

Sugar Hill Primary School

Sheraton Road, Newton Aycliffe, County Durham, DL5 5NU

Inspection dates 16–17 May 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.

- From the time children enter the school in the Early Years Foundation Stage, they make good progress in both numeracy and literacy.
- Pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium funding and those who have special educational needs often make outstanding progress because of the support they receive.
- Teaching is good and pupils learn effectively because of the partnership of teachers and teaching assistants in planning and delivering high quality lessons.
- Pupils learn well because their work is marked exceptionally well. Teachers insist that pupils react to the areas where they might improve a piece of work so that they learn from their mistakes.
- Behaviour is good because pupils are taught to respect others by all adults in the school.
- Pupils have very good manners because they are taught to be polite from the time they enter school.
- The senior leaders work exceptionally well together. They have the full confidence of their staff and they have enabled the school to make significant improvements to pupils' achievement.
- The governing body has a very good understanding of this improving school, including areas where it can be improved even further.
- Members of the governing body understand precisely how much progress pupils are making.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A minority of higher achievers do less well than might be expected.
- Pupils' reading skills in Key Stage 2 are weaker than their writing skills.
- There are not enough lessons where the teaching is outstanding.
- In some lessons, teachers spend too long on lengthy introductions which cut down the time for pupils to work on their own.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 25 lessons or parts of lessons taught by 15 different teachers.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and talked to them about how much reading they do as well as looking at their work in class.
- Discussions took place with members of the governing body, staff, groups of pupils and a telephone conversation was held with a representative of the local authority.
- Documents were examined, including those relating to safeguarding, the school's improvement plan, and records of its checks on teaching and learning, as well as the school's own assessment data.
- The views of 18 parents who responded to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) were also taken into account, as well the school's own questionnaires, which surveyed 50 parents.
- Questionnaires about their views of the school were also completed by 23 staff.

Inspection team

Frank Cain, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jim Hall

Additional Inspector

James Hannah

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Sugar Hill is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children who are looked after,, children of service families, and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus, or with a statement of educational needs, is above average.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage.
- The school has experienced disruption in its staffing in recent years but it is now more stable.
- The school met the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics, in 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that more is outstanding by:
 - making sure that the work for all higher-achieving pupils matches their ability
 - encouraging pupils to read more widely and to develop a broader vocabulary of words that they understand
 - giving pupils more time to show what they can do by having less time in lessons devoted to teachers' lengthy introductions.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- When children enter the school in the Nursery class they have skills which are below, and sometimes well below, those that would normally be expected for their age. By the time they leave Year 6, their standards of attainment are below, but close to, the national average, which represents good progress from their starting points.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children make very good progress, often through play. One child in the Reception class was enthusiastically using a trowel outside to look for buried objects. The teacher commented, 'He is our archaeologist.' The child ran off calling out the word 'archaeologist' accurately, breaking down the difficult word into the sounds that the letters make.
- Historically, pupils have made less progress in Key Stage 2. This has not just been arrested, but reversed, so that most pupils from Year 3 to Year 6 are making good progress. Progress is accelerating as the school has high expectations and high targets for pupils to achieve.
- Pupils who are known to be eligible to receive free school meals and those other pupils supported by the pupil premium funding do extremely well at school and they outperform other pupils in the school in English and match them in mathematics. This reflects the school's commitment to ensuring all have an equal opportunity and eliminating discrimination.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs do well, particularly in Key Stage 2, where their attainment is, on average, approximately one term ahead of similar pupils nationally.
- The children from the Early Years Foundation Stage are adept at using tablet computers and older ones use them to read books. This is having a very positive effect on learning.
- Progress in mathematics, which is a popular subject with pupils, is good because of good teaching and imaginative practical activities.
- In last year's screening check to see how well Year 1 pupils read standards were well above average. Pupils in Year 2 are able to break down words into the sounds that letters make very well. Some older pupils have not yet become keen readers, partly because their vocabulary and their ability to comprehend the meaning of words are weak.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good across the school because teachers plan lessons well. In a Year 4 lesson, hidden objects were used for the pupils to smell and then come up with interesting words to describe what they experienced.
- Pupils are able to talk confidently about their work and to demonstrate clear gains in their understanding. In a Year 3 mathematics lesson, pupils were introduced to the new concept of 'perimeter', which they quickly understood because the teaching was good.
- The development of the pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural awareness is part of all lessons. In Year 6, where pupils were asked to react to having a strange creature from a different planet as a house-guest, one was a bit shocked, while another chirped up 'That's a bit like racism.'
- In a university-inspired inquiry, the school were pairing up Year 3 with Year 5 pupils and the latter were teaching the younger ones mathematics. The pupils found this good fun and it helped them to learn as, 'teaching others helps you to understand things.'
- The quality of the pupils' work in books shows that teaching over time has been good. Pupils are given a wide variety of tasks including research work and writing at length. Worksheets are kept to the absolute minimum.
- Teachers' marking is outstanding and is a key factor in helping pupils to improve over time in both literacy and numeracy. Teachers do not just comment on pupils' work, but engage in a

written conversation on how to correct and make their work better.

- While lessons are adapted to the abilities of different pupils, in a few lessons those who have higher ability are not given work that challenges them to do their best.
- In a small number of lessons, pupils are not given sufficient time to do their work as too much time is taken up by teachers in introducing and explaining the work.
- The vast majority of parents and all of the pupils who spoke to the inspectors think that teaching is good. On a scale of one to ten, pupils said teaching is, without hesitation, ten. They appreciate that teachers are there to help them to improve.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' attitude to learning is very good and they waste little time in getting down to work in class.
- At break time, pupils queue up to buy refreshments in a courteous and respectful way.
- Pupils are taught good manners from entering the school. At a break in activities, children in Reception were encouraged to say 'please' and 'thank you' when getting their snack.
- Pupils smile and wave and hold doors open for fellow pupils and adults. They are considerate and friendly to visitors. One Year 2 pupil, without prompting, pulled a chair forward for a visitor to his classroom to sit on.
- Occasionally, when lessons are not quite so engrossing, some pupils do get distracted but this never affects the learning for the vast majority.
- There are very few recorded incidents of unacceptable behaviour in school and pupils say there is no bullying or name-calling. Pupils are extremely aware of the dangers of using computers and were conscious that they should never put in personal details and should report any unpleasant telephone calls.
- Outside, the pupils have extensive grounds in which to play and to make friends and they are well supervised by 'loads of dinner nannies', so that they feel safe.
- Pupils are aware that 'they have a right to be safe'. All the pupils who spoke to the inspectors said that they feel very safe in the school and both parental surveys indicate that almost all parents agree and that their children enjoy school.
- Pupils look after others through their 'buddy' system, so that pupils have someone to turn to if they need someone to play with.
- The school believes that praising good behaviour is more important than punishing poor behaviour. Time in a 'rewards room' with interactive computer activities has had a positive effect in improving pupils' attitudes.
- Attendance is broadly average, and improving, and very few pupils arrive late because they enjoy school.

The leadership and management are good

- The senior leaders of the school have made a significant impact on improving the achievement of pupils and their attendance. They have managed the staffing extremely well to improve teaching and learning in the school.
- Managers have detailed records, which give a clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses of teaching in the school. Teaching is regularly monitored by leaders, and teachers' performance is managed very thoroughly. All teachers thought that the targets that they are expected to reach regarding how well pupils were doing are stringent.
- The school curriculum is wide and varied. Pupils are able to talk about how their learning is helped by visits to museums and historic buildings.
- Pupils' social, moral, spiritual, and cultural development is particularly good as seen by the contribution pupils make to the local area. Pupils pick-up litter and plant bulbs in the local park

and, at Christmas, sing carols in local homes for the aged.

- Links with parents are good and the school gives very good support to parents, who are encouraged to come to school if they have any concern about their children.
- The local authority has given the school good support and advice for what is provided in the Early Years Foundation Stage and confirmed the accuracy of the school's own evaluation of its performance.
- The school's procedures for safeguarding pupils meet current statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have an extremely clear idea on how well the school is doing because they can interpret the detailed information on pupils' progress extremely well. They can talk confidently about the school's strengths in teaching and of areas where more improvement could be made. The governors are very aware of the link that needs to be made with progress and increases in teachers' salary. They understand the significant impact that is being made on pupils' progress by the pupil premium.

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	114207
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	412139

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	445
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lyn Swift
Headteacher	Linda Cumming
Date of previous school inspection	20 May 2010
Telephone number	01325 300334
Fax number	01325 308980
Email address	sugarhill@durhamlearning.net

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