

Rookhope Primary School

Rookhope, Bishop Auckland, County Durham, DL13 2DA

Inspection dates 16 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	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. Pupils make good progress from their starting points. Standards are slightly above the expectations for their age for pupils in school.
- Teaching is good overall. Teachers use questions well and make it very clear to pupils what they are to learn. The teaching assistant is very skilled at teaching and supporting pupils' learning.
- The curriculum offers pupils many opportunities to apply their mathematical skills in real-life, problem-solving situations. They enjoy 'forest school' activities, science, information and communication technology (ICT), art and a range of extra-curricular activities.
- The school offers excellent care and support and provides very well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils' behaviour is excellent. They care exceptionally well for one another; they say they feel extremely safe at school.
- Leaders have introduced initiatives which have improved teaching and speeded up pupils' progress in reading and mathematics.
- The headteacher and the governing body have a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have acted sensitively to improve teaching and develop leadership skills across the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Too few pupils make good progress in writing.
- Opportunities are missed for pupils to write at length in English and in subjects across the curriculum and to use pupils' reading as a stimulus to writing.
- Not all teachers are equally skilful in planning work that is well-matched to the learning needs of individual pupils.
- Leaders, including the governing body, are not yet fully skilled and confident in monitoring the impact that initiatives and teaching have on pupils' progress.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors had meetings with staff, groups of pupils and the Chair and another member of the Governing Body. The inspectors also spoke to the school's local authority education development partner.
- The inspectors looked at a range of evidence including: the school's improvement plan; the school's data relating to pupils' progress; monitoring reports; the work in pupils' books; and the school's documentation relating to safeguarding.
- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in four lessons taught by two teachers and listened to groups of pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 read. In addition, the inspectors made a number of short visits to lessons.
- Inspectors conducted one joint lesson observation with the headteacher. The inspectors also observed the headteacher reporting back to the teacher on his findings regarding the quality of learning and pupils' achievement in the lesson.
- There were too few responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) for it to be accessible to the school. However, inspectors spoke to parents and analysed the school's own questionnaire of parents' views.
- Three staff completed questionnaires and the responses were analysed.

Inspection team

Gordon Potter, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Derek Sleightholme

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is very much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Almost all pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below average. (The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children that are looked after.)
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is below average.
- The proportions of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are below average.
- There is a breakfast club and many after-school clubs which are managed by the governing body.
- The school has had too few pupils in its last three Year 6 classes for them to be measured meaningfully against the current government floor standards. These are the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment in English and mathematics.
- These set out the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment.
- The headteacher has been in post since January 2011 on a 0.5 basis. He is also headteacher of another local school on a similar basis. The two class teachers have shared the assistant headteacher role this year. The substantive assistant headteacher is to re-assume her role in September.
- This is the first year since 2008 when the school has not been affected by unavoidable absence or changes to staffing and leadership.
- There are two classes: one for pupils in Reception and Years 1 and 2; the other for pupils in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6.
- During the current school year there have been no Year 5 and Year 6 pupils in school. This is with the exception of one Year 6 pupil who joined the school in June 2013 and who completed national tests and assessments in another school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is outstanding, to further raise standards and rates of pupils' progress, especially in writing, by:
 - offering pupils even more opportunities to write at length in English and in subjects across the curriculum, including using pupils' reading as a stimulus to writing
 - sharing the good practice that is already in school in planning work that is well-matched to the skills and abilities of individual pupils
 - further improving the skills and confidence of all leaders in monitoring the impact that initiatives and teaching have on pupils' progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The abilities of different year groups vary in this small school. Attainment at the end of Year 6 is typically above average in English and average in mathematics. At the end of Year 2, in the past two years, attainment in reading and mathematics has been average; it has been below average in writing.
- The school has introduced successful initiatives to improve the quality of teaching in mathematics and writing. As a result, good teaching now helps pupils to make good progress in reading and mathematics. However, too few pupils make more than the progress expected of them in writing. This is because there are too few opportunities for pupils to write at length in English and other subjects.
- No pupil currently in Year 6 completed national tests and assessments in school. The oldest pupils currently in school, in Year 4, have attained standards which are in line with national expectations for nine-year-olds.
- A very small minority of pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium. As in 2012, no pupils in Year 6 were known to be eligible for this funding it is not possible to make any meaningful comparisons about their attainment. Those pupils currently in school who are eligible make similar good progress as other pupils in school in English and mathematics. This is owing to clearly targeted support and extremely focused tracking of their progress.
- Likewise, a very small minority of pupils have special educational needs. Teachers and the teaching assistant are very skilful at teaching and supporting these pupils in their learning so they can make similar good progress to other pupils in the school.
- Indeed, the school is very clearly focused on identifying any pupils who are at risk of falling behind and concentrates on closing the gap for all pupils. This clearly shows the school's commitment to promoting equal opportunities and tackling discrimination.
- Inspection evidence shows that progress in reading is good and attainment is typically above average by the end of Year 6. There is a consistent focus on reading across school. Pupils have a very clear understanding of how letters are linked to sounds and this helps them to read words they are not used to. Pupils say that improvements to the teaching of reading and more exciting books have encouraged them to read more often and with greater enjoyment, in school and at home. However, teachers make too little use of pupils' reading as a stimulus for their writing.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is consistently good. Teachers ask questions which stretch pupils and encourage them to develop their ideas. They offer pupils many chances to talk together with friends, using imaginative approaches to engage pupils' interest. These approaches were seen in good teaching in both classes.
- Older pupils interviewed one another about their experience of sports day and younger pupils collected mini-beasts and natural resources in the 'forest school' to design and make 'bug hotels'. Pupils enjoyed learning together, made rapid progress in their speaking and listening skills and had clear ideas which they then developed in their writing.
- There is good teaching of mathematical concepts and a very strong focus on developing pupils' skills in mental mathematics, calculation and data handling. Teachers make it very clear to pupils what they will learn and lead them very clearly through new concepts so that understanding is very clear. There are many opportunities for pupils to practise their mathematics skills in real-life, problem-solving activities which have more than one answer.
- These excellent approaches were seen in a mathematics lesson for pupils in Years 3, 4, and 6 where learning had a brisk pace. The teacher challenged pupils to think quickly and they made good progress in developing their mental mathematics skills. The teacher also engaged pupils through encouraging them to map coordinates using photographs from their sports day. Pupils

were highly engaged and made good progress.

- Pupils' work is regularly marked and teachers tell pupils extremely clearly how to improve their work. Time is provided for pupils to act upon any advice they give. Older pupils know the level of their work and in all classes pupils have clear targets to help them take the next steps in their learning.
- While teachers try hard to use data about pupils' skills and abilities to plan work that is set at exactly the right level for pupils of all abilities, this is inconsistent across school. The school has not yet fully shared the best practice in matching work to pupils' needs among all staff.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils are extremely happy in school. They respect one another and are extremely polite to adults. They say that behaviour is excellent in their lessons. The school's records of behaviour confirm that behaviour has been outstanding in the past three years.
- Indeed, outstanding behaviour was evident in lessons where pupils support and encourage one another in exciting learning activities. Pupils also conduct themselves exceptionally well around the school. They play extremely well with each other and show exemplary manners when they eat lunch together and with their teachers.
- Pupils feel exceptionally safe and are aware of different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying. They say that there is no bullying, although friends occasionally fall out. Even this is extremely rare and when it does happen they are confident that it will be dealt with quickly. This is also as a result of the outstanding, sensitive care they receive from adults in the school.
- Older pupils look after younger children and help pupils play safely and enjoyably together. Pupils develop social skills in the breakfast club and through the many opportunities to learn together. There is no school council because all pupils contribute to the life of the school and their views are listened to and respected. Attendance is above average because pupils enjoy coming to school.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has a very clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. With the governing body, he has acted determinedly, decisively and sensitively to develop teaching and leadership both of which have been affected in recent years by unavoidable absence and many changes to leadership and staffing.
- The headteacher and the two assistant headteachers work very well together. They are very capable leaders of the school on a day-to-day basis when the headteacher is in his other school. Together they have introduced initiatives to improve the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, teaching and the rates at which pupils make progress have improved this year.
- All subject leaders regularly assess the quality of teaching and look at pupils' work so that a consistent approach to learning is evident across school. The headteacher offers clear advice about how to improve teaching and teachers welcome and act upon this advice. There are very clear and detailed plans for the school's future development which are regularly monitored by school leaders, including the governing body.
- However, while these initiatives and the monitoring of teaching have ensured that teaching across school is typically good, all leaders are not fully confident or skilful in monitoring their impact on pupils' progress. Accordingly, teaching and pupils' progress are good rather than outstanding.
- Performance management is clearly focused on increasing the rates at which pupils make progress, improving the quality of teaching and raising standards. The headteacher has set demanding targets for teachers which have had an impact on all these areas. Teachers are very clear that they will only be rewarded when their pupils have done as well as, or better than, they

should have done.

- The curriculum is exciting and contributes well to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. There is a strong focus on the environment, geography and science. This is particularly true of the school's use of its wooded area to develop pupils' independence, curiosity and understanding of the natural world.
- The local authority works very effectively with the school. It has offered helpful advice on legal and personnel issues as well as offering high-quality training for teachers. This advice has led to improvements in the quality of the teaching and leadership across school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has a very clear view of the strengths of the school and has acted determinedly to improve teaching and leadership. Since being faced with a deficit budget in 2011, they have improved their monitoring of all aspects of the school. They have acted very skilfully to remove that deficit. As a result, they have been able to improve resources for reading and ICT. They have a clear understanding of the quality of teaching and school data and have ensured that the gap in achievement between pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium grant and other pupils in school is narrow. They monitor the performance of all staff and are aware of the way rewards are allocated for good teaching. They ensure that pupils are kept safe from harm through safeguarding systems which meet current guidelines. However, they acknowledge that their skills in monitoring the impact of initiatives on pupils' progress require further development.

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	114063
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	413273

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	13
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Fiona Graham
Headteacher	Ian Carroll
Date of previous school inspection	16 March 2010
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