

Witton Gilbert Primary School

Sacriston Lane, Witton Gilbert, Durham, DH7 6TF

Inspection dates 30–31 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 achieve well. From starting points that are typically below those expected for their age, pupils make good progress across the school to reach standards that are similar to those found nationally by the end of Year 6.
- A focussed approach to the teaching of writing has led to significant improvements in pupils' skills. They now achieve equally well in this subject as they do in reading and mathematics.
- Teaching is good. Staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve, pick up quickly on any misconceptions pupils may make and regularly share with their class how their work could be even better.
- The school is quick to identify any pupil who may be falling behind in their learning. The additional support provided is effective and allows pupils to catch-up and keep-up with their classmates.
- Pupils behave well and feel safe. They have good attitudes to their learning, are eager to please their teachers and enjoy coming to school. This is shown in their consistently above average attendance.
- Leaders, including the governing body, are committed to making the school the best it can be. A consistent focus on improving the quality of teaching, together with regular checking on how well all pupils are learning, has led to rising standards and quicker rates of progress.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A small minority of teaching is not yet good and too little is outstanding overall.
- Pupils' work is not always matched closely enough to their ability level, particularly for the more able. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 do not have sufficient opportunity to return to their teacher's marking and improve their work.
- Pupils need more regular opportunities to use their reading, writing and mathematical skills in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- Leaders who are new to their posts need to develop their skills so that they can take a fuller role in checking the quality of work in their subjects.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons or parts of lessons delivered by seven different teachers. Five were jointly observed by the headteacher. A number of short visits were also made to sessions that teach pupils letters and the sounds they make and to groups of pupils who were receiving additional support outside of their classroom.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, the headteacher, leaders with responsibility for English and mathematics and a group of governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body. A discussion was also held with representatives from the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of the 20 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) that were submitted during the course of the inspection. They also spoke to groups of parents at the beginning of the school day and took account of feedback from 19 staff questionnaires.
- The inspection team observed the school's work and examined a range of documentation including the school's own records of pupils' learning and progress, the checks made on the quality of teaching and performance of staff and those relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Lee Owston, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

John Pattinson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Witton Gilbert is smaller than the average sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children looked after by the local authority, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and the children of members of the armed forces, is above that found nationally.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is similar to the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also similar to the national figure.
- Virtually all pupils are of White British heritage. Of the few pupils from other minority ethnic groups, none are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- A private nursery shares the school site. This will be inspected separately. A copy of its most recent report can be found on the Ofsted website.
- The school holds many awards. These include the Basic Skills award and the Activemark for its work in physical education. The school is currently working towards gaining the UNICEF Rights Respecting School award.
- A new headteacher took up post in September 2012. A number of other leaders within the school are also new to their posts, including the Chair of the Governing Body.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good and a greater proportion is outstanding by:
 - matching the activities pupils are given more closely to their ability levels, especially for the more able
 - planning more regular opportunities for pupils in Years 1 and 2 to return to their teacher's marking and improve their work
 - developing the use of pupils' reading, writing and mathematical skills in all subjects of the curriculum.
- Develop the skills of those leaders new to their role so that they are more fully involved in checking on the quality of teaching and the progress pupils make in their subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils achieve well across the school. They enjoy their learning, work hard for their teachers and, as some pupils commented, learn best when they get to 'have-a-go'. Parents are accurate in their view that pupils make good progress.
- Children start school in the Reception class with skills and abilities that are below those typically expected for their age. Through good quality teaching and caring relationships, children make good progress across the Early Years Foundation Stage so that their confidence and independence increase. This prepares them well for Year 1.
- Pupils make good progress overall across Key Stage 1 to reach standards that are broadly average. The proportion of pupils reaching and exceeding the level expected for their age by the end of Year 2 is improving quickly and securely, particularly in writing. The school's detailed assessment records show that pupils are on-track to achieve results that are higher this year than in previous years.
- Across Key Stage 2, pupils continue to make good progress from their starting points. In previous years, pupils left Year 2 to start in Year 3 with attainment that was below average. These pupils made good progress through Key Stage 2 to reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 6. In 2012, boys made particularly impressive progress in their writing so that they were approximately one term ahead of all boys nationally. This has ensured that pupils achieve equally well in English as they do in mathematics by the time they leave the school.
- Across the school, pupils show a confident grasp of reading, writing and mathematics skills so that, for example, they can recall number facts quickly, calculate efficiently and write with accuracy of grammar, punctuation and spelling. They do not yet get enough opportunity to use and apply these skills in subjects other than English and mathematics to help them make even faster progress.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make equally good progress to that of other learners from their starting points. This is because their learning is carefully checked so that regular, additional support can be provided during lessons by skilled teaching assistants.
- Pupil premium funding is used highly effectively. Additional staffing has allowed many one-to-one and small group support programmes to be delivered. These have led to this large, targeted group of pupils making good and sometimes outstanding progress to catch-up and keep-up with their classmates and reach broadly average standards in their work overall. Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals achieved particularly well in their writing where they were more than a year ahead of similar pupils nationally by the end of Year 6. This demonstrates the school's strong commitment to promoting equal opportunities.

The quality of teaching

is good

- In the vast majority of lessons, and over time, teaching is typically good. As a result, pupils achieve well and develop positive attitudes to learning. Parents overwhelmingly agree that the quality of teaching their children receive is good.
- Where pupils make good progress and achieve well, teaching is typically characterised by:
 - high expectations of what all pupils can achieve so that planned activities offer just the right amount of challenge
 - effective questioning of pupils to find out what they have learned and to allow any misconceptions that may have developed to be corrected quickly
 - regular reinforcement of pupils' reading, writing and mathematical skills
 - skilled support from teaching assistants so that all pupils take part in the lesson and offer their own ideas.

- In the very few lessons where teaching is not yet consistently good, activities are sometimes too easy or too hard because teachers do not match them carefully enough to pupils' ability levels. Even in the better lessons, some teachers do not always challenge more-able pupils during whole-class teaching because it is not adjusted carefully enough to what they already know and can do. As a result, these pupils sometimes sit through introductions to learning that they have already mastered. This prevents even faster progress.
- The teaching of reading is good. Daily teaching of the sounds that letters make are effective because teachers make these sessions fun and practical. Teachers in the younger classes use books that only include words that pupils can sound out themselves and this ensures that the vast majority quickly see themselves as readers and develop a real love of books.
- A whole-school focus on improving writing and mathematics has led to a better quality of teaching in these subjects. Teachers now use a wide range of strategies, including a sharper focus on speaking and listening, to prepare pupils to write and develop their calculation methods. Pupils are now confident in these basic skills but do not have enough opportunity to use them in other subjects.
- Marking of pupils' work is frequent and regularly identifies where pupils have been successful and where further improvement is needed. While pupils in Key Stage 2 are often given time to return to their teachers' comments and improve their work, pupils in Years 1 and 2 do not have the same opportunity. This prevents even faster progress in this key stage.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are polite, courteous and show respect for each other, their teachers and the school surroundings. Attendance is consistently above the national average. This reflects pupils' enjoyment of school and the trust that parents place in the care provided.
- Where teaching is good, pupils focus on their work without distraction and show positive attitudes to their learning. In a very few lessons, particularly when the pace of learning slows because activities are not aimed at the right level for all learners, pupils can become restless. In these instances, pupils' progress slows.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school and that adults are very approachable if they have concerns. They have a good understanding of the risks to which they may be exposed, including those presented by modern technology such as mobile phones and the internet.
- Parents and pupils are in agreement that there are very few instances of bullying at the school. As one pupil described, 'if we do not get along with our friends it is normally due to a falling-out rather than bullying.' All pupils are clear about the nature of bullying, although those from younger classes show less understanding about the different forms it may take, including that linked to prejudice. The school is currently undertaking the UNICEF Rights Respecting School programme to promote further the values of acceptance, tolerance and respect across the school.
- Behaviour is managed consistently well. The house-point system provides an effective strategy for all staff to reward good behaviour and pupils from all year groups respond well to this approach. Pupils are clear about the school rules, including any sanctions for poor behaviour, and readily take on themselves the role of 'buddy' or 'peer mediator' to resolve any minor conflicts that occur. This supports their strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The leadership and management are good

- The new headteacher has quickly identified the strengths and weaknesses of the school and has the full commitment of staff in the school's drive to become even better.
- School systems to check on the quality of teaching and the progress that pupils make are effective. This has supported accurate identification of priorities for further work. As such, the

school has continued to improve since the time of its last inspection. Attainment has risen at every key stage, progress has quickened and the quality of teaching has become more consistent.

- Leadership of teaching is strong. Teachers' performance is well managed and closely linked to staff training. Senior leaders check on the quality of teaching regularly to find ways of making teachers' work even better. This knowledge of teaching, together with effective analysis of the progress pupils make, enables the school to make accurate decisions about which teachers to reward through pay progression and where underperformance needs to be tackled.
- Leaders with responsibility for English and mathematics have made a good start to their new posts. They have looked through pupils' books to appreciate the standards of work and the approaches teachers are using to improve progress. They have a less-developed understanding of the quality of teaching overall or the progress different groups of pupils are making across the school because they do not yet have enough opportunities to develop their skills in this area.
- The school's curriculum has strengths in the range of sporting, musical and artistic opportunities that are planned to involve pupils and strengthen their learning. This supports effective promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The essential skills of reading, writing, communication and mathematics are well taught, although the advantage of using other subjects to enhance further learning in literacy and mathematics has not yet been consistently planned into the curriculum.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements.
- Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated so that pupils work and play together well. Any gaps in learning evident between different groups of learners at the beginning of school narrow significantly by the time pupils leave.
- The local authority has provided termly support for the new headteacher and supported a programme of coaching to improve the quality of teaching of those teachers who are not yet consistently good. This has been highly successful and teaching has improved as a result.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is clear about the strengths and weaknesses of different subjects and pupil groups because of good knowledge of performance data. Governors follow-up on the impact of pupil premium funding and challenge senior leaders appropriately to ensure pupils make even faster progress. The governing body is knowledgeable when deciding if good teachers can be rewarded through pay progression or when providing support for those who are underperforming. It has been proactive in securing additional training from the local authority to develop the skills necessary to understand what is effective teaching.

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	114122
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	403227

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	177
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alexia McKenzie
Headteacher	Paula Nelson
Date of previous school inspection	30 April 2008
Telephone number	0191 371 0424
Fax number	0191 371 2296
Email address	wittongilbert@durhamlearning.net

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