

Sedgefield Primary School

Rectory Row, Sedgefield, Stockton-on-Tees, County Durham TS21 2BJ

Inspection dates 14–15 March 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		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well. By the time they leave the school, they are confident, articulate young people, well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- From starting points in Reception that are similar to those expected for their age, pupils make good and sometimes outstanding progress to reach well above average standards by the end of Year 6.
- Teaching is good. Teachers know their pupils well and plan interesting activities that offer just the right amount of challenge to keep their pupils keen and interested.
- Teaching in Years 4, 5 and 6 is often outstanding. This is because teachers engage their pupils in exciting and imaginative ways and constantly adapt their teaching to ensure the very best learning takes place.
- The school offers a good range of additional experiences for pupils, so that their sporting and musical talents in particular are equal to those in English and mathematics.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary; in lessons, around the school and when at play. Pupils are extremely considerate of one another and their teachers. Attendance is consistently above average because pupils thoroughly enjoy the experiences their school provides.
- Leaders at all levels know their school well and are committed to making it the best it can be. A consistent focus on improving the quality of teaching, together with regular checking of the progress pupils make, has led to even higher standards across the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- At Key Stage 1, a small minority of teaching requires improvement and not enough is outstanding to enable pupils to make more rapid progress.
- More-able pupils are not always fully challenged and pupils do not always address the comments teachers make about their work to ensure faster progress.
- Standards in literacy are not as high as they could be in the Early Years Foundation Stage, because there are not enough opportunities for children to develop their communication and writing skills.
- School improvement planning does not always include measurable targets so that all leaders know how quickly new initiatives are making a difference.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 15 lessons or parts of lessons delivered by seven different teachers. Three 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 (phonics) and to groups of pupils receiving additional support outside their classroom.
- Inspectors listened to a number of pupils read, observed pupils in lessons, around school and during play and looked at pupils' work from all year groups.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, the headteacher, school leaders, including those with responsibility for English and mathematics and a group of governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body. A discussion was also held with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of the 57 responses to the online 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 20 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

- Sedgfield Primary is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium (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 well below the national average.
- Virtually all pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below that found nationally.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below the national figure.
- The school holds many awards. These include Healthy School status and the Basic Skills Quality Mark. The school is currently working towards the Investors in Children award and becoming a UNICEF Rights Respecting School.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- Senior leadership has changed significantly since the time of the last inspection. The headteacher has been in post since September 2010, a new deputy headteacher took up post in May 2012 and the current Chair of the Governing Body took up his role in October 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching at Key Stage 1 so that it is consistently good and a greater proportion is outstanding by:
 - ensuring more-able pupils are challenged to make better progress
 - limiting the number of worksheets and encouraging pupils to work more independently
 - ensuring pupils return to their teacher’s comments about their work to make the necessary improvements
 - sharing the very best practice in Key Stage 2 more widely across the school.
- Raise standards in literacy in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - providing more opportunities for mark-making and writing
 - ensuring the activities that children choose for themselves provide sufficient levels of challenge to further their learning
 - asking more open-ended questions so that children are encouraged to give more extended responses.
- Refine school improvement plans in order to include clearly measurable targets, broken down into steps across the year, so that all leaders, including the governing body, know how quickly new initiatives are making a difference.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children arrive at the school in Reception with skills and abilities that are typical for their age, although some exhibit weaknesses in their communication and literacy. They make good progress across the year; as a result, their confidence and levels of independence increase.
- The standards children reach by the end of Reception are particularly strong in their personal, social and physical development but their literacy skills are not as high as they could be. This prevents an even better start to Year 1. Children do not have enough opportunities to take part in mark-making and writing activities and are not always encouraged to use a higher level of language because the questions adults ask do not encourage more extended responses.
- Pupils make good progress across Key Stage 1 and reach above average standards overall by the end of Year 2. A consistent focus on the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics ensures that the vast majority of pupils are confident readers and writers and demonstrate quick recall of number facts by the time they start Key Stage 2. Occasionally, opportunities for pupils to apply these skills independently are overlooked and this prevents more-able pupils in particular from making even greater progress.
- Pupils' progress accelerates across Key Stage 2 due to consistently good and often outstanding teaching. By the time pupils leave the school in Year 6, they are well above national standards in English and mathematics, working approximately two terms ahead of their classmates nationally. Achievements in writing are particularly strong, with a significantly higher proportion of pupils than found nationally making more than expected progress to reach the higher Level 5.
- Across the school, pupils enjoy reading. They quickly develop the ability to sound out new words and regularly discuss their understanding in small groups. This secure foundation allows pupils to access work by a range of classic and contemporary authors, so that by the time they leave Year 6, they have a good appreciation of different literary styles and a genuine love of books.
- Disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and the few pupils who attract the pupil premium funding make at least good and sometimes outstanding progress. This is due to the high quality support they receive from skilled teaching assistants to ensure that their specific needs are met. This has allowed many pupils to catch-up and keep-up with their classmates so that they no longer need specific, additional support. For example, in 2012, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals left the school working approximately two terms ahead of similar pupils nationally and broadly in line with their classmates. This demonstrates the school's strong commitment to promoting equal opportunities.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is typically good. It is often outstanding in Years 4, 5 and 6 and this leads to accelerated progress in upper Key Stage 2. Parents overwhelmingly agree that the quality of teaching their children receive is at least good.
- In lessons, and over time, teachers demonstrate a good knowledge of what their pupils need to learn next so that they can provide activities that offer just the right amount of challenge. This allows the vast majority of learners to make good progress. For example, in a Year 3 mathematics lesson, the teacher knew that pupils were confident at recalling their times tables so challenged the class by asking quick-fire questions linked to division. This further secured pupils' mental calculation skills.
- In the outstanding lessons observed during the inspection, teachers were adept at asking effective questions to review constantly the progress of their class. The feedback they received allowed them to adapt instantly their teaching to offer further support or challenge. This enabled all pupils to make rapid and sustained progress because their exact learning needs were being fully met.
- A few lessons in Key Stage 1 are occasionally not as strong and require improvement. This is

because more-able pupils are not always fully challenged by their work and there is an overuse of worksheets which prevents pupils from applying their learning more independently. This slows their progress.

- The teaching of writing across the school is particularly strong because pupils are given regular opportunities to write for real reasons and teachers use imaginative strategies to stimulate their interest. For example, Year 6 staff performed a role play about a television news report at the beginning of the lesson and this exciting start inspired all pupils to write their own newspaper reports based on the features they had collected from their teacher's live model.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good when teachers are working directly with the whole class or small groups on a focused activity. This was particularly evident during a session on phonics where progress was good. When children are choosing activities for themselves, learning is not as strong because activities do not always provide sufficient challenge to sustain their interest and further their learning. This prevents pupils from achieving as highly as they could, especially in their literacy.
- Marking and feedback across the school are regular and positive. Pupils clearly know what they have done well and where further improvement is needed. Key Stage 2 pupils are often given time to return to their teacher's comments and make the suggested improvements. This practice is not as consistent in Years 1 and 2, which prevents even faster progress at this key stage.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils are caring, exceptionally courteous and treat others, whether friends or adults, as they themselves would wish to be treated. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the quality of care their children receive so that they are happy, safe and free from bullying. This allows pupils to focus fully on their learning, make at least good progress and develop exemplary attitudes to all that they experience at school.
- Pupils have a strong sense of respect. They work and play alongside one another well. As younger pupils themselves commented during discussion, 'we all get along so well because we know we have more about us that is the same than is different.' The school council, eco-warrior group and the school's work on fair trade all contribute to pupils' excellent moral, social and cultural development. Work around the UNICEF Rights Respecting School award is strengthening this even further.
- Parents and pupils believe that bullying is rare and that, should it ever occur, it would be dealt with quickly. Pupils understand the nature of bullying, including that relating to different forms of prejudice, and are extremely knowledgeable about the dangers and risks they may encounter; they are aware of how to keep safe when using mobile phones and the internet.
- Behaviour is exemplary. Pupils are skilled at managing their own behaviour with the support of the 'playground buddy' scheme and the training of 'mini-buddies' in Year 2. Staff are highly skilled at managing pupils' behaviour positively through the consistent application of the school's 'green card' reward system, to which pupils respond exceptionally well.
- Attendance is consistently high and improving even further as the number of term-time holidays reduce. Pupils are rarely late because they enjoy all that the school offers.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher strive for the very best. They are well supported by an effective leadership team who act as strong role models in their day-to-day teaching.
- School systems for checking on the quality of teaching and the progress that different pupils make are effective. This provides an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. While school improvement plans identify clear priorities for action, they do not always include clearly measurable targets, broken down into steps across the year, of what the school is trying

to achieve. This prevents all leaders, including governors, from knowing if new initiatives are making a big-enough difference and at a quick-enough rate.

- The leadership of teaching is strong. Teachers' performance is well managed and closely linked to school priorities, additional training and decisions about the salary each teacher receives. Where necessary, the headteacher has tackled underperformance of staff through additional training to improve practice.
- Senior leaders regularly check on the quality of teaching to support staff in finding ways of making their work even better. While some coaching has been undertaken to share the best practice in the school more widely, not enough has been developed across key stages to ensure a more consistent quality of teaching across the school.
- The school's curriculum is planned well to provide interest and excitement to lessons and has strengths in the range of visits, visitors and additional activities that takes place for each year group. Opportunities to develop pupils' sporting and musical talents are particularly effective and support pupils' spiritual and cultural development.
- 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. Gaps in the level of attainment between pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and other learners have narrowed through good use of targeted money.
- The local authority has supported the new leadership of the school well. Additional training for governors around school performance data and the curriculum has been well received.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors are committed to their roles and offer a range of professional expertise to the school. They regularly challenge senior leaders to improve further through a good understanding of pupil progress data, including that relating to the impact of the pupil premium funding. They make regular, timetabled visits to appreciate the quality of teaching. This also supports them in understanding the decisions made about rewarding good teachers through salary progression. Governors are not as clear about how quickly new initiatives are making a difference. This is because school improvement planning does not provide, in a consistent manner, measurable targets against which they can judge the progress that is being made.

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	114159
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	403228

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	198
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dudley Waters
Headteacher	Andrea Cox
Date of previous school inspection	8 May 2008
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