

Stephenson Memorial Primary School

Martin Road, Wallsend, Tyne and Wear. NE28 0AG

Inspection dates 24–25 October 2012

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school because

- Attainment is rising rapidly particularly in reading and writing and is now closer to national averages. Pupils make good progress because of good quality teaching.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception make good progress. They enjoy the interesting activities provided.
- The curriculum provides a wide range of stimulating activities which enthuse and engage the pupils. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. The curriculum is enhanced by a variety of visitors and visits.
- Pupils are well motivated and keen to learn. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are polite and well mannered and their motivation to learn is outstanding. They feel safe in the school and also know how to keep themselves and others safe.
- The headteacher, senior leaders and the governing body together have brought about rapid improvements in the quality of teaching which has had a significant impact upon pupils' learning and progress. The staff team are committed to providing the best for the pupils.
- Attendance is now above average.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There are still gaps in some pupils' learning, particularly in mathematics, due to previous underachievement.
- Standards and achievement in mathematics have not improved as quickly as in reading and writing.
- In some lessons, pupils do not learn as quickly as they might because they are not challenged enough in their learning. Whilst this is more obvious for the most able, this is something to consider for all pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 23 lessons, five of which were joint observations with the headteacher. The headteacher and lead inspector also visited classes and intervention groups to observe teaching across the school. Inspectors heard pupils read and observed small groups of pupils being taught.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, members of the governing body, including the Chair of Governors and the local authority school improvement officer. Inspectors met with two groups of pupils and spoke to parents informally.
- Inspectors took account of parents' views in the online questionnaire (Parent View) and other correspondence from parents.
- They looked at pupils' work in books and scrutinised school documents. This included past and current pupil data about attainment and progress, monitoring information, performance management information and training and records relating to safeguarding, behaviour, exclusions and attendance.

Inspection team

Janet Greaves, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Anne Humble

Additional Inspector

Graeme Clarke

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are from a White British background though there are an increasing proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups, many of whom speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is well above average as is the proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The school has achieved many awards. These include Basic Skills Quality Mark and ECO School Gold Award.
- There is on-site childcare provision that is not managed by the governing body.
- The school meets the current floor standards, which set out the government's minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Extend throughout the school the successful work being done to raise standards and increase the rate of all pupils' progress, particularly in mathematics, by:
 - ensuring teaching is consistently good or better throughout the school by drawing on the expertise of the most skilful teachers to help the less experienced teachers
 - ensuring that in Nursery and Reception year groups, mathematics, particularly calculation, is taught using both the indoor and outdoor areas
 - improving the quality of questioning in order to increase the level of challenge for pupils, including the more able
 - developing pupils' mental numeracy skills progressively throughout the school
 - providing additional support for those pupils where there has been underachievement in the past to ensure that there are no remaining gaps in their knowledge and understanding.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start school with skills that are well below those typical for their age, particularly in communication skills. By the end of the Reception Year, they have skills that are still below but closer to those typical for their age. They make good progress because of good teaching. An effective programme ensures that children learn about letters and the sounds they make, so reading skills are improving quickly as pupils move into Year 1.
- Attainment at the end of Year 2 is steadily increasing although there was a dip in standards in 2012 because of previous underachievement. This year group also had a greater proportion of pupils whose starting points were low. Although many pupils did not reach national standards they made good progress.
- Work in pupils' books and school data indicate that pupils in Year 5 and 6 are set to attain standards that are broadly average by the end of Year 6. Pupils across Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 make good progress, although in Years 3 and 4 they still have gaps in their knowledge and understanding, particularly in mathematics and numeracy skills development, due to previous underachievement.
- The progress of pupils with special educational needs is good overall, with many of these pupils making outstanding progress, particularly in reading and writing.
- The performance gap between those pupils who are known to be eligible for pupil premium funding and other pupil groups is closing because of well-targeted intervention and support. The gap is narrower in reading and writing than in mathematics. This includes mental numeracy skills development, which is not taught consistently across the school.
- The emphasis the school has placed on developing communication skills has helped all pupils, including those for whom English is an additional language, to make good progress in reading and writing. This, and the good progress made by other pupils from minority ethnic groups, shows the school's successful commitment to promoting equality of opportunity for all its pupils.
- Progress is better in reading and writing than in mathematics. Leaders have started to take effective action to improve progress in mathematics although this improvement is not yet evident throughout the school. Professional development for staff and well planned support for pupils is beginning to address gaps in learning.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers' high expectations are evident in planning and in lessons where a wide range of teaching methods are used to enable pupils to make good progress.
- Well-planned activities meet the needs and interests of pupils, alongside effective small group support provided by skilled support staff that makes an important and effective contribution to learning.
- Excellent relationships between staff and pupils help pupils enjoy their learning and their motivation to succeed is evident. In a mathematics lesson, for example, pupils were working out amounts of food needed to make enough soup using various methods of multiplication. They worked with great enthusiasm and spoke confidently about their learning.
- Children in Nursery and Reception enjoy a wide range of exciting activities. In the 'Reach for the Stars' theme, children were making a large rocket with large construction materials. The teaching of letters and the sounds they make is effective and contributes to the children's early reading development though opportunities to increase mathematical development, particularly in calculation, are not established enough to have had a positive impact upon outcomes.
- Lessons are briskly paced and provide challenge for all pupil groups. Teachers review the learning at the end of lessons, allowing pupils to evaluate their own learning.
- Pupils develop their basic skills across all areas of the curriculum. Work from a recent STEM

week (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) shows how they practise their writing and use mathematics in real situations.

- The emphasis on developing communication skills is having a positive impact on all pupil groups including those who speak English as an additional language. Following Harvest Assembly, for example, pupils in Year 6 wrote about world poverty. They discussed their ideas about how they could help with some very thoughtful responses during reflection time. This helped to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.
- Marking is usually effective, particularly in writing, with guidance provided for pupils about their next steps in learning. In some lessons, pupils are not clear what they need to do and this slows the pace of learning. Sometimes questioning is not used effectively enough to challenge pupils to learn, particularly for the most able.

The behaviour and safety of pupils is outstanding

- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is typically exemplary. Pupils are hard working and keen to learn, particularly in lessons that are well paced, interesting and also challenge their thinking. The quality and quantity of work in pupils' books demonstrates their hard work and commitment and also reflects on the staff team's dedication to ensuring pupils are able to achieve well.
- Pupils are polite and well mannered towards each other and to the adults in the school. Playtimes and lunchtimes are orderly and calm. Pupils take on a wide range of responsibilities such as House Captains and Buddies. They are proud of the school and talk about how much they enjoy their learning.
- Pupils feel safe at the school and state that bullying occurs very rarely and that the adults in the school look after them if they do have any problems. Pupils understand about the potential dangers of the internet. They also are well aware of dangers in other circumstances such as road and fire safety and how to behave responsibly.
- Parents support the view that their children are very happy and feel safe.
- Attendance has improved greatly and is now above average. Exclusions are rare due to the supportive nature of the school, which encourages good behaviour and supports those who need help in managing their own behaviour.
- The Breakfast Club is very well attended and provides an excellent start to the school day. Pupils are able to meet socially before the school day begins.

The leadership and management is outstanding

- The outstanding impact of school leadership is evident in the much improved quality of teaching and in rapidly accelerating pupil progress. A strong common sense of purpose amongst all leaders and governors has improved behaviour, attendance, teaching, attainment and achievement. All leaders have a very good understanding of performance data and use it to identify strengths and areas for improvement.
- The school has very successfully improved teaching but the staff team continues to strive exceptionally hard for further improvement, ably led by the headteacher, who has relentlessly driven the actions that have led to rapidly improved standards and the current good and accelerating rate of progress. The management of teachers' performance has played a key part in improving teaching and standards, leading to pupils' better rates of progress. The school's excellent professional training programme includes team teaching, mentoring, coaching and the sharing of good practice, although school leadership recognises that there is still further scope to share the best practice of the most skilful teachers with their less experienced colleagues.
- The rich curriculum includes visits and visitors to extend pupils' experiences and promotes their strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It is derived from pupils' own interests,

ensuring that they are enthusiastic learners. Homework is interesting and strongly linked to what is being taught in lessons.

- The parent/school partnership is very strong. Parents are extremely pleased with what the school provides for their children. They enjoy the many opportunities to support learning and many volunteer to hear readers. Their involvement is encouraged at the start of their children's school life. In the Nursery, for example, children proudly show parents their achievement in learning journals. Staff and parents regularly discuss the children's strengths and areas for development.
- Safeguarding is meticulously managed and meets statutory requirements. There are strong links with many agencies that provide additional support for pupils and families.
- The local authority has provided excellent support and guidance which has enabled the school to accelerate the rate of progress for pupils.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are involved in all aspects of monitoring the effectiveness of the school. Individual governors are members of working groups alongside leaders and other members of staff. They are closely involved in decisions to do with salary progression and have made important assessments, which have improved the quality of teaching. Governors are fully aware of the details of pupil premium spending and have allocated funding successfully, helping many potentially vulnerable pupils to make good and often outstanding progress.

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	108597
Local authority	North Tyneside
Inspection number	405180

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	388
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Carole Taylor
Headteacher	Mrs Emma Overton
Date of previous school inspection	28 September 2010
Telephone number	0191 2007365
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