

# Ashington Central First School

Millburn Road, Ashington, Northumberland, NE38 0AX

**Inspection dates** 19–20 September 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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 because

- The majority of pupils make good progress in all subjects.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make outstanding progress and get a really good start to their time in school.
- The attainment and achievement of pupils by the end of Key Stage 1 have remained consistently good since the last inspection.
- The performance of pupils by the end of Year 4 is above what is typical for their age.
- Pupils who are disabled or have a special educational need make good progress due to good intervention and support.
- Teaching and learning are good across the school with some that are outstanding particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Pupils really enjoy their time in school. They are safe and well looked after due to the school's excellent procedures for safeguarding. Pupils consistently behave well and attendance is broadly in line with the national average.
- The Principal is a very effective leader and is well supported by the vice- principal, both have been instrumental in driving improvements . Good senior and middle leaders also share a common determination to ensure pupils receive a high quality education.
- The Ashington Learning Partnership and a good governing body further ensure the school's good progress.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Boys do not consistently reach expected standards in writing.
- Feedback to pupils in marking does not sufficiently accelerate their progress.
- Teaching is not always consistent enough in its quality to ensure it is outstanding.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 28 lessons or parts of lessons of which six were joint observations with the Principal and vice-principal. In addition, inspectors also observed various groups of pupils working with teaching assistants.
- Inspectors talked to a range of pupils including a specific group of pupils about the school.
- They met with governors as well as teaching staff, including senior and middle leaders. They also met with the Executive Director of the Ashington Learning Partnership.
- Inspectors took account of four responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection.
- They observed the overall work of the school and looked at a number of documents including the school's data about pupils' current progress. They also looked at documents relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.

## Inspection team

David Shearsmith, Lead Inspector

Additional Inspector

Lesley Richardson

Additional Inspector

John Pattinson

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is a much larger than an average-sized first school.
- An above average number of pupils are known to be eligible for pupil premium.
- The proportion of disabled pupils or those with special educational needs is above average. An above average proportion is supported at school action, school action plus and with a statement of special educational needs.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage.
- The school has gained the Healthy School award.
- The school is part of a hard federation trust of five schools known as the Ashington Learning Partnership. The federation includes another first school, two middle schools and a high school in the Ashington area. The federation has an executive director. The Principal of this school is also Principal of Hirst Middle school in the partnership. There is one full governing body and each school has a group of governors who work directly with it on behalf of the full governing body. Three of the other partner schools were inspected at the same time as this inspection.
- The school is not subject to government floor standards which sets the minimum standards for schools.
- The school has had significant staffing changes since the previous inspection.

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

- Improve the standards of boys' writing by:
  - ensuring boys have more opportunities to explore independent writing
  - designing learning opportunities that match boys' specific writing needs.
- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching to outstanding by:
  - using the expertise of staff who are already delivering outstanding lessons
  - ensuring that all staff share ways that pupils can be successful in their lessons to accelerate pupils' understanding and progress
  - ensuring pupils know how to assess their own progress and learning.
- Improve the quality and effectiveness of feedback to pupils by:
  - allowing pupils time to respond to written feedback in marking
  - ensuring feedback is targeted so it accelerates pupils' progress.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### is good

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are well below what is typical for their age with particular weaknesses in their literacy skills. They receive a good start to their time in school and achieve well.
- At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils attain standards that are just above average, although standards of boys' writing are still below the national average. The school has put strategies in place but these need extending further to include opportunities for independent writing and activities designed to meet boys' specific writing needs.
- By the time pupils leave the school in Year 4, they reach standards that are above what is typical for their age. Boys' writing still remains below what you would expect for their age despite the school providing additional support.
- By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' standards in reading are broadly average, having made good progress. This continues so that, by the time pupils leave the school in Year 4, standards are above what is typical for their age.
- Pupils who are disabled and have a special educational need make good progress. This is due to well-organised provision that meets the needs of all pupils. Skilled teaching assistants support pupils well in lessons being carefully directed by teachers.
- Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals make good progress due to teachers' effective planning of activities that are matched to their needs so that they achieve well.
- The school's curriculum has a strong focus on promoting pupils' basic skills. This has improved achievement by the end of Year 4. Good links between subjects have had an impact on pupils' overall achievement in all subjects.
- The pupil premium has been used effectively to improve pupils' achievement. The school provided additional support to ensure pupils who were at risk of underachieving were successful.

### The quality of teaching

### is good

- The quality of teaching over time is good with some that is outstanding and, as a result, teachers more than meet the standards for teachers.
- Pupils make good progress as their needs are well met in most lessons, through good quality planning and activities that are tailor-made to support individuals' needs. An example of this was in a good lesson in Year 4 on negative numbers where tasks were designed to ensure that all pupils could achieve and, as a result, progress was good and for some pupils outstanding.
- Teachers are skilful at engaging pupils, as seen in an outstanding lesson in Year 2 based on pupils improving their writing skills using verbs. The teacher very effectively used a puppet to engage pupils and to get them to understand what a verb is; as a result, they recorded an extensive list of words and some sentences and made outstanding progress.
- Teachers use data well to inform their planning and pupils' next steps in learning. As a result, pupils make good progress. They are skilful at targeting questions and assessing what pupils know, understand and can do.
- Teachers share learning objectives with pupils. Some teachers ensure that pupils know how to be successful in lessons and know how to assess their own learning. In these lessons progress is accelerated but this very effective practice is not yet extensive enough.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly and teachers identify points for improvement. These are not always sufficiently focused with targets that are precise enough to move pupils on in their learning and time is not given to enable them to improve. Where teachers use marking effectively, it has a positive impact on pupils' learning and progress.
- Reading is taught well across the school. Pupils have regular sessions that focus on developing their understanding of the sounds that letters make (phonics).
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage children have a rich learning environment that makes a significant contribution to their outstanding progress. There is an excellent balance between

child-initiated and adult-led activities that is significant in meeting children's needs and accelerating their progress, particularly in the basic skills.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- Pupils' behaviour is good as everyone in school subscribes to the school's calm and purposeful working environment. Pupils are proud of their school. They are well mannered and courteous to each other and to everyone in the school. As a result, there is no discrimination in school and everyone is treated equally.
- The school's curriculum also supports pupils' good behaviour through a systematic approach to developing pupils' personal development. This is reinforced through class assemblies where pupils are encouraged to consider moral and social issues.
- Teachers are very effective in managing pupils' behaviour and fostering a positive learning environment and, as a result, pupils achieve well. Teachers provide activities that are stimulating, and support pupils with their learning. This results in a positive attitude to learning.
- Pupils reported that they feel very safe in school. This is due to the school's rigorous approach to safeguarding children. The school has developed excellent systems that ensure that everyone in school feels safe. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe and know about different forms of bullying.
- Pupils are well cared for across the school including those with specific needs who are supported by a range of outside agencies.
- Parents and staff feel that pupils are safe in the school and that behaviour is generally good due to the systems that the school has developed to promote good behaviour.
- The school has worked hard to improve attendance. The pupil premium has been effectively used by utilising the school minibus to collect poor attenders. Attendance is now broadly average.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The Principal provides strong and effective leadership well supported by the vice-principal. They have been key drivers in promoting improvement since the last inspection. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They have used these to good effect to drive up standards, particularly in Key Stage 2.
- The school is rigorous in monitoring and evaluating all aspects of its work including accurate self-evaluation. Performance management has been used particularly effectively along with teacher's standards to support the improvements across the school.
- The school is committed to ensuring that all pupils achieve well and, as a result, most pupils have an equal opportunity to achieve. Where pupils are falling behind, the school is quick to react to ensure they achieve well.
- There has been a significant improvement in teaching which is now good with some that is outstanding due to effective coaching and support from senior leaders. However, the outstanding expertise of teachers in the school is not yet shared extensively.
- The curriculum is successful in meeting pupils' needs and has been revised so that it is more creative and engages pupils well. There is a good use of cross-curricular links to support pupils' basic skills and this has been instrumental in raising standards. The school plays particular attention to pupils' personal development resulting in good spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.
- The Ashington Learning Partnership effectively supports the school's drive for improvement. The school also works with other partners including the local authority and this has had a positive impact on pupils' achievement.
- The school works well with parents and carers providing a range of opportunities to engage with them, including regular consultations about their child's learning and progress.
- The school has excellent procedures in place to support safeguarding and all statutory

requirements relating to safeguarding are met.

■ **The governance of the school**

has been effective in challenging and supporting the school to improve.

In particular:

- they are very knowledgeable about the school and monitor and evaluate its effectiveness in order to support the school in making improvements
- they have a good understanding of the school’s data and the school’s overall strengths and areas for development
- they are effective in ensuring it manages its finances well and gets value for money.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	131021
<b>Local authority</b>	Northumberland
<b>Inspection number</b>	408946

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

<b>Type of school</b>	First
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	481
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Chris Smith
<b>Principal</b>	David Godfrey
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 February 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01670 810570
<b>Fax number</b>	01670 810573
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