

# Stead Lane Primary School

Stead Lane, Bedlington, Northumberland, NE22 5JS

**Inspection dates** 18–19 June 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.

- Stead Lane Primary School is a good and improving school.
- From their individual starting points, pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics, regardless of ability or background.
- The leadership team, including governors, under the clear direction and guidance of the headteacher, is sharply focussed on continuous school improvement.
- Teaching and learning are good across the school because teachers plan learning in detail and teach interesting lessons. On occasion, teaching is outstanding.
- Staff are dedicated to providing a stimulating environment in which pupils learn well and develop into responsible young people. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the work of the school.
- Governors are knowledgeable about the school because they regularly check on how well it is doing. They are, therefore, able to provide a good balance of support and challenge.
- Pupils enjoy being at school and, justifiably, feel safe. They say that if they have any problems they will be well looked after. Pupil behaviour and attitudes to learning are good.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not yet enough outstanding teaching across the school to lead to pupils making outstanding progress.
- The rate of pupils' progress in writing is not yet as fast as it is in reading and mathematics.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 15 lessons, two of which were joint observations with the headteacher. In addition, inspectors made a number of short visits to classrooms.
- Inspectors talked to pupils about their experiences in school and listened to pupils read.
- 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.
- Inspectors took account of the 15 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), together with the results of the school's own questionnaire to parents and discussions with parents during the school day.
- Inspectors also took account of 20 staff questionnaires.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and examined a range of documents, including the school's own view of its 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.
- Pupils were observed at playtime, lunchtime and at the beginning and end of the school day.

Alan Sergison, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Peter Harrison

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The school recently converted to being a primary school. Prior to this, it was Bedlington Stead Lane First School, with provision for pupils up to Year 4. The oldest pupils in the school are now in Year 5.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British background.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those children in local authority care or from services families, is above average.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs supported at school action is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school provides a breakfast club for pupils.
- The school has achieved a number of awards including the Basic Skills Quality Mark, the Eco-Schools Award and has achieved Healthy School status.

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

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching to raise pupils' achievement further by:
  - sharing more widely the skills, expertise and best practice found in the school and in other schools
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to respond to teachers' marking
  - refining the questioning skills of all teachers, so that they are all as good as the best practice seen in the school
  - providing pupils with more opportunities to show they can work things out for themselves and learn on their own.
- Speed up the rate of pupils' progress in writing so that it equals that in reading and mathematics by:
  - improving pupils' spoken vocabulary and communication skills in order to help their writing
  - giving pupils more opportunities to write at length and to practise their writing skills in different subjects.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start the school with skills that are below, and on occasion well below, those typical for their age, especially in their communication, language and personal skills. The teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and so children settle very well into school life and make good progress. They access a range of exciting and stimulating activities both indoors and out of doors. Pupils enter Key Stage 1 with skills and knowledge closer to those seen nationally.
- Progress of pupils in the school in recent years has been good. Although pupils' standards of attainment reported in the Key Stage 1 national tests in English and mathematics fell in 2012, most pupils made good progress from their previous starting points. Pupils' good progress continues across Key Stage 2 and the oldest pupils in the school achieve well in relation to the expected levels for their age. Inspection evidence indicates that the oldest Year 5 pupils are on course to meet challenging targets by the time they leave Year 6.
- Pupils make good progress in their reading skills. From Nursery, children have a secure understanding of a range of things they can do to extend their reading skills. Children learn to recognise letters and the sounds they make (phonics) in the Early Years Foundation Stage and throughout their time in school. The majority blend these sounds and build words confidently. Older pupils were aware of the work of different authors and were able to express a preference for different styles of writing. The school develops a love and enjoyment of reading in children.
- Pupils make slower progress in their writing skills compared to their progress in reading and mathematics, because they do not have sufficient opportunities to write long pieces of work or to practise their writing skills in different subjects. Pupils also have insufficient opportunities to improve their vocabulary and communication skills to help their writing. Opportunities to show they can get on with their work and learn on their own are also inconsistent between classes.
- The school's leadership work tirelessly to ensure that the pupil premium funding is spent effectively. They employ a wide range of strategies to support these pupils, including providing additional support, purchasing resources and subsidising their attendance on educational visits, so they can access other areas of the curriculum. This is having a positive impact on the achievement of this group. School data confirms that the gap between the progress of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and that of their peers has narrowed and in some year groups they are performing better than their peers.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special needs make progress in line with their peers. Their needs are identified at an early stage and teachers work in close partnership with skilled teaching assistants to ensure they receive the help that they need.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Overall, teaching is good across the school. On occasion, it is outstanding. This has had a direct positive impact on the consistently good progress now seen in the school.
- Teaching in the Nursery is a strength of the school. The excellent relationships between adults and children and the strong teamwork between the teacher and the teaching assistant, ensures that children are provided with a very exciting range of activities. For example, a group of children were very highly motivated and excited about their learning when experimenting with syringes full of different coloured water, seeing how the coloured liquids flowed and mixed together.
- In the most successful lessons, teachers make clear to pupils what they are going to learn. Good relationships and the way teachers plan their teaching helps pupils make good progress. They make work interesting as demonstrated in a successful Year 2 lesson when pupils were challenged to pretend to be athletes, writing a diary entry about how they felt about their training. The teacher's enthusiasm and energy for the task, together with the use of sharp questioning ensured that pupils were highly motivated and that learning moved forward at a

brisk pace.

- Not all teaching is as good as this however. In the few less successful lessons, teachers' questioning of pupils is not sufficiently focussed. The pace of the lesson then slows as does the rate of learning.
- Teaching assistants make a strong contribution to pupils learning across the school. They plan topics well with teachers, work well with small groups of pupils and individuals and are particularly effective in supporting those who are at risk of falling behind.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and follow the school policy carefully. Pupils are often given clear steps for improvement and this is supporting the overall good progress they make. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to respond to this marking and take their learning forward at a faster rate, particularly in writing. These opportunities would ensure that they were more fully involved in improving their own learning.
- Teaching very effectively promotes pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is evident in lessons and around school. Pupils work well together, value the opinions of others and show good awareness of other cultures. Lessons are rarely disrupted through unacceptable behaviour.

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

- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school is good. Pupils work diligently to complete tasks and usually give of their best. They listen well and eagerly tackle what they are set to do. Attitudes to learning are consistently good, particularly when pupils are highly motivated by stimulating teaching. They work together cooperatively and are respectful and considerate towards each other. However, in the few less successful lessons, when the pace of the learning slows, pupils become more easily distracted and are less engaged in the activities they are being asked to complete.
- Pupils say that they feel happy and safe in school. They feel confident and secure and this is reflected in their improving levels of attendance which are now broadly average. There is a positive atmosphere in the school. As one pupil commented 'Everyone respects one another. The teachers are very supportive and we have exciting lessons'.
- Pupils relish opportunities to take responsibility for themselves and others. This is exemplified in the work of the school council, the playground buddies and the committee of pupils charged with developing aspects of the school's work in mathematics.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the work of the school. The vast majority who responded to Parent View and the school's own survey and those who spoke to inspectors expressed very positive views. As one commented 'The staff always have time for you if you need to discuss anything with them'.
- Pupils state that bullying does not occur in their school, but they know what to do if they have a problem. They feel that they have a range of adults who will listen to them and support them. They are aware of different kinds of bullying, including cyber-bullying and know how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations, including when using the internet.
- There is a consistent approach to behaviour management by all adults in the school and pupils very much value the school's merit and reward systems.

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

- The headteacher is providing determined leadership and is passionate about improving the school. She has challenged underperformance and has taken difficult decisions.
- This approach has led to sustained good progress of pupils and a relentless focus on improving the quality of teaching. Although there is some sharing of practice, this is not yet systematic to ensure that the very best teaching practice observed within the school and in other schools is shared more widely.

- There is a clear focus from all leaders on continuous school improvement and there is a collegiate approach to ensuring positive change. For example, leaders are focussing on developing the curriculum for Years 5 and 6 and enabling staff to take advantage of training and development opportunities to prepare them to meet the needs of these pupils.
- Senior leaders have raised the expectations of most staff and there is a strong focus on where further improvements are needed. Ambition is evident and regular monitoring activities provide a clear picture of what is going well in different areas. Staff are held to account for the progress pupils make.
- These checks on how well it is doing are very accurate and lead to very appropriate school improvement activities. The curriculum that the school provides for pupils is good. The formal curriculum is further enhanced by a broad range of visits and visitors to the school. Older pupils really enjoy the benefits of a residential visit to an outdoor pursuits centre. The good range of extra-curricular activities, also enhance pupils' learning and personal development. Senior leaders have accurately identified that pupil progress in writing is not yet as strong as in other areas and there are clear plans in place to tackle this.
- The school is very successful at promoting equality of opportunity for all pupils and ensures that all groups achieve equally well, especially those who are considered to be more vulnerable.
- It benefits from good light-touch support from the local authority and accesses various services as required.
- Statutory safeguarding requirements are met.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body is very effective and passionate about ensuring that pupils' achievement and overall standards continue to improve. They understand clearly how well the school is performing and how this relates to the national picture in schools. They are very well informed and provide the right balance of challenge and support for senior leaders. They have a good knowledge of the quality of teaching and the next steps to take to improve this further. Governors are fully aware of how pupil premium funding is used and are aware of the positive impact this is having. Governors are not afraid to hold the school to account. They are well informed about the link between teachers' salary and performance and set challenging targets for the headteacher. They access appropriate training and development opportunities and have a good understanding of the strengths of the school and what the future challenges hold, in order to ensure further improvements. For example, they ensure that the school works well in partnership with the local authority and other schools who have experience of the changes they are currently undergoing.

## 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>	122181
<b>Local authority</b>	Northumberland
<b>Inspection number</b>	412886

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>	3–10
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	221
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Susan Greaves
<b>Headteacher</b>	Louise Mallin
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	23 September 2008
<b>Telephone number</b>	01670 823171
<b>Fax number</b>	Not applicable
<b>Email address</b>	admin@steadlane.northumberland.gov.uk



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