

Bearpark Primary School

Collierly Road, Bearpark, Durham, DH7 7AU

Inspection dates 25–26 April 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

- Teaching is inconsistent across school. While teachers try to make learning interesting, work is not always hard enough for all pupils and does not become harder as pupils go through the year.
- Pupils currently in school have attainment which is below national expectations and they are only making the progress expected of them.
- Pupils have too few opportunities, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage, to apply their mathematical skills in real-life situations or to write at length in English and other subjects.
- Teachers do not offer pupils enough time to talk or plan together or make it clear how to develop their ideas in writing.
- Recent improvements to marking and target-setting, so that teachers make it clear to pupils how to improve their work and give them time to act upon advice, are not yet fully in place.
- Recent strategies to improve teaching, the use of data to plan work, and provision for pupils with special educational needs have not had time to be fully effective.
- Strategies to improve the skills of middle leaders in planning improvements and checking that they are working are not yet fully in place.
- Procedures for performance management have only recently been introduced and are not yet fully effective in ensuring pupils make the good progress of which they are capable.
- There is a group of pupils whose attendance is too low despite frequent reminders and communication from the school.

The school has the following strengths

- There is some good and outstanding teaching in Years 5 and 6 that engages pupils and helps them to make good progress. As a result, standards at the end of Year 6 are typically average.
- Pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium and those with special educational needs made excellent progress in English in 2011 and 2012.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and, in some lessons, outstanding. Pupils say that they feel very safe. Attendance is improving.
- The headteacher has a very clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Recent initiatives are helping to improve teaching. Senior leaders and the governing body are determined to improve the school further. This is an improving school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector had meetings with staff, groups of pupils and the Chair and other members of the Governing Body. The inspector also met the school's local authority Education Development Partner.
- The inspector 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 inspector observed teaching and learning in seven lessons taught by four teachers and listened to a group of pupils read. In addition, the inspector made a number of short visits to lessons.
- The headteacher conducted six joint observations of lessons with the inspector. The inspector also observed the headteacher reporting back to teachers on her findings regarding the quality of learning and pupils' achievement in lessons.
- Seven staff completed questionnaires and the responses were analysed.
- Too few parents had responded to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) for their opinions to be published. However, the inspector spoke to a group of parents and took their views into account.

Inspection team

Gordon Potter, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is much smaller than the average sized primary school.
- All pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well above average. (The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children that are looked after.)
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average.
- There are a breakfast club, a morning learning club and many after-school clubs which are organised and managed by school staff.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment.
- Many more pupils than is the case across the country leave or join the school at other than the usual times.
- There are four classes for pupils in Reception; Years 1 and 2; Years 3 and 4; Years 5 and 6.
- The headteacher has been in post since January 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better, to further increase pupils' progress and attainment, for all pupils and in all subjects, by:
 - ensuring that activities in the Early Years Foundation Stage offer clear opportunities for children to develop their skills in all areas of learning, especially in writing, counting and recognising numbers
 - using the school's information about how well pupils are working to set tasks which are hard enough for all pupils and which get harder as pupils grow older
 - embedding recent improvements to marking and target-setting so teachers help pupils understand how to do better next time and allow them time to act upon that advice
 - refining the curriculum so that it offers pupils more exciting and stimulating learning experiences, more time to explore independently and together, and more opportunities to write at length
 - improving the way that teachers help pupils to develop their writing
 - offering pupils more opportunities to improve their mathematics skills by practising them in different subjects and in real-life, problem-solving situations.
- Embed the initiatives and changes in leadership and management introduced by the headteacher, by:
 - providing high quality continuing professional development to develop the skills of middle leaders in planning, monitoring and evaluating those strategies which are designed to improve teaching, and raise attainment
 - ensuring that the recent introduction of performance management is managed rigorously enough to ensure that pupils achieve the good progress set for them in their new targets.
- Further improve attendance by working closely with families whose children are not attending school regularly.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Most children start school with skills that are below, and often well below, those typically expected for their age. Children made the progress expected of them in the Early Years Foundation Stage. There is good teaching of number and of how to link letters and the sounds they make to help pupils begin to develop their reading skills. However, activities are not well enough planned so that children are able to practise their skills in writing and counting while playing together.
- While standards at the end of Year 2 are broadly average in mathematics, they are well below average in reading and writing. In 2012, the gap in achievement between those pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium and other pupils in the school was wide. They were two terms behind in reading and a year behind in mathematics; in writing, they were four terms behind. However, the gap between those pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium and other pupils currently in Year 2 is closing as a result of a recent clearer focus on identifying and addressing their learning needs. This desire to ensure good progress for all groups of pupils shows the school's commitment to promoting equal opportunities and tackling discrimination.
- At the end of Year 6 standards are typically average. In 2012, standards in reading were above average. Boys, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, in particular, made good progress in English.
- All pupils who were eligible for the pupil premium made expected progress in English and almost all did so in mathematics. In English and mathematics their attainment was in line with age-related expectations. They were two terms ahead of other pupils in the school in reading; in writing they were one term behind. In mathematics, they were four terms behind. Good and, occasionally outstanding teaching, in Year 6 is beginning to close that gap, although some strategies are recent and are not yet fully refined or in place.
- However, the work of pupils currently in Year 6 is below average. This represents expected progress for these pupils who reached standards that were below average at the end of Year 2. Across school pupils do not yet make better than expected progress as a result of teaching of writing and mathematics which requires improvement.
- Inspection evidence shows that progress in reading is good. This is a result of a strong focus on reading and good, consistent teaching in how to link letters and the sounds they make to help pupils read words they are not used to. There is a strong focus in all classes on helping pupils to enjoy books and read more often in school and at home.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is inconsistent. Some is good and, on occasion, outstanding especially in Years 5 and 6. Teachers make it clear to pupils what they will learn and show them the skills they will need to use. However, this limits opportunities for pupils to find things out for themselves or to practise their skills.
- While there are good examples of teachers making sure that work set is at the right level and with the right amount of interest, they do not all consistently plan work that is hard enough for all pupils. The curriculum is not well enough planned to ensure that work becomes harder as pupils grow older.
- Recent improvements to marking and target-setting, so that teachers make it clear to pupils how to improve their work and give them time to act upon advice, are not yet fully in place. Older pupils know the level of their work but are less clear about how to achieve the next level.
- The curriculum offers too few opportunities for pupils to develop or to practise their mathematics skills in real-life problem-solving activities in mathematics lessons and in subjects across the curriculum. Teachers try to give pupils interesting topics to write about, for example about their village and its heritage, but they are less skilled in helping pupils to understand how to organise

and develop their ideas, and they provide few opportunities for pupils to write at length. These weaknesses restrict pupils' ability to make consistently good progress.

- Where teaching is good and outstanding, teachers make lessons interesting. They use exciting topics, drama techniques and questioning skills that allow pupils time to think and explain their ideas. They give pupils the chance to talk together to plan ways to tackle problems, and the time to tackle them.
- For example, in the class for pupils in Years 5 and 6, the teacher set work which challenged pupils to solve a murder and extend their thinking. Pupils had to use their mathematical skills to measure the relationship between distance, speed and time, crack codes, use calculators and eliminate suspects. Their behaviour was excellent because they fully enjoyed what they were learning. However, this approach is not used widely enough across school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Parents and pupils say that behaviour has improved rapidly in the past term. This is as a result of a determined effort by the headteacher to ensure that pupils, parents and teachers have a clear understanding that anything less than good behaviour is unacceptable.
- There is a consistent approach to behaviour management across the school. There are now firm expectations and a consistent system of rewards and sanctions which have helped pupils have a very clear understanding of how to behave well. Pupils particularly like the system of red and yellow cards which helps them behave well.
- Pupils say that behaviour is now consistently 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 now very well managed by the school. While the school has used fixed term exclusions when necessary in the past, these have declined in number. There has been one, unavoidable permanent exclusion in the past three years.
- Pupils are aware of different forms of bullying, including name-calling and cyber-bullying. They now understand what is, or is not, bullying and are very clear that they feel much safer in school since new procedures were introduced. These include the use of 'buddies' and 'minibuds' who help to deal with any problems. As a result, they respect one another, work and play well together and are very polite to adults.
- Pupils develop social skills well in the lively and safe breakfast and after-school clubs, as well as through the increased responsibilities they have in school, including as librarians. The school council has been re-formed and pupils take pride in taking part in its meetings and helping to improve the school.
- As a result of robust initiatives introduced by the new headteacher to encourage pupils to attend regularly and on time, attendance has improved rapidly but remains below average. These initiatives include tackling incidences of persistent absenteeism, which have reduced, and term-time holidays.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- In a short time the headteacher has had a significant impact on improving the school. She has introduced procedures, which were previously lacking, to monitor teachers' performance and to set them targets to ensure pupils make more rapid progress. These have not had time to have an impact and there is as yet a mismatch between the targets set for pupils and those set for teachers. The latter are not yet rigorous enough to ensure that pupils make good progress. Staff are aware that they will only be financially rewarded when their pupils have done as well as they should have done, although this has not been the case in the past.
- The headteacher has skilfully used the expertise of existing leaders in the school who have

helped pupils to make good progress in the past. For example, the deputy headteacher has rapidly put highly effective systems in place to ensure that the needs of pupils with disabilities and special educational needs are understood and that work is well matched to their learning needs.

- There are clear procedures and training to help leaders develop their skills quickly and effectively. For example, the mathematics coordinator has reviewed the mathematics curriculum and delivered training to other teachers about effective teaching. However, these new arrangements have not yet had time to be fully effective and skills in planning, monitoring and evaluating are not yet sharp enough.
- The headteacher has refined procedures to collect and analyse data about pupils' attainment and progress. This information is used well to provide leaders with a clear understanding of how much progress pupils are making, in different classes. It is not yet fully in place to hold teachers to account for the progress of their pupils nor is it being used well enough, when teachers plan work, to ensure that pupils make good progress.
- The headteacher has begun to improve the consistency of teaching. She carries out rigorous, 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 are helping teachers to become better.
- In the past the school has deliberately focused the curriculum on helping pupils overcome the significant gaps in their basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics and in this it has been successful for older pupils. The school is now developing a broader curriculum that helps pupils see how subjects link together. Although this is developing well, it has not yet had time to become fully established and effective.
- The curriculum is also used to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It has a strong focus on developing pupils' awareness of their local heritage and there are links with schools across Europe which help to broaden pupils' awareness of the wider world.
- It is only with the appointment of the new headteacher that the local authority's advisory role is becoming truly effective. It has recognised the ability of the headteacher to improve the school and has supported her strongly. Such advice is helping to improve the quality of teaching.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has improved recently. While governors have always been involved in the life of the school, in the past the governing body was over reliant on the headteacher's view of the school's effectiveness. While there is an increased use of training to improve its overall effectiveness, some governors believe their views are not fully taken into account. With the headteacher, the governing body is taking action to improve teaching including establishing systems to ensure that teachers' performance is assessed and their training needs are met. As a result of delays in doing this, teaching requires improvement. Increasingly, governors carry out routine assessments of the overall provision, including pupils' achievement. They have established a clear system to review governors' input to the school. They know how the pupil premium funding is allocated, and are clear about its impact. They ensure that the school budget is well managed and that the school fulfils its statutory responsibilities for safeguarding.

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	114129
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	401410

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	73
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jeff Teasdale
Headteacher	Jill Hodgson
Date of previous school inspection	5 July 2010
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