

Evergreen Primary School

Warwick Road, Bishop Auckland, County Durham, DL14 6LS

Inspection dates 16–17 January 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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' achievement is good. Many pupils arrive in school at times other than the start of the academic year from a variety of different settings. Despite this, once they settle into the routines of school they achieve well academically, socially and emotionally.
- Teaching is good as is the care and support offered by staff. Staff make learning fun and in the majority of lessons staff support pupils' learning needs well.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, staff are skilled at providing a good range of experiences and activities which enable children to achieve well.
- Pupils behave well despite the problems that some face. This is because well-established routines to manage behaviour are adhered to by all staff. As a result, the majority of pupils feel safe and are caring and polite. Those with communication difficulties, particularly those with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD), are well supported to improve their ability to manage their behaviour.
- Despite a period of turbulence for the school's leadership team since the last inspection, senior leaders, managers and governors have sustained the quality of teaching and pupils' good achievement. This demonstrates the school's continuing ability to improve.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In a small number of lessons, particularly in Key Stage 2, teachers' planning does not take into account the needs of all pupils and the work set does not match pupils' abilities sufficiently well and learning slows.
- Teachers' marking is not yet consistently helpful and as a result, pupils are not always clear about how to improve their work.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 20 lessons and parts of lessons taught by 14 teachers and teaching assistants. Joint lesson observations were undertaken with the headteacher. The inspection team also examined the quality of work in pupils' books and folders from across the school.
- The inspection team held meetings and had discussions with eight pupils, senior leaders, members of the school staff, two members of the governing body and a parent.
- Forty one parents made their views known to the inspection team through the online questionnaire (Parent View). Three others made their views known directly to the team through letters and a visit to the team.
- The inspection team studied health and safety documentation, teachers' curriculum planning, documents relating to the performance management of staff and the school's system for checking pupils' progress.

Inspection team

Marian Thomas , Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Katharine Halifax

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Evergreen Primary is a community special school. Pupils attend between the ages of two and 11 and have a range of difficulties which affect their ability to learn. Approximately 40% of pupils have a diagnosis of ASD and a further 10% have profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD).
- The majority of pupils who attend are from the Bishop Auckland and Durham area. A small number come from neighbouring authorities.
- Since the last inspection, there have been changes to the leadership team and currently, the headteacher is supported by an acting deputy headteacher.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage with just a small number from other ethnic backgrounds.
- An average number of pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those in the care of the local authority and those from service families.
- All pupils who attend have a statement of special educational needs.
- The school has a number of accreditations including Investors in Children, Healthy School status, Unicef Rights and Responsibilities Award and most recently, the National Science Award.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 so that it is consistently good or better by:
 - improving the quality of teachers' planning for learning so that it meets the needs of all pupils in the class
 - improving the overall quality of marking across the school so that all pupils are better informed on how to improve their work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Staff are good at recognising and supporting the needs of pupils, and as a result, all groups of pupils, including those with ASD and those known to be eligible for the pupil premium, make good progress during their time in school.
- Children who attend the school often start in the Early Years Foundation Stage Nursery or Reception class. The overwhelming majority come with skills well below those expected for their age. A significant number, particularly those with ASD, also lack the behavioural skills needed for learning.
- Despite this, the majority settle quickly and enjoy the organised and imaginative activities on offer. This was clearly evidenced by the excited way in which the children shared their work with inspectors.
- Key Stages 1 and 2 pupils make equally good progress because activities are successfully tailored to their needs in both English and mathematics. An excellent example of this was seen in a lesson for Key Stage 2 pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD). The lesson focus was on counting skills and pupils became excited and animated as the teacher brought to life, through the skilful use of props, including toy frogs, ducks and a water spray, a variety of songs and rhymes. The anticipation of getting wet and the lively teaching style kept pupils involved and achieving well.
- Pupils achieve well in Key Stage 2 as evidenced by a small minority of more-able pupils who reach national expectations at the end of Year 6.
- Parents agree that their children make good progress. The view of one summed up the feelings of many. 'Our child loves coming to school and staff have been brilliant at helping us every step of the way to understanding her needs better at home'.
- Staff work hard to ensure that, where possible, pupils become proficient readers. Carefully tailored literacy lessons in Key Stage 2 improve pupils' reading skills and develop their understanding and comprehension skills.
- Pupils achieve equally well in mathematics as staff are good at matching activities to their needs.
- A large number of pupils who attend school, particularly those with ASD, find communication difficult. Through the use of pictorial timetables and the careful use of signs and symbols in the classroom these barriers to pupils' learning are reduced and the majority make good progress academically, socially and emotionally.
- Overall attainment is low for all groups of pupils, including those known to be eligible for free school meals. Pupils' achievement is carefully tracked and monitored. This ensures that all groups make equal progress. The small numbers of pupils who are from other ethnic groups and those known to be eligible for free school meals make equal progress because of school's continuous commitment to equality of opportunity for all pupils.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good or better in the majority of lessons across the school. Opportunities for learning in many lessons are interesting and exciting and teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Children are happily involved in the wide range of activities and opportunities for play. Improvements since the last inspection to the outdoor area now ensure that opportunities for learning are equally good both indoors and outdoors.
- Teachers are particularly good at meeting the many and varied needs of the pupils in their care. They are effective at using the information on how well pupils are doing to plan learning for individuals and groups of pupils. For example in a Key Stage 2 science lesson, pupils were given

the opportunity to become 'science detectives' and investigated how to make ice cream without a freezer. The whole class was on the edge of their seats as the teacher explained the task and pupils participated exceptionally well following instructions and behaved exceptionally well throughout. As a result of this highly enjoyable and well-organised activity, pupils achieved exceptionally well. By the end of the lesson despite their high level of need, all were clear that the addition of salt to the ice caused it to cool further and the cream and milk became ice cream.

- The majority of teachers plan and prepare work which meets the diverse needs of their pupils well. However, in a small number of lessons in Key Stage 2 this is not so effectively undertaken. As a result, pupils make less progress because work set is too hard or in some cases too easy for them. On these occasions, pupils sometimes become bored and behaviour in the classroom deteriorates.
- Teachers and support staff work closely as a team in classrooms. As a result, and despite the wide range of abilities found in many classrooms, all groups of pupils make equally good progress.
- Because of pupils' wide range of abilities and needs, feedback to pupils about their work takes a variety of different forms. However, whilst other forms of feedback, such as spoken praise, are undertaken well, marking of work of in pupils' books is not consistently helpful in giving pupils sufficient guidance on how to improve.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils spoken to during the inspection said how much they enjoy coming to school. This was clearly evidenced by the happy way most greeted staff in the morning. One pupil's comment summed up the feelings of many: 'School is just great'. Attendance is high and has increased for the last two years. Even those pupils with medical needs attend as regularly as possible.
- School is a calm and orderly place. This is because, although some pupils have high level of need, they learn to behave well both inside and outside the classroom. Lunch and break times are well organised and enjoyable for pupils, even when the weather is too bad for pupils to play outside, as it was at the time of the inspection. Regular clubs and activities are well attended. One pupil commented: 'I love computer club best'.
- Pupils spoken to during the inspection said staff taught them how to keep safe both inside and outside school particularly on the internet. All of the parents who shared their views on Parent View said they feel school is good at keeping their children safe.
- Pupils feel that no type of bullying is common in school and if an incident does occur, staff sort it out immediately.
- The school has formed strong partnerships with health care professionals and pupils receive support and guidance on how to improve their behaviour and personal and social development. This improvement is reflected in the school's record of not excluding any pupil in the last three years.

The leadership and management are good

- Despite the recent problems encountered by the school's leadership team, the headteacher and other senior leaders, supported well by the governing body, have continued to improve the school's performance.
 - Leaders are clear in their understanding of the strengths of the school and have continued to improve the achievement of pupils since the last inspection.
 - Areas for improvement identified in the last inspection report have been successfully addressed and the quality of teaching has been maintained.
 - Performance targets for individual teachers are closely linked to the school's improvement plan
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and are rigorously monitored by senior leaders. The headteacher uses this information to make decisions on teachers' pay. This has contributed to the good standards of teaching that have been maintained since the last inspection.

- A strength of the school is its individual support for each pupil's needs. This individual approach is much valued by parents and ensures that all groups in school make equal progress. This is clear evidence of the school's continued commitment to equality of opportunity for all pupils.
 - The curriculum in all areas of the school is exciting and adapted to meet the needs of individual pupils. A creative approach to the curriculum offers pupils of all abilities a wide range of experiences, which increases pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. For example, pupils enjoyed celebrating the Hindu festival of Diwali, as well as participating in Christian activities at Christmas.
 - Acknowledgement of the high quality of the school's science curriculum has come through its recent gaining of Science Quality Mark accreditation.
 - The local authority has supported the school through recent staffing difficulties, but is now offering a lighter touch level of support overall.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body members have a diverse set of skills. They understand comparative data about pupils' performance. This enables governors to offer a good level of support and challenge to the decisions made by school leaders. Further training for the governors has enabled them to improve their monitoring of staff performance and to make knowledgeable decisions about teachers' pay. As a result, the good achievement of pupils and improvements in the quality of teaching have been maintained. The governing body oversees the school's finances effectively. It has made careful use of the pupil premium funding by improving the quality of support in classrooms for the most vulnerable pupils. As a result, achievement for this group has improved and is in line with others in the school. The health and safety committee ensure safeguarding procedures meet current requirements.
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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	134663
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	402618

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	2–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	144
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Frank Ridley
Headteacher	Tracey Hutchison
Date of previous school inspection	19 July 2010
Telephone number	01388 459721
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