

Vane Road Primary School

Vane Road, Newton Aycliffe, County Durham, DL5 5RH

Inspection dates 22–23 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.

- Pupils make good progress from their individual starting points in reading, writing and mathematics. They reach standards that are at least in line with, and often above, age-related expectations by the time they leave the school.
- School leaders, including governors, are clearly focussed on ensuring continuous improvement. They have an accurate view of the school's strengths and priorities for the future. There has been a specific and successful focus on improving the quality of teaching.
- This vision for improvement is shared by staff and there is a strong sense of teamwork.
- The quality of teaching is good, and on occasion it is outstanding. In the best lessons, teachers' sharp use of questioning means that pupils' learning is probed and extended, and ensures a good pace to lessons.
- Pupils state that they feel happy and safe in school. In the words of one, 'There is something special about Vane Road because everyone enjoys it here.' Pupils behave well, are polite, courteous, welcoming to visitors and take good care of each other.
- Pupils enjoy the varied curriculum opportunities and additional activities, usually linked to the topics they study, that are on offer. These include a good range of visits and visitors to the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not yet sufficient outstanding teaching to lead to pupils making consistently outstanding progress.
- Pupils' progress in writing is good, but it is not yet as strong as in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils' technical handwriting skills are not sufficiently well developed.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 21 lessons, one of which was a joint observation with the acting headteacher. In addition, inspectors made a number of short visits to lessons and listened to pupils reading.
- Discussions were held with school staff, groups of pupils, parents, senior teachers and subject leaders, a representative from the local authority and three members of the governing body.
- The inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a wide range of documentation including safeguarding documents, the school’s self-evaluation and development plans, local authority reports, records of pupils’ current attainment and progress, documents relating to attendance and pupils’ behaviour, and pupils’ work in books.
- There were 30 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and these were taken into consideration along with the school’s analysis of its own questionnaire to parents.
- There were 28 responses to the staff questionnaire and these were also taken into account.

Inspection team

Alan Sergison, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Geoffrey Seagrove	Additional Inspector
David Wilson	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- The great majority of pupils are from a White British background.
- There has been a period of significant turbulence in the senior management of the school. The current acting headteacher joined the school in January 2013. The newly appointed headteacher will take up his post in September 2013.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above average. (This is additional funding provided for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those in local authority care and those with parents in the armed forces.)
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has the Eco School Award, Investors in People Award and has achieved Healthy School status.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching in order to raise standards and accelerate pupil progress further by:
 - improving the overall quality of teachers' marking so it is all as consistently good as the best practice seen
 - improving the consistency of the quality of teachers' questioning to ensure the skills of all teachers in this area are as sharp as those observed in the very best lessons
 - sharing more widely the very best teaching practice within the school and in other schools.
- Accelerate pupils' progress in writing by:
 - making sure that the recently introduced actions to develop pupils' writing skills are having a positive impact
 - creating opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their writing skills in different subjects and to write at length in a range of contexts
 - developing pupils' technical handwriting skills.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Most children join school in the Reception class with knowledge and skills below those expected for their age. As the result of good teaching, they make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and also in Years 1 and 2. They join Year 3 with attainment levels which are broadly typical for their age.
- Pupils continue to make good progress across Key Stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics and by the time they leave the school, standards are generally above average. Progress in writing, however, is not as strong as in reading and mathematics. Strategies to address this are at an early stage of implementation but there is already evidence that these are beginning to have a positive impact. However, pupils' technical handwriting skills are not yet strong enough across the school.
- The school uses its increasingly detailed information about individuals' progress well to trigger swift action when necessary and this ensures that all achieve well.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make similar progress to that of other pupils due to timely and sharply focused help from teachers and teaching assistants.
- Pupils who are supported by the pupil premium make similar, and sometimes better, progress compared to that of their classmates. Teacher assessments show that there are no significant gaps between the standards they reach and those reached by other pupils in the school. In 2012, pupils eligible for this funding attained standards similar to those of their peers in both English and mathematics. This demonstrates effective use of the extra funding and the school's commitment to equality of opportunity.
- The systematic teaching of letters and the sounds they represent (phonics) helps most pupils learn to read quickly and accurately. Phonics lessons are well organised and structured to enable pupils to work at their own level.
- Pupils who read to inspectors demonstrated how to work out unfamiliar words and read with confidence and expression. Older pupils were able to discuss the work of a range of authors and express a preference about the types of books they enjoyed and why. The school clearly develops an enthusiasm for reading in pupils.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is consistently good throughout the school and some of the teaching is outstanding.
- Where teaching is at its best, teachers and teaching assistants plan lessons very well together to ensure that pupils are given work to get the best out of them. Consequently, all pupils learn rapidly because they are given work that matches their ability and they find out things for themselves.
- An example of this was seen in a very successful lesson in Year 5. Pupils were challenged to write a quality description of a setting, after watching a short clip from 'Around the World in Eighty Days'. The teacher's enthusiasm and sharp use of questioning brought an urgency and pace to the learning. Pupils responded positively to this and were very well motivated to complete the task.
- Not all lessons are as successful as this however and, on occasion, teachers' use of questioning is not as focused. As a result, the pace of the lesson slows as does the pace of learning.
- Classrooms are well organised and stimulating and there are good relationships between adults and pupils. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good and on occasion they are exemplary. In the best lessons, teachers make good use of small-group work, where pupils talk together to share their ideas. This shared working helps them to clarify their thinking and rehearse their ideas before writing.
- There are some very good examples of quality marking of pupils' work. In the best examples,

teachers give pupils the opportunity to respond to the marking. This supports and extends their learning by telling them what they need to do to improve and, importantly, allowing them time to consider the suggestions. However, this quality of marking is not consistent across the school.

- Pupils' progress in writing is not yet as strong as in reading and mathematics. This is, in part, because teachers do not always provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to write at length across a range of subjects to enable them to develop their writing skills further.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The school is calm and orderly; a place where teachers can teach and pupils can learn purposefully and effectively. Pupils demonstrate an eagerness to learn. Only on rare occasions does pupils' attention wane when teaching is less stimulating. Pupils are treated with respect and they show respect for each other and for adults.
- Pupils feel happy and safe in school. They state that bullying is rare and they are confident that issues would be dealt with by supportive adults. They are aware of the different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying, and know how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations. The comment of one pupil was typical, 'We all play and learn together and you make lots of friends and have fun.'
- Pupils relish the opportunities that the school gives them to take responsibility, for example, as members of the school council, the school sports council or in supporting younger pupils at lunchtimes.
- The school has worked hard, and with success, with parents and outside agencies to improve the attendance of pupils and attendance is now broadly average.
- The majority of parents are supportive of the work of the school and feel that their children are well cared for and supported. When parents raise issues of concern, the school endeavours to respond.
- The school provides sensitive support for pupils and families whose circumstances might make them vulnerable. Staff all work well with external agencies to ensure these families receive all the help they need.

The leadership and management are good

- In the short time since her arrival, the current acting headteacher, well supported by governors, has worked diligently and with success to ensure an unrelenting focus on further improving the quality of teaching.
- Senior leaders have not yet had time, however, to ensure that the best practice in the school, and in other schools, is more widely shared. They are also aware of the need to review recent initiatives introduced to accelerate progress and raise standards, to make sure that they are having the desired impact.
- Leaders, managers and governors, supported by all staff, share high ambitions for the school. They have a sharp understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They keep all aspects of its work under close review and move swiftly and decisively to address issues.
- The school's information on pupils' achievement is increasingly robust and accurate. Information is now being used more efficiently to identify those pupils who may be in need of extra support or additional challenge to stretch them. Pupil progress meetings are held regularly with senior staff to ensure the progress of specific groups of learners is closely checked. Subject leaders, some of whom are new to role, are increasingly involved in this process.
- The school's improvement plan sets out realistic targets. The performance of all staff is monitored closely and any underperformance is rigorously challenged. Increases in teachers' salaries are closely linked to the impact of teaching on pupils' performance. A good range of staff training and development opportunities, including partnership with other schools and training provided by the local authority, have led to significant improvements since the last

inspection.

- Subject leaders are developing well. They have raised expectations of staff and there is a strong focus on where further improvements are needed. Ambition is evident here too and regular monitoring provides a clear picture of what is going well.
- The creative curriculum has had a very positive impact on pupils' good social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. Pupils are really excited and stimulated by the interesting range of topics they study, by the visits to places of interest and by visitors to the school related to areas of study. Older pupils particularly enjoy the opportunities provided for them to take part in residential visits.
- Statutory safeguarding requirements are met.
- The local authority has provided very good support for the school through a range of its services to schools. This has been very much appreciated by governors and senior leaders.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is committed to continually driving improvements at the school. Governors ensure that the school fulfils its statutory duties. They have an accurate view of school provision and work increasingly closely with the senior leadership team. They challenge and support the school well and hold senior staff to account through reports to the full governing body. They also keep themselves up to date on school developments. They have a good understanding of financial expenditure and monitor this closely. They have taken decisive action when required. Governors are aware of the quality of teaching at the school and that it is linked to teachers' pay, based on meeting performance targets. They know about pupil premium expenditure and the positive impact that this is having in supporting pupil progress. They understand how well the school is performing in relation to other schools and are developing their knowledge of the school through links to key areas and regular visits. They also access appropriate training and development opportunities.

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	114206
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	412881

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	335
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rohit Patel
Headteacher	Dorothy Brennan
Date of previous school inspection	13 May 2009
Telephone number	01325 300380
Fax number	01325 321203
Email address	d.brennan100@durhamlearning.net

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2013

