

Whitburn Village Primary School

Cleadon Lane, Whitburn, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear, SR6 7NS

Inspection dates 2–3 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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 achieve well. All groups make good progress from their individual starting points, regardless of ability or background and reach standards that are above national averages in reading, writing and mathematics, by the end of Year 6.
- Teaching is at least good and on occasion it is outstanding. Pupils say that teachers make learning fun and challenging. They often have good opportunities to discuss their ideas and work together.
- Leadership has been strengthened since the previous inspection. The headteacher, ably supported by senior leaders, has stepped up the rigour with which they check on the quality of teaching. They use information about pupils' progress to hold staff much closer to account for pupils' achievement.
- The safeguarding of pupils is given a high priority by the school. Consequently, pupils feel happy and safe in school. They behave well in lessons and around the school and demonstrate positive attitudes towards their learning.
- Governors carry out their responsibilities effectively and are confident in holding leaders to account for the school's performance. As a result, teaching and achievement are rising and this is an improving school.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the work of the school and feel that their children are very well cared for.
- The spiritual, moral, social and spiritual aspects of pupils' learning are promoted effectively in a fully inclusive environment. Cultural aspects of provision are a real strength of the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The proportion of outstanding teaching is not yet high enough to lead to consistently outstanding pupil progress.
- While pupils' progress in writing is good overall, it is not yet as strong as in other areas. Pupils' handwriting skills are not sufficiently well developed.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 18 lessons. One of these was a joint observation 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 48 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), together with the results of the school's own questionnaire to parents, discussions with parents during the school day and one letter from a parent.
- Inspectors also took account of 17 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.

Inspection team

Alan Sergison, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Philip Scott

Additional Inspector

Deborah Bailey

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The 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 service families, is below 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 below average.
- The school provides a breakfast club for pupils.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has achieved a number of awards including the Healthy School Award and the International School Award (Basic Award).

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching to raise pupils' achievement further by:
 - ensuring that teachers' marking always gives clear guidance to pupils on how to improve their work and that they also routinely have the opportunity to respond to this
 - refining the questioning skills of teachers so that in all lessons they regularly check pupils' understanding and adjust their teaching to meet different needs with accuracy
 - sharing more widely and systematically the skills, expertise and best practice found in the school and in other schools.
- Speed up the rate of pupils' progress in writing by:
 - making sure that handwriting skills are taught successfully and pupils have enough opportunities to write at length across a range of subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills broadly typical for their age. However, this does vary and on occasion pupils' skills are below expectation. They settle quickly and soon become confident and happy in a very positive atmosphere. For example, one child confidently explained how vegetables and fruit are grown in the school's raised beds. He identified all the plants and explained how strawberries ripen. Children display high levels of cooperation and well-developed listening skills.
- Good progress continues from Year 1 to Year 6 and pupils leave school with standards that are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Although progress in writing is good, standards achieved are not as high as in other areas. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to write at length across a range of subjects. Pupils' handwriting skills are not sufficiently well developed.
- The development of pupils' reading skills is given high priority. 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, making good progress. The school is currently reviewing the way in which phonics is taught to further accelerate pupils' progress. Older pupils develop a love of reading and express views on the work of different authors and have a preference for different writing styles.
- Very good systems check on the progress pupils make and ensure that they all have the opportunity to perform equally well. This demonstrates the school's commitment to equality of opportunity. Staff are held to account for the performance of pupils by senior leaders. Any gaps in knowledge are dealt with promptly by way of extra work or additional groups.
- These regular checks ensure that any pupils in danger of falling behind are quickly identified and their needs swiftly addressed. As a result, disabled pupils, and those who have special educational needs, make progress in line with their peers. Their needs are spotted at an early stage and teachers work in close partnership with skilled teaching assistants to ensure that they receive the help that they need.
- School leaders use the pupil premium funding well to target support for individuals and small groups of pupils who need the most help. This is proving to be very effective and the progress of these pupils is improving. Consequently, previous gaps in their results, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, compared to their peers are closing. National data from the 2012 Key Stage 2 tests suggested that these pupils were around half a term behind their peers in English and around a term behind in mathematics. School data on the performance of these pupils now confirm that this gap is closing rapidly and their levels of attainment are now much closer to that of their peers in English and mathematics.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good and on occasion, it is outstanding. Senior leaders check regularly the quality of teaching and have high expectations of teacher performance. This has led to increased consistency in the quality of teaching and has had a strong impact on pupils' good progress.
- In the most successful lessons teachers make clear to pupils what they are going to learn. Sharp teacher questioning ensures a good pace to learning and probes and extends pupils' understanding. For example, in a very successful Year 6 lesson, pupils undertook research on Victorian inventions. Working cooperatively with a partner, they all produced short power-point presentations and performed short sketches to illustrate their use. Pupils thoroughly enjoyed this challenging activity.
- Not all teaching is as good as this, however. In the very few less successful lessons, teachers questioning of pupils is not sufficiently focused. The pace of the lesson then slows as does the rate of learning.

- Although pupils make good overall progress in writing, it is not as brisk as other subjects because teachers do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to write at length. Expectations of pupils' handwriting are not always high enough. There is, for example, insufficient focus on teaching correct letter formation and pencil grip.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge. This is very evident in reading and mathematics. Letters and sounds are taught well using practical activities that consolidate new learning. In mathematics, good attention is paid to teaching pupils how to solve problems.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and follow the school policy carefully. Pupils' good overall progress is often well supported by the clear steps for improvement they are given. There are, however, times when comments do not make it clear to pupils how to improve and they have insufficient opportunities to respond routinely to comments and take their learning forward.
- There are very positive relationships between pupils, teachers and other adults and pupil behaviour is managed very well. As a result, lessons are calm, orderly and well-focused and pupils work hard and make good progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. The behavioural records confirm that this is the case over time too. In a range of situations, pupils play and work together harmoniously. They say that they feel safe and that they have a range of adults to turn to if they need support. Pupils are welcoming, polite and confident. All staff and the majority of parents support this view.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning and are keen to do well. They concentrate and persevere in completing the work set for them. Only on rare occasions, when activities lack challenge, does pupils' concentration wane. Pupils do not always present their work as neatly as they could.
- Pupils are aware of the different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying, and know how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations. Pupils are very positive about their experiences in school. They trust staff and expressed confidence that they will listen to their problems and act upon their concerns. As one pupil remarked, 'This is a telling school. If an adult is told about something, it gets sorted out.'
- Pupils relish the opportunity to take responsibility, for example as members of the school council or playground buddies caring for and looking after others.
- The school has worked hard, and with success, to improve attendance and this is now average. This reflects the fact that pupils enjoy coming to school.
- Pupils very much value the school's merit and reward systems and there is a consistent approach to behaviour management by all adults in the school.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides strong and determined leadership and has secured school improvements. The focus has rightly been on a rigorous programme of improving the quality of teaching. This programme has been successful and the improved teaching has led to good progress by pupils.
- Monitoring of teaching is rigorous. Decisions about salary are based on teacher performance and the headteacher and governors have taken difficult decisions and challenged any underperformance rigorously.
- Teachers are given clear steps for improvement. Staff views, expressed in discussions and in their response through their questionnaires, indicate clearly that they appreciate the support they are given and that they enjoy working as part of the team at the school. They value the training organised for them to support further improvements in their practice. However, a few weaker aspects of teaching remain. Senior leaders have not yet ensured that the best practice found in the school is more widely shared so that teachers can learn from each other.

- All leaders express ambition for the school and are clearly focused on continuous school improvement. Skills of senior leaders have been enhanced and they now take a lead role in holding colleagues to account for pupil performance. Regular monitoring of progress and provision provide a clear picture of what is going well in different areas and what requires development. Swift action is then taken to address areas of concern.
- The curriculum is good. Pupils particularly enjoy their topic work. Opportunities to extend skills in other subjects are stronger in reading and mathematics than in writing. Not enough time is allocated to promoting pupils' skills to write at length across the curriculum.
- Visits and visitors enhance the curriculum. Older pupils really enjoy the benefits of a residential visit to an outdoor pursuits centre. A good range of extra-curricular activities also enhance pupils' learning and personal development. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is enhanced greatly by the quality of this curriculum. Cultural aspects of pupils' learning are particularly well developed.
- Statutory safeguarding requirements are met.
- The school very much appreciates the good quality, light touch support that it now receives from the local authority and accesses various services as required.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body provides effective support and challenge to the school. A number of governors are relatively new to post and, along with other governors, they have ensured that they have accessed appropriate training and development opportunities. Governors express a clear vision about securing the best for the school and in ensuring that pupils' achievement and overall standards continue to improve. They review data and understand clearly how well the school is performing and how this relates to the national picture. Governors have a good knowledge of the quality of teaching and the next steps to take to improve this further. They have supported the headteacher in challenging underperformance and are not afraid to hold the school to account. Governors are fully aware of how the pupil premium is used and the positive impact this is having. They are well informed about the link between teachers' pay and performance and set challenging targets for the headteacher. They check that school finances are used efficiently to secure the best outcomes for pupils.

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	131917
Local authority	South Tyneside
Inspection number	402516

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	259
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sharon Robson
Headteacher	Judith Merriman
Date of previous school inspection	11 January 2010
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