

# Wearhead Primary School

Wearhead, Bishop Auckland, County Durham, DL13 1BN

## Inspection dates

16–17 October 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school.

- Pupils make exceptionally good progress from their generally average or below average starting points.
- Most pupils reach above nationally expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6. Typically, they are a year ahead for their age.
- Pupils with special educational needs make excellent progress.
- Teaching is first rate. Lessons are packed with interest and pupils learn quickly.
- Staff enjoy teaching their specialist subjects and pupils enjoy having different lessons with different teachers.
- Sometimes teachers are so enthusiastic that they do not give pupils enough time to work on their own.
- Pupils behave very well indeed. They work hard and listen intently in lessons.
- Pupils feel very safe. Older pupils look after younger ones and everyone plays together happily at break and lunchtimes.
- The school is extremely well led and managed. Simple, effective systems mean that even when the headteacher is teaching the school runs smoothly.
- The leadership of teaching is especially good. The headteacher sets and expects high standards both in her own and in her staff's teaching.
- Members of the governing body visit the school frequently. They know exactly how well it is doing and what it needs to do next to improve further. This school continues to get better.
- The curriculum is outstanding. The school's motto: 'Think globally, act locally' sums up the rich, outward-looking curriculum, recognised in the school's recent International Award.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed seven lessons or parts of lessons taught by three teachers, including the headteacher.
- The inspector heard older pupils read and observed younger pupils play a game in which they read words to each other.
- The inspector looked at the work that pupils in Years 1 to 6 had done in their English and mathematics books since the start of term.
- She looked at records of pupils' progress and how the school checked teaching quality.
- Pupils in Years 5 and 6 talked to the inspector about their school and what helped them to learn.
- The inspector held meetings with staff and the Chair of the Governing Body. She had a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspection took account of parents' views in the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and in letters written to the inspector.
- The inspector looks at a range of documentation relating to safeguarding, the governing body and school improvement.

## Inspection team

Lesley Clark, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This school is considerably smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Pupils are taught in two mixed-age classes. They have different teachers for different subjects.
- Year groups are tiny. Most have fewer than three pupils. There were no pupils in Year 4 at the time of the inspection.
- Pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- Recently, 23% of pupils have been identified as being eligible for the pupil premium. The funding has yet to come through to support their learning.
- The school meets the current government floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

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

- Make sure that teachers give pupils enough time during lessons to work on their own and practise new skills independently.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### is outstanding

- Attainment is above average by the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics. Typically, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, reach the expected Level 4 in national tests and two-thirds of pupils reach the higher Level 5. This has been the pattern for the last three years with little variation and evidence shows attainment remains at this level.
- Achievement is outstanding for all groups of learners. This is because pupils work on individual tasks that match exactly their needs. Often, pupils have one-to-one tuition. This means that more-able pupils thrive because they can move on to new work quickly and those with special educational needs catch up because they build on what they know and understand. Pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium also make excellent progress and benefit from this support, despite funding only just being identified.
- Children make rapid progress in the Reception Year. They have lots of 'choosing times' when they do thought-provoking activities, both indoors and outdoors. Children quickly learn how letters and sounds link together (phonic knowledge) to make words. They listen to stories on headphones and record and listen to their speech.
- Pupils continue to learn at a rapid rate in Years 1 and 2. They read and write well for their age. In one lesson, for example, Year 1 pupils used their phonics knowledge very well to record descriptions of the leaves they had gathered in the wind and rain, using phrases such as 'dark, bready brown colour'. They know their targets and check their work carefully.
- Pupils read fluently and accurately in Years 3 to 6. They talk enthusiastically about favourite books and authors. Older pupils read unfamiliar poems exceptionally well with good intonation and careful attention to punctuation. It was quite clear, for example, when they had reached an exclamation mark.
- Pupils write well in a range of different subjects in Years 3 to 6. They show a keen interest in discovering and using new words to enliven their writing. They phrase sentences in different ways to add variety and use poetic devices, such as personification, well.
- There are very few lengthy pieces of writing in pupils' English books. Sometimes the work looks a bit rushed because they have run short of time in lessons.
- Achievement is outstanding in mathematics. Pupils calculate accurately. They set their work out clearly which helps to reduce careless mistakes. Occasionally, as in their English books, some work is not presented as neatly, appearing to be completed too quickly. However, pupils certainly cover a wide range of work and swiftly move on to the next challenge. Gifted pupils, for example, move on to aspects of the very high Level 6 work when they are ready to do so.

### The quality of teaching

### is outstanding

- Teaching quality in lessons and over time is excellent, as shown by pupils' sustained outstanding achievement.
- Very effective use is made of teachers' skills as the timetable is organised so that teachers move between classes teaching their specialist subjects to all pupils. Teachers' subject knowledge is extremely good. They know exactly what to do to ensure that pupils reach high standards.
- Teachers have high expectations. They match work carefully to pupils' capabilities. Tasks and activities are challenging but manageable and so pupils of all abilities have a real sense of achievement.
- Lessons are fast-paced and fun. Teachers use games and practical resources well to help pupils to understand new concepts. Attention to detail adds a real edge to learning as when younger pupils programmed a toy to move in different directions across a table top. They had to be absolutely accurate so it did not fall off.
- Teachers ask probing questions that deepen pupils' understanding. Equally, pupils ask sensible questions in return and have no hesitation in asking for help when they need it.

- Sometimes in both English and mathematics lessons, teachers do not step back a little and let pupils work independently, make mistakes and learn from practising new skills without rushing in to help them too soon.
- Teachers encourage pupils to find out information for themselves. Older pupils used etymological dictionaries, for example, to help them understand old-fashioned words such as 'wailful'.
- Marking clearly shows pupils what they need to do to improve their work. Often there is a written dialogue between pupil and teacher as pupils correct or try something different in their work.

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

- Pupils behave extremely well. They come into school ready to learn and are very attentive in lessons. Pupils are confident, capable young people, keen to use every moment in school productively.
- Attendance is above average and pupils arrive punctually. There is no persistent absenteeism or exclusions.
- Pupils feel very safe. Their views confirm the school's behavioural records that there is no racism or homophobia and 'definitely no bullying.' Pupils seemed astonished that anyone would think there might be, explaining, 'Our school couldn't be any better. We love it. It's so small that you get a lot of attention.' They know that adults in school will help them if they have any concerns.
- Pupils know about different types of safeguarding. They are very clear what to do if they should inadvertently see something on the internet that worries them. 'You shut the lid, call out or put your hand up and get a teacher straight away.'
- Pupils are very proud of their school and the contribution that they make to help it to run smoothly. Older pupils explained, for example, how they run the library or help the youngest pupils in the swimming pool if they are nervous.
- Pupils join in everything that the school has to offer, including educational visits abroad and multi-faith days. After-school clubs are well-attended.
- Pupils talk enthusiastically about learning different languages. They demonstrated asking and answering simple questions in French, Spanish, Japanese and Nepalese. The school's links with schools in these countries give pupils a well-rounded perspective on different cultures and societies. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted most effectively.

### **The leadership and management** are outstanding

- The headteacher is extremely efficient, balancing a sizeable teaching load with leading and managing a school. The local authority confirms that it gives light touch support to this excellent school with its record of continuing improvement.
- The school has improved considerably since the last inspection. This is because teaching is much better.
- With a limited budget, the headteacher took the decision to have no teaching assistants and to invest in 'quality first' teaching with a strong focus on individual learning. She checks regularly that teaching is effective and discusses in detail with each teacher what needs to be improved. This then forms the basis for a follow-up visit that checks on improvements. This is why teaching is highly effective for pupils of all ages and abilities.
- Performance management is effective, with targets for both teaching and management roles. These are linked to the school improvement plan. There is a strong link between performance management, appraisal and salary progression.
- Staff confirm, 'For a small school with a small budget we manage to access any continuing professional development that will be useful for our professional development.'
- A striking example of the leadership's commitment to excellence is that it has bought in

additional reading resources in advance of receiving the budget allocated for pupils who have recently been identified as being eligible for the pupil premium. As a result, there are no gaps between these pupils' performance and that of others.

- The curriculum promotes high levels of achievement. Pupils reach high standards because they have frequent opportunities to use and apply literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. For example, a recent 'Forensic Science' day involved pupils in a crime scene scenario, measuring and analysing samples, taking witness statements and broadcasting updates as they investigated why the pumpkin in the school garden had a large hole in it.
  - Pupils are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education because they are academically ahead of pupils of a similar age. They work regularly with pupils from other local schools as well as working with teachers from different countries whose schools are linked to theirs.
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - Governors know the school well and visit regularly. They have a clear overview of why teaching is successful. Governors take appropriate steps to ensure that safeguarding meets requirements. They review the school improvement plan and ensure all pupils achieve as well as they possibly can.
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## 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>	114065
<b>Local authority</b>	County Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	403221
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4-11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	13
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Michelle Robson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Karen Evans
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	February 2008
<b>Telephone number</b>	01388 537265
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