

Hamsterley Primary School

Hamsterley, Bishop Auckland, County Durham, DL13 3QF

Inspection dates

14–15 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
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.

- Children enter the school with skills and knowledge expected for their age. By the time they leave their attainment is well above average. This is because a high proportion of pupils make better progress than similar pupils across the country.
- Pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium and those who have special educational needs make outstanding progress because of the support they get in class and the extra resources that the school has invested in to help them to achieve well.
- The teaching in the school is outstanding because the work that pupils do is very well adapted to meet their individual needs. Teachers and the teaching assistant give pupils tasks to make them think hard, as well as plenty of opportunities for them to make choices as to what they are going to investigate and learn.
- The work pupils do is marked well, but teachers could give pupils more time to respond to their suggestions and ideas.
- The attitude of children to their work is exemplary. They need very little encouragement to work hard. Even when the staff are dealing with other groups, pupils are very well-behaved.
- This is a friendly school where pupils are happy. The pupils themselves rejected the name 'anti-bullying policy' when it was put to them, wanting to call it a 'friendship policy' instead.
- Pupils' attendance is excellent, as it is well above the national average and over a number of years there have been no children absent for long periods.
- An overwhelmingly proportion of the staff and parents thinks that behaviour is very good and the school has had no recorded incidents of exclusions or poor behaviour for well over three years.
- The leadership of the school, including the governing body, is excellent. This has resulted in rising standards. New systems to make sure that pupils do not fall behind have been introduced and teaching has improved.
- The pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is very good. However, pupils in this small rural school community would benefit from more opportunities to mix with other children with quite different backgrounds.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out with half a day's notice.
- The inspector visited five lessons or parts of lessons taught by three different teachers. One was a joint observation with the headteacher.
- He listened to pupils read and talked to them about how much reading they do, as well as looking at their work in class.
- Discussions took place with members of the governing body, staff, groups of pupils and a representative of the local authority.
- Documents were examined, including those relating to safeguarding, the school's improvement plan and its analysis of how well it is doing, as well as the school's own records for assessing pupils' attainment and progress.
- The views of 17 parents who responded to Parent View and the contents of one letter were taken into account, as well the school's own recent parental questionnaire, which surveyed 20 parents.
- Eight returns from the staff questionnaires were also considered.

Inspection team

Frank Cain, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Hamsterley Primary School is much smaller than average.
- Currently there are no pupils supported through school action. The proportion at school action plus is average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, for children of service families and those in the care of the local authority) is below average.
- All pupils are of White British heritage.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Broaden pupils' understanding of the multicultural make-up of society in the United Kingdom.
- Improve teaching and learning further by giving pupils time to respond to teachers' marking so that they learn from their mistakes.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- The size of each year group is very small and key stage results vary from year to year. Generally, however, from average starting points pupils' attainment by the time they leave the school is well above average.
- Pupils make excellent progress in this very small school from the point that they enter. Pupils who join the school midway through the school year also make progress that is better than average.
- There are few pupils who have special educational needs but they do exceptionally well, as do those eligible for the pupil premium.
- In lessons pupils of all ages are keen to work and learn very well. For example, a child in reception was able to explain how the marking on bottles found in the home warned that some might be dangerous. She was able to single out that vinegar was not dangerous but you only need to take a little of it as 'too much wouldn't be nice'.
- The work pupils do in their books is of a high standard and they take pride in what they do, encouraged by the school's new handwriting policy.
- Exciting and demanding lessons encourage outstanding progress. Pupils, for example, are encouraged to explore feelings as well as facts. In a Key Stage 2 lesson, where pupils had to write a diary extract about the death of Julius Caesar, they looked at it very intelligently from the point of view of different people at the time.
- The school encourages reading strongly and pupils have booklets in which they usefully keep a record of books that they have read. Older pupils are very confident in reading and enjoy books. Their reading ability is above average and they read with feeling in their voices. They are able to describe who their favourite authors are and name several other books written by them.
- Parents think that their children in the school are happy and make good progress and this was confirmed by what was observed in the classrooms and in pupils' books. Pupils are enthusiastic about their school and are proud to be members of what one said, was a 'family'.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- The teaching in the school is outstanding, because the work given to pupils is well-planned to allow all pupils in the two mixed-age classes to progress exceptionally well whatever their ability.
- Pupils are encouraged to investigate things for themselves rather than always being directed by their teacher. In a Key Stage 1 lesson they were given a choice on what animal to describe and to dress it up in its own special costume. The very youngest went outside to paint their animal first, while older ones used their books to write about their animal. The support given by the teaching assistant was key to the progress of one child who was uncertain what he should do. She helped supportively rather than doing things for him.
- Pupils are given memorable experiences in lessons to capture their interests. In a science lesson pupils were captivated by a video of nocturnal animals. This led to pupils sharing and discussing their knowledge of these creatures. Pupils were given different tasks according to their ability, which they tackled with enthusiasm.
- Pupils are very aware of what standards teachers are expecting them to achieve. They understand how well they are doing because of the very good feedback they are given in books or verbally by the teachers.
- Teachers regularly mark pupils' work and give them good advice on how to do better. They do not always set aside enough time for pupils to follow up their comments so that they learn from their mistakes.
- Teachers plan tasks which build very well on what pupils have learnt in earlier lessons. They make it clear at the start to lessons what pupils are expected to learn. Teachers ask very

searching questions to get them thinking and to see how much they have understood.

- Teachers expect the best from all pupils. Relations between pupils and teachers are excellent and pupils are encouraged to develop their social and study skills by team and group work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils say they feel very happy and safe in school. Parents unanimously supported this view. The younger pupils show excitement and enthusiasm in lessons, such as when dressing up their soft toys as part of a literacy lesson.
- Pupils are very polite, helpful and friendly to all staff and visitors to school and during social times pupils play well together.
- Pupils' attitude to learning is very positive and older pupils caringly often help the younger ones with their work. When listening to teachers they are very respectful and sit quietly when looking at the whiteboard or listening to stories.
- There have been no exclusions for more than three years and no instances of poor behaviour are recorded. Pupils understand about different kinds of bullying. They say that there is none in their school. They are well versed in the dangers linked with new technology such as mobile phones and the Internet.
- Pupils help one another, showing concern when one hurt himself on the playground. In the past the school had 'playground buddies' to comfort children who had a problem. The school council asked the headteacher to get rid of them as they said it was the job of everyone to help others.
- The attendance of pupils has been well above national figures for over three years and pupils arrive on time to school.
- The school is successful in developing personal as well as academic qualities in its pupils. Consequently, they are increasingly confident and able to work independently of an adult. Pupils raise money for charities on a regular basis. The active school council often comes up with its own money-making schemes and then the members themselves organise what they are going to do.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Staff at all levels, along with the governing body, share the headteacher's high ambitions for the school. Parents agree that the school is led well. Leadership is very strong and has led to an improvement in the quality of teaching and rising standards. This demonstrates that the school is well placed to improve even further.
- Since the previous report the school has introduced very good procedures to check teaching and excellent systems to see how well pupils are learning are in place. This is used to work out which pupils need extra help and make sure that all pupils are performing well.
- The whole staff regularly conduct surveys on the quality of pupils' work to see how well they are doing. The school promotes equality of opportunity exceptionally well by being adaptable to children's' specific needs.
- The curriculum is planned very well to take account of the mixed-year classes. This means that work is not unnecessarily duplicated although some topics need revision.
- Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is encouraged very strongly throughout the school. For example, all pupils learn to play an instrument. They visit art galleries and the theatre. Their social skills are excellent and they are aware of how they should behave. The school recognises that it could do more to prepare them for later life, by giving them more experiences of how other people live in Britain.
- Links with parents, judging from the last school survey, as well as the on-line 'Parent View' survey, show that support for what the school is doing is exceptionally high. The school has a very informative website to show parents what their children are doing.
- The local authority has provided some helpful support for this outstanding school.

■ The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body has an extremely good knowledge of the strengths of the school as well as an accurate view of how it could improve further. Members are determined to move the school forward. The new governors have speedily been trained by the local authority so that they can ask very relevant, probing questions on what is happening in the school. They hold the school to account rigorously. The school links salary progression to how well teachers perform.

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	114053
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	403220

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	27
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ann Robinson
Headteacher	Lynn Cowans
Date of previous school inspection	6 March 2008
Telephone number	01388 488279
Email address	hamsterley@durhamlearning.net

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