

Durham Gilesgate Primary School

Kepier Crescent, Gilesgate, Durham, DH1 1PH

Inspection dates 26–27 February 2013

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.

- Teaching is good with some outstanding teaching in the class for pupils in Years 5 and 6.
- Pupils with special educational needs, including those with hearing impairments, benefit from excellent teaching and support. This enables them to achieve extremely well.
- Pupils make rapid progress in reading because of the good teaching about how to link sounds and letters (phonics); they are encouraged to read at home and in school.
- Pupils say they feel very safe. Their behaviour is good and their attendance has improved.
- The exciting curriculum helps pupils to enjoy learning. It contributes strongly to their well-developed spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness.
- There are many opportunities for pupils to see how subjects link together and to practise their skills in mathematics and writing in other subjects, which increases their enjoyment of learning.
- The headteacher has a very clear view of the school's strengths and relative weaknesses. With the governing body and the previous and current deputy headteachers, he has acted decisively to tackle weaker teaching.
- Teachers are set targets to improve their performance and these are used successfully to increase the rate of pupils' progress. As a result, teaching has improved and pupils' attainment has risen. This is clearly an improving school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, teachers miss opportunities to allow children to practise their skills in counting and number recognition in exciting real-life situations.
- In some instances, when teachers mark work, they do not make it clear to pupils how to make their work better next time or allow time for pupils to act upon advice given.
- In some lessons, teachers do not ask enough questions that challenge pupils to think hard.
- Attainment in writing is lower than in reading and mathematics. Pupils have too few opportunities to write creatively and at length.
- The new leadership and management structures have not yet had time to become fully effective in helping to further increase pupils' progress.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors had meetings with staff, groups of pupils and the Chair and vice-Chair of the Governing Body. The inspector also spoke on the telephone to the school’s local authority Education Development Advisor.
- 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 ten lessons taught by seven teachers and listened to a group of pupils read. In addition, the inspectors made a number of short visits to lessons.
- The headteacher conducted three 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.
- Too few parents had responded to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) for their opinions to be published. However, inspectors spoke to a group of parents and analysed the school’s own questionnaire of parents’ views.
- Seven staff completed questionnaires and the responses were analysed.

Inspection team

Gordon Potter, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Wendy Richardson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage, although there is a small, but significant, proportion of pupils, particularly Arabic speakers, who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after children and children from military service families) is well-above average.
- The school has a designated resource base for pupils with hearing impairment. The resource base accommodates 19 pupils, aged 3–11, from across the county.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is well-below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well-above average.
- There is a breakfast club as well as many lunch-time and after-school clubs which are managed by the headteacher and run voluntarily by staff.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment.
- There were unexpected disruptions to staffing in the autumn term resulting in staffing changes this term. The deputy headteacher and another member of the senior leadership team took up their posts in January 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to outstanding and thus raise further pupils' progress and attainment by:
 - offering children in the Early Years Foundation Stage more opportunities to practise their skills in counting and recognising numbers in exciting, real-life situations
 - ensuring that all teachers mark work for pupils in a way that helps pupils to do better next time and allows them time to act upon that advice
 - ensuring that all teachers are skilful at asking questions which give pupils the chance to explain their ideas fully and to think hard
 - helping pupils to improve their writing by offering more opportunities for them to write creatively and at length
 - continuing to develop the new leadership and management structures within school through the effective use of training to help subject and senior leaders continue to improve and understand how to accelerate pupils' progress further in their areas of responsibility.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Most children start school with skills that are well-below those typically expected for their age, especially in calculation and understanding numbers. Due to good teaching, including some excellent development of pupils' speaking and listening skills in the nursery class, children make good progress but are still below average when they enter Year 1.
- Previous weaker teaching in the Early Years Foundation and Key Stage 1 means that in the past pupils have made only expected progress to the end of Key Stage 1. As a result, attainment at the end of Year 2 is low in English and mathematics. In 2012, the Year 2 class was a year group with a significant proportion of pupils with special educational needs.
- Pupils currently in Year 2 have benefited from good teaching throughout school. The school's data and inspection evidence shows that attainment is rising and, for the first time in a number of years, more-able pupils in Year 2 are on track to attain above average standards for their age.
- Attainment at the end of Year 6 was average in the Year 6 national tests in 2012 in English and mathematics. All pupils achieved the standards expected for their age. This is a much higher proportion of pupils than is found in schools across the country. Excellent teaching in Year 6 had helped them to make up some of the learning they had lost in previous years.
- Inspection evidence and the school's data show that as a result of good teaching in Key Stage 2 and further excellent teaching in Year 6, pupils currently in Year 6 have made rapid progress. A greater proportion of pupils than has been the case previously are on track to attain even higher standards in English and mathematics than those expected for their age.
- Inspection evidence and the school's records show that progress in reading is consistently good. This is as a result of good teaching about how to link letters and sounds (phonics) to help pupils read words with which they are unfamiliar. Teachers encourage pupils to enjoy books and to read more in school and at home.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, including those with hearing impairment, make outstanding progress from their starting points. This is as a result of the excellent support and teaching they receive from teaching assistants and the outstanding teaching of the teachers of the deaf.
- The attainment of pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium is in line with age-related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics and in line with other pupils in the school. At the end of Year 2, pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium attain more highly than other pupils in the school. However, the school is very well aware that the attainment of all pupils in the school has been too low and has successfully closed the gap for all groups of pupils.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress, from their starting points, as a result of the school's clear understanding of their needs and how to help them progress quickly in reading and speaking and listening.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers make sure that work is set at the right level for pupils of all abilities. They are very skilful at explaining what pupils are to learn and leading them through ways to do tasks. Lessons have interesting topics and a range of exciting activities and move at a brisk pace.
- In the very best lessons, teachers ask questions which encourage pupils to explain their ideas and use their answers to reshape work during lessons. Lessons are interesting and involve pupils in solving problems for themselves. Teachers check pupils' understanding and offer extra, more difficult work as the lesson progresses. In these lessons, pupils learn quickly. All of these excellent approaches were seen in the outstanding teaching of mathematics in Year 6. Not all teachers are so skilled in encouraging pupils to think hard and develop and explain their ideas.
- There is good teaching of mathematics which offers pupils opportunities to improve their understanding of a wide range of mathematical skills and they make good progress. However, in

the Early Years Foundation Stage, there are too few chances for children to practise their counting and develop their understanding of numbers in exciting, real-life situations.

- Teachers use pupils' reading and the many exciting topics they cover in a range of subjects as the starting point for writing activities. As a result, pupils write regularly in English and in subjects across the curriculum and attainment is beginning to rise. However, teachers do not ensure pupils have enough opportunities to write creatively or at length.
- In some classes, pupils' work is marked regularly and helpfully tells them how successful they have been in their work and how to improve it; teachers give pupils time to act upon any advice they give. However, this is not consistent practice across school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Inspectors' analysis of the school's records of behaviour show behaviour is consistently good. 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 during the inspection and around the school.
- The needs of a very small number of pupils who have significant behavioural problems are very well managed by the school. As a result, there have been no permanent exclusions in recent years. While the school has used fixed term exclusions when necessary, these are few in number.
- There is a consistent approach to behaviour management across the school. There are clear expectations and a consistent system of sanctions and rewards which help pupils to have a very clear understanding of how to behave well. Pupils particularly like the house system which offers points as a reward for excellent behaviour and work.
- As a result of clear initiatives introduced by the school to encourage pupils to attend regularly and on time, attendance has improved rapidly and is now average. This is also because there is a lively, exciting and stimulating curriculum and pupils are determined to do their best in their lessons.
- Pupils feel very safe and are strongly aware of different forms of bullying, including racism or cyber-bullying. They are very clear that any form of bullying is rare and when it does happen they are confident that it will be dealt with quickly by 'playground buddies' or adults. They are eager to talk about their school and do so very politely. They respect one another and play and work well together.
- Pupils develop their social skills in the safe, well-managed and lively breakfast and after-school clubs, as well as through the responsibilities they have in school, including working as librarians. The school council is helping to develop the school website and offers ideas to improve the playground through raising funds and buying play equipment.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has a very clear view of the school's strengths and the areas where the school needs to improve further. With the previous deputy headteacher and Early Years Foundation Stage leader, he has improved teaching through a rigorous approach to assessing its quality. He carries out regular observations of teachers, giving firm judgements and offering detailed and precise advice about how teachers can improve. This advice is clearly linked to training programmes which help teachers to become better. The school's self-evaluation is therefore accurate and offers clear and appropriate areas for development.
- There are clear procedures to help leaders who are new to their roles to develop their skills quickly and effectively so they can be in charge of pupils' progress in their areas of responsibility. This is particularly important as the school has gone through a series of rapid and unexpected changes in senior and middle leadership in the current school year. These have been skilfully managed through giving some experienced staff new responsibilities and the

appointment of a new deputy headteacher and new member of the senior leadership team. These members of staff are good teachers and their expertise is already being used to good effect to monitor the quality of teaching across school. However, these new arrangements have not yet had time to be fully effective and further raise pupils' achievement.

- There are very clear procedures to track pupils' progress and attainment. This information is used well to identify pupils who have fallen behind with their learning and those who need to be given harder work. As a result, teachers plan work that is well-matched to pupils' individual learning needs.
- The school caters extremely well for pupils who have a wide range of abilities and individual needs. The desire to ensure good progress for all groups of pupils shows the school's commitment to promoting equal opportunities and tackling discrimination.
- The curriculum is inspiring. There are many opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual and cultural awareness, through links with Durham Cathedral and a school in Sri Lanka, and to appreciate the natural world through the use of the 'Forest school'. Pupils study history, geography and science in depth and are excited by their learning. They are helped to see the links between subjects and to write and apply their skills in mathematics in subjects across the curriculum.
- Performance management is clearly focused on raising attainment and improving the quality of teaching. Staff have only been rewarded when their pupils have done as well as, or better than, they should have done. As a result, leaders set targets for teachers and pupils which are demanding enough to ensure pupils' progress becomes even more rapid.
- The local authority works effectively with the school, offering advice about how to improve teaching and bring about improvements in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Such advice has helped to improve the quality of teaching, accelerate pupils' progress and raise attainment.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has improved over the past two years. They have a clear understanding of school data and effective procedures to check on pupils' achievement and on the budget, which is consistently well-managed. With the headteacher, they have taken decisive action to tackle weak teaching. They offer clear challenge as well as strong support to school leaders. The governing body has developed very clear procedures to hold the school to account. Governors carry out rigorous assessments of the overall provision, including how the pupil premium funding is used to help pupils for whom it is intended to achieve better results. This gives them a very clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They ensure that the school fulfils its statutory responsibilities for safeguarding. They ensure that staff are trained appropriately in order to keep pupils safe and free from harm, as well as to improve their teaching skills.

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	114211
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	401414

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	185
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cllr Les Tomson
Headteacher	Mark Turner
Date of previous school inspection	1 July 2010
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