

# King Street Primary School

High Grange Road, Spennymoor, County Durham, DL16 6RA

## Inspection dates

14–15 November 2012

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Although it is much improved, teaching has not been challenging enough over time to ensure pupils make sustained good progress and achieve well.
- Information available from checking pupils' progress is not always used to ensure work is hard enough for pupils.
- Teachers do not always allow pupils enough time to practise their writing in lessons. Marking does not provide clear guidance for improvement.
- Increasingly, lessons are interesting and excite pupils' thinking but, at times, insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to find and work things out for themselves or with a partner.
- The headteacher has an accurate view of the school's strengths but senior leaders do not check rigorously enough on the impact of actions on the school's performance. The rejuvenated governing body is at an early stage of developing its understanding of how to help drive forward and sustain improvement.

### The school has the following strengths

- Since his appointment the headteacher has taken decisive and concerted action to improve the quality of classroom environments, lessons and first-hand experiences for pupils. As a result, there is compelling evidence that many aspects of pupils' learning are improving rapidly.
- Much teaching is now good because staff expectations of what pupils can achieve is much higher than in the past and teachers' assessment more accurate.
- Teaching is well led and staff are clear about what they need to do to further improve their teaching expertise and skill.
- Pupils are happy, safe and confident because they thoroughly enjoy their school life. Behaviour is good and sometimes exemplary. It is characterised by considerate attitudes, politeness and respect for each other.
- Leaders and managers enjoy the full confidence and trust of parents. The strong relationships have helped to raise the level of their children's commitment and improve their attendance, which is now high.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 15 lessons of which four were joint observations with the headteacher. In addition, the inspection team made a number of short visits to lessons and support sessions.
- The inspection team held discussions with pupils, parents, members of the governing body, school staff, including senior leaders and those with responsibilities such as leadership of subjects, the local authority education development partner and the school's professional headteacher partner.
- Inspectors took account of the eight responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and the feedback from parents when collecting their children.
- The inspection team observed the school's work and examined a range of documentation including the school's own records of pupils' current progress, records from the observation of lessons and checking of pupils' work, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Clive Petts, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Tim Nelson

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- King's Street is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding (which is provided to support the learning of pupils who are entitled to free school meals, in the care of the local authority or the children of members of the armed forces) is over twice the national average.
- The number of pupils whose learning needs receive the level of support known as school action is below average. Those supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is three times the national average.
- A much lower than average proportion of pupils is from a range of different minority ethnic groups. None are at an early stage of learning to speak English.
- Higher-than-average proportions of pupils join or leave the school at other than the usual time.
- The school meets the current floor standards which set out the government's minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- The school extends its services in that it provides a breakfast club each day.
- The after-school care is not managed by the governing body, is subject to a separate inspection and will receive its own report which will be published on the Ofsted website.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher were appointed in September 2011 following a protracted period of unsettled leadership.

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

- Increase the amount of teaching that is good or outstanding by:
  - adopting imaginative and thought-provoking practice that excites and arouses the interest of pupils in lessons
  - increasing the opportunities for pupils to find things out for themselves
  - making certain that marking and teaching guide pupils to understand precisely what they need to do to improve their work.
- Make certain that the progress pupils make is rapid and sustained, to boost achievement even more, by:
  - ensuring teachers continuously use information on how well pupils are learning to adapt activities so that they closely match their abilities and needs
  - ensuring activities and tasks constantly challenge pupils' thinking and understanding
  - increasing the quality and range of opportunities in all lessons for pupils, especially boys, to practise their writing skills.
- Improve senior leaders' checking of school performance by:
  - increasing the precision and rigour of checking procedures in order to make certain that actions taken are having the intended impact on improving pupils' performance
  - extending the governors' grasp of how they can help bring about further improvements in the school's performance
  - making certain that plans to improve are accurately and concisely focused on those important areas which will help to encourage further improvements in the quality of lessons.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Pupils' previous underachievement has been eradicated over the past year, but there remain gaps in their skills which mean that their achievement over time is not yet good. Recent test results at the end of Year 6 show standards were above average in reading and mathematics and below average in writing. This is a better picture than in the previous two years when standards were average in mathematics, below average in reading and well below average in writing. Increasing proportions of pupils throughout the school are exceeding what is expected of them.
- Most children start Reception with skills and experiences well below those typically expected for their age. Their communication and number skills are frequently underdeveloped. Children settle quickly, confidently and happily and begin to make good progress. The positive action taken to improve resources, both inside and outdoors, is enriching the quality of learning. Systematic approaches to the teaching of how letters and sounds link ensure that children make good progress in their early reading and writing.
- Although the rate of pupils' progress requires improvement, it is starting to accelerate. It slows a little in Years 1 and 2, but thought-out and interesting approaches to teaching are beginning to speed it up. Progress made by pupils in Year 3 to Year 6 is increasing as teaching becomes more imaginative and more consistently challenging. Pupils are ever more confident using their skills to solve problems.
- Despite the school's recent work, pupils' writing skills, particularly those of boys, still show weaknesses, such as in the accuracy and richness of their vocabulary. In part, this is because pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to practise their writing in other subjects.
- The progress and achievement of pupils supported by pupil premium funding and those with special educational needs are similar to those of their classmates. The improving teaching of early reading and writing is helping to speed up the rate at which pupils of all abilities can learn. More imaginative approaches, such as using characters from Star Wars, are capturing interest and bringing pupils' writing alive.
- Attainment in reading by the age of six is below average. More interesting activities maintain a firm focus on linking sounds and letters to help pupils make sense of new words. Increasingly, younger pupils are using reading in enjoyable ways to discover things for themselves.
- Much headway has been made in nurturing the reading interests of older pupils. They speak enthusiastically about their enjoyment of reading and display good insight into the styles used in a range of novels.
- Parents appreciate just how effectively the school is developing their children's reading, writing and number skills.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Although most of the teaching seen by inspectors was good, it requires improvement overall because it is not yet consistently effective and inspiring enough to move all pupils' learning forward at a sustained, fast pace. The excellent relationships staff have with pupils, and rising expectations of the success pupils can achieve, make a strong contribution to their faster progress and rising achievement.
- An interesting range of visits and visitors and more active, practical approaches in classrooms inspire and motivate pupils so that they want to learn. For example, pupils in Year 4 wrote movingly about the experiences of a soldier, recently returned from active service in Afghanistan, who visited school. This also made a valuable contribution to the pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

- Progress is increasingly rapid and sustained when:
  - pupils are clear about what they are expected to learn and how they are going to learn
  - the work set for pupils is successfully tailored to their individual abilities and needs
  - searching questioning always checks how much pupils have learnt and demands accurate explanations of their ideas and solutions
  - first-hand experiences spark the imagination and thinking of pupils
  - skilful classroom discussion and support continuously add to pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Teaching is less effective when:
  - the challenge and pace of learning in lessons is slower
  - tasks are not set at the correct level for individual pupils and fail to fire their interest
  - marking does not make it clear how to improve and questioning is insufficiently thought-provoking to check pupils' understanding
  - teachers' assessment is not used well enough to set clear, simple and demanding targets for improvement which are shared with pupils
  - pupils do not get sufficient opportunities to work things out for themselves or with a partner.
- The pupils supported by pupil premium funding have benefited from increased and intensive support in lessons and a wider range of interesting first-hand experiences. This is ensuring that such pupils are doing as well as they should.
- The excellent relationships with parents are resulting in a higher level of involvement in their children's learning. This is paying dividends in the school's drive to raise the achievement of pupils even more.

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

- A high quality of care and clear boundaries for behaviour ensure pupils feel happy and secure in school. Pupils' eagerness to learn is evident in the good levels of commitment in lessons. The friendly, family atmosphere in the breakfast club provides a calm, cheerful start to the day.
- Pupils get on well with each other, displaying a well-developed sense of fairness. At times their behaviour is exemplary. Pupils show each other much consideration, kindness and care, and they respond well in an atmosphere of mutual respect. All parents, staff and pupils comment very positively about the friendly, sensible and responsible attitudes of pupils. Pupils report that even minor misbehaviour is very rare in lessons and at playtimes.
- Pupils report that they feel safe and appreciate the high levels of support they receive from staff. They are well aware of how to cope with risk and avoid danger. During break and lunchtime pupils are well supervised and safety-conscious attitudes are encouraged by staff. Pupils show an understanding of what constitutes bullying and confidently discuss what action they would take if they had any worries or concerns.
- Individual pupils whose circumstances might put them at risk are effectively managed and supported. This includes well-judged and targeted support from specialist agencies. In their responses on Parent View all parents value how effectively their children's individual needs are being met.
- The school promotes the benefits of regular attendance exceptionally well. This has led to considerable improvements in punctuality and consistently high attendance levels.

**The leadership and management** **require improvement**

- The headteacher has re-energised the whole school in a short time, after a long period of frequently changing leadership. His high ambitions are shared by all staff and parents. Determined approaches have helped to establish a highly positive atmosphere in the school. Consequently, the school has demonstrated the ability to improve at a fast pace.
- Well-directed training, including the use of local authority specialists, adds to the pace of improvement. Staff performance management targets are firmly linked to improving the quality of lessons, with appropriate rewards for good performance. Robust systems to check pupils' progress and development help to accurately pinpoint gaps in their learning. The information is increasingly used to plan and structure lessons, but not yet consistently so by all teachers.
- Frequent monitoring of the quality of teaching in lessons is accurate. Although teaching is variable between classes, staff react extremely positively to actions intended to accelerate the pace of pupils' progress.
- There is a clear sense of purpose in school practice. Despite this, procedures for obtaining an accurate view of performance are not sharp enough to ensure the school's focus is fully on what is required to improve and that actions have a positive impact on school performance. This hinders the school's ability to carry on improving at a fast pace.
- Staff work hard to ensure that all pupils have an equal chance to succeed. This includes those who arrive part-way through their primary schooling. As a result, gaps are narrowing between how well different groups are doing, for example between those who are eligible for the pupil premium and other pupils. The high quality of care and support ensures that pupils' and family needs are quickly identified and addressed.
- The improving curriculum provides a developing range of interesting experiences for pupils. The increasingly imaginative approaches, such as when older pupils wrote about the fears and anxieties of child evacuees in the Second World War, are helping to liven up lessons. Yet, at times, opportunities are missed to develop writing skills in subjects across the curriculum.
- The Rights Respecting initiative helps pupils to model their relationships and it underpins their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements, with much best practice supporting the high quality of care, intervention and support for pupils.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Crucial changes in the composition of the governing body have strengthened the range of members' expertise and skills. They share the headteacher's high ambitions. The newly appointed Chair has ensured the governing body holds the school's performance to account in positive ways, for example in checking the use of pupil premium funding and establishing controls to ensure financial stability. Governors now appreciate why pupils have underperformed in the past and recognise the work that remains to be done. Decisive action has been taken to strengthen procedures to monitor staff performance. The governing body works competently with the local authority, making good use of available expertise to improve what the school offers. However, opportunities are sometimes missed to extend the use of local authority specialists to sharpen up the school's monitoring and evaluative skills.

## 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>	130946
<b>Local authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	406396

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

<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>	173
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Christine Parkinson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Christopher Horn
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	31 January 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01388 816078
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