

John F Kennedy Primary School

Station Road, Columbia, Washington, Tyne and Wear, NE38 7AR

Inspection dates 28–29 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.

- The school's aim 'to foster a love of life and learning' is put into practice in every area of school life.
- Pupils achieve well at school. They make good progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics. Last year pupils exceeded the nationally expected standards in their tests, due in part to strong teaching in Year 6.
- The quality of teaching is good. Some is outstanding. Teachers use different teaching methods and plan interesting and lively lessons. As a result, pupils get on well with their work. Teachers mark work in a way that helps pupils do better next time.
- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and this supports their good progress. They are courteous and polite, both with each other and with adults. They have a very good understanding of how to stay safe.
- The headteacher and other senior leaders have a clear view of how successful the school can be. They have been making steady and consistent progress in improving teaching.
- Systems to check the quality of teaching and pupils' progress are good. The plans put in place as a result of the findings are effective. As a result, the school is improving.
- Teachers notice individual pupils or groups of pupils who are falling behind and use small groups and other adults to help these pupils make good progress.
- The school has very positive relationships with parents and involves them effectively in helping their children learn.
- The curriculum is exciting. Music and sports help 'foster a love of learning'.
- One pupil said that he 'loves coming to school because everyone cares here'. This is a view typical of many parents, staff and pupils.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not check the progress of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage well enough to ensure that the activities planned for them meet their individual needs. As a result, progress is slower in Nursery and Reception classes than the rest of the school.
- Sometimes teachers do not set tasks which help all pupils to learn well, whatever their ability.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to improve their writing skills by practising them in different subjects.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors held meetings with senior staff, groups of pupils, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors looked at a range of evidence including: the school’s improvement plan; the school’s own evaluation of its work; the school’s data for tracking pupils’ progress; the work pupils were doing in their books; and the school’s documentation relating to safeguarding.
- The inspectors observed teaching in 26 lessons and listened to pupils read from different year groups. They observed assemblies, playtime, parts of lessons and small group work.
- The headteacher conducted joint observations with the inspectors. The inspectors also observed her reporting back to teachers on the quality of learning and pupils’ achievement in lessons.
- The inspectors took into account the responses to the school’s own surveys. There were 22 responses from parents to the online questionnaire (Parent View). They also took into account responses from the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Michael Wardle, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Peter Eeva

Additional Inspector

Deborah Wylie

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an above-average-sized primary school.
- An above-average proportion of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of pupils identified with special educational needs through school action is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is slightly below average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- In 2012 the school exceeded the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- Since the time of the previous inspection the school has appointed a new deputy headteacher.
- The school has achieved the following awards, among others: Artsmark Gold; Anti Bullying Award; and the Basic Skills Award.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - ensuring that the procedures for checking the progress children are making improve the types of activities available for each individual child
 - ensuring that teachers use searching questions to get the children thinking and to see how much they have understood
 - developing the independence of children by providing a rich variety of resources.
- Strengthen teaching further so that all pupils make outstanding, rather than good, progress by:
 - ensuring that the work teachers set helps pupils to learn well, whatever their ability
 - making sure that pupils learn quickly by getting them started on their tasks straight away
 - giving pupils more opportunities to write at length and to practise their writing in different subjects
 - increasing the chances pupils have to think for themselves and to discover new ideas.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Almost all parents rightly regard their children as making good progress and lesson observations during the inspection confirm this. Pupils' attainment was above average in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they left Year 6 in 2012.
- Most children start school with skills that are below those typically expected for their age. In particular, their communication skills, their mathematical skills and their creative development are less strong than is typically found.
- The caring environment in the Early Years Foundation Stage and some of the activities on offer for the children help them make progress. However, teachers do not consistently match activities to the abilities of the individual children and, as a result, their progress is inconsistent. By the time they start Year 1 they have made some progress, particularly in their creative development.
- In Key Stage 1 pupils make good progress. Teacher assessment in Year 2 confirms that pupils reach standards that are at least broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Progress continues to be strong throughout Key Stage 2 and in Year 6 pupils' progress accelerates due to outstanding teaching. Over the course of the time they are in school, pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- Most pupils made the progress expected of them in 2012. Several made even better progress than this in mathematics and reading. The school is now focusing on further developing pupils' writing skills, because pupils are not given enough opportunities to write at length and to practise their writing in different subjects.
- Good systems are in place to check the progress of pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 and the school ensures that, where there are any gaps in knowledge, these are dealt with by way of extra work or small group work. The school checks the progress of pupils with special educational needs and those with disabilities. These pupils make good progress because teaching and small group work meets their needs. The progress of pupils supported by the pupil premium is also good when compared with similar pupils nationally.
- In lessons pupils make good progress and enjoy their learning. The learning environment, well structured lessons and the attentive behaviour of the pupils help lessons proceed well.
- Pupils enjoy reading. Younger pupils are taught well how to link letters to sounds to help them read unfamiliar words. This is also the case in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They develop well as readers, so that in Year 6 many pupils read fluently and with confidence. The school chooses the types of books to be used in lessons well so that both boys and girls enjoy reading.

The quality of teaching is good

- Most of the teaching observed during the inspection was good, and some outstanding practice was seen. Inspectors agree with the overwhelming majority of parents who say that teaching is good.
- Good relationships and the way teachers organise their classrooms help pupils to learn well. In lessons teachers make it clear what the pupils are going to learn and they use different teaching methods to ensure all pupils get on with their work. Teachers mark work in a way which helps pupils know how to do better next time.
- Teachers also use information about how well pupils have learned to help them plan future lessons. In school, when individual pupils or groups of pupils find a certain activity too hard and need extra help, teaching assistants and other adults help them to understand and make good progress.
- In the very best lessons pupils buzz with excitement due to the expert way in which the teachers plan and teach their lessons. In these lessons the work teachers set helps all pupils to learn well,

whatever their ability.

- In a Year 6 literacy lesson pupils were fully involved in constructing a paragraph about deserts. There was an excellent level of independence among the pupils and they were thinking hard to solve problems that were set for them by their teacher. In this session pupils were learning very quickly and were getting on with their tasks straight away.
- In a Year 2 mathematics lesson pupils were grappling with a difficult concept as they were beginning to learn how to multiply. Because the teacher's explanation was so clear, and the lesson was planned to meet the needs of all pupils, they made very strong progress. Pupils say that lessons are often this good.
- Not all teaching is as strong as this, however. Sometimes the work teachers set does not help pupils of all abilities make progress and sometimes it takes too long for the teacher to get the pupils started on their tasks, due to explanations being too long. Pupils also do not have enough opportunities to work things out for themselves.
- Teachers in the Early Years Foundation Stage do not make enough use of information about how well the individual children are learning to help plan future lessons and activities. The questions teachers ask do not focus enough on identifying exactly what the children know and what they need to do next. Activities and resources on offer do not encourage independence enough.
- Teaching assistants support pupils with special educational needs and pupils with disabilities well, both in the classroom and in small groups. As a result, these pupils make good progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Parents overwhelmingly agree that their children are safe at school and that behaviour is good.
- Pupils are well behaved both around school and in lessons. They are courteous and respectful to each other and to other adults. As a result, the school is a calm and orderly place.
- Pupils have good attitudes to their learning. In class they are attentive to the teacher and work very well with each other. They behave well and get on with their tasks. Where teaching sparks their imagination, they concentrate well on the task and make outstanding progress.
- Many pupils are given responsibilities on the school council and in doing practical tasks around school. They play well together at breaktime and lunchtime, and if any unkind behaviour does occur pupils say it is dealt with swiftly by adults. Some of the older pupils help keep younger ones busy and safe at breaktimes. One girl was organising the outdoor games and toys, and was leading a group in 'Simon says ...'
- Pupils have a good awareness of different types of bullying, including prejudice and cyber-bullying, about which they have few concerns. They know that any incidents will be dealt with quickly and effectively by the school. The way in which the pupils accept one another supports those who speak English as an additional language to feel included and to develop their linguistic skills.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and, as a result, attendance has improved and is now broadly average. Pupils are punctual to school and to lessons. Due to strong systems and processes at school, pupils respond well to guidance on how to behave properly. As a result, exclusions are rare.
- During their time at school pupils become more mature and take more responsibility for their behaviour. However, sometimes children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and pupils in Key Stage 1 are less focused than is typically found. They are not always given enough opportunities to develop independence, although their behaviour is good.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has been working steadily to create a strong team of senior leaders and shows determination in driving forward improvements. She has high ambitions for her school.

- There are good procedures for checking the quality of teaching and how well teaching is helping pupils learn. There are also good systems in place for checking the rate of progress of the pupils. This is then used to improve teaching and to identify small groups who need extra support. As a result, the quality of teaching is improving, as is the rate of progress for the pupils in school. These systems are less developed in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
 - The school has an accurate view of its performance, and long-term plans for continued improvements are effective.
 - Senior leaders use the arrangements to check the performance of teachers successfully to challenge areas of underperformance. As a result, teachers currently at school meet the Teachers Standards comfortably. Training provided for teachers to help them continue developing their skills is linked directly to these performance arrangements.
 - The curriculum helps the pupils to develop their skills and capabilities and prepares them well to live in a diverse society. Extra-curricular opportunities and clubs give the pupils opportunities to get involved in a range of exciting activities. Musical opportunities are now rich and varied and are at the centre of school life. For example, all pupils in Year 2 are given the opportunity to learn to play the violin.
 - The school works in partnership with parents in order to support pupils in their social and academic development. During the inspection many parents came into school to see a class assembly where they heard about the mining tradition in the North East, and pupils read, sang and danced with confidence about related topics and themes.
 - Parents are happy with the leadership of the school and agree that the school keeps their children safe. The school's procedures for checking that pupils are safe are in line with expectations and give no cause for concern.
 - The local authority provides light touch support to this good school.
 - The school's ability to continue making improvements is good. The track record of the headteacher and her leadership team over the past year, in particular the way in which she has dealt with staffing changes and difficulties and still improved achievement, indicate that the school can continue to improve.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is fully committed to the school. Members are aware of the strengths and areas for improvement for the school, including the quality of teaching. They have ensured that training given to teachers is directly linked to efforts to improve the quality of provision. They have a good understanding of the progress pupils are making. They ensure that the arrangements to check the performance of teachers are well managed, so that salaries and promotion generally reflect performance. They have supported the headteacher in her desire to strengthen her team of senior leaders.
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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	108825
Local authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	401016

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	442
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Frank Carroll
Headteacher	Mandy Tellyn
Date of previous school inspection	21 April 2010
Telephone number	0191 2193745
Fax number	0191 2193745
Email address	jfk.primary@schools.sunderland.gov.uk

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