular activities, especially in competitive sport and performing arts. The limitations of the curriculum have not helped all groups of pupils to achieve the outcomes they should, including those of disadvantaged boys. However, recent initiatives to enrich the curriculum, including a project on 'The Likely Lads', are starting to address this.
- Since the last inspection, there has been little evidence of leaders analysing the impact of the additional funding, including the extra funding for special educational needs, on pupils' outcomes. As a result, leaders have not been successful in helping pupils to make good progress across a range of subjects. Following a staffing review, leaders have very recently appointed a communications coordinator to strengthen the impact of the spending of pupil premium funding and Year 7 catch-up funding.
- Leaders now utilise support from the local authority and the diocese more effectively. The much-improved culture among staff has allowed the support to be more productive and the majority of staff appreciate the opportunities provided. Improved leadership in English is a strong example of the impact of the external support and change of culture in the school.

- The recent robust actions of school leaders to improve behaviour, including higher expectations of pupils, have resulted in an overall rise in exclusions. However, current school information suggests that as pupils begin to fully understand the raised expectations, the number of exclusions is beginning to reduce.

Governance of the school

- Over time, governors have not effectively held school leaders to account. As a result, pupil outcomes have not improved enough.
- The new chair of the governing body has provided stability, focus and a much-improved structure to the governing body. There is evidence of clear accountability structures which allow governors to provide challenge to school leaders. However, it is too early to see any impact of this work on pupils' outcomes.
- Governors work more closely together and with the local authority to reduce the budget deficit. As a result, financial management is now effective.
- Governors acknowledge that they have more work to do but they feel more empowered and supported to carry out their statutory functions since the arrival of the new headteacher.
- There are now clear strengths in governance. Members of the governing body have an appropriate range of skills and experience. They are beginning to provide effective direction under the guidance of the new chair of the governing body. The findings of the recent skills audit have informed a targeted training plan for governors.
- Governors have high aspirations for all pupils; they want pupils to believe in themselves, work hard and achieve the very highest standards.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school.
- There is visible supervision on entry to school in the mornings, at lunchtimes and between lessons.
- Staff are knowledgeable about child protection procedures, the signs to look for and how to report concerns. Leaders make referrals to the local authority social care services where necessary and keep a record of conversations and actions.
- Leaders track and trace children who go missing from school. Risk assessments are effective, including for pupils attending alternative provision.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching varies between and within subject areas. It is the inconsistency in the quality of teaching that has led to wide variations in pupils' progress.

- The new headteacher has taken robust action to eradicate weak teaching. This action has contributed to many staff absences and high staff turnover in some subject areas. This has had a further negative impact on the progress of some groups of pupils.
- Inconsistencies remain in the level of challenge and pace across subjects, abilities and year groups. In the stronger-performing subjects such as art, vocational courses, and more recently English, staff use assessment information effectively to plan learning. As a result, learning matches the needs of pupils of all abilities. In these subjects, staff have higher expectations of pupils and provide appropriate levels of challenge for the most able.
- School leaders prioritised English because of historical underachievement and as a result there is evidence of strong improvement. Pupils generally know what they need to do to improve because teachers give effective and precise feedback. Teaching in this subject is now systematic and methodical with well-planned sequences of learning which result in sound progress.
- The good leadership of the art department results in effective teaching that engages pupils and helps them to produce work of good quality. Pupils take pride in their drawing and painting. Staff feedback is constructive and developmental and pupils are keen to return after school to continue with their projects.
- Teaching in the personalised learning bases for pupils at risk of exclusion engages these pupils well. Staff plan learning effectively and ensure that these pupils do not fall behind. Consequently, these pupils are reintegrated into lessons as quickly as possible.
- Leaders have recently appointed a communications coordinator to improve literacy and oracy. During the inspection, inspectors listened to pupils read. The quality of the books selected by the pupils varied and did not provide sufficient challenge for some pupils, especially boys. Boys were also less confident in reading than girls.
- During the inspection, inspectors observed positive and constructive relationships between staff and pupils. As a result, pupils were confident to ask questions in a calm and orderly classroom environment.
- Staff report positively that the recently introduced performance management system supports them to reflect on their teaching and the additional development time allows them to address areas for improvement.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Leaders work hard to promote pupils' personal development and welfare. Pupils are aware of healthy lifestyles including healthy eating, and how to keep safe. They are positive about what the school does for them.
- Pupils present themselves well, wear their uniform smartly and are proud of their school. Pupils conduct themselves well and show respect for each other and staff.

Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities refer to the school as 'a family' and that they feel 'at home'.

- Year 7 pupils appreciate the buddy system with Year 9. Pupils value the change in ethos and culture brought about by the current headteacher.
- Pupils report that bullying incidents occur but the school deals with them swiftly.
- Careers advice and guidance is a strength of the school. In 2016, all Year 11 pupils were engaged in further education, apprenticeships or training. Current Year 9 pupils are involved in cadetships. Leaders have strong links with local businesses, the local university and a wide range of external speakers. There is very limited detailed analysis of impact in this area, especially for different groups of pupils, and leaders are just beginning to put systems and processes in place.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Expectations of behaviour are higher since the arrival of the new headteacher and the more systematic recording and reporting of incidents reflects this.
- Since the new headteacher arrived, there has been a rise in exclusions as a result of higher expectations for behaviour. While some pupils, including some who are disadvantaged, come to terms with the new higher expectations, the school's actions here have contributed to above-average rates of absence.
- Leaders work closely with external agencies to keep pupils with behavioural needs in school and utilise the on-site resources, Bridge Reflection and Respite, effectively. Pupils work well in these bases in a calm and orderly atmosphere and engage successfully with vocational courses such as BTEC in Animal Care.
- The attendance team works tirelessly to track, monitor and improve attendance. Although the school has had support from the local authority, leaders recognise there is still more work to be done in improving attendance, especially for the disadvantaged.
- Pupils feel that in many lessons behaviour is positive and they feel safe. They also report that some pupils disrupt lessons.
- Prefects model and support positive behaviour. They are a strength of the school.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils enter the school with attainment in line with national averages. The rate of progress pupils make in different subjects varies. Rates of progress are inconsistent across the age range because of variability in the quality of teaching over time.
- There is no pattern or trend in the progress of the most able pupils. Some teaching stretches these pupils and so they make good progress but this is not the case throughout the school and so often the most able pupils do not reach the standards they are capable of.
- Girls continue to do better than boys in most subjects and year groups.

- Overall, school assessment information for current Year 11 pupils suggests improvement compared to the previous year. However, assessment information for mathematics suggests progress is weaker for all pupil groups including the disadvantaged pupils. The school's information about the progress of Year 11 boys suggests a weaker picture than for the progress of girls.
- In English, progress is improving across all groups of pupils, including the disadvantaged and boys. Progress of pupils in general in Year 7, Year 8 and Year 10 also shows improvement, although less so for pupils in Year 9.
- Outcomes historically in art and vocational subjects are a strength. Pupils have made good progress and continue to do so.
- School leaders have reviewed systems for target setting and assessment. Currently, the majority of pupils, including the most and least able, are on track to meet their targets that enable them to demonstrate deeper knowledge and understanding. There are notable improvements in Year 7 and Year 8 which show an increase in the proportion of pupils on target.

School details

Unique reference number	133293
Local authority	Hartlepool
Inspection number	10023818

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	668
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Darren Hankey
Headteacher	Tracey Gibson
Telephone number	01429 273041
Website	www.sthilds.org.uk
Email address	admin@st-hilds.hartlepool.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	4 February 2015

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about pupil premium and Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up premium on its website.
- The school met the floor standards in 2016. These are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics set by the government.
- St Hild's Church of England Voluntary Aided School is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- Almost half of the pupils are known to be eligible for pupil premium.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- Very few pupils are from minority ethnic groups or speak English as an additional language.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited parts of 29 lessons across most subject areas. Some of these visits took place with senior leaders. During visits to classrooms, inspectors looked in pupils' workbooks and questioned pupils about their learning.
- Discussions were held with pupils. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour around the school, including between lessons, at breaktimes and at lunchtime. Inspectors also listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders and a number of teachers. Discussions also took place with the school improvement partner, a representative of the local authority, a representative of the diocese and members of the local governing body.
- Inspectors took into account the 19 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and the 46 responses to Ofsted's staff survey. There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.
- Documents were examined, including school development plans, governing body minutes, leaders' monitoring notes and information about pupils' achievement.
- Records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding were also scrutinised.

Inspection team

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