

# Middlestone Moor Primary School

Rock Road, Middlestone Moor, Spennymoor, DL16 7DA

**Inspection dates** 9–10 Jul 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.

- Pupils achieve well during their time at the school. They learn well, make good progress and leave the school with results that are broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The quality of teaching is good. Tasks are interesting and matched well to pupils' individual needs, enabling all groups to make equally good progress, so that no group falls behind.
- Pupils justifiably feel happy and safe in school. No one feels left out in this caring environment. Pupils respect one another and get on very well together. They behave well and enjoy learning.
- Pupils enjoy the stimulating curriculum and they learn while having fun.
- Leadership has been strengthened since the previous inspection. Leaders and managers know their school well and are honest and open in their evaluation of its development. There are clear signs of improvement, for example, in the quality of teaching.
- The headteacher has shown strong and determined leadership to drive continuous school improvement. School leaders check the progress of all pupils carefully. The school is well placed to continue to improve.
- Governors are enthusiastic and effective in supporting school leaders.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Senior leaders have not yet been given the opportunity to have full impact on driving improvement in their subjects.
- Pupils' progress in writing is not as fast as in reading or mathematics.

## 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 14 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 letters from parents.
- Inspectors took account of 19 staff inspection questionnaire responses.
- 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 of the school day.

## Inspection team

Alan Sergison, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lucie Stephenson

Additional Inspector

John Pattinson

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 supported through school action is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- 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 above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has achieved a number of awards including the Healthy School Award and the Rights Respecting School Award.

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

- Develop further the skills of senior leaders, especially in English and mathematics, so that they can have a full impact on driving improvement in their subjects, by providing them with more opportunities to observe teaching and learning and to give focused feedback to colleagues.
- Accelerate pupils' progress in writing to be in line with the faster rates seen reading and mathematics by:
  - ensuring that teachers' marking is more focused, taking account of pupils' more specific writing targets
  - ensuring that pupils have opportunities to work in groups and as individuals to complete specific, targeted writing tasks
  - ensuring that pupils have more opportunities to write at length and across a range of subjects.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils achieve well. They make strong progress during their time at the school. From individual starting points which are below age-related expectations, they make good progress and leave the school attaining standards that are broadly average in English and mathematics.
- Pupils' progress is faster, and standards are higher, in reading and mathematics than in writing. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to write at length across a range of subjects, and teachers' marking is not sufficiently well focused to support pupils. Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to work on specific writing tasks that meet their personal learning needs in writing.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children are well supported to settle quickly into the routines of the school and, because of the positive relationships, the stimulating classroom environment and the wide range of quality opportunities for children to develop their skills, they make good progress.
- Pupils continue to make good progress overall from Year 1 to Year 6. Standards achieved by the current Year 6 group of pupils are below national standards. This is due to a legacy of underachievement which the school has done all it can to address. As a result, a large majority of these pupils have made good progress relative to their individual starting points.
- The school places high priority on the development of pupils' reading skills. Children are well supported to learn to recognise letters and the sounds they make (phonics). The majority blend these sounds and build words confidently, making good progress. This is demonstrated in the high percentages of pupils succeeding in the national phonics screening check. Pupils develop a love of reading and are able to express preferences for different writing styles and authors.
- 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 that they receive the right help.
- Pupil premium funding is used well to target support for individuals and small groups of pupils who need the most help. The progress of these pupils, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, is accelerating. As a result, previous gaps in their attainment compared to that of their peers, are closing. Data from the 2012 Key Stage 2 tests suggested that these pupils were approximately three terms behind their peers in English and two terms behind in mathematics. Current school data now confirm that this gap is closing rapidly.
- The regular checks on the progress pupils make ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to perform equally well. This demonstrates the school's commitment to equality of opportunity. Teachers are held to account by senior leaders for the performance of pupils. Where pupils are seen to be in danger of falling behind, then there is prompt intervention and appropriate support.

### The quality of teaching is good

- The vast majority of teaching is good and a small proportion is outstanding.
- Lessons are well planned and this helps to motivate and engage learners with relevant, challenging tasks often well matched to pupils' needs. In a very successful Year 6 English lesson, for example, pupils were enthused when challenged to think critically about newspaper articles. The theme was 'Seeing graffiti as art not vandalism'. Confident teacher delivery, high expectations and a focus on the use of journalistic vocabulary ensured that pupils were engaged and well motivated to complete this imaginative task.
- In an outstanding Year 3 science lesson, the pupils were challenged to undertake an exciting cross-curricular science experiment relating to the pirate 'Peg-Leg Pete' and his chest of treasure. They were very well supported to make predictions, begin to construct a fair test and make appropriate choices for how to record data. Very good teacher subject knowledge and sharp use of questioning, focused on clear success criteria, served to ensure that all pupils made

outstanding progress. Pupils also had the opportunity to use their mathematical skills in another subject.

- Not all teaching is as strong. In a very few lessons, tasks are sometimes too easy and not accurately matched to pupils' needs. As a result, the pace of the lesson slows as does the rate of learning as pupils' attention wanes.
- The headteacher regularly checks on the quality of teaching and uses this information to tailor staff training. Senior leaders, however, especially in English and mathematics, have not had the opportunity to observe teaching or to give feedback to staff and so have not had a full impact on the development of their subjects.
- Teachers do not plan sufficient opportunities for pupils to write at length, tasks are sometimes too general and not well matched to individual pupils' needs. As a result, pupils' progress in writing is not as rapid as in other subjects.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and follow the school policy carefully. Pupils' progress is often well supported by the steps for improvement given. There are times in writing, however, when marking is not sufficiently well focused on pupils' specific writing targets to fully support them to do even better.
- In lessons, good relationships exist between pupils and teachers. Teachers have high expectations and pupils are eager to learn.

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

- Pupils behave well both inside and outside the classrooms. They are proud of their school and really enjoy all that it offers. They say that they feel safe and happy in school and that they have a range of adults to turn to for support. Pupils are very polite, welcoming and confident. The vast majority of parents and staff confirm this.
- Pupils are very keen to get on with their work. Only on rare occasions, when teaching does not fully engage them in their learning, does their interest wane.
- Pupils are very aware of the different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying. They say that bullying in the school is rare and is dealt with quickly by supportive adults. They know how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations and are aware of potential dangers when using the internet.
- Pupils are very positive about their time in school. As one pupil remarked, 'Because we are a Rights' Respecting School, that helps us to get on well together and to understand each other and care for each other.'
- Pupils really enjoy taking responsibility, for example, as members of the school council or as playground buddies who support others. These promote their personal development well.
- The school has worked hard to improve attendance. It is now above average, reflecting pupils' enjoyment of school.

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

- The headteacher provides strong leadership so that all leaders express a common ambition and determination to secure the very best for pupils. The school has the capacity to improve further, as seen in the improvements in teaching and pupils' progress.
- Monitoring of teaching by the headteacher is rigorous. Underperformance is challenged and difficult decisions have been taken to secure improvements. Other senior leaders, some of whom are new to role, especially in English and mathematics, have not had the opportunity to formally observe colleagues teach or to offer developmental feedback. Consequently, they are still limited to a degree in how far they can raise standards or accelerate the rate of pupils' progress in the subjects they lead.
- Performance management systems are secure. Targets set for staff are challenging and are based on school needs. Staff training is also well focussed on further developing teachers' skills.

Links between performance and salary increases are very secure.

- The checks that the school makes on its performance are accurate, rigorous and are based on a secure knowledge of the school. Senior leaders rigorously analyse data and identify key areas for further development. Members of staff are held to account for the progress that pupils are making.
- The curriculum is highly creative and stimulating for pupils. The learning environment is of the highest quality and supports the curriculum very well. Pupils really enjoy their experiences both within and beyond the school. This includes a broad range of visits and visitors. A range of interesting activities outside the classroom and a highly stimulating outdoor environment all make a significant, positive contribution to promoting pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The curriculum supports the development of pupils' basic skills well. However, senior leaders are aware both that writing is an area of relatively weaker performance and that pupils do not have enough opportunities to write in different subjects.
- The school works closely with parents. The vast majority of parents are very pleased with the education and care provided for children.
- Statutory safeguarding requirements are met.
- The local authority provides good light-touch support for the school. The school appreciates this support and accesses a range of services as required.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors provide effective support and challenge and they express a clear vision for continuous improvement. They use information on school performance to compare the schools' effectiveness with that of schools nationally. They receive regular information about the quality of teaching and are well aware of the link between pay and teacher performance. They have supported the headteacher in taking difficult decisions and are not afraid to hold senior leaders to account. Governors regularly access relevant training and individual governors have links to specific school improvement targets and so learn more about school developments. They have a clear view of school finances and challenge expenditure to ensure value for money. They are aware of how pupil premium funding is spent and the positive impact on pupils' performance.

## 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>	131886
<b>Local authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	412347

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	261
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	K Moore
<b>Headteacher</b>	H Wilson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 March 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01388 816351
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