

Birtley East Community Primary School

Highfield, Birtley, Chester le Street, County Durham, , DH3 1QQ

Inspection dates 1–2 May 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		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 overall has not improved at the same pace as it has in Key Stage 1. Attainment in mathematics by Year 6 has shown a two-year decline.
- Too few pupils make expected progress in mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those eligible for the pupil premium are reaching lower than expected levels in all subjects by the end of Year 6, especially in mathematics.
- Improvements to teaching, the curriculum and assessment have not had time to make sure that all pupils make rapid progress consistently across the school, especially at Key Stage 2.
- Pupils do not always know how they can improve their work or when they have reached their targets.
- Marking does not consistently inform pupils how they can improve.
- On occasions, time is wasted in lessons instead of being used to move learning on at a faster pace.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has identified what requires improvement and is taking swift, decisive action. Members of the governing body, the senior leaders and all staff work together as an effective, close team, which is improving teaching and pupils' learning.
- The good provision is made for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage where they make good progress.
- The improvements in teaching and effective support for pupils is raising standards by the end of Key Stage 1.
- The rich curriculum effectively promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness.
- Pupils behave well, take good care of one another and know how to stay safe.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 18 lessons or parts of lessons, of which two were joint observations with the headteacher.
- In addition, inspectors heard groups of children read in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
- Meetings were held with pupils, members of the governing body, the headteacher and the school's senior staff. The lead inspector also met with a representative of the local authority.
- There were insufficient responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) to allow results to be shown. However, inspectors took account of the results of the school's own questionnaires to parents, as well as discussions with parents at the start and end of the school day.
- Inspectors also received and took account of 16 staff questionnaires.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including the school's view of its own performance and planning for improvement, the information the school keeps on pupils' current progress and achievement, records relating to behaviour and attendance and the school's safeguarding information.

Inspection team

Irene Cochrane, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lesley Richardson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a slightly smaller than average sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (funding provided by the government to support the learning of pupils who are known to be entitled to free school meals, in the care of the local authority or children from armed service families) is well above average.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- 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 average.
- In 2012, the school met the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- There have been a number of staff absences and changes in Key Stage 2, but this has stabilised.
- Since the last inspection, the school has undergone a significant refurbishment completed in autumn 2010. The school had extensive flood damage in June 2012, resulting in further refurbishment and repairs.
- The school has achieved a number of nationally recognised accreditations including Healthy School status and Get Set Award.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the consistency and quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 so it is all at least good in order to accelerate pupils' progress by:
 - ensuring that all pupils are clear about what they have to do to improve their work and making sure that they know when they have reached their targets and when they are expected to do this
 - ensuring that marking and feedback on key learning points are consistently applied in all subjects
 - ensure activities are better matched to pupils' individual needs, so they are not too easy nor too hard
 - making more effective use of time in lessons to move learning on at a quicker pace
 - ensure the most effective practice seen in the school is recognised and consistently used in all classes.
- Raise pupils' attainment in mathematics to at least levels similar to their peers nationally and especially at the higher levels by:
 - making full use of the new tracking system to quickly identify those pupils who are falling behind and put support in place to remedy this, especially for disabled pupils, those with special educational needs, and those eligible for the pupil premium.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' progress has been insufficiently consistent over time to ensure that achievement is as good as it could be, particularly in mathematics. However, as a result of more effective teaching, there are signs that it is improving securely.
- From starting points which are generally below and often well below those typically expected for their age, children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress. The improved outdoor provision provides valuable opportunities for children to develop their skills in all areas. They respond enthusiastically to the wide range of well-planned activities that staff provide. Pupils' skills when they enter Year 1 remain below average.
- Pupils in Key Stage 1 have made good progress to attain broadly average standards at the end of Year 2. Actions taken by leaders to provide regular opportunities to recognise letters and sounds to help pupils read unfamiliar words has brought about steady improvement over the past three years. Pupils are well motivated and keen to learn and achieve, as illustrated in a successful Year 2 mathematics lesson where pupils were stimulated to write their own calculations by doubling numbers in a challenging activity. Although improvements have been particularly successful in Key Stage 1, the disruptions to staffing have slowed the rate of improvement overall by the end of Key Stage 2.
- By the end of Year 6 in 2012, pupils' attainment was low overall. It was broadly average in reading and writing but low in mathematics. Girls did better than boys in all subjects, particularly reading. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels in all subjects was below average and significantly below in mathematics. Whilst outcomes in English have shown some improvement over the past two years, attainment in mathematics has declined with pupils almost a year behind their peers nationally.
- The rates of progress in Key Stage 2 are improving. This is as a result of more accurate assessment, raised teachers' expectations through more challenging end of year targets and better teaching.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make less progress than their peers nationally, particularly in mathematics. Current school data shows an improving picture overall, although this is not consistent across all year groups or in all subjects. Progress of individual pupils is good where they receive additional targeted support from other well-trained adults.
- The attainment of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and receive additional support funded by the pupil premium was below that of non-eligible pupils in writing and mathematics and in line with reading. The proportion making expected progress was well below in mathematics compared to their peers nationally. School data shows that these pupils are making better progress in mathematics currently, although this is not consistent across the school.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Whilst teaching is improving and some good teaching was seen in all key stages, particularly in the Nursery class and Key Stage 1, there is still some teaching which is not good enough. Staff are working closely together to bring about improvements but the most effective practice seen in some classes is not yet used consistently by everyone.
- Relationships are strong and additional support in lessons ensures that all pupils are fully included in lessons. Teaching assistants are used well to support the learning of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- In the best lessons, teachers use imaginative and stimulating strategies with a key focus on practical activities to interest pupils. Work builds well on prior learning and effective questioning ensures pupils understand what is expected in the lesson and are encouraged to share and

extend their learning. Teachers have high expectations and lessons proceed at a brisk pace where pupils become independent learners.

- Not all teaching was as good as this, however. In less successful lessons, the pace of learning slows when activities are not always well matched to pupils' needs and time is not used as effectively to move learning on at a quicker pace.
- Work is marked regularly but teachers comments do not always give consistent guidance to pupils on how to improve. Some good examples were seen during the inspection in both Key Stages 1 and 2, where teachers involve pupils in evaluating their own work but this was not consistent across classes. Pupils' books provide a wide range of learning opportunities and are generally well presented because most pupils take pride in their work.
- Pupils are given individual targets in order to work towards the next level of learning, however, they are not always clear what their targets are or when they are expected to achieve them.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage provides good opportunities for children to learn indoors and outside. Staff are responsive to children's interests and, therefore, children are very interested and involved. Assessment is used well to plan the next steps in learning. In discussion with parents during the inspection, parents expressed their views that their children were well looked after and felt welcome at the school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils enjoy learning and have positive attitudes. They are interested in the varied experiences on offer. For example, they say that teachers make learning fun and that lessons are exciting. They talk knowledgeably about their learning across the curriculum and through school visits.
- Behaviour in and around the school is good because of the very positive relationships that exist between adults and pupils. They have a particularly good understanding of those pupils who find it difficult to behave well at times and how to maintain their own behaviour. Pupils behave well in lessons. Pupils' attention only wanes a little in lessons when teaching is not quite as stimulating.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school and on the playground. They say that 'they are well looked after and everyone is kind'. They particularly appreciate the security gates, fences and doors which help them to feel safe.
- Pupils were very clear that there is no bullying because they say 'the school has strict rules about bullying'. However, they are aware of the different forms this can take, such as cyber bullying. They have positive strategies for dealing with worries by sharing with adults and friends, should the need arise. A particular strength of the school is the way in which pupils show respect and take care of each other.
- The majority of pupils attend well and arrive on time. The school has made concerted efforts to raise attendance and it is now broadly average. An improvement was seen in 2012 because of the determined action of leaders who work well with the support provided by other services.

The leadership and management are good

- There is a strong commitment from senior leaders and the governing body to improve progress and raise standards. The headteacher has the confidence of all staff who share her view of what needs to be improved.
- The headteacher has accurately identified the school's strengths and areas for development. In partnership with the governing body, she has taken decisive steps to improve the quality of teaching, raise standards at the end of Key Stage 1 and to develop outdoor provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Her work is valued by the parents spoken to during the inspection, who recognise the difference she is making and the positive relationships that exist in school.
- Leaders have recognised that opportunities to develop pupils' mathematical skills, particularly in calculation, needed to take a higher priority throughout school. They have reviewed the school's

policy and ensured that appropriate training has been undertaken to improve subject knowledge. Although this is raising teachers' expectations and the rate of progress is improving, there has not been enough time for these actions to take effect fully.

- A new system introduced this year to track the progress of individual pupils is making it clearer for each teacher to check the progress of different groups of pupils. However, this is not yet fully embedded to ensure that all pupils make rapid progress, particularly in mathematics.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and is enhanced through subjects and the range of activities provided. The curriculum is carefully planned to offer interesting and exciting opportunities for pupils to learn from a variety of first-hand experiences and visitors to the school. The focus on improving pupils' basic skills has also improved.
- Performance management is used well to promote effective learning and to increase teachers' accountability for the progress pupils make in their classes. Responsibilities have been extended to other senior leaders which have further strengthened the leadership of the school.
- The school's focus on improving teaching has been successful, as a result of rigorous monitoring of lesson observations, external support and raised expectations. Improved outcomes at the end of Key Stage 1 affirm the improvements made in the quality of teaching. Improvements in Key Stage 2 are less marked because staffing disruption has slowed the pace of change.
- Pupil premium funding is used to provide additional resources and opportunities for learning within and beyond the classroom. Enhanced staffing and counselling support is provided to ensure that pupils receive support tailored to their needs. This has been effective in narrowing the gap in English compared to similar pupils nationally, but less successfully in mathematics.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements.
- The talents of all pupils are valued and pupils from all backgrounds take a full part in all aspects of school life, promoting equality of opportunity. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.
- The local authority has provided effective support to help the school improve subject knowledge in mathematics and to support the Early Years Foundation Stage provision. It has also developed partnerships with other successful leaders to share effective practice.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors have a good understanding of the work of the school. This is because they make regular visits to support school activities and also hold senior leaders to account. The governing body has gone through some changes in its composition recently with a number of new appointments. Effective use is made of the individual skills and expertise of governors. They have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development of the school and how the school compares with other schools nationally. For example, they are aware that the school's performance in mathematics is not as good as other similar schools at the end of Key Stage 2. Governors have had access to relevant training opportunities. They are aware of ways in which performance management is being managed and links to increases in staff salaries. Governors are aware of the way in which pupil premium funding has been spent and know that the achievement of pupils and the standard of teaching must continue to improve in mathematics.

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	108337
Local authority	Gateshead
Inspection number	400976

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	241
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Debra Robinson
Headteacher	Anna Diggle
Date of previous school inspection	13 October 2009
Telephone number	0191 4102551
Fax number	0191 4102551
Email address	birtleyeastcommunityprimaryschool@gateshead.gov.uk

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