

Bowburn Infant and Nursery School

Wylam Street, Bowburn, Durham, DH6 5BE

Inspection dates 24–25 April 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.

- Under the very effective leadership of the headteacher, who is well supported by governors and all staff, pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching continue to improve.
- Teachers explain work clearly and teach interesting and imaginative lessons, particularly in literacy, which motivate pupils to learn.
- From their starting points, which for many children are below average, pupils make good progress and reach average standards by the end of Year 2.
- In this very welcoming school, the talents of pupils are nurtured and the views of staff are valued. Parents comment warmly on the good quality of education their children receive.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very well through the interesting topics they study, the wealth of visits they go on and through a variety of knowledgeable visitors who come in to school.
- Pupils say how very safe they feel in school. They behave well and are kind and courteous to each other, to staff and to visitors.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is good not outstanding. In a few lessons, the work set does not fully challenge all pupils, their learning is not checked quite regularly enough and teachers do not always move pupils on quickly enough to learn on their own and at their own pace.
- Pupils' standards and progress in writing and mathematics are not quite as good as they are in reading.
- The effect of the extra help given to improve pupils' writing has not yet been fully checked.
- In some mathematics lessons, pupils do not have enough chances to do practical tasks which capture their interest. Pupils' knowledge of letters and sounds are not always developed well enough to fully support their writing.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 lessons and part-lessons which included 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, parents, 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.
- Thirty-one 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

Anne Vernon

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 and those from families in the armed forces, is above average.
- An average proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, and a similar 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 well above average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus and with a statement of special educational needs.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards and further speed up pupils' progress in mathematics and writing to at least match that in reading by:
 - providing more practical tasks and exciting ways of learning mathematics which will capture the interest of all pupils
 - improving pupils' knowledge of letters and sounds at the end of Year 1 so it better supports their writing
 - checking that the extra help which is given to pupils, particularly those who are supported by the pupil premium, is helping them to improve their writing.
- Further improve teaching so that it is always good and more is outstanding by:
 - moving pupils on to work on their own and at their own pace when they are ready, making sure all activities challenge pupils to achieve their very best
 - checking pupils' learning regularly and reshaping lesson activities in the light of what they have learnt and can do.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children come into the Nursery and Reception classes with skills which are often below those expected for their age, especially in speech and language and physical development. They quickly settle into school routines, make good progress and become confident learners.
- This good progress continues as pupils move through the school and they reach average standards at the end of Year 2. Results of assessments have been in line with the national average for the last three years, with standards in reading being slightly higher than those in writing and mathematics.
- Although pupils achieve well in mathematics and have good opportunities to use and develop their numeracy skills, the school is not complacent and recognises pupils' attainment in mathematics is not quite as high as that in reading. It is now seeking ways to engage pupils' interest and further accelerate their achievement in mathematics by giving them more opportunities to do practical, problem-solving tasks in lessons.
- Pupils in Year 1 in 2012 showed a weaker understanding of letters and sounds (phonics) than is expected for their age and the school recognises the need to develop fully these skills to support improvement in pupils' writing. However, new approaches to the teaching of phonics are helping pupils to make faster progress, particularly in reading. Most read confidently, have developed good strategies to decode unfamiliar words and read with expression and meaning.
- In lessons, pupils were working hard and making good progress. Work in their books and the school's own tracking data confirmed that pupils are achieving well. In an interesting and imaginative Year 2 literacy lesson, pupils made good progress and enjoyed learning because the teacher skilfully relayed a message from 'Pirate Pete' and encouraged the children to use their literacy skills to write detailed instructions for making him some 'horrible soup'.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs receive sensitive yet sharply-focused support from teachers and teaching assistants so they make the same good progress as their classmates.
- Extra funding from the pupil premium is spent wisely on employing skilled teaching assistants and staff who work closely with pupils' families to support those pupils who are eligible for free school meals and those in the care of the local authority. Their attainment in writing and mathematics remains behind that of other pupils and the effect of the extra help given to these pupils to improve their writing have yet to be fully checked. However, school data shows that the attainment of these pupils is rising, their progress is speeding up and is now much closer to that of their peers.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The majority of teaching is good. A small minority requires improvement and in some lessons there are elements of outstanding teaching.
- Pupils' social and moral development is promoted well in lessons. They work well in pairs and groups and share toys, books, and their ideas willingly and sensibly. Children in the Reception class enjoyed donning their 'puddle packs' and identifying the colours and patterns they could make in puddles of shallow and deeper water.
- Teachers know their pupils and manage their classes exceptionally well. Lessons are carefully planned and teachers' clear explanations and high expectations of what pupils can do all contribute to the good progress pupils make.
- In a Year 1 lesson, work was closely matched to the needs of individual pupils as they confidently added numbers in increasingly difficult calculations. Their learning was checked regularly and the teacher quickly moved them on to a new activity when they were ready.
- Teachers and teaching assistants give very timely and constructive individual advice in lessons to disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Consequently, they enjoy learning and

make good progress.

- Pupils' work is marked thoroughly and regularly. Pupils are clear about how to achieve their targets and value the rewards and praise they receive for doing well.
- In lessons where pupils' progress is slightly slower, learning is not checked as regularly. Pupils' progress slows when they spend a little too long completing an activity when they are ready to move on to do something more challenging or learn on their own. In numeracy lessons, the school recognises the need to give pupils even more interesting, practical activities to raise standards and increase their enthusiasm for learning mathematics.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

- Pupils typically behave very well in the playground, in classrooms and around the school. They are polite and courteous to adults and visitors and know how to look after each other.
- The youngest children in the Reception and Nursery classes follow instructions carefully, and enjoy working and playing together.
- Records show that challenging behaviour is dealt with swiftly and effectively. Responses to the on-line questionnaire Parent View and conversations with parents show that they feel pupils behave well, are kept safe at school and any hint of bullying is dealt with quickly.
- Pupils are proud of their school and say how safe they are made to feel. They know how to keep themselves safe and have a sensible attitude to taking risks. They understand that there are different types of bullying and know about cyber-bullying.
- Pupils and their parents are very grateful for the excellent personal support the school gives them. The school makes good use of expert help from outside agencies when this is needed. Further good support is given by the parent support advisor, who also provides a valuable link with the local junior school who share her time and expertise.
- Although below average, attendance has improved steadily over the last three years to 2012. It has dipped slightly in the last two terms due to both long term and short-term pupil illness. However, all staff make sure that all absences are followed up rigorously and that parents realise the importance of sending their children to school regularly.
- Pupils speak enthusiastically about the 'jobs' they do in school. They are pleased to be chosen as members of the school council, they act as monitors, willingly help younger children and make sure that lights are turned off to save electricity.

The leadership and management

are good

- The headteacher has a very clear view of how to improve the school and is well supported by the deputy headteacher in bringing this about. Consequently, the school is well placed to improve further.
- Governors and senior leaders check on the school's work closely. Its strengths are clearly recognised and any weaknesses are quickly tackled. Pupils' progress is carefully tracked and those who need extra help are quickly identified and supported. The effectiveness of this support in improving writing has yet to be fully checked.
- The headteacher and other leaders and managers observe lessons regularly and staff are given very constructive feedback on how to improve their work. Their performance is managed very well. Responses to staff questionnaires show that staff feel well supported and have access to regular high quality training to help them improve their skills.
- The views of all pupils are valued and their talents are nurtured so they all feel special. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated and all pupils have equality of opportunity to succeed.
- Safeguarding policies and procedures fully meet requirements. Staff are well trained and fully aware of child protection and risk assessment issues.
- The curriculum meets the interests and needs of all pupils and promotes their spiritual, moral social and cultural development exceptionally well. Pupils are enthusiastic about the interesting

topics they study and can remember numerous trips, including those to the Oriental Museum and Durham Cathedral. Many interesting and knowledgeable visitors come to school, including the fire service, authors, and visitors from overseas with whom the school has forged close links.

- The local authority provides good support for the school. The school development partner visits termly and has provided support for the headteacher and staff with, for example, improving marking, teaching phonics and the analysis of performance data.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are very supportive. They are well informed about the quality of teaching, how staff performance is managed, how staff are rewarded and how any underperformance is tackled. They are familiar with school performance data posted on the internet and are kept further informed by the headteacher's report and their own visits to the school. Finances are well managed and governors hold the school to account for how pupil premium funding is spent.

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	114088
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	412564

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	217
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Janet Blackburn
Headteacher	Christine Ormerod
Date of previous school inspection	11 September 2008
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