

West Pelton Primary School

Twizell Lane, West Pelton, Stanley, DH9 6SQ

Inspection dates 19–20 June 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 in all year groups, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, make good progress and achieve well.
- Teaching in all classes is good. Staff know pupils very well and have high expectations. They ensure that pupils receive appropriate support and guidance when needed.
- Pupils' performance is carefully monitored and this is helping to improve teaching and raise achievement.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils enjoy school. They are keen to learn and get on well with each other and their teachers. They feel very safe and well cared for in school. Attendance is improving.
- School leaders and governors have a clear view of how well the school is doing and what it needs to do to improve further.
- The school makes a strong contribution to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Parents are very supportive of the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet outstanding. Teachers do not always ensure that all pupils, particularly more-able pupils, are challenged enough to reach the highest levels and make more than expected progress.
- Teachers do not always give pupils clear enough guidance about how to improve their work, and do not always check that this guidance is followed.
- Teachers do not always ask questions that lead to pupils having a deeper understanding of their work.
- Pupils are not always given enough opportunity to think, learn and work independently.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to apply and use their mathematical knowledge and skills in practical situations.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed nine lessons taught by four teachers, including one joint observation with the headteacher. Short visits were made to three other lessons. The inspector also listened to pupils read and visited a school assembly.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, the headteacher, the Early Years Foundation Stage coordinator, the mathematics coordinator, two members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school improvement plan, data on pupils' current progress, work in pupils' books, minutes of the governing body meetings and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- Too few responses were received to analyse in the online questionnaire (Parent View), but the inspector considered responses to a school parental questionnaire. He also took into account responses to the questionnaires completed by staff for the inspection.

Inspection team

Robert Birtwell, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Pupils are taught in three classes comprising Reception and Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3, and Year 4, 5 and 6.
- Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children who are looked after by the local authority and children from service families) is above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported at school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' achievement by:
 - ensuring that work is always closely matched to pupils' needs, particularly for the more able, so that more pupils achieve the highest levels and make more than expected progress
 - ensuring that pupils have increased opportunities to use and apply their mathematical knowledge and skills to investigate and solve problems in practical situations, both in mathematics lessons and across the curriculum.
- Improve teaching and learning by:
 - making sure that pupils have additional opportunities to think, learn and work independently
 - ensuring that pupils are always given very clear advice about what they need to do to improve their work, and that teachers check that this is followed
 - making sure that teachers ask questions that deepen pupils' understanding as well as reinforcing their knowledge.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join the school in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and understand that are generally well below those expected for their age, although the number of pupils is small and abilities can vary from year to year.
- Children make good progress during the Reception Year and are well prepared to enter Key Stage 1.
- Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1. Attainment at the end of Year 2 has improved, and standards in reading, writing and mathematics are below, but closer to the national average.
- Pupils continue to make good progress throughout Key Stage 2. Attainment in English and mathematics has been around the national average for two of the last three years, although it was below average in 2012. The school's data shows that current Year 6 pupils are on course to achieve stronger outcomes this year.
- The school's detailed tracking information shows that pupils currently make good progress and achieve well throughout the school, whatever their starting point. This is supported by inspection evidence from lesson observations and work in pupils' books.
- Pupils make good progress in reading, although the proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard in the national phonics (letters and the sounds they make) check was below average in 2012. Staff ensure that pupils read regularly and have a good knowledge of phonics.
- The dip in performance in 2012 at the end of Key Stage 2 was caused by weaker performance in mathematics. School data shows that this is not a consistent trend, and that weaknesses have been addressed. Pupils have sound basic skills and are now making good progress in mathematics across the school.
- Pupils have many opportunities to write in a range of styles in different subjects. However, there are too few opportunities for them to use and apply their mathematical knowledge and skills to investigate and solve problems in practical situations, both in mathematics lessons and across the curriculum.
- Almost half of the pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, and these pupils, including those known to be eligible for free school meals make progress similar to the rest of the pupils in the school. Test results at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2012 showed that these pupils were around a term and a half behind other pupils, due mainly to weaker performance in mathematics. School data shows that this gap in performance is closing rapidly.
- The small number of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress and achieve as well as other pupils. This is because their needs are accurately identified and they receive support in lessons or in individual or small group sessions.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good across the school and this enables pupils to learn well. There is a positive climate for learning in classrooms and pupils are keen to do well. Teachers know pupils very well and have high expectations.
- Teachers plan lessons that generally meet the needs and interests of pupils. All lessons have clear learning objectives and success criteria, and teachers use questioning effectively to check pupils' knowledge and reinforce their understanding.
- In the best lessons where pupils make the most rapid progress, imaginative work is carefully matched to different pupils' needs. There are opportunities for pupils to work independently or in groups investigating issues or solving problems. Questioning is used skilfully to challenge and extend pupils' learning.
- In an English lesson, for example, pupils worked independently on incorporating particular features into the opening paragraphs of an autobiography. Different groups of pupils had

different targets, and were challenged to exceed them. As a result, they produced some effective writing and made good progress.

- In other lessons, pupils have fewer opportunities to think, learn and work independently. Teachers ask questions that reinforce rather than deepen pupils' understanding, and work is not always matched closely enough to their abilities. More-able pupils in particular, are not always given work which is challenging enough. In these lessons, the pace of learning is slower and pupils do not have enough opportunity to reach the highest levels and make more than expected progress.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work closely together, and use a range of methods to deal with any slower progress. Effective support is given to those pupils who need it, including those eligible for the pupil premium and those who are disabled or have special educational needs. This ensures that they make good progress and achieve as well as other pupils in the school.
- Work in pupils' books shows clear progress demonstrating that teaching has been good over time. Work is marked regularly and praise is used effectively. However, teachers do not always ensure that pupils are given clear enough advice about what they need to do to improve their work, and do not always check that this advice is followed.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well. They have positive attitudes to school and are typically polite and courteous. In lessons, they want to succeed and cooperate well with their teachers and with each other. Around school during break and lunchtime they are friendly and behave responsibly.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and are cared for well. They know how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations, including when using the internet. They have a good knowledge of different forms of bullying, but say that it is very rare in school. They have confidence that the school sorts out any incidents quickly and fairly.
- A consistent approach to managing pupils' behaviour means that learning continues without disruption. School behaviour logs show that some pupils can display challenging behaviour at times, but that instances of poor behaviour are rare and dealt with effectively when they happen. As a result, the school can demonstrate real improvements in behaviour for some pupils.
- Attendance has improved and is now closer to the national average. The work of the parental support adviser who is employed by the school has had a strong impact here.
- All parents who responded to the school's survey thought that their children were safe and well looked after in school, and that good behaviour was encouraged. Inspection evidence confirms this.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and staff work well together as an effective team. All staff and governors are committed to giving pupils the best education possible. They have ensured that the strengths identified at the last inspection have been maintained and have also secured improvements to teaching and pupils' achievement. The staff questionnaire results show that morale is high.
- The headteacher has a very good overview of how well the school is doing and where it needs to improve. The school's view of its own performance is accurate and the school improvement plan correctly identifies the key priorities and focuses on further improving teaching and raising pupils' achievement.
- Information on pupils' progress is used to judge how well teachers are doing. This is used to identify where further training and support are needed and taken into account when making decisions about teachers' pay. As a result, the quality of teaching has improved.
- The school knows all its pupils well as individuals. Effective systems track pupils' progress at an

individual level, and any underachievement is rapidly addressed by providing extra help when pupils need it. This means that the school is very good at ensuring equality of opportunity, and that discrimination of any form is not tolerated.

- The curriculum provides a broad range of learning opportunities for all pupils, and is enriched with a range of clubs, activities, trips and visits. There is a well-established school rock band, which performs outside the school, and links with other schools in Sunderland and in the USA. Pupils take on responsibility in the active school council. As a result, the curriculum promotes good behaviour and makes a strong contribution to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The local authority provides light touch but effective support in reviewing the performance of the school and the headteacher. The authority has an accurate view of how well the school is doing.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is well informed about how well the school is doing. Members visit regularly and have a good understanding of performance data. As a result they know the school's strengths and where it needs to make further improvement. They hold the school to account by asking challenging questions, and by setting performance targets for the headteacher, which are reviewed regularly. They also ensure that teachers' performance is taken into account when making decisions about pay. Governors know how pupil premium funding is spent, and how this impacts on pupils' performance. They make sure that finances are well managed and that the school meets its statutory duties, including those related to safeguarding.

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	114004
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	413057

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	58
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Grant Mackie
Headteacher	Julie McDowell
Date of previous school inspection	30 April 2009
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