

Stannington First School

Church Road, Stannington , Morpeth, NE61 6HJ

Inspection dates

7 December 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. Their attainment is typically above that expected for their age at the end of Year 4.
- Teaching is good, with some outstanding teaching in the Key Stage 2 class. Work is well planned to be hard enough for all pupils and helps pupils enjoy learning. As a result, they make rapid progress in reading and mathematics.
- The curriculum offers pupils exciting learning activities, chances to be creative and to follow their own interests. It helps pupils see how subjects link together and how their learning is used in real-life situations.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is good.
- The headteacher has a detailed view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and a clear understanding of how to improve the quality of teaching and raise pupils' achievement.
- She is well supported and rigorously challenged by the governing body. Together, they have taken decisive action to tackle weak teaching. As a result, teaching and pupils' achievement have improved.
- Pupils' behaviour is good; they say they feel very safe. They play a large part in helping each other to play well together and in suggesting improvements to the school. Attendance is above average.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Information about pupils' progress is not used well enough to provide leaders with a clear understanding of how much progress pupils are making in different classes.
- In some lessons, teachers do not plan work that allows pupils to move on quickly to new areas of learning.
- Recent improvements in marking and target-setting have not had time to raise achievement. Pupils are not given time to act upon advice given by their teachers.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to use their writing skills in English and in different subjects. As a result, there is slower progress in writing.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors had meetings with staff, groups of pupils, members of the governing body and with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors looked at a range of evidence including: the school's improvement plan; the school's data relating to pupils' progress; monitoring reports; the work pupils were doing in their books; and the school's documentation relating to safeguarding.
- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in three lessons taught by three teachers and listened to groups of pupils read. In addition, the inspection team made a number of short visits to lessons.
- The headteacher conducted two joint observations of lessons with the inspectors. The inspectors also observed the headteacher reporting back to teachers on their findings regarding the quality of learning and pupils' achievement in lessons.
- The inspectors met some parents informally at the start of the school day. They took into account the 23 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). They also took into account the views expressed by a parent during a telephone conversation. .
- Five staff completed questionnaires and the responses were analysed.

Inspection team

Gordon Potter, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Anne Humble	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is much smaller than the average sized primary school. Pupils leave at the end of Year 4 to attend middle school.
- Almost all pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is well below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is well below average.
- The proportions of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are above average.
- There is a breakfast club and many after-school clubs which are managed by the governing body.
- Since September 2011, the Early Years Foundation Stage class has included nursery-age children in the Community Nursery, which is managed by the governing body.
- There have been significant changes to staffing since the last inspection. The Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 teachers have been in post since September 2011 and September 2012, respectively.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to outstanding, to further raise attainment and rates of pupils' progress, especially in writing, by:
 - offering more opportunities for pupils to improve their writing skills by practising them more regularly in English and in different subjects
 - improving marking and target-setting further so that pupils know clearly how to take the next steps in their learning and have time to act upon advice
 - ensuring that in all lessons teachers offer pupils opportunities to move on quickly to new areas of learning
 - making better use of the school's information about how well pupils are working so that leaders can accurately measure pupils' progress in different classes and set targets for teachers and pupils to ensure even faster progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Cohorts vary in this small school. Most children start school with skills that are in line with those typically expected for their age. Children do well in the Early Years Foundation Stage. In 2010 and 2011, pupils lost ground as a result of weak teaching in Key Stage 1 and attainment was below average at the end of Year 2.
- As a result of improvements to the quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 the trend of declining standards in that key stage has been reversed. In 2012, pupils in Year 2 made good progress to make up some of the ground lost in their previous learning and their attainment improved to average. As proof of this on-going improvement, pupils currently in Year 2 are on track to achieve above-average attainment.
- At the end of Year 4 pupils' attainment is typically above that expected for their age in reading and mathematics and in-line in writing. However, in 2012, attainment at the end of Year 4 was in-line with that expected for their age. Good teaching had helped these pupils make up some of the ground lost in Key Stage 1. Outstanding teaching in the Key Stage 2 class is now ensuring that pupils currently in Year 4 are rapidly making up for ground they also lost in Key Stage 1.
- Leaders have acted decisively to improve the quality of teaching ensuring that progress is consistently good.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, including those at school action plus and with a statement of special educational needs attain higher standards than similar pupils across the country and make good progress from their starting points.
- There are a very small number of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium. They have typically attained standards which are below similar pupils across the country and well below all pupils. Outstanding teaching in Key Stage 2 is now helping these pupils to make good progress and to close the gap.
- Inspection evidence shows that progress in reading is good. This is a result of good teaching of how to link sounds and letters to help pupils read words they are not used to and a drive to help pupils enjoy books and read more in school and at home.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The quality of teaching is consistently good and, on occasion, outstanding. Teachers make lessons interesting and pupils learn quickly. Teachers ask questions which encourage pupils to explain their ideas and use their answers to reshape work during lessons.
- Outstanding teaching in Year 3 and 4 helped all pupils make rapid progress in their mental mathematics skills. The teacher planned work that stretched all pupils, asked questions that were very well targeted at individuals and used quizzes and smart board technology to make sure pupils were thoroughly involved in their learning. The teaching assistant supported the less-able pupils highly effectively so that they were helped to make excellent progress.
- Teachers use exciting topics, allow pupils the chance to talk together to plan their ideas and give them the time to concentrate on developing their skills. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 were excited by making moving woodpeckers in art and design and carried this excitement over into writing instructions about how to make them. They checked their own and other pupils' writing and made good progress.
- While there are good opportunities like this for pupils to write about work in other subjects, pupils do not do enough writing in English or across a range of subjects.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the teacher plans work that excites children and allows them to follow their interests. They talked about a visit to the Post Office, the snow and ice and the Christmas story. All adults questioned children skilfully and probingly so that mistakes were quickly addressed. For example, children were helped to understand that ice is frozen water and that King Herod was not a kind man.

- Recent improvements to marking and target-setting have not had time to raise achievement. Teachers give pupils too little time to act upon any advice they give. While pupils have targets which help them know how to improve, they are less clear about the level of their work and how their targets help them reach the next level.
- Teachers make sure that work set is at the right level to help pupils. However, they do not always move pupils on quickly enough to the next area of learning so that they can make even more rapid progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

- Pupils are happy in school and enjoy their lessons because they are excited by their learning. They respect one another, work and play well together and are very polite to adults. They are very keen to talk about their school and the many visits and visitors they have. They are eager to show their work and are proud of their outstanding art and excellent singing.
- Pupils say that behaviour is good in their lessons and any minor misbehaviour is quickly dealt with by their teachers. Indeed, much excellent behaviour was evident in lessons observed during the inspection as well as around the school.
- Inspectors analysed the school's records of behaviour which showed that behaviour is consistently good. This is as a result of the successful use of clear expectations and the pupils' own clear understanding of how to behave well. As a result, there have been no exclusions in recent years.
- Pupils feel very safe and they are aware of different forms of bullying. They say that any form of bullying, including name-calling, is rare and when it does happen they are confident that it will be quickly dealt with. They know that older pupils, as well as the teachers and other adults in school, will help with any problems.
- Playground buddies and house captains help pupils play safely and enjoyably together and they develop social skills in the breakfast and after-school clubs. Pupils say that the school council and their very own school inspectors listen to their concerns and ideas. They discuss school rules with teachers and members talk to school leaders on safety issues that worry pupils. The council has helped to plan and raise funds to make the playground better and is involved in the appointment of new teachers.
- Attendance in the last school year was badly affected by a winter virus. It is typically above average. It is improving further as a result of recent initiatives by the school to encourage pupils to attend. It is also improving because pupils are excited by their lessons and so they love coming to school.

The leadership and management

are good

- In a relatively short time, the headteacher has had a significant impact on improving the school. She has been successful in reversing a decline in attainment, ensuring that pupils now make good progress in mathematics and reading. Clear strategies have been introduced to improve writing, although they have not had time to ensure that progress is as rapid in writing as it is in reading and mathematics.
- This improvement is as a result of a distinct understanding of how to improve teaching and a determination to get rid of that which is weaker. Along with regular and rigorous observations of lessons, this has had a significant impact on improving the quality of teaching and is helping pupils make faster progress. The headteacher gives clear advice about how teachers can improve and this advice is carefully linked to training programmes which help teachers to become better.
- The headteacher has an accurate picture of the school's strengths and relative weaknesses, has developed high expectations among all staff and strengthened the staff team. All teachers are determined to make the school even better and willingly accept opportunities to develop the

school further. For example, new teachers have taken on responsibility for the school's systems for tracking pupils' progress and the development of the Forest School.

- They astutely know what needs to be done to make the school better and have rapidly developed skills in planning improvements and checking that they are successful. The school's view about its own performance is therefore accurate and offers clear and appropriate areas for development.
- Performance management of staff is clearly focussed on raising attainment and improving the quality of teaching. Staff are clear that they will only be rewarded when their pupils have done as well as they should have done. However, information about pupils' progress is not used well enough to provide leaders with a clear understanding of how much progress pupils are making in different classes. As a result, leaders do not set targets for teachers and pupils which are demanding enough to ensure that pupils' progress becomes even more rapid.
- Funding has been used to improve the basic skills of those pupils eligible for the pupil premium. The gap between them and all pupils across the country is closing. This shows the school's commitment to promoting equal opportunities and tackling discrimination.
- At its best, the curriculum catches pupils' interest. There are many opportunities across school which help pupils to see the links which can be made in learning in different subjects.
- In addition, there are numerous chances for pupils to develop their spiritual awareness and to appreciate the natural world, especially through the school's Forest School. They also learn to appreciate the wonderful things, such as music, art and literature that humans have created, through visits to the theatre and working with African drummers and local artists. The local authority has provided successful support in legal and personnel matters. It has also provided advice on how to improve the teaching of mathematics and English and promote developments in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Such advice has helped to improve teaching and pupils' attainment and progress.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has extremely clear procedures to hold the school to account. Governors carry out routine assessments of the overall provision, including how the pupil-premium funding is helping pupils to achieve better. This gives them a very clear view of the strengths and weaknesses. They are very involved in the life of the school, helping pupils in their learning, and monitoring teaching and areas of the curriculum. They ensure that the school fulfils its statutory responsibilities for safeguarding. All staff have been vetted and are trained appropriately to keep pupils safe and free from harm. The governing body understands data, has rigorous procedures to check on pupils' achievement and on the budget. As a result, it has effectively removed a deficit. With the headteacher, they have taken decisive action to tackle weak teaching and establish a core of good and outstanding teachers, whose performance is clearly assessed and whose training needs are effectively met. As a result, there have been improvements in teaching, pupils' progress and leadership in recent years.

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	122228
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	406082

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	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	73
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Hepton
Headteacher	Helen Stokoe
Date of previous school inspection	7 October 2010
Telephone number	01670 789276
Fax number	-
Email address	admin@stannington.northumberland.sch.uk

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