

# Malvin's Close Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	122262
<b>Local authority</b>	Northumberland
<b>Inspection number</b>	380437
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 March 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Gordon Potter

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	468
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Simon Smith
<b>Headteacher</b>	Julie Bowman
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 December 2008
<b>School address</b>	Albion Way Blyth NE24 5BL
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## Introduction

### Inspection team

Gordon Potter  
Philip Scott  
Peter Harrison

Additional inspector  
Additional inspector  
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed 36 lessons taught by 17 teachers, including joint observations to several classes with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. The inspectors held meetings with representatives of the governing body, staff, pupils, parents and carers. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of school policies and documentation relating to safeguarding and strategic planning, examples of pupils' work, assessment data and monitoring records. They also scrutinised the 72 questionnaires returned by parents and carers as well as questionnaires from pupils and 21 staff. No responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) were available to assist in planning the inspection.

## Information about the school

This school is much larger than the average-sized primary school. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. The proportion of pupils who are disabled and those who have special educational needs is below average. The school has Healthy School status and has achieved the Artsmark Gold award. The school meets the government's current floor standard for pupils' progress and attainment.

In September 2009, the school changed status from a first school to a primary school and moved to a new building. There have also been significant changes to staffing.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate**  
 Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key Findings

- This is a good school. It encourages pupils to behave outstandingly well and provides excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It is not an outstanding school because, while there is much good teaching which enthuses pupils and offers them challenge, teachers occasionally miss opportunities to allow pupils to take responsibility for their own learning.
- Pupils' achievement is good. From starting points that are generally well below age-related expectations on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils make good progress to attain standards that are average at the end of Year 6. Progress in Key Stage 2 has been inconsistent but improvements to teaching have ensured that it is now good.
- Teaching is good overall. Teachers make clear what pupils will learn and check their understanding during lessons. Targets and marking are well used to help pupils understand how to improve their work. Occasionally, teachers offer too much help and limit opportunities for pupils to work things out themselves. Opportunities are missed to allow pupils to follow their own interests and apply their skills in all subjects.
- Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils say they feel extremely safe in school. They enjoy school greatly and say that misbehaviour is uncommon, although when it does occur it is effectively dealt with by their teachers. Attendance is high.
- Leadership and management are good. The senior leadership team has implemented strategies which have increased the rates at which pupils make progress. They have improved the accuracy of assessment data, although such information is not always used well enough to ensure that work is well matched to pupils' individual needs. They accurately evaluate the school's strengths and weaknesses, monitor teaching robustly and use the outcomes astutely to target further improvements. The outstanding governing body supports senior leaders well, monitors robustly and offers extremely rigorous challenge.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By the summer of 2013, increase the rates at which pupils make progress and raise attainment, by:
  - providing pupils with even more opportunities in lessons to direct their own learning and follow their own interests in a range of open-ended, non-directed investigative activities which develop independence, confidence and organisational skills
  - offering pupils even more chances to develop their basic skills in writing, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) across different subjects
  - using assessment information more rigorously to ensure that work is matched accurately to the needs of individual pupils.

## Main Report

### Achievement of pupils

Pupils enjoy lessons. They are extremely hardworking and very eager to give of their best. They respond well to good teaching that stimulates their learning. They enjoy being actively involved in finding things out for themselves and respond positively to challenging activities. For example, pupils in Year 3 were enthused by imaginative teaching that allowed them to use drama techniques to explore and understand the Easter story. They were highly involved in a range of activities that included interviewing one another in role, questioning and sharing views and opinions. They rose eagerly to the challenge and made good progress as a result.

Children achieve well in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1. Attainment on entry has declined in recent years and while progress is good, pupils are below average in their attainment at the end of the Reception class. By the end of Year 2, attainment is average. Attainment in reading by the end of Key Stage 1 is also average, although by the time pupils leave school, it is above average. Pupils who sat the national tests for 11 year olds in 2011 were the first cohort to do so. Their attainment overall at the end of Key Stage 2 was average in English and mathematics. They made satisfactory progress in Key Stage 2, but good progress from their starting points. Successful initiatives to improve teaching in Key Stage 2 have ensured that pupils now make good progress across the school.

Boys' achievement is below girls' but the school has introduced initiatives which are closing the gap. All groups of pupils, including those who are disabled and those who have special educational needs, make good progress because the school identifies their needs accurately and provides effective support.

Almost all parents and carers are of the opinion that their children are making good progress.

## Quality of teaching

All parents and carers believe that pupils are taught well. In the best lessons, teachers explain clearly to pupils what they will learn and how they will know if they have succeeded. They plan effective opportunities for pupils to learn through practical activities, including research, role play, games and investigations. Teachers use questions well to check what pupils already know and the progress they are making. There are strong relationships and teachers and teaching assistants interact well with pupils to support them in their learning. In English lessons in Key Stage 2, there is good teaching which is strongly focused on extending pupils' writing skills. Teachers use games, newspapers, stories and drama techniques to stimulate imagination and ideas for writing. They model writing clearly and enable pupils to have a clear understanding of the level of their work and what they need to do to take their learning to the next level. Opportunities are occasionally missed in English and mathematics to allow pupils time to practise and apply their skills in the exciting ways seen in the best lessons. Teachers often provide too much direction to pupils which stifle their initiative and development as independent learners. Occasionally teachers plan lessons according to what pupils will do, rather than the skills they will learn. This is particularly the case in Key Stage 1 where teachers are more reluctant to allow pupils opportunities to explore for themselves. Targets and marking are used well to tell pupils how to improve their work and how to take the next steps in their learning.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, a range of engaging activities captures children's imagination, allows them to investigate for themselves and moves their learning on quickly. There is effective teaching of linking sounds and letters so that pupils make good progress in reading and writing. There is highly effective and imaginative use of the outdoor area, which stimulates children's creativity and physical development.

The impact of the planned curriculum is good overall. It has been successful in increasing rates of progress in English and mathematics. There are many activities which help pupils to see the links between subjects and to develop and apply important skills, including writing, solving problems, teamwork and research. Work on topics such as the Second World War and the local environment, including research into coal mining, develops pupils' understanding of local history and geography. However, pupils have insufficient opportunities to develop their basic skills across subjects, investigate together in open-ended activities or initiate their own learning. Research into life in India, exploring the crucifixion or the history of Greece and other faiths and cultures develop pupils' imaginative, artistic, writing and language skills, as well as their cultural understanding. In these cases the impact of teaching on spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.

## Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils enjoy school very much. They are extremely polite to adults and highly respectful of each other and their school surroundings. Almost all parents and carers responding to the inspection questionnaires agree that, overall, there is a good standard of behaviour at the school. Exemplary behaviour was evident in most lessons observed during the inspection and around the school. The inspectors

analysed the school's records of behaviour over time and talked to many pupils during lessons, at break times and more formally in group discussions. Pupils say that behaviour is excellent in their lessons and that bullying in any form is uncommon. They feel exceptionally safe and know that 'playground mentors' and school prefects, as well as the teachers and other adults in school, will help with any problems if they arise. Pupils particularly appreciate the praise system which encourages them to achieve well, work hard and develop teamwork and social skills. Attendance is high. The pupil council works very hard on behalf of other pupils. Its members and those of the 'Green council' are particularly proud of the actions they have initiated to improve aspects of school life, although they are frustrated that planned improvements to play equipment and the development of the school environment are hampered by circumstances beyond the school's control.

### **Leadership and management**

The headteacher has had a significant impact on driving school improvement and has led the school through a period of difficult change. She has made astute appointments which have ensured that she is ably supported, in the drive for improvement, by an effective team of senior leaders and managers. The impetus for improvement has been effected through skilful delegation of responsibilities, the development of effective teams and the sharing of good practice. Well-targeted professional development has led to improved teaching and more rapid progress for pupils in Key Stage 2. The school has developed procedures with which it now accurately analyses pupils' attainment and progress. This enables the rapid identification of groups and individuals who need additional support to close any gaps in their learning. However, such information is not used well enough to ensure that work is always well matched to the needs of individual pupils. Rigorous monitoring and self-evaluation highlight the right priorities for improvement and lead to effective action to tackle them. Robust analysis ensures that the school has a clear understanding of its strengths and where it could improve further. It is well placed for further improvement.

Capacity to improve is good. All subject leaders consistently apply the school's procedures to monitor and plan initiatives which have improved teaching and accelerated progress. However, while monitoring of teaching is regularly done, it concentrates too much on teacher input at the expense of the quality of the learning experience for pupils. The school has a clear commitment to equality of opportunity and effective systems to enable pupils to be successful. It tackles discrimination firmly. Safeguarding procedures meet the current government requirements. The school has a range of effective partnerships; for example, to provide opportunities in music and sport; and to support pupils who have a range of learning, emotional and behavioural needs, and their families. The governing body is highly supportive of the school, has effectively managed a period of significant change and provides an excellent level of challenge through the extremely comprehensive processes of monitoring and evaluation it employs.

The curriculum is good. There is a strong and effective focus on developing basic skills in English, mathematics and the use of ICT, though these skills are not always developed further in other areas of the curriculum. Across the school there is a coherent and systematic approach to teaching reading with a balanced emphasis on

letters and sounds, comprehension and, as pupils become more proficient, opportunities to analyse character and authors' use of language and plot. Well-planned enrichment activities, including visits to residential centres, places of worship and to museums, and visits from sports coaches and musicians help to develop pupils' excellent understanding of other faiths and cultures. Accordingly, pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is outstanding. This is as a result of the school's emphasis on developing pupils' interest in local history and a detailed programme of religious education. There are many popular extra-curricular clubs which promote learning and enjoyment in sporting, artistic and environmental activities.



## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



16 March 2012

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Malvin's Close Primary School, Blyth NE24 5BL**

Thank you for making the team so welcome when we inspected your school. We particularly enjoyed talking to you about your school and your work. We were impressed with your outstanding behaviour and by your politeness and the exceptional care you show for one another. Your school takes excellent care of you so that you feel extremely safe in school. Most of you attend school very regularly – well done!

You go to a good school and your headteacher and the governing body know how to make it even better. Your teachers make your lessons fun, especially when you learn and explore and investigate together. You told us that you look forward to coming to school because you like your teachers, your lessons, lunchtime and after-school clubs and visits. Your parents and carers like the school very much.

In order to help you reach higher standards and make faster progress, I am asking your teachers to make sure that:

- you always have enough opportunities to find things out for yourselves and then use what you have learned to improve your skills
- all the information that teachers have about how well you are doing is used to plan work that is at the right level for all of you.

You can help by continuing to do your best and continuing to attend so regularly. We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Gordon Potter  
Lead inspector

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