

# Valley Road Community Primary School

Corporation Road, Hendon, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear, SR2 8PL

**Inspection dates** 14–15 May 2013

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

- The headteacher has taken extremely effective action to improve achievement by rapidly increasing the proportion of good and outstanding teaching and eradicating weak teaching.
- Progress is good. Attainment at Year 6 is below average but the individual starting points of many children are significantly below expectations, and the gains in learning represent good achievement.
- Behaviour and safety are good because the school succeeds in encouraging pupils to behave consistently well. Pupils have a good understanding of how to be safe.
- Provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is good. Consequently, they make good progress.
- The school has a welcoming atmosphere. Relationships, care and support are strong so pupils are keen to learn.
- The headteacher and other leaders are respected. They lead and support staff highly effectively so that the school has improved further since the previous inspection.
- The curriculum promotes pupils' good achievement and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It meets the needs of all pupils.
- Partnerships with parents are a strength of the school. This is due to the proactive involvement of the family support worker supported by the headteacher.
- The leadership and management of the Early Days Nursery provision is extremely effective and gives children a good start to school.
- A dedicated governing body is very supportive of the school and is behind the steps being taken by senior leaders to raise standards.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of teaching and learning is not yet consistently outstanding.
- Pupils have too few opportunities to apply their good basic skills in mathematics to solve mathematical problems.
- Marking and feedback to pupils are not always helpful enough in mathematics to let pupils know what they need to do to improve their work.
- The governing body is not yet fully effective in using data to check on pupils' progress.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 26 lessons and analysed the work in pupils' books.
- Meetings were held with the school council, a group of pupils to hear them read, the headteacher, senior and subject leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and one representative from the local authority.
- In planning and carrying out the inspection, the inspectors took account of the 11 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and 66 responses from staff.
- They observed the school's work and scrutinised a number of documents including the school's checks on how well it is doing, its improvement plans, data on pupils' current progress and the school's monitoring of teaching, as well as records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Kevin Dodd, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Julia Bayes	Additional Inspector
Kate Pringle	Additional Inspector

# Full report

## Information about this school

- This school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action, at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is high. (The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and children that are looked after.)
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The headteacher has been in post for sixteen months.
- The governing body manages the 'Early Days Nursery' day-care provision for children from three months to five years.
- The school has achieved the Artsmark and Healthy Schools Status awards.

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

- Raise the quality of teaching and learning in order to raise achievement by:
  - systematically sharing the outstanding practice evident in the school and eradicating weaker lessons
  - providing more opportunities for all pupils to apply mathematical strategies taught to the solution of word problems in practical and purposeful situations
  - providing more consistent feedback through marking to pupils on how to improve their work in mathematics
  - ensuring that teaching assistants offer consistently good support in mathematics.
- Improve leadership and management by:
  - developing the expertise of the governing body in using pupil performance data to hold senior leaders and teaching staff better to account.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

**is good**

- The individual starting points of children when they enter the school are significantly below the expectations for their age. As pupils move through the school, they make good gains in their knowledge and understanding and the gap between the attainment of pupils in the school and other pupils nationally narrows quickly. Despite this good progress, the attainment of the pupils at Year 6 is below average. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, of whom the school has a high proportion, also make good progress but struggle to reach average standards in English and mathematics.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, questioning is used effectively when children are initiating their own learning and good support is provided by teaching assistants. A significant minority of children enter the nursery with speech, language and communication difficulties. Skilled staff support these children to achieve as well as their peers. Nevertheless, attainment is still below average when pupils enter Year 1.
- Children achieve equally well in the Early Days Nursery due to the way staff organise the rooms and the effective support children receive.
- Improved teaching and effective use of assessment to target appropriate intervention in Key Stage 1 have led to a rapid improvement since the last inspection. Progress in reading, writing and mathematics at Key Stage 1 is now much better. Standards rise at a good rate but are not yet at national average by the end of Year 2. In Key Stage 2, inspection findings confirm that standards are rising and progress is good. Achievement in reading and mathematics is good given the individual starting points of the pupils.
- Progress in literacy is good. Pupils write in a variety of styles and express their ideas confidently. In mathematics, pupils use their mental recall skills well to develop written methods of calculation but problem solving is not as well developed. Inspection evidence shows that pupils make good progress in reading. This is a result of strong teaching in Key Stage 1 of the sounds that letters make (phonics). This helps pupils read words unfamiliar to them. The school has been successful in helping pupils to enjoy books and read more in school and at home.
- The progress of pupils supported by the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, is good and improving, although their attainment is not improving enough to reach the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Good teaching ensures that any gaps in their attainment compared to that of other pupils are closing rapidly, and that they make the same good progress as other pupils in the school. This shows the school's commitment to promoting equal opportunities and tackling discrimination.

### The quality of teaching

**is good**

- Teaching is good with evidence of outstanding teaching across the school and the school's records show that the proportion of good and outstanding teaching is rising.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage and routines are based on a good understanding of children's needs. Observations of children's achievements are used well to inform activities. Teachers' questioning extends children's skills and understanding well. Teaching assistants guide children's progress effectively. Good resources support learning well. Provision outdoors is not yet as vibrant as indoors but the school has plans to address this.
- In the very best lessons in Key Stages 1 and 2, teachers plan their lessons to make sure all pupils are given work that gets the very best out of them. Teachers explain ideas carefully and use questions skilfully so that pupils learn very quickly. Teaching assistants provide effective support to guide pupils' learning and pupils are encouraged to check their work individually or in pairs, using helpful guidance.
- Activities are interesting and capture pupils' interest. For instance, information and communication technology and a range of relevant word problems were used very effectively

with a class of more-able Year 5 and 6 children to help them practise calculation methods and deepen their understanding of proportion and ratio in mathematics. Setting pupils according to their ability is used particularly effectively throughout Years 5 and 6 to make sure pupils are appropriately challenged.

- When teaching is less effective, one or more of the strengths outlined above are missing. For example, pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to use methods taught in mathematics to solve word problems, or provided with suitable targets and feedback in marking to help them improve. In English, pupils are not consistently encouraged to check and correct their spelling and punctuation to help them learn for themselves.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are given extra help. Teaching methods are especially well suited to the needs of these pupils and of those who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, helping them to learn quickly. However, the quality of teaching provided by teaching assistants for pupils in mathematics intervention groups is less effective: work set does not match their needs and learning is slower.

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

- Staff and parents are positive about behaviour within school and report that behaviour has improved since the last inspection. This is due to recent changes brought about by the headteacher who has established effective relationships with parents, ensuring pupils arrive punctually at school and ready to learn. Instances of misbehaviour are rare and are dealt with quickly and effectively by staff.
- Staff are good role models, encouraging pupils to behave well through a calm, caring and supportive atmosphere. Consequently, pupils display positive attitudes in lessons and pupils' learning is rarely interrupted.
- Pupils speak positively about their learning and are happy in school. Pupils are punctual to lessons and eager to get on with their work because of the good relationships in class and high expectations of staff. They work and play well together, respect one another and are very polite to adults.
- School records show that bullying and exclusions are rare and effectively managed. Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying, including racism, harassment and cyber bullying. Pupils are very clear about the behaviour expected of them.
- Pupils report that they feel safe in school; they understand what constitutes unsafe situations and the basic principles of how to keep themselves safe. Risk assessments are undertaken and the school is rigorous in its procedures for ensuring pupils' safety.
- Break times and lunchtimes are supervised well and a well-resourced play area ensures pupils enjoy playing with one another.
- The school is aware of the need to review its procedures for authorising holidays for pupils during term time. This is to secure the improvements in attendance made since the last inspection and to ensure attendance, which is currently below average, rises to national averages.

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

- The leadership of the headteacher and other leaders is strong. They have a very clear view of how successful the school can be and challenge and support staff well. The leadership team inspires staff and pupils and there is a good team spirit overall. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and the staff and pupils appreciate the headteacher's encouraging approach.
- The leadership team has worked relentlessly and successfully to improve pupils' progress by strengthening the quality of teaching, through rigorous monitoring and by providing astute comments on how to make it better. Training links to these needs.

- Good progress has been made in tackling all areas identified for improvement in the previous inspection report. Successful actions, including improved teaching and learning, have raised achievement in reading, writing and mathematics for all groups of pupils.
- An accurate and robust system has been put in place to check pupils' progress and the data manager provides highly effective support to staff in order to set and monitor progress towards pupil targets. The effective use of this system is evident in the good progress now being made by all pupils.
- The headteacher has strengthened the way teachers are appraised for their performance. Discussions about pupils' progress ensure that staff are answerable for the progress of the pupils in their class. The headteacher and governors are committed to ensuring teachers are only rewarded when they are successful in helping pupils to make at least good progress.
- The school's procedures for gaining an accurate view of its strengths and areas to develop are effective in identifying the main priorities for improvement. Plans to tackle priorities are correctly centred on teachers sharing good and outstanding practice; this is having a positive impact on raising attainment and improving the consistency in the quality of teaching.
- Links between home and school are good and parents are involved appropriately in pupils' learning due to the tireless efforts of the family support worker who has had a positive impact on improving attendance.
- The curriculum meets pupils' needs. It adds interest to pupils' learning and promotes their spiritual, moral and social development well, although the school is aware of the need to strengthen cultural development. A number of school clubs exist to meet the interests of all pupils and are well attended. Homework is also provided to extend pupils' skills and learning.
- The local authority has a good understanding of the school's needs and has been effective in supporting its rapid improvement.
- Leadership and management of the Early Days Nursery is highly effective. Data is used well to shape children's learning and provision. All three areas within the nursery are stimulating, promote high-quality learning and meet safeguarding requirements.
- Inspectors investigated concerns expressed in a minority of staff and parent questionnaires, which related to the leadership and management of the school. Inspectors found no evidence to indicate the leadership and management of the school are not good.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors know achievement and teaching have improved and are good. They check that teachers' salary progression is linked to their appraisal outcomes and their stage of career development. Under the strong leadership of the headteacher, governors are playing a more central role in future planning. They understand that the pupil premium funding has been allocated to provide help for pupils who are at risk of underachieving and the impact of this spending is measured against the outcomes for eligible pupils. Governors are not fully involved in analysing essential information about the school's performance. They ensure that all safeguarding requirements are met.

## 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>	133559
<b>Local authority</b>	Sunderland
<b>Inspection number</b>	412576

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	415
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Darren Andrews
<b>Headteacher</b>	Debra De Muschamp
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5 October 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 553 7750
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