

# Blue Coat CofE (Aided) Junior School

Langley Road, Newton Hall Estate, Durham, DH1 5LP

## Inspection dates

14–15 November 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		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress. Typically, they reach high standards in reading and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Teaching is good in every class. Lessons are well organised. Teachers plan together so that pupils in the same year group make equally good progress.
- Pupils behave exceptionally well both in lessons and around the school. They are courteous and friendly. They are very keen to learn.
- Pupils feel very safe. They really enjoy school life. Their attendance is above average.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength. The school has strong links with the church and with international communities.
- The school is well led and managed. School leaders know exactly what to do to improve the school further.
- The leadership of teaching is also good. All staff are involved in checking how well their pupils are learning.
- The well-informed governing body plays an active role in the school. It checks regularly how well the school is doing.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not outstanding. This is because teachers have a fairly narrow range of teaching techniques. This limits the extent to which pupils learn actively and independently. Teachers' marking of pupils' writing is not always as helpful as it should be and so pupils tend to repeat mistakes.
- Standards in writing are not as high as they are in reading and mathematics.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 16 lessons or part of lessons taught by eight teachers and one teaching assistant.
- The inspectors heard pupils from Years 3 and 6 read. They talked to pupils in Years 4 and 6 about the books they like to read.
- The inspection team looked at pupils' English and mathematics books to check the standards of their work and how much progress pupils had made since the start of term. They looked at a representative sample from each class.
- In addition, the inspectors held meetings with three groups of pupils to discuss behaviour, safety, the things that help them to learn and the different jobs they do around the school.
- The inspection team held meetings with staff, the senior leadership team, the Chair of the Governing Body and the vice-chair. The lead inspector had a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documentation supplied by the school. This included information relating to safeguarding, pupils' progress and the school's future plans.
- The inspection took account of the 26 parents' views in the on-line questionnaire (Parent View).

## Inspection team

Lesley Clark, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

John Pattinson

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This school is similar in size to the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British. A very small minority come from different ethnic groups.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is below average.
- An above average proportion of pupils are supported at school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below average.
- The school has had three headteachers, including an interim headteacher, in the last three years. The current headteacher joined the school in January 2011.
- The school has a teacher on exchange from America teaching for one term in Year 4 in place of a member of the leadership team who is teaching in America in her place.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress.

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

- In order to make teaching outstanding teachers should:
  - develop a wider range of teaching techniques to involve pupils in working actively and independently which give them opportunities to make their own decisions and choices
  - ensure that marking tells pupils how to improve their written work and give pupils enough time to respond so they learn from their mistakes.
- Raise standards in writing by:
  - giving pupils in Years 3 and 4 more opportunities to write at length
  - making sure that pupils in Years 5 and 6 use paragraphs and a wide range of punctuation
  - enabling pupils to read an extensive range of more challenging books so they develop a wider vocabulary which they can use in their writing.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils achieve well. They make good progress from their starting points.
- Typically, most Year 6 pupils reach the level expected of their age in reading, writing and mathematics. Around two thirds of them do better than this in reading and mathematics but only about a fifth do as well as this in writing.
- Pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium do better than all pupils nationally. There are no gaps between their learning and that of other pupils. This is because the funding is used well to give them extra help when they need it.
- Pupils who have statements of special educational needs or who are supported at school action plus make good and sometimes outstanding progress. They learn really well because they are given intensive help in lessons. In addition, some pupils have special lessons with the teacher on their own. These are carefully designed so that tasks are not too hard but not too easy either.
- The school identified that the very small number of pupils supported at school action were not doing as well as other groups. These pupils now have more help in lessons. As a result, they are catching up well. The school therefore shows that it promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination well.
- Pupils read fluently and expressively. Year 6 pupils talked animatedly about the books they enjoy and discussed in detail why they like them. These are mostly books they read at home.
- Older pupils find the reading scheme books too easy. 'There's not enough to get into, they're too short,' pupils explained. 'We read some shortened classics in school but they are just like the outline of the story. We'd prefer to read the originals. The words are not modern but you could use them in your writing to make your writing more interesting.'
- Pupils write neatly and accurately in a range of different genres such as letters and play scripts. However, comparatively few write as well as they read because their written vocabulary is not particularly rich and they are not always given time to respond to their teachers' marking. As a result, they tend to repeat mistakes.
- Pupils in Years 3 and 4 do quite a lot of exercises, including comprehension questions and grammar exercises. They do not write freely at length very often. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 do not always use paragraphs consistently well. They tend to use a limited range of punctuation, overusing commas and neglecting semi-colons and colons, for instance. As a result, their sentences sometimes lack variety.
- Pupils make fast progress in mathematics because the work is challenging and fun. They calculate quickly and accurately and are good at solving mathematical problems. A fifth of Year 6 pupils are working currently at the level expected of secondary school pupils in Years 7 and 8.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Lessons are consistently good in every class and several have outstanding elements.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge. They take pains to make lessons interesting and informative. Lessons are well-paced. Teachers use interactive technology well to make teaching points clear.
- Teachers check that pupils understand what they are being taught and deal quickly with any misconceptions. Lessons follow a consistent pattern which results in pupils working productively. Pupils make good progress because they build on what they know and understand.
- Teachers generally set more challenging work for more-able pupils. They make sure that those who struggle have extra help when they need it. In mathematics, the work is just right. It is not too hard and not too easy and so pupils do really well.
- In the better lessons, teachers use a range of strategies such as paired discussions or working in groups to involve pupils in their learning. In these lessons, pupils' learning accelerates because

they learn through making choices and decisions for themselves.

- For example, a group of the most-able mathematicians worked hard together, at speed, exploring multiples of 12 in large numbers, because the teacher asked pupils to 'explore the possibilities' based on the information they had been given so far.
- Teaching is not outstanding because lessons tend to be over-directed by the teacher, particularly in writing. This sometimes takes away the excitement of learning through discovery. Occasionally, it dampens pupils' curiosity when they have limited times to read extensively or to pool their ideas.
- Marking in mathematics is very effective because teachers clearly show pupils what they need to do to improve their work. Pointers as to how pupils should improve their writing are less specific and not so easy for pupils to act upon.

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

- Behaviour in lessons is exemplary. Pupils listen intently and work hard to do as well as they possibly can. This means that they learn quickly and efficiently, without wasting any time. For example, pupils took notes while watching a video about Victorian schooling which they then used to help them with their writing.
- Pupils behave exceptionally well around school. Those who have problems managing their behaviour are given good strategies to help them to cope. As a result, the school is a friendly, happy, harmonious community.
- Many older pupils have responsible jobs such as office monitors who answer the school telephone at lunchtimes. School councillors show that they make a difference to what happens in school. Dinner monitors canvass classmates to find out the most popular food. This is then put on the menu. Pupils agree that as a result, 'The food is improving. There's not much left over and more people stay to school dinners.'
- Attendance is above average with the majority of pupils attending every day. This is because they like school. 'There are really nice people here and always someone to turn to. Buddies are always there to help you if you feel sad.'
- Pupils feel extremely safe. They are very sure that there is no bullying. They know about different forms of bullying such as cyber-bullying. They know that some internet sites are not safe. Equally, they know that adults will help them should they have any concerns.
- Pupils are also very definite that there is no racism and no homophobia. They say, 'It's wrong to say hurtful things.' The school's records of behavioural and other incidents confirm pupils' views.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength. Pupils respect each other and have positive attitudes. Strong international links, recognised in the school's International Award, develop pupils' advanced understanding of different cultures and faiths.

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

- The headteacher provides strong leadership. The senior leadership team now supports her fully but it is still a little over-dependent on her to initiate and lead changes. Many things have changed for the better in the last 18 months. As a result, the school is better than it was. It is continuing to improve at a good rate. The school has good, manageable plans for the future.
- A crucial change was altering the way teachers check pupils' progress. This now happens twice a term. Teachers have regular meetings with the headteacher to discuss how well each pupil is doing. This means that any pupil who is in danger of falling behind is identified very quickly and given the help they need.
- Teachers are now responsible for the progress their pupils make. The school uses performance management targets well to ensure that all staff are more accountable. These are linked to salary progression. Staff say that the system works well for them.

- The leadership of teaching is a strength. All staff are involved in checking how well pupils are doing.
  - School leaders regularly check teaching quality. They give staff good pointers to make good teaching better. Teachers want to improve their practice. For example, they visit other schools to see different teaching styles and attend different training courses. Teaching is not yet outstanding because these are recent initiatives which have not yet had time to impact fully on teaching techniques, especially in English.
  - School leaders also promote staff's professional development well. The impact is seen in pupils' accelerated progress.
  - As a result of good leadership and management, staffing is much more flexible. It can therefore be used to target support for specific groups of pupils as and when it is needed. This, too, is aiding pupils' good achievement, especially those supported at school action.
  - The local authority gives light touch support to this good school.
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - The governing body is a strength of the school. It has provided stability during periods of change in the leadership and management of the school. Governors are knowledgeable and very experienced. They know the right questions to ask to check that the school is doing everything it should to help every pupils do as well as they can. They ensure that staff and pupils are safe and that attendance is good.
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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>	114274
<b>Local authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	403235

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	221
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Joanne Thorns
<b>Headteacher</b>	Lynn Scott
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 May 2008
<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 386 5975
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