

Mickley First School

Mickley, Stocksfield, Northumberland, NE43 7BG

Inspection dates

10 July 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		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils' achievement is good. Attainment at the end of Year 4 is above average and all groups of pupils make good progress.
- The quality of teaching is good and has improved as a result of higher expectations of pupils. Some teaching is outstanding, particularly in Key Stage 2.
- Pupils' behaviour and their understanding of how to stay safe are outstanding. All pupils feel safe and say how well the school cares for them.
- The school is led by a determined and very effective headteacher, ably supported by an ambitious governing body and, increasingly, by other leaders within the school. Leaders share a determination to improve the school. Their clear focus on raising standards has resulted in better teaching and improving achievement.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very strong and pupils regard their school as a real community. They feel very well cared for and, in turn, care for, and about, each other.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There are not enough lessons that are outstanding, enabling pupils to make outstanding progress. The best practice is not always shared amongst staff.
- Teachers mark work regularly and provide suggestions about how to improve but do not provide opportunities for pupils to make these improvements.
- Subject leaders do not have enough opportunities to find out how good teaching and learning are in their subject or to improve them further.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed four lessons, one of which was a joint observation with the headteacher. Some pupils were heard reading.
- Inspectors took account of 15 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and nine questionnaires completed by the staff.
- They held a meeting with a group of pupils and talked to other pupils informally at lunchtime and break time. Inspectors talked to two members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. They also had discussions with leaders at different levels, including the leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage and the special educational needs coordinator.
- Inspectors observed the school at work and looked at a range of documentation, including internal and external information relating to pupils' progress, pupils' workbooks, school improvement planning and the school's procedures for gaining an accurate view of its own performance. They also considered minutes of governing body meetings, reports written by the local authority, and safeguarding and child protection documents.

Inspection team

Peter Evea, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
James Hannah	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized first school.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, who are looked after by the local authority or children from service families, is very low. In some years there are no such pupils.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs who are supported through school action is well below average. The proportion of those supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- In 2012 the school met the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure that the leaders of all subjects are provided with regular opportunities to find out how good the quality of teaching is in their subject and to plan and carry out actions to improve it further.
- Improve the quality of teaching and raise achievement further so that they become outstanding by:
 - consistently sharing the very best practice which already exists within the school
 - making better use of marking by making sure that pupils take due notice of the suggestions teachers make about how to improve their work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- By the end of Year 4 pupils typically reach standards above those expected for their age and have made good progress during their time at school.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage children make good progress and, as a result, the standards reached by children by the time they enter Year 1 are above average, with many writing sentences and using correct grammar and punctuation accurately and with growing confidence. Children get off to a good start in linking letters to the sounds they make and are already becoming good readers by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Good progress continues in Key Stage 1 and accelerates in Key Stage 2 as a result of some outstanding teaching and the wide range of carefully planned activities.
- Standards in reading in Year 1 are similar to those of pupils of that age nationally but by the end of Year 2 they are above average and this good progress continues in Years 3 and 4 as a result of the effective teaching of reading.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics is similarly good and by the end of Year 4 pupils can choose from a range of mathematical skills to solve increasingly complicated problems.
- The progress of the very small number of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, is also good and their attainment in English and mathematics is similar to that of other pupils. This is because of the extra support provided for them, such as individual one-to-one or small group work.
- The school provides additional support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs so that they, too, make the same good progress as others in the school. Staff have a thorough understanding of each individual's particular needs and provide a very caring environment.
- The small number of pupils in each year group means that each pupil has a disproportionate effect on overall results. However, it is clear that, over time, the achievement of pupils is increasing as a result of the high expectations of pupils and the better use of data to track pupils' achievement.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The quality of teaching is good, and sometimes outstanding, in its impact on pupils' progress over time.
- Teachers plan lessons which interest and enthuse pupils. In a Year 1 and 2 class pupils enthusiastically used the outdoor learning area to measure a range of objects accurately.
- Teachers use their knowledge of pupils' progress and attainment to plan activities that meet the needs of the wide range of pupils in their mixed-age classes.
- Teaching assistants and other adults are deployed well and have a clear understanding of the needs of different groups of pupils, especially disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. This is why the achievement of these groups is good.
- Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and want them to do their very best. Good relationships are typical and pupils are keen to succeed.
- Teachers mark pupils' books regularly and make suggestions about how to improve. However, time is not always given in lessons to make these improvements. As a result, some pupils repeatedly leave out capital letters or full stops and make the same simple spelling mistakes. Where writing might benefit from the addition of connectives or adjectives, pupils do not have a chance to do this until their next piece of extended writing which may be some days later.
- Pupils have regular opportunities to tackle problems on their own and are becoming increasingly skilled at choosing the appropriate tools to help them to learn well.
- Teachers expect pupils to behave well. These high expectations, together with careful planning

based on teachers' knowledge of individual pupils' needs, mean that lessons proceed without pause, allowing pupils to make good progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is always very good and often impeccable, especially when pupils are out of school on visits.
- Pupils say that they feel very safe and parents are sure that the school provides a secure environment where their children enjoy learning.
- Behaviour in lessons and around school is of a high order. In lessons, the high standards of behaviour mean that everyone can concentrate on learning without any distractions, and so progress is not interrupted.
- Pupils are unfailingly polite and are keen to share their many experiences with visitors. They are very proud of their school and are eager to talk about all the positive experiences they have.
- The school's records, and observations made during the inspection, demonstrate that behaviour over time is very good. Staff are very skilled at managing those pupils whose special educational needs mean that they find learning difficult. As a consequence, they are able to learn alongside other pupils.
- Pupils are very confident and respond eagerly to opportunities to take on responsibilities, including being a member of the active school council.
- Pupils' enjoyment of school can be seen in their above-average attendance and the punctual way they arrive at the start of the school day.
- Pupils have a very clear understanding of how to keep safe. They recognise dangers when using the internet and know how to avoid these problems. They have a very good understanding of different types of bullying and say that it very rarely happens. They are confident that, should any occur, adults would deal with it quickly and fairly.

The leadership and management are good

- The school is very well led by a determined and effective headteacher, supported by an ambitious governing body and an increasingly skilled group of leaders.
- The school has an accurate view of its strengths and areas for development.
- The school attaches significant importance to the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding and this is a key factor in ensuring that pupils' personal development is of a good quality.
- The headteacher carries out regular checks on the standards of teaching, which provides an accurate view of its quality. However, teachers do not have enough opportunities to learn from the very best practice which exists within the school.
- Thorough systems are in place to check on pupils' progress throughout the school. As a result, the school can swiftly identify any gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills. Where these occur, rapid action is taken to boost pupils' learning by providing extra support in class or out of class, individually or in small groups.
- Leaders of subjects have an increasingly accurate view of progress in their subjects across the school. However, they do not have enough opportunities to monitor the quality of teaching in their subjects and so cannot lead improvements in those subjects.
- The school values its pupils as individuals and successfully removes any barriers to learning. As a result, all pupils have an equal opportunity to do well. There is no difference in the achievement of different groups.
- The school has very good links with parents and the community who hold the school in high regard.
- Arrangements for pay and promotion of staff are linked to their performance in ensuring that their pupils make good progress. The National Standards for Teaching are used when leaders

judge the quality of teaching. This means that teaching is at least good and sometimes outstanding.

- The local authority recognises that this is a good school and provides light-touch support which is appreciated by the school.
- Child protection and safeguarding procedures are effective and meet current requirements.
- The curriculum is of a good quality. It ensures that pupils experience a range of interesting topics. During the inspection the Nursery and Reception classes thoroughly enjoyed a day out investigating local recycling arrangements. Pupils say that they thoroughly enjoy the range of after-school clubs and activities. They were particularly enthusiastic about the gardening club and were really looking forward to the imminent cricket tournament.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body knows the school well and is effective and determined in monitoring its performance rigorously and systematically. Governors are ambitious for further improvement and ask challenging questions to help make this happen. They are well informed about all aspects of school life, in particular school data relating to the achievement of pupils and the quality of teaching. They are familiar with the Teachers' Standards and use them to help manage teachers' performance, appropriately rewarding good teaching and taking action to tackle any underperformance. When there is any pupil premium funding they oversee its spending and are aware of the positive impact it has on pupils' achievement.

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	122219
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	412717

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	5–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	87
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Chris Hughes
Headteacher	Andrew Hudson
Date of previous school inspection	4 December 2008
Telephone number	01661 842269
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Email address	Andrew.Hudson@northumberland.gov.uk

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