

# Gurney Pease Academy

Dodsworth Street, Darlington, County Durham, DL1 2NG

**Inspection dates** 9–10 July 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 make good progress in English and mathematics from when they join the school to the end of Year 6.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make a good start to their learning.
- Disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those supported by the pupil premium make good progress due to the well-targeted support they receive. Management of special educational needs is a strength.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes about their school where they feel safe.
- Teaching is good across the school with some that is outstanding. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and effectively match work to their needs.
- The curriculum is matched accurately to the needs of the pupils. It is enhanced with many educational visits.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong throughout the school.
- School leaders, managers and governors are focussed on raising the quality of teaching and pupils' attainment across the school. As a result, the school is improving.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet consistently good and outstanding.
- The assessment of pupils' progress is not always used very well to identify what pupils need to do to improve their learning. As a result, work occasionally is not always set at the correct level.
- The behaviour of a small minority of pupils in lessons is not always managed firmly enough, leading to the pace of lessons slowing occasionally.
- Marking does not always tell all pupils how to improve.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 lessons including a joint observation with the headteacher. Together with the headteacher, five part lessons were observed during short focussed visits.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read.
- Discussions were held with pupils, staff, governors and a representative of the academy trust,
- Inspectors looked at pupils' books with the headteacher. Progress data, safeguarding information and other school documentation were reviewed.
- The responses to the school's own parental questionnaire were considered. There had been insufficient responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) to be considered.
- Twelve responses to the staff questionnaire were taken into account.

## Inspection team

Mark Lovell, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Declan McCauley

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well above average. The pupil premium is additional funding supporting those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and for whom English is an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and supported at school action is above average. Those supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has just completed its first year as an academy and is part of an academy trust. Gurney Pease Academy converted to be an academy in July 2012. When its predecessor school Gurney Pease Primary School was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be good.
- The proportion of pupils entering or leaving the school mid-way through their primary education is above the national average.

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

- Eliminate the few inconsistencies in the quality of teaching to ensure pupils' progress accelerates to the high levels seen in Year 6 by:
  - improving the management of behaviour of a small minority of pupils to avoid time being wasted during lessons and so ensuring all learning proceeds at a fast rate
  - ensuring all learning tasks are always matched accurately to the needs of the pupils
  - always identifying fully the next steps in learning for all pupils when teachers mark their work.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children enter the Nursery class with skills and abilities that are often well below those typical for their age especially in communication, language and literacy. They make good progress throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage and by the time they leave the Reception Year most children are working slightly below the expected level.
- Pupils continue to make good progress from Years 1 to 6. Progress is particularly strong in Year 6, due to the quality of teaching in this class which is both challenging and very effective. Consequently attainment at the end of Year 6 has risen in English and mathematics.
- Although overall, pupils of all abilities make good progress this does vary in lessons when teachers do not always set work that gets the best out of pupils. On occasion some work is not always as challenging as it could be to ensure pupils make best progress.
- Disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and the few from minority ethnic groups make good progress, which is similar to other pupils in the school. Some pupils with special educational needs make very good progress because of the precise identification of individual needs and the good support provided.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium make good progress. The additional funding is well focussed on providing additional support for this group. The attainment of those pupils known to be eligible for free school meal pupils is broadly in line in English and mathematics to other pupils in the school. These pupils make the same progress as other pupils and the previous gaps in performance between them and pupils not in receipt of free school meal are closing rapidly. This clearly demonstrates the success of the school's promotion of equality of opportunity for all pupils.
- Attainment in reading is above average. Pupils who read to inspectors demonstrated how to work out unfamiliar and difficult words. Older pupils were able to discuss the books they read and showed their enjoyment of reading. Progress in reading is good due to good teaching of letters and sounds they make (phonics). This effective teaching was evident in the screening check conducted in Year 1 and pupils attained above the national average.
- Progress in literacy is improving strongly due to the school focus in this area this year. Pupils are becoming more accurate in their spelling and punctuation. Progress in some classes is very rapid. This was seen, for example, in Year 6 during a lesson about how to write a factual account. In this lesson, the teacher continually challenged the pupils to check and extend their learning.
- Mathematical skills are systematically taught throughout the school, which has recently invested in new practical resources to further enhance pupils' achievement. This is raising pupils' confidence in solving problems.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- Most teaching is good with some outstanding and overall enables pupils to make good progress. The quality of teaching in Year 6 is consistently outstanding, with activities involving pupils fully and successfully challenging them to make accelerated progress.
- In the best lessons, rapid progress was made due to rigorous challenge and tasks being matched accurately to the pupils' needs. These lessons are planned in great detail and pupils clearly enjoy their learning; however, occasionally this is not always the case.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge that enables them to ask questions to check and challenge knowledge and understanding of all pupils. This is especially the case in mathematics and was seen in Year 6. Quick fire questions and answers provided visible challenge as well as allowing the teacher to check pupils' understanding and correct misunderstandings.
- In most lessons time is used efficiently ensuring rapid learning but on occasion in a few lessons progress is slower due to repetition of tasks and too much time given to managing some minor

occasional distracted behaviour.

- Reading and writing skills are taught systematically across the school. The good teaching of letters and sounds in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 has made a marked improvement in all pupils' reading skills. There are a small number of reluctant readers and others who do not read at home. The school provides extra support for these pupils including using older pupils hearing younger children read outside the normal school day.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and accurately. Marking is often used to celebrate work but occasionally is not always clear enough to inform pupils about how to improve their work and develop their learning.
- Examples of very effective use of information and communication technology to support learning were observed across the school. For example, in the Early Years Foundation Stage it was used to develop fine motor skills and to extend children's understanding of colours and mathematics.

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

- Pupils generally behave well around the school. Children are polite to one another and staff. However, a few pupils exhibit more challenging behaviour. These incidents are managed effectively. Exclusions are rare.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons is usually good and pupils enjoy learning. In a small minority of lessons, some pupils misbehave and teachers take too much time to resolve this which interrupts the flow of learning for other pupils.
- Pupils benefit from a wide range of school clubs and activities outside the classroom. This develops their social skills, personal development, and helps to improve the behaviour of those who need it. As a result, almost all pupils play together happily at playtimes
- The school breakfast club, attended by over half the pupils, has improved the pupils' punctuality at the start of the school day. Attendance has improved and is broadly average. Absence is always followed up by the school and the level of persistent absence is decreasing.
- Pupils state they feel safe and are happy in school. Pupils have a good understanding of keeping safe, including when using the internet. They understand there are different types of bullying and that in their school bullying is rare. They felt should bullying occur the school would deal with it very well.
- Parents state they believe the school is a safe environment for their children.

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

- As a result of good leadership and management, the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement are good. School leaders strive for success and the impact of their effective actions is that the school continues to improve.
- The headteacher, deputy headteacher and senior teacher are a strong senior leadership team. They fully understand the school and the challenges posed by some pupils and hard to reach families. Leaders work closely with staff and other agencies to offer the best support possible.
- Careful evaluation of the school's performance leads to accurate priorities to raise pupils' attainment further. Actions are prompt and their impact is evident in raising attainment as well as improved attendance and behaviour.
- Pupils' progress is checked closely and support put in place if there are signs of underachievement. Thorough checks on the quality of teaching identify strengths and aspects to develop. As yet, not all the inconsistencies in the quality of teaching have been eliminated.
- Middle leaders play a role in checking performance and have been able to positively influence both curriculum development and teaching across the school.
- Teachers are set targets based on their performance and the progress pupils make. Salary awards link to the achievement of these targets and this is improving the quality of teaching and learning.

- The management of the provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is good. Progress meetings are held every term where progress, attendance and individual needs are discussed. As a result of this effective support, these pupils make good, and for some, outstanding progress.
- The school has developed the curriculum in relation to the needs of all pupils. Many enrichment activities and visits add excitement to learning. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 learn about the importance of finance as they work together to raise funds for their residential visit.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong throughout the school. The school provides many opportunities outside the classroom to develop pupils' awareness of the world around them. The school has established links with schools in other parts of the world, such as Africa and Europe, which have developed pupils' understanding of other cultures.
- Safeguarding meets statutory requirements.
- The academy trust provides good support and challenge to enable the school to improve further.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The school is part of an academy trust and has both a local governing body and a board of directors.
  - The local governing body review the information and data about pupils' progress and the quality of teaching provided by the headteacher's detailed reports. Members of the governing body both support and challenge the headteacher about pupils' progress, the quality of teaching and finance. They are aware that staff have to achieve challenging targets and manage effectively the performance management of the headteacher and all staff. Several governors support the school in a voluntary capacity during the day and this sharpens their first-hand knowledge of the school.
  - The academy representative, the executive principal, has established very positive links with the local governing body.

## 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>	138362
<b>Local authority</b>	Darlington
<b>Inspection number</b>	413133

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Academy converter
<b>School category</b>	Non-maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	178
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ian Grieves
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sandra Battensby
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	26 May 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01325 380790
<b>Fax number</b>	Not applicable
<b>Email address</b>	admin@gurneypease.org.uk



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