

Beamish Primary School

Co-Operative Villas, Beamish, Stanley, DH9 0QN

Inspection dates

23 November 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		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress, many from starting points which are well below those typically expected for their age.
- Teaching is good and some is outstanding. All teachers have high expectations and are successful in engaging pupils' interest and helping them to make good progress in their work.
- The effective teaching of the links between letters and sounds enables pupils of all abilities to develop good reading skills.
- Pupils enjoy school. They behave well and develop positive attitudes to learning. They feel safe in school, help each other at playtimes and in their lessons, and are polite and well mannered. Attendance is above average.
- Systems for evaluating learning are rigorous and used well by teachers to guide planning. All teachers know how well their pupils are doing and respond promptly to their differing needs.
- The school takes very good care of its pupils so that all feel extremely safe. Pupils are insistent that there is no bullying and that adults help and support them. Parents agree with this view.
- The headteacher, who is extremely well supported by other leaders and the governing body, has high expectations for the school. Together they have been successful in improving teaching and, thus, raising pupils' achievement.
- Teaching is monitored rigorously. Teachers are held to account for pupil progress. Targets and on-going training to strengthen teachers' performance are closely linked to school priorities.
- The governing body knows the school well. It provides a good level of support and challenge to school leaders.
- The school is highly valued by parents.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In some lessons more-able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged to enable them to attain the higher levels at both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
- Teaching is not yet strong enough to promote outstanding progress. In mathematics there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills to problem solving activities across a range of subjects.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They observed eight lessons of which two were joint observations with the headteacher. In addition, the inspectors made a number of short visits to lessons and listened to pupils read.
- Meetings were held with one group of pupils, the Vice Chair of the Governing Body, senior leaders from both the school and its federated partner and a representative from the local authority. Short discussions were held with pupils at break times and lunch time. Discussions were also held with parents who brought their children to school.
- The inspectors took account of four responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and took into account the work in pupils' books, the school's own data on pupils' current progress, the school's improvement plans, planning and monitoring information, minutes of the governing body meetings, records relating to behaviour and attendance and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Anthony Kingston, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Julie McGrane

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This primary school is much smaller than the average size primary school.
- There has been a high turnover of teaching staff since the previous inspection.
- The school does not provide any other alternative provision for pupils either on a full or part-time basis.
- The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school other than at the usual time is above average.
- The proportion of pupils' eligible for pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and the children of forces families, is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also average.
- Almost all pupils are White British.
- The school's most recent results cannot be compared to the current government floor standards, which set the minimum standards for pupils' attainment and progress, because there were not enough pupils to make such a comparison meaningful.
- The school has been placed in a hard federation with Pelton Community Primary School.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
 - ensuring that activities are matched precisely to the needs of more-able pupils so that there is always enough challenge in the work presented in lessons
 - ensuring that pupils have more well planned opportunities to apply their calculation skills to real life problem solving activities across all subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Levels of attainment at the end of each key stage vary year on year. This is because of the small numbers of pupils within each year group, their different composition and, most significantly, the very high level of pupils who leave or join the school at times other than at the beginning of the year.
- Recent trends show that the rate at which pupils make progress is increasing rapidly. This is reflected in pupils' improving attainment which, by the end of Key Stage 2, is now average. Information on current pupils shows that this trend is set to continue. However, the proportion of more-able pupils achieving the higher levels at both key stages is below average, especially in writing and mathematics.
- Most children start school with skills well below those typically expected for their age. Good induction procedures help the children to settle quickly. They respond very positively to the high levels of care and support and the wide range of exciting activities provided for them indoors and outside. As a result, by the time they join Year 1, although attainment is still below that expected for their age, they have made good progress.
- Reading is a priority throughout the school. Pupils tackle unfamiliar words confidently and read with increasing fluency and expression. The levels of challenge are well matched to pupils' abilities and they quickly move on to gain personal enjoyment from reading books independently and discussing content in small groups with adults. Pupils' enjoyment of reading grows securely and rapidly. This was exemplified by one Year 6 pupil who said, 'There are parts to every book when I just want to jump into the pages and be a part of the adventure.'
- The proportion of pupils who make expected progress is above average, particularly in reading and mathematics. This includes disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those who are eligible for the pupil premium. The imaginative use of booster classes and one-to-one support for pupils funded through the pupil premium makes a very positive contribution to their good progress and ensures that they improve at a faster rate than that of other similar groups nationally.

The quality of teaching is good

- Recently appointed teachers have brought new strengths that have added to the overall quality of teaching. This is now good, with some examples of outstanding teaching.
- A well structured system for teaching letters and sounds is securely in place. Reading is promoted very effectively through individual support for pupils who need it and guided reading sessions which have increased their love of reading.
- In the best lessons no time is wasted. Introductions are brief and focused, and explanations are clear and precise. For example, in a Year 3 class, the teacher and teaching assistant each focused on groups with different needs. Within minutes of entering the room, each had pupils working enthusiastically on meaningful problem solving activities well matched to their needs. They questioned, challenged and consolidated the learning of each group without putting the learning of others on hold. This promoted good understanding and progress, especially for the more-able pupils who relished having time to solve challenging problems and explain the strategies they used.
- Systems for evaluating learning are rigorous and used well by teachers to guide planning and match activities to pupils' needs. However, sometimes more-able pupils do not make as much progress as they should because they are not given enough time to engage in sufficiently challenging work.
- Skilled and committed teaching assistants work effectively with pupils who have special educational needs. They provide targeted support for groups in the classroom and for individuals in quiet work-bases around school.
- Learning targets are clear and most pupils understand what they do well and what they need to do to improve. However, more-able pupils are not always spurred on to reach the aspirational targets

set for them because the work is not sufficiently challenging.

- The quality of marking is consistently good across the school. It celebrates pupils' successes, tells them the steps needed to improve their work and move on to the next level and encourages them to respond to teachers' comments.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The school places the pupils at the centre of all it does and has high expectations of how well they conduct themselves. As a result, pupils are polite, well mannered, welcoming to visitors, get on well together and demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. They enjoy school and this is reflected in above average attendance.
- All parents who offered an opinion said that behaviour was good. They justifiably believe that their children are safe at school and are well looked after. One parent said, 'The teachers care for everyone and treat them as individuals. They're amazing and always go that extra mile to help any child or any parent.' Pupils share this view.
- Pupils are proud of their school. This was exemplified by one pupil who declared that, 'any friend of the school is a friend of mine.' Pupils are eager to help by accepting extra responsibilities such as becoming members of the active school council.
- Teachers manage behaviour extremely well and resolve issues swiftly and quietly. Relationships between pupils and adults are excellent. Pupils are carefully nurtured as individuals and those with behavioural difficulties learn how to regulate their own behaviour. They are insistent that there is no bullying because they are taught to care for one another. As one pupil said, 'it's easy because just one smile can make a new friend.'
- Pupils feel safe and know how to keep themselves safe when for example, they are on the internet.
- The work of the Parent Support Adviser has been pivotal in enhancing communication between home and school. She has worked with the school to improve pupils' attendance as well as having set times to meet parents and provide them with 'drop-in' sessions to help them sort out any difficulties which could adversely affect their child's performance at school.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides the school with exceptionally strong and highly effective leadership. The checking of the school's performance is accurate and uncompromising in identifying what needs to be improved. All the issues raised at the previous inspection have been dealt with successfully. The quality of teaching has improved from satisfactory to good.
- Leaders and governors have high aspirations for the school. These are reflected in the challenging targets and very effective collaboration with the partner school to improve the quality of teaching from good to outstanding and further raise attainment. For example, leaders use the information gained from the rigorous monitoring to promote and develop outstanding teaching. Teachers support each other extremely well across the two schools and share a genuine culture of exchanging ideas and expertise.
- Pupils' progress is checked regularly and carefully. Teachers use this information to identify pupils not making rapid enough progress and to provide well targeted support.
- The promotion of equal opportunities and tackling discrimination is very evident. For example, pupil premium funding is used effectively to provide additional support. This is making a significant difference to the progress of eligible pupils and so the gap between their attainment and that of other pupils is closing.
- The theme based curriculum is firmly based on the teaching of skills and is enriched by a wide range of special events, a close working relationship with Beamish Outdoor Museum, visits and visitors. These bring added relevance and purpose to pupils' learning and promote both engagement and enjoyment. There are many well considered opportunities for pupils to use their

reading and writing skills in other subjects but too few for them to apply their mathematical skills to problem solving activities across other subjects.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is provided for well. For example, all pupils in Key Stage 2 are taught to read music and play the trumpet.
- The local authority provides good support and has worked with the school, particularly in raising achievement.
- The school works exceptionally well with parents. They hold the headteacher in very high regard. All parents who volunteered their views expressed their complete faith in the school's leadership and staff.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body has a good understanding of the strengths of the school and where it needs to improve further. Members use data to ask pertinent questions and hold leaders to account for pupils' achievements and for the performance of staff. Governors ensure that performance is linked closely to the standards expected of teachers, to improving achievement and to the pay scales that teachers are on. The achievement of pupils is monitored closely, including those known to be eligible for the pupil premium, to make sure that any underachievement is identified and successfully tackled. Safeguarding has a high priority and the governing body ensures that statutory requirements are met.
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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

Unique reference number	114021
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	405494

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	75
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Catherine Irwin
Headteacher	Wendy Edwards
Date of previous school inspection	11 January 2011
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