

Blackhall Colliery Primary School

Middle Street, Blackhall Primary, Harlepool County Durham, TS27 4NA

Inspection dates

18–19 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		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding; they feel exceptionally safe as a result of extremely friendly and respectful relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils are always polite and determined to do well in their work.
- Pupils make good progress from their starting points which are well below those typically expected for their age. Their attainment is slightly below average at the end of Year 6.
- Teaching is good across school, with some outstanding teaching in Years 5 and 6. Teachers help pupils enjoy learning and make rapid progress. Outstanding teaching helps pupils become confident learners who take responsibility for their own work and thrive on investigating and researching together.
- The curriculum offers pupils exciting learning activities and chances to be creative. It helps pupils see how subjects link together, offers opportunities for writing in all subjects and chances to use their mathematical skills in real-life problem-solving activities. There is a vibrant learning atmosphere in school.
- The headteacher has a detailed view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. She is well supported and challenged by the governing body and skilfully assisted by the deputy headteacher. Together, they have taken decisive action to tackle weak teaching. As a result, teaching and pupils' achievement have improved.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The school does not make enough use of information about progress to set targets for teachers and pupils that would ensure even faster progress and higher attainment.
- Occasionally, teachers do not explain what pupils are supposed to be learning or how to be successful in their work clearly enough.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors had meetings with staff, groups of pupils, a member of the Governing Body and with a representative from the local authority. The lead inspector also spoke to the Chair of the Governing Body by telephone.
- 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 fourteen lessons taught by eleven teachers and listened to a group of pupils read. In addition, the inspection team made a number of short visits to lessons.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher conducted four joint observations of lessons with the inspectors. The inspectors also observed senior leaders reporting back to teachers on their findings regarding the quality of learning and pupils’ achievement in lessons.
- The inspectors took into account the ten responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and one letter received from a parent.
- Nine staff completed questionnaires and the responses were analysed.

Inspection team

Gordon Potter, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

John Pattinson

Additional Inspector

Zoe Westley

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is an average sized primary school.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is average.
- The proportions of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are well above average.
- There is a breakfast club and many after-school clubs which are managed by the headteacher and run voluntarily by staff.
- A Parent and Toddler group, One Point, operates in the school. It is subject to a separate inspection.
- The school meets the current government floor standards which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher both work in school on 0.6 basis, sharing one day each week in school.

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, by:
 - sharing existing outstanding practice
 - ensuring that teachers make clear to pupils what they are going to learn and how to do well
 - 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 and higher attainment.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Most children start school with skills that are well below those typically expected for their age. Children do well in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that they start Year 1 with skills which have improved but which are below average for their age.
- As a result of improvements in the quality of teaching, children now make good progress in Key Stage 1. As a result, attainment at the end of Year 2 is now average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- At the end of Year 6 attainment for all pupils, including those of White British heritage has risen and is now slightly below average, with an increasing proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels. In recent years pupils have made faster progress in Years 5 and 6 to make up for some weaker progress in earlier years. Improvements in teaching across the school ensure that progress is faster than in previous years and is now consistently good. These improvements have not yet had time to raise attainment at the end of Year 6.
- Pupils with special educational needs attain lower standards than similar pupils across the country. However, they make good progress from their starting points as a result of work that is well suited to their abilities, good support from teaching assistants and some excellent teaching in Year 6.
- Pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium now attain standards at the end of Year 2 which are in line with similar pupils across the country in reading and writing and above in mathematics. At the end of Year 6 they attain standards which are below similar pupils across the country. However, the gap in achievement is closing between them and similar pupils and all pupils across the country. Again, improvements in their attainment in Key Stage 1 have not yet had time to help them close the gap fully by the end of Year 6.
- 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 good and, on occasion, outstanding. Teachers make sure that work is set at the right level for pupils of all abilities, ask questions which encourage pupils to explain their ideas and use their answers to reshape work during lessons. Lessons are interesting, involve pupils in finding out things for themselves and pupils learn quickly.
- Teachers make it clear to pupils what they will learn and how they will know if they have been successful. Pupils say that they find this approach very helpful and they check their work carefully as they are doing it. Occasionally, teachers do not make the criteria for being successful clear enough; pupils are unclear about what they are learning and progress slows.
- A clear, successful strategy to improve reading and writing is to use fiction as a stimulus for topic work. For example, outstanding teaching of 'Boy' and 'A Christmas Carol' in Years 5 and 6 encouraged pupils to write about their own lives and how Scrooge's character changes. They made outstanding progress in their writing. Excellent approaches of this kind are used across the school and pupils have many opportunities to write across a range of subjects.
- In the other Year 6 class, outstanding teaching encouraged pupils to investigate together so they could find out and write about an alien invasion of the village. Pupils were excited by the activity and made excellent progress in researching, problem-solving and speaking and listening, as well as writing.
- The curriculum also gives plenty of opportunities for pupils to practise their mathematics skills in real-life, problem-solving activities. For example, in the Early Years Foundation Stage, after the teacher had helped children understand the idea of more than and less than, children practised their skills in a range of tasks. There is also good teaching of linking sounds and letters (phonics)

and writing through a wide range of engaging activities, both indoors and outdoors, which help children to thrive in all aspects of learning.

- Pupils' work is regularly marked and this marking helpfully tells pupils how successful they have been in their work and how to improve it; teachers give pupils time to act upon any advice they give. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 know the level of their work and in all classes pupils have clear targets which will help them take the next steps in their learning and reach the next level. However, targets could be even more rigorous to help pupils make faster progress and have higher attainment.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils are extremely happy in school and fully enjoy their lessons because they are excited by their learning. They respect one another, work and play extremely well together and are exceptionally polite to adults. They are very keen to talk about their school and are proud of the success they – and their school cook – have had in competitions.
- Pupils say that behaviour is excellent in their lessons and any minor misbehaviour is quickly dealt with by their teachers. Indeed, excellent behaviour was evident in lessons observed during the inspection as well as around the school. Even in those few lessons where learning was less exciting, pupils were determined to do their best and strived to learn.
- Inspectors analysed the school's records of behaviour which showed that behaviour has improved significantly in the past two years. This is as a result of the successful use of clear expectations, a clear and consistent system of rewards and sanctions and the pupils' own clear understanding of how to behave well. As a result, there have been no exclusions. The school also has exceptional systems in place to help the very few pupils who find good behaviour difficult. As a result, all pupils are helped to behave well and settle quickly into school.
- Pupils feel exceptionally safe and they are aware of different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying. They say that there is no bullying, although friends occasionally fall out. Even this is extremely 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.
- The head girl and head boy help pupils play safely and enjoyably together and pupils also develop social skills in the breakfast and after-school clubs. Pupils say that the school council listens to their concerns and ideas. The council has helped to plan and raise funds to improve the playground and inside the school.
- Attendance is average. It has improved rapidly as a result of actions by the school to encourage pupils to attend. It has also improved because pupils are excited by their lessons and so they love coming to school.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has had a significant impact on improving the school. She has raised staff morale and got rid of weak teaching. Her judgement of teaching is extremely rigorous and has helped teachers come to a clear and effective understanding of how their teaching can be improved. This advice is carefully linked to training programmes which help teachers to refine their skills. As a result attainment and pupils' progress have improved.
- The deputy headteacher is very clear about her responsibilities when the headteacher is not in school and there are very clear procedures for them to ensure the school works effectively on a daily basis as well as to make effective plans to improve the school further.
- All leaders, including those who are new to their roles, have highly 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 focused 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, the school does not make enough use of information about how much progress pupils are making in individual classes to set targets for teachers and pupils that would ensure even faster progress and higher attainment. Funding has been used well to improve the basic skills of those pupils eligible for the pupil premium. The gap in achievement between them and similar pupils across the country has closed in Key Stage 1. While the gap remains in Key Stage 2 between them and all pupils across the country, outstanding teaching is now helping it to close more rapidly. This shows the school's commitment to promoting equal opportunities and tackling discrimination.

- The curriculum is based upon pupils' own interests and helps them see the links which can be made in learning in different subjects. There are numerous chances for pupils to develop their spiritual and cultural awareness and many opportunities for pupils to appreciate and practise their skills in music, art and literature.
- The local authority has provided successful 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' progress.
- The governance of the school:
 - The governing body has clear procedures to hold the school to account. They 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 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 has distinct procedures to check on pupils' achievement and on the budget. As a result, it has effectively enabled the headteacher to improve the school's learning environment and increase staff numbers. With the headteacher, they have taken decisive action to tackle weak teaching and establish a team of good and outstanding teachers, whose performance is clearly assessed and whose training needs are effectively met.

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	405503

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	268
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	William Greenwell
Headteacher	Joanna Clark
Date of previous school inspection	19 October 2010
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