

St Aidan's CofE Primary School

Off London Fields, Billinge, Wigan, Lancashire, WN5 7LS

Inspection dates 1–2 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress and achieve well. Their attainment in English and mathematics is above average by the end of Year 6.
- Teaching is usually good and some is outstanding. Teachers organise their classrooms effectively and this enables pupils to learn well.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and their attendance is above average. Pupils have a thorough understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe.
- The headteacher's effective leadership has been central to maintaining and building on the school's good performance since the previous inspection. The school's procedures for gaining an accurate view of its performance are good. The governing body know what is happening in school and are fully involved in driving improvement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' achievement in writing is not as strong as in reading and mathematics. Pupils are not adept at using grammar, punctuation and spelling accurately. They do not have enough opportunities to improve their skills by writing at length in subjects other than English.
- Teachers do not always give more able pupils work that challenges them to do their best, especially in Key Stage 1. Through the school, not enough opportunities are provided for pupils to work independently and make choices for themselves.
- Outstanding teaching is not systematically shared with other staff.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 19 lessons or parts of lessons taught by seven teachers. Six joint observations were carried out with senior leaders.
- Discussions were held with the Chair of the Governing Body, other governors, parents, staff, pupils and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at school documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, minutes of meetings of the governing body, assessment information and curriculum planning. Work in pupils' books and displays around the school were examined. Inspectors listened to groups of pupils read.
- Account was taken of the 43 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning and carrying out the inspection.

Inspection team

Melvyn Hemmings, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Rebecca Lawton	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Aidan's is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- An average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action and those at school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs, is below average.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- St Aidan's has gained a number of national awards, including the International Schools Award, and holds Healthy School status.
- The school incorporates a privately run nursery that is subject to a separate inspection and the report is published on the Ofsted website.

What does the school need to do to improve further

- Raise achievement in writing further by:
 - improving pupils' skills in using grammar, punctuation and spelling correctly
 - providing sufficient opportunities for pupils to write at length in subjects other than English.
- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
 - ensuring teachers consistently provide sufficient challenge for more able pupils, especially in Key Stage 1
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to work independently and make choices for themselves
 - systematically sharing the outstanding practice evident in the school with other staff.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children's skills on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage are typical of those expected for their age. Pupils achieve well and they make good progress throughout the school and, as a result, their attainment is above average in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage settle quickly to everyday routines and enjoy all their activities. They are curious and keen to explore things for themselves. Children work and play well together, taking turns and sharing resources fairly.
- Through the rest of the school, pupils show interest and enthusiasm in their work. They enjoy sharing ideas and working together to complete tasks. Pupils gain knowledge and understanding quickly in a wide range of subjects.
- In Key Stage 1, pupils make good progress in learning how to link letters and sounds. Consequently, by the end of Year 2, more of them exceed the expected level for their age in reading than pupils nationally. Pupils in Key Stage 2 maintain this good progress, reading confidently and fluently, so that by the time they leave at the end of Year 6 their attainment in reading is above average.
- Although attainment in writing is above average, it is not as strong as in reading and mathematics. Pupils write in a variety of styles, such as narrative and poetry, to express their ideas but do not use grammar, punctuation and spelling accurately enough. In mathematics, pupils have quick mental recall skills and can use these well to solve number problems in a variety of real-life situations.
- Pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) confidently to support their learning. This was evident when pupils in Year 4 were successfully using computers to refine a video presentation incorporating text, sounds and graphics.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make the same progress as other pupils. This is due to their needs being identified quickly and the extra support provided in literacy and numeracy, on an individual basis, to help them learn as quickly as other pupils. Although pupils who are more able make good progress, it is occasionally limited by them not being sufficiently stretched by the work they are given to do, particularly in Key Stage 1.
- The funding for pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is spent effectively. It has enabled the school to provide pupils with time to work in individual and small groups, which is helping to improve their literacy and numeracy skills and so raise their achievement.

The quality of teaching is good

- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, adults provide interesting and practical activities that stimulate and enthuse children so that they are eager to learn. They encourage children to make choices for themselves, which helps children to develop the skills to work and learn on their own. The outdoor area is used well to extend learning that has taken place indoors.
- Through the rest of the school, teachers have good subject knowledge and plan lessons well to build upon pupils' previous learning. They have good relationships with pupils and manage classrooms well this ensures that little time is lost and pupils learn quickly.
- Questioning is used well by teachers to find out what pupils already know and to make them think hard about their current learning. Teachers' marking and comments about pupils' work are effective in helping pupils to improve.
- Teachers usually provide work that meets the needs of different groups to get the best out of them. Occasionally the activities given to more able pupils are too easy, especially in Key Stage 1. In some lessons, teachers do not give pupils enough opportunity to work things out for themselves.
- Training to help teachers improve their skills has been successful in furthering staff expertise in

teaching reading. As a result, pupils' progress has accelerated and attainment has risen.

- Teaching assistants successfully guide the learning of all pupils, especially disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium.
- Outstanding teaching was characterised by pupils being given highly stimulating and motivating activities. This resulted in pupils concentrating well because their work was challenging and effectively met their needs. This was evident in a gymnastics lesson for pupils in Year 6, in which they made excellent progress in putting together a paired sequence that showed synchronisation.
- Pupils' spiritual and moral awareness is developed well by teachers who encourage them to reflect upon their experiences and through high expectations of their behaviour. The opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively and find out about cultures different to their own effectively foster their social and cultural development.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well in and around school, showing respect and consideration for others. They are polite and willing to help and support other pupils when needed. Pupils are eager to get on with their work and collaborate well in pairs and small groups.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the different kinds of bullying, such as physical and cyber bullying. They say such incidents seldom occur and are confident they would be dealt with quickly by staff. The views of parents, staff, pupils and the school's records indicate that behaviour is good and has been so over time.
- A few pupils find it difficult to act responsibly at times. However, they respond positively to the school's consistently applied behaviour policy and procedures.
- Attendance is above average and pupils arrive at school on time. This reflects their enjoyment of school.
- Pupils have a good awareness of how to keep themselves and others safe. They know about a variety of potential dangers, such as those associated with water and roads, and what to do if approached by someone they do not know. Pupils say they feel safe in school and when they go on school trips.
- Pupils enjoy taking on a variety of responsibilities, including being a member of the school council. This enables them to have a say in how the school develops, such as being involved in the appointment of new staff. Pupils contribute well to the local community, as seen in the way the ECO team recently completed a litter pick to enhance village life.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides a clear view of how she wants the school to improve further and has high expectations of what she wants staff and pupils to achieve. Senior leaders drive improvement well, leading by example and effectively encouraging staff to do their best. The governing body and staff work well together and morale is high.
- The procedures for checking on the school's performance are good and give leaders a clear picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Areas for improvement are prioritised and action is taken to bring about improvement. These actions are monitored carefully to see if they are proving successful.
- The leadership of teaching, including performance management and training for teachers, is good. Since the previous inspection, it has successfully improved teaching and raised pupils' attainment in reading. Teachers are now more accountable for the progress pupils make. Leaders have shown they are capable of continuing to make improvements.
- Lesson observations are undertaken regularly and teachers given areas for further development. Leaders have rightly identified examples of outstanding teaching but have not systematically

shared these with other staff in order to extend their expertise.

- The promotion of equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination are good. Leaders have improved the procedures for checking the progress of different groups of pupils, so any unevenness in progress can be quickly identified and swiftly tackled. This is shown in the way leaders have used funding for pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium to narrow the gap between their achievement and that of other pupils.
- Staff show respect and courteousness to pupils and other adults. Relationships are good and this helps pupils to learn well. Involvement with parents is good and ensures they are kept well informed of their children's progress.
- The local authority provides light touch support for this good school.
- The curriculum is enhanced by activities beyond lessons and educational visits, such as to The World of Glass in St Helens. While pupils have good chances to improve their mathematical and ICT skills, there are not enough opportunities for them to practise and improve their use of grammar, punctuation and spelling by writing at length in subjects other than English. The curriculum effectively promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is supportive of the school and ensures safeguarding requirements are met. Governors have an accurate view of the quality of teaching and of pupils' progress. They show initiative in challenging leaders about the school's performance and in planning for long term improvement. The budget is managed well to target resources on priority areas for development. Governors evaluate spending effectively to ensure value for money, as seen in the way they know that pupil premium funding has been used successfully to raise pupils' achievement. The governing body undertakes regular, good quality training to maintain its effectiveness.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	104798
Local authority	St Helens
Inspection number	402954

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	195
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rod Dakin
Headteacher	Melanie Ravenscroft
Date of previous school inspection	9 July 2008
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