

North Park Primary School

St. Andrew's Lane, Spennymoor, County Durham, DL16 6PP

Inspection dates

5–6 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils' achievement and their rates of progress, although accelerating, are inconsistent across the school.
- The quality of teaching is not yet uniformly good and the teaching in some lessons requires improvement.
- Pupils are not always given sufficient opportunities to develop their learning skills by finding out things for themselves and solving problems. Teachers do not check pupils' learning regularly enough in lessons to know when to give them extra support or provide further challenges.
- There is no consistent approach to the teaching and assessment of phonics (the sounds that letters make). Opportunities for children to develop their writing skills in the Early Years Foundation Stage are limited.
- Leadership and management requires improvement. Senior and middle leaders have yet to fully build their expertise in checking the quality of teaching and the progress of all groups of pupils in the subjects they are responsible for. The impact of extra help given to pupils to improve their learning has yet to be fully measured.

The school has the following strengths

- This is an improving school. The leadership of the headteacher, well supported by the governors, has been instrumental in moving the school forward. Weaknesses are being tackled and teaching, although still requiring further improvement overall, is getting better and is often good.
- Pupils behave well, feel safe and attend school regularly. They know right from wrong and most show kindness and respect towards each other, staff and visitors.
- The headteacher has put in place whole-school systems for accurately assessing pupils' standards and measuring their progress.
- The school works closely with parents and the local community. Pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable, and their families, receive good personal support from the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons and part-lessons which included a joint lesson observation and short visits to classrooms with the headteacher. They also listened to pupils read and observed the teaching of literacy and numeracy to smaller groups of pupils.
- Discussions were held with pupils, staff, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at pupils' books, progress data, safeguarding information and other documentation.
- Twelve responses to the on-line questionnaire 'Parent View' were considered as well as those from the school's own parental survey and from school staff.

Inspection team

Ann Ashdown, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lucie Stephenson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is similar in size to the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority and for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is well above average.
- A below-average proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, and a below-average proportion speaks English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported at school action is below average whilst the proportion supported at school action plus and with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good across the school by:
 - keeping teaching sessions concise so that pupils have time to tackle challenging activities on their own
 - giving pupils even more opportunities to develop their learning skills by finding out things for themselves and solving problems
 - checking pupils' learning regularly in lessons so teachers know when pupils need more support or extra challenge.
- Raise attainment and accelerate pupils' progress particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 by:
 - adopting a systematic approach to the teaching and assessment of phonics across the school
 - giving children in the Early Years Foundation Stage more opportunities to develop their writing skills across all areas of learning.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - building the expertise of newly appointed senior and middle managers in checking the quality of teaching and the progress of all groups of pupils in their areas of responsibility
 - checking that extra help given to pupils is well matched to their needs and is successfully boosting their learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Children join the Nursery class with skills which are often below those typical for their age, especially in language and in personal and social development. Their progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage requires improvement. They enter Key Stage 1 with below average standards. Children's progress in personal development is faster than that in communication, language and literacy. This is because children do not have sufficient exciting and challenging opportunities to practice their writing skills as part of all of their learning activities.
- Pupils' attainment has been, overall, significantly below average at the end of Key Stage 1 for the last three years. However 2012 assessment results showed a small improvement in standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Year 6 test results in 2011 were significantly below average. However in 2012 standards rose when this year group of pupils reached standards in line with the national average.
- The school's data which tracks pupils' progress, and work seen in pupils' books, shows that current pupils' progress is now beginning to accelerate, although it still requires improvement because it is not consistently good in all classes.
- Some pupils are keen readers and speak enthusiastically about the recently restocked library and the quizzes they enjoy completing about books they have read. However, pupils' progress in reading still requires improvement. This is because the school has not yet adopted a consistent approach to the teaching of phonics or to the way pupils' progress in phonics is assessed. Consequently pupils' progress in reading varies across the school.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language have the same levels of achievement and progress as other pupils because they receive extra help from teachers and teaching assistants.
- Pupils who are supported by extra funds (the pupil premium) are making progress at the same rate as their classmates. However, their overall attainment (as shown by their scores in 2012 Year 6 tests) remains below that of other groups of pupils. Extra funds have been wisely spent on staff training and teaching resources. The impact of money spent on small group and one-to-one tuition has yet to be fully measured.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching in some lessons, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage, still requires improvement. However much good teaching was also seen, for example, in Years 3, 4 and 6.
- In lessons which require improvement teachers often ask all groups of pupils to listen for too long rather than letting them get on with challenging activities on their own.
- In some classes pupils have too few opportunities to solve problems and find out things for themselves.
- Teachers do not always check how well pupils are learning at regular intervals during the lesson. Consequently they do not always give pupils more challenging activities or provide them with extra support at exactly the time they need it.
- A range of 'booster' classes are in place to give pupils extra help when they need it. In some of these, for example, in mathematics, pupils make good progress and skilful teaching builds pupils' confidence well. In other classes, including those in phonics, slower paced and less challenging activities do not allow pupils to make maximum progress.
- In good lessons seen all groups of pupils really enjoyed learning and achieved well. Year 4 pupils responded well to good teaching as they enthusiastically practiced their seven times table which they confidently recited forwards, backwards and with actions before going on to show off their mathematical knowledge as they competed against each other in an exciting game of 'Fizz Buzz'.
- In a Year 6 mathematics lesson pupils' social development and learning skills were extended well

as they worked in groups to solve a tricky problem about exactly how many people lived in each house in Albert Square.

- Pupils books are marked regularly and they are given suitable pointers for improvement. In some classes pupils have particularly good opportunities to respond immediately to teachers' marking so they quickly improve their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils typically behave well in lessons and around the school. They are keen to answer questions in lessons and most concentrate on the task in hand and work hard. A few pupils lose concentration during longer activities and their pace of learning slows. Most pupils treat each other, staff and visitors with care and kindness.
- Records show that any incidents of poor behaviour are carefully recorded and dealt with swiftly and effectively. Pupils are clear about what is right and what is wrong and understand clearly the consequences of their actions. Staff manage their classes well and relationships are good.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They are, rightly, confident that any concerns they have will be quickly dealt with by staff in school. They are knowledgeable about different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying and have a sensible attitude to taking risks and keeping themselves safe.
- Pupils and their parents are very appreciative of the personal care and support the school gives them. The headteacher works very closely with a range of agencies to make sure that pupils, particularly those whose circumstances make them vulnerable, get the specialist help they need.
- Pupils attend school regularly and are punctual.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well, both in lessons, through assemblies and through opportunities to contribute to school life. Pupils enjoy their roles as members of the school council and speak enthusiastically about contributing to eco-groups, fair trade activities and anti-bullying days.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The school is improving because, under the good leadership of the headteacher, many new initiatives have been introduced which are helping to accelerate pupils' progress and raise attainment. However, the expertise of senior and middle leaders has yet to be fully developed. They are not yet fully involved in checking the quality of teaching and do not have enough experience of analysing recently improved assessment data. They do not know exactly how much progress all groups of pupils are making in the subjects and areas they are responsible for and therefore cannot fully contribute to driving improvement.
- The quality of teaching is now being carefully monitored by the headteacher and good support and staff training put in place where this is needed. Staff are increasingly well deployed and any underperformance is beginning to be effectively managed. Weaknesses in teaching are being identified and the skills of the best teachers more widely shared. This has not yet ensured that teaching is consistently good.
- Whole-school systems for checking how well pupils are doing and how fast they are making progress have improved markedly and are now more rigorous and accurate. The school is getting better at using this information to identify pupils who need extra help. However leaders and managers have yet to make sure that pupils get exactly the right type of consistently high quality additional support to boost their learning and ensure they make good progress.
- The headteacher knows the strengths and weaknesses of the school well and the right priorities for improvement, such as a more consistent approach to the teaching of phonics, have been clearly identified.
- The local authority has worked in partnership with the headteacher in providing good support for the school. Expertise provided has helped to improve, for example, teachers' marking and lesson

planning.

- All safeguarding requirements are met. Staff are fully trained and have a good understanding of risk assessment and child protection issues.
- The talents of all pupils are valued and all groups of pupils are given equal opportunities to succeed. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.
- The curriculum meets pupils' needs and promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It has been reviewed and there are clear plans to improve it further by giving pupils more opportunities to practice their skills across all subjects and by linking subjects even more closely together. A range of extra activities, together with exciting trips and visits add to pupils' enjoyment of school. They spoke equally enthusiastically about residential visits to France and to an outdoor centre, as about working with friends and partners in the local community.
- The school has forged good links with parents. They are made to feel very welcome in school and successful events, such as a recent parent and child craft workshop, are enabling them to become increasingly involved in their children's learning.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They have provided good support and challenge for the headteacher and helped the school to forge valuable links with the local community. They are kept well informed about the quality of teaching, how teachers' performance is managed and rewarded and how pupil premium funding is spent. They are aware of weaknesses in teaching and how underperformance is tackled. They are becoming better informed about the school's performance data.

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	132172
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	406472

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	230
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Neil Foster
Headteacher	Patricia Monk
Date of previous school inspection	16-17 February 2011
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