

# Prudhoe Castle First School

Castle Road, Prudhoe, Northumberland, NE42 6PH

**Inspection dates** 16–17 October 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Pupils' outstanding behaviour and caring attitudes help to create the warm, welcoming, family atmosphere that pervades this happy school. Excellent pastoral care makes pupils feel safe; they are secure in the knowledge that 'teachers always sort things out'.
- Pupils of all abilities achieve well and make good progress from their starting points. They are eager learners, who work hard in lessons to please their teachers and delight in sharing their learning with others.
- Children get off to a good start in the Reception class. They settle well because they are exceptionally well cared for and quickly learn to follow routines and develop independence.
- Teaching is good, with much that is outstanding in some classes. Teachers know their pupils well and plan lessons which capture their interest and bring success to all.
- Teaching assistants are well trained to give support to pupils with additional needs. This develops their confidence and helps them succeed as well as their classmates.
- Reading is very well taught and arrangements for regular reading in class ensure that pupils exceed the expected level for their age by the end of Year 2 and Year 4.
- The school is very well led and managed. A strong senior leadership team is taking the school forward at a rapid rate under the determined and inspirational leadership of the headteacher. Governance is skilled, knowledgeable, and dedicated to making the school the best it can possibly be.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all teaching and learning are yet outstanding.
- Additional resources for outdoor learning are needed to further accelerate the progress of children in the Reception class.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with half a day's notice.
- The inspector observed teaching and learning in 12 lessons taught by five teachers, including one joint observation with the headteacher, and heard a number of pupils read.
- Meetings were held with staff, pupils and members of the governing body. In addition, the inspector spoke with the representative of the local authority.
- The inspector looked at documents, including the school's own monitoring of teaching, self-evaluation, records of pupils' progress and arrangements for safeguarding.
- The inspector took account of the 22 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View).
- The inspector also spoke to parents as they brought their children to school and scrutinised 10 questionnaires returned by staff.

## Inspection team

Moira Fitzpatrick, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage and none speaks English as an additional language.
- The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.

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

- Increase the opportunities in the Reception class for learning outdoors by:
  - providing more resources so that the staff can plan a bigger range of activities from which children can choose and thereby accelerate their learning and increase their decision-making skills.
- Extend the outstanding teaching found in some, to all classes, so that all pupils make the best possible progress.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils **is good**

- When children enter the school their skills are often below what is expected for their age, especially in language and communication, mathematical development and emotional development. Children make good progress because teaching and planned activities take good account of their individual needs and they are encouraged to develop curiosity and independence. This is somewhat restricted when children learn outdoors because recent floods have reduced the resources currently available for learning there.
- By the time they start Year 1, children have a good grounding in basic skills, are able to listen well and to follow instructions.
- These good learning skills are built upon very well, so that pupils always learn at a good, and often an excellent, rate in Years 1 and 2. This was evident in a Year 1 mathematics lesson where pupils responded eagerly to rapid-fire questions by the teacher which helped them consolidate their number knowledge very quickly.
- Pupils' achievement by the end of Year 2 rose in 2012 to above the level expected nationally, especially in reading and mathematics, sustaining the trend of improvement since the previous inspection.
- Progress in reading is particularly good. This is the result of a strong emphasis on reading every day and of the one-to-one support provided for pupils who are behind the expected level for their age.
- By the end of Year 4, pupils reach at least the level expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics and have made good progress from their individual starting points.
- Pupils who are disabled and those who have special educational needs achieve well, as do the few pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium. This is because teachers and teaching assistants keep a close check on their learning and support them well.
- Work seen in pupils' books and the school's tracking data confirm the good progress seen in lessons.
- Parents agree that their children make good progress.

### The quality of teaching **is good**

- Teaching is good and often outstanding. Parents agree that their children are well taught. Teachers work together very closely to improve their own and others' teaching skills by sharing planning formats, ideas and resources. This has developed a consistency of high expectations among staff and a receptiveness to new ideas, although some staff new to the school are at an earlier stage than others in putting these into practice.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge which is enhanced by their excellent understanding of how young children learn best. They plan activities that allow pupils to think for themselves, follow their own ways of working and work cooperatively to complete tasks. A very good example was seen when Year 4 pupils first estimated, then measured two-dimensional objects. The pace of learning was fast and driven by pupils' urge to impress the teacher with how well they could achieve.
- Reading skills are well taught from the earliest age. Children in Reception have already gained a good knowledge of the sounds that letters make, and are being well prepared for building and recognising simple words. Guided reading sessions for older pupils are very effective in developing the whole range of reading skills through a variety of activities that they clearly enjoy, as seen in the Year 3 class. These work well because teachers have accurate knowledge of each pupil's reading level and prepare individualised activities so that pupils are able to work quietly while others read to an adult.
- Writing is taught well in all classes. Teachers make sure there is a clear purpose to all writing so that pupils learn to write for different purposes as the year progresses. For example, in one

Year 2 English lesson pupils learned how to listen to, follow and write instructions at an excellent rate and had enormous fun, because they were engrossed in the humorous story and had plenty of opportunity to discuss their ideas. Everyone was able to write instructions independently and well, so they felt very successful.

- Pupils know what is expected of them in each lesson because teachers explain this at the beginning and usually check that pupils understand before they begin work. In the best lessons, teachers scan the classroom to see which pupils have started confidently then move alongside pupils they can see need help. This ensures that all get off to a prompt start and are confident they are on the right track.
- Teachers give pupils regular and helpful feedback on their work so they know what they have to do to improve. Regular rewards for hard work and good effort are much sought after by pupils and add another spur to their good learning.

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

- Behaviour is exemplary, in and out of the classroom, because staff have high expectations and follow the school's behaviour management systems rigorously and consistently. This means that pupils have a very clear understanding of their responsibilities for creating a happy and harmonious school community where everyone can work and have fun. The school's behaviour records show that this is sustained over time.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning could not be better. They are friendly and caring towards one another and are constantly seen in lessons helping each other or praising each other's work. They are set an excellent example for this by teachers who constantly praise pupils for 'doing the right thing' and reward them with merits and the much coveted Gold Star.
- Pupils say they feel safe and know how to keep themselves and others safe. They are well taught to assess risks, as in a Year 2 lesson about the possible dangers of medicine. They know about different types of bullying, and say that it seldom occurs. Two older pupils reported that 'Mostly its "falling outs" – like we do. But then we make friends again.' Pupils are unanimous that teachers will solve any problems quickly.
- Responsibilities, such as school councillor, playground buddy or security buddy, are taken very seriously by Year 4 pupils who relish the opportunity to improve the school and look after younger pupils.
- Attendance has improved well since the previous inspection and is above average. There are no exclusions.

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

- The headteacher consistently communicates high expectations of all staff and pupils. She is ambitious to get the best for and from every pupil, in this 'greenhouse school where everyone flourishes'. She has the full support of staff and members of the governing body.
- Senior leaders know the school's strengths well and have accurately identified where further development is needed.
- Robust and accurate systems for tracking pupils' progress have been developed by the deputy headteacher since the previous inspection. These have played a significant part in ensuring the accurate measurement of pupils' progress and have contributed much to raising their achievement.
- Teachers' performance is robustly monitored by the headteacher and senior staff. This has been effective in raising the standard of teaching and ensuring that all staff are held to account for the progress that their pupils make and that this is linked to salary progression.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted exceptionally well.

- Pupils have many opportunities to learn about the lives of others and to develop understanding and generosity by, for example, raising funds for the Spirit of Africa charity. Their social skills and moral values are extremely well promoted through the high expectations the school has of their behaviour and relationships with each other.
- The school provides an exciting, broad and balanced curriculum. It is rich in special events that interest and motivate pupils and there is an extensive programme of after-school clubs.
- Links with partner schools and the local community add to the breadth of pupils' learning.
- Every pupil enjoys an equal opportunity to succeed through careful tracking of their needs and staff commitment to removing any obstacles to learning.
- Effective use of the pupil premium, by providing resources for learning at home as well as at school, additional interventions when needed and, when required, the costs of extra-curricular activities, ensures that pupils who are eligible for this achieve as well as all other pupils.
- The school is a harmonious community where discrimination is not tolerated.
- Safeguarding and child protection arrangements are robust and meet requirements.
- The local authority provides light touch support for this good school.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body has given very good support since the previous inspection to ensure that the school continues to move forward.
  - Through regular and rigorous monitoring, the governing body is well placed to challenge, as well as support the school. It does so well, for example, through a good knowledge of the quality of teaching and how performance management targets are linked to school improvement and salary progression.
  - The governing body holds the school to account for the effective use of resources to support pupils who are eligible for pupil premium.
  - Governors ensure financial management is efficient and resources are used effectively.

## 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>	122218
<b>Local authority</b>	Northumberland
<b>Inspection number</b>	406080

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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4-9 years
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	112
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Richard Davies
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jane Bland
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 October 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01661 833122
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