

# Leadgate Community Junior School

Alder Grove, Leadgate, Consett, County Durham, DH8 7RH

**Inspection dates** 1–2 May 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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.

- Standards in reading writing and mathematics are improving year on year and are above average in reading and mathematics. Pupils make good progress, including those entitled to pupil premium funding and those with special educational needs.
- Teaching is good. Pupils are enthused by the interesting activities and tasks they are given. Lessons are clearly structured so that pupils' understanding builds up over time. Where they struggle to understand, teachers explain clearly how to overcome the difficulty.
- Pupils say they feel safe and parents comment on the family atmosphere in the school. Nearly all pupils behave very well. Those who struggle to manage their own behaviour are provided with good support.
- The headteacher and other school leaders have very thorough systems to check the work of the school. They have an in-depth understanding of what needs to be done to improve. As a result the school is improving: standards have risen, the level of attendance has risen and teaching has become more effective.
- The headteacher and governors have created a strong team who work together and share high aspirations and ambitions for the school.
- Pupils take great pride in their school. They have many opportunities to contribute to its development and to undertake responsibilities. Nearly all are eager to represent their school in the extensive range of sporting opportunities offered to them.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' progress in some aspects of writing is not consistently good and fewer pupils reach the standard expected of them than in reading and mathematics.
- Teachers' written comments about pupils' work tells them what to do next but this does not always help develop their understanding.
- Some teaching requires improvement. Pupils are not always clear about what they are learning and checks are not made frequently enough to ensure that they understand what has been taught.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in eight lessons. An observation was conducted jointly with the headteacher. In addition, short visits were made to observe small groups of pupils working with teaching assistants, and to each class to find information about pupils' writing.
- The inspector heard pupils of different ages read.
- Meetings were held with one group of pupils, school leaders and managers, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector spoke to a small number of parents informally at the beginning of the school day and took into account responses to the school's own survey. There were insufficient responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) to take account of.
- The inspector also observed the school's work and took into account work in pupils' books, the school's data on pupils' progress, improvement plans, planning and monitoring information, minutes of governing body meetings, records relating to behaviour and attendance and documents relating to safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Susan Waugh, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized school.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Few pupils are at an early stage of acquiring English.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is twice the national 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 by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils who need extra help with their learning and are supported through school action is over three times the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who need extra help with their learning and are supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above the national average.
- Since the last inspection the headteacher has been appointed permanently to the post and the deputy headteacher joined the school in September 2012.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further raise standards in writing by:
  - extending the approach used to teach storytelling to other types of writing
  - ensuring that younger pupils in particular apply their knowledge of letters and the sounds they make in their writing
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to practise their writing in other subjects
  - applying a consistent approach to setting writing targets across the school
  - improving the quality of handwriting and presentation.
- Ensure that all teaching is consistently good or better by:
  - always making clear to pupils what they are going to learn
  - systematically checking pupils' understanding and being clear about how to correct any misunderstanding
  - ensuring that written comments in books always help to develop children's understanding further.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils make good progress overall from the time they join the school. Rates of progress in one aspect of writing (storytelling) are rapid because of the new approach the school has recently adopted.
- Standards are rising and a higher proportion of pupils now reaches the expected standard in reading and mathematics than is reached nationally. Slightly fewer reach that standard in writing. The proportions reaching higher than expected standards are similar to those reached nationally except in writing, where it is lower.
- Pupils eligible for pupil premium funding are now reaching standards which are similar to those reached by other pupils in reading and writing. The standards reached in mathematics are higher than those reached by other pupils. This is because all groups of pupils are progressing at a good rate as they move through the school.
- Pupils who have a statement of special educational need or are supported at school action or school action plus make good progress. This is because they are given help by adults who know them well. As a result they help pupils to understand what they have to do and tailor their work precisely.
- Pupils enjoy reading. It is taught well. Some younger pupils struggle with reading but they make good progress because they are systematically taught phonics (linking sounds and letters). Older pupils read fluently and confidently. They appreciate the wide range of books available to them in the school library so that they can choose to read the authors and the types of book they enjoy. For example, one girl expressed a preference for reading Roald Dahl whilst a boy said he enjoyed the adventure and fantasy stories available.

### The quality of teaching is good

- The relationships between all staff and pupils are very good. The relaxed yet respectful atmosphere contributes to pupils' keenness to learn and do well. In one class the teacher was applauded spontaneously for demonstrating clearly how to measure accurately using a protractor.
- Teachers plan well-structured lessons which build on what pupils have previously learned. Their explanations and demonstrations of new learning are clear. Pupils are then provided with ample opportunity to practise the new learning by themselves as they enthusiastically undertake a range of interesting tasks.
- Teachers frequently check pupils' understanding and make sure that any misconceptions are corrected as they arise. For example, in one class the teacher quickly realised that some children were struggling to understand symmetry. As a result more time was spent explaining and practising this so pupils were clear about what they were learning.
- Marking of pupils' work is thorough and regular and pupils regularly respond to it. It tells pupils what they have done well, the mistakes they have made and what to do next. However, sometimes the next steps are not always linked to what pupils have been learning and do not deepen their understanding.
- Teaching assistants provide good support to pupils in lessons and when working in small groups. They know pupils very well and are briefed well by teachers so they can adapt the task appropriately to suit individual capabilities.
- Where teaching is less successful pupils are not clear about what they are learning. Their misunderstandings are not corrected rapidly, so the pace of their progress slows.
- Reading is taught well for younger pupils by using letters and sounds systematically. The same approach is not applied to writing and this, along with many pupils' poor handwriting, hampers fluency in writing.

- Pupils are clear about their current targets for future success and can talk about what they have learned and what improvements they need to make. However their targets in writing are not consistent across the school so that pupils often change focus from one year to the next without securing the steps in learning that they need to.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- Typically, pupils behave well. In class they settle to work without delay and apply themselves diligently to what they have been asked to do. Lunchtimes are characterised by pupils' enjoyment. They have time to chat and play with their friends. Staff rarely have to intervene to sort out disputes. Pupils resolve their differences by themselves or with the help of well-trained and high profile peer mediators.
- Pupils are polite and friendly. They are keen to share the many good things they like about their school or talk about the particular responsibilities they undertake. For example the Junior Road Safety Officers initiate competitions to remind the many pupils who walk to school about the dangers of crossing the road.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school. They have a good understanding of what bullies do and how they behave and say that bullying is rare in their school. They say that any issues which arise are dealt with promptly by school staff. This is confirmed by school records and the results of the school's own survey of parents.
- The vast majority of pupils attend school regularly. Concerted action to raise the profile and importance of good attendance alongside the introduction of very thorough checking systems have had a good effect on increasing attendance so that it is now average. Additionally fewer pupils now have high levels of absence.
- One or two pupils struggle to manage their own behaviour. They are supported very well by school staff who also engage the help of specialist external agencies. As a result the incidences of exclusion, which is used as a last resort, are decreasing.
- Pupils understand the importance of keeping themselves safe out of school. For example, they have a very good awareness of the dangers of social networking and how to minimise risk when using the Internet.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- Staff and governors praise the headteacher for his strong clear-sighted leadership and commitment to teamwork. Consequently all share the same high ambition for the school. They aspire to ever higher standards of achievement and to providing pupils with the opportunities to develop as well-rounded and responsible individuals who enjoy the benefits of sport, art and music.
- Leaders are committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all pupils. This is demonstrated in the effective use of pupil premium funding to improve rates of attendance and purchase resources such as reading books to improve pupils' attainment.
- Leaders' good track record of improvement in achievement, teaching and attendance is based upon a thorough, detailed and accurate knowledge of the school and carefully managed plans to develop provision further. Leaders therefore have the ability to continue to make improvements.
- The headteacher has successfully enabled all teachers to undertake a leadership role within the school and all contribute to improving the aspect of the school they are responsible for. They make regular checks to ensure that new initiatives are having the effect they want. For example leaders have already begun to tackle weaknesses in writing with good results.
- Safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements. Policies and procedures are in place and are checked to ensure that they are implemented as they should be.
- The curriculum is good and evolving to capture pupils' interests and enthusiasm. For example, pupils were inspired to write, based on the novel '10,000 zombies'. However pupils have too few

opportunities to practise writing in subjects other than literacy.

- The curriculum contributes well to pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development through studies inspired by visits to a local Hindu temple or Durham cathedral, for example.
- The extensive range of opportunities to join an after-school activity are highly motivating to pupils. They enthusiastically participate in different sporting opportunities. For example, a cross-country competition was eagerly anticipated by both boys and girls alike.
- The school offers parents a good range of opportunities to participate in their child's education. Regular newsletters keep them informed and social events and performances are appreciated. Termly meetings to discuss their child's progress are well-attended.
- Procedures to manage staff performance are rigorous and challenging. This, combined with well-thought-out professional development for individual staff, has contributed to improvements in the quality of teaching.
- The local authority has provided appropriate support to the school in the past. The school now requests support when it is needed.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors have a very good knowledge of the school as a result of regular visits, frequent meetings with staff and comprehensive information provided by the headteacher at their request. Consequently they have a clear picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses, they know how the pupil premium monies help those who are entitled to it to make the same good progress as that of their peers, they can offer the right level of support and challenge and are able to make well-informed decisions about all financial spending and the direction the school should move in. Governors' individual expertise is used effectively to enhance the quality of leadership within the school. They are aware of the importance of managing the performance of staff and they use the information they have to ensure that teachers who require support receive it and those who are successful are rewarded.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	114039
<b>Local authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	405496

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	95
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Cllr Watts Stelling
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Mark Watson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	30 March 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01207 502937
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