

Blaydon West Primary School

Blaydon Bank, Blaydon-on-Tyne, Tyne and Wear, NE21 4PY

Inspection dates 10–11 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.

- Most children start school with skills that are well below those typically expected for their age. They make good, and sometimes outstanding, progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- In Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils continue to make good progress and by the end of Year 6 reach broadly average standards. This represents good achievement from their starting points.
- Pupils feel happy and safe in school. They behave well in lessons and around the school and demonstrate positive attitudes towards their learning.
- School leaders have effective systems in place to check the quality of teaching and learning. As a result, the quality of teaching has improved and is now good and pupils are making increasingly faster progress.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- School improvement plans do not include clearly measurable targets that are broken down into small steps. As a result, leaders and governors do not know how well new initiatives to improve the school are working.
- Systems to enable leaders to check pupils' progress accurately are too complicated.
- Although pupils make good progress overall, progress is not as strong in writing as it is in other subjects.
- In some instances, when teachers mark pupils' work, they do not make it clear to pupils how to make their work better next time or allow time for pupils to act upon advice given.
- As a result of the school's work, attendance is rising but it remains below the national average.
- The school's website does not contain the most up-to-date information for parents.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 10 lessons and parts of lessons. Four observations were conducted jointly with the headteacher. The inspectors also observed pupils being taught in small groups and listened to pupils from different year groups reading.
- Discussions were held with a range of pupils, the headteacher and deputy headteacher, members of the governing body, and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of 20 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), and 25 responses to the staff questionnaire. Discussions were held with a small number of parents.
- The inspectors observed the overall work of the school and looked at a number of documents including the school’s data about pupils’ current progress. In addition, the inspectors looked at documents relating to safeguarding, governance, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors looked at a range of other evidence, including school displays, the school’s website and evidence representing the school’s wider achievements beyond the classroom.

Inspection team

Margaret Armstrong, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Shirley Fall

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well above 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 who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs supported through school action is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is higher than the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- A number of new teachers have joined the school since the last inspection. This represents approximately half the teaching staff.
- Some pupils are taught in mixed-age class because of the small size of the school.
- The school has a breakfast club managed by the governing body.
- The school works closely with Bede Primary School to support pupils who have significant behavioural difficulties.

Inspectors were aware during this inspection that a serious incident which occurred at the setting since the previous inspection is under investigation by the appropriate authorities. While Ofsted does not have the power to investigate incidents of this kind, actions taken by the setting in response to the incident were considered alongside the other evidence available at the time of the inspection to inform inspectors' judgements.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve pupils' attendance and punctuality by:
 - working closely with those families whose children are not attending regularly nor arriving on time
 - ensuring that swift action is taken to follow up any unexplained absence.
- Ensure that management systems are improved by:
 - establishing a more simplified and coordinated system for tracking pupils' progress, which gives school leaders a clear picture of pupils' performance across the school
 - making sure that plans for improvement include clear measures of success that are broken down into achievable steps across the year so that all leaders, including the governing body, know if new initiatives are having a positive impact on improving outcomes for pupils
 - making sure that the school's website contains information for parents which fully meets requirements.
- Further improve teaching in order to raise standards, particularly in writing and for higher-ability pupils, by:
 - ensuring that all pupils know exactly what they are learning and what they need to achieve by the end of the lesson

- ensuring that the marking of pupils’ books consistently gives sufficient guidance to pupils about how to improve their work and time to act on advice given
- improving pupils’ handwriting, presentation and grammatical skills so that pupils are more fluent in their writing and reach a higher standard
- ensuring that pupils are able to use their understanding of the sounds that letters represent (phonics) to improve their spelling of words and to make them more confident when writing new words
- making sure pupils have plenty of opportunities to write at length across a range of subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Most children start in the Nursery class with knowledge and skills which are well below those typically expected for their age. An increasing proportion of children have very poorly developed speech and language, and personal and social skills. Despite this, they make good and sometimes outstanding progress as they catch up in their learning.
- Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. By the time they leave Year 6, standards are broadly average in English and mathematics. However, progress in writing is not yet as rapid as in mathematics and reading, particularly for the more able pupils. This is because there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to write at length across a range of subjects. In addition, pupils' handwriting skills are not sufficiently well developed and some misunderstandings about the use of grammar hamper their ability to reach higher standards.
- Improvements in mathematics have been effective and most pupils now make good progress from their starting points. This is because the teaching of mathematics has improved and pupils are given more problems to solve, which extends their thinking and helps them to learn.
- Pupils throughout the school enjoy reading. Standards in the national screening check for reading at Year 1 are above the national average. This is due to the school's good approach to teaching reading and the sounds letters represent (phonics). Nevertheless, pupils are not always able to apply their skills when attempting to spell new words and this slows their progress in writing.
- Although the systems for checking on pupils' progress are at an early stage of development, senior leaders strive to ensure all pupils have the opportunity to perform equally well. This demonstrates the school's commitment to equality of opportunity. 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 they need.
- Close links with the 'Behavioural Arms' at Bede Primary School ensure pupils with significant behavioural difficulties make good progress.
- Pupil premium funding is used well to ensure that pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals achieve as well as other pupils. The attainment of pupils supported by the pupil premium is improving rapidly so that the gap between their achievement and that of others in the school has narrowed considerably, so that most attain at a comparable level to others.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good and on occasions it is outstanding. Senior leaders regularly check the quality of teaching and have high expectations of teachers' performance. This has led to increased consistency in the quality of teaching and has had a positive impact on pupils' progress.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage benefit from a wide range of activities, both in the outdoor area and in the classroom, and from teaching which is lively and interesting. For example, in an outstanding lesson in the Reception class, children were mesmerised when watching the movement of snails in the outdoor learning area. This fuelled their interest and they made excellent progress in learning how to mix colours to produce an authentic painting of a snail.
- In the most successful lessons, teachers make clear to pupils what they are going to learn. Teachers' sharp questioning ensures that pupils learn quickly and probes and extends their understanding. For example, in a successful Year 5 lesson, the class teacher questioned pupils skilfully about their research into the key characteristics of the Amazon rainforest. Working cooperatively with a partner, all pupils then produced good introductory paragraphs for a newspaper report. Pupils thoroughly enjoyed this challenging activity and did well.
- However, not all teaching is as good. In some lesson introductions, teachers' questioning of

pupils is not sufficiently focused on learning. When this is the case, pupils' progress is not as fast as it could be. Occasionally, explanations do not give pupils a clear understanding of what they are going to learn and how to achieve success.

- Although pupils make good overall progress in writing, it is not as brisk as in other subjects because teachers do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to write at length. Expectations of pupils' handwriting are not always high enough because there is insufficient focus on teaching the correct letter formation and pencil grip.
- Relationships between pupils and adults are strong, and the way in which teachers organise their classrooms helps pupils learn well. Teaching staff are adept at planning exciting opportunities for pupils to learn in different ways. They also offer pupils a range of diverse experiences, whether it is Year 6 pupils developing fitness skills in 'Jumbo Jungle', Year 5 pupils dressing up as their favourite characters as part of the 'Roald Dahl Day', or Year 2 pupils exploring different animal habitats at 'Shibdon Pond'.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and always provide pupils with feedback on the quality of their work. However, marking does not consistently suggest how pupils can improve and there are not enough opportunities for pupils to make the improvements that teachers have identified.
- Teaching assistants make a strong contribution to all lessons. They are skilful when providing extra specialist support for pupils through intervention programmes and, as a result, have been successful in helping disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs reach their full potential.

The behaviour and safety of pupils is good

- As a result of the school's clear initiatives to work with families and to encourage pupils to attend regularly and on time, the number of persistent absentees has reduced. Nevertheless, attendance remains below average because there are some pupils from a small number of families whose attendance and punctuality are not good enough.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. The school's records confirm that this is the case over time. Typically, pupils are welcoming, polite and show kindness towards each other. They have a good sense of right and wrong and understand that people have different views and beliefs.
- 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 weaken. Pupils do not always present their work as neatly as they could.
- Across the school, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted effectively and all pupils get on well together. Pupils describe their school as a very happy one where 'everyone enjoys learning'. This was evident in an excellent assembly in Key Stage 2 where pupils reflected very sensibly on the school's 'Golden Rules'.
- Pupils say they feel safe and they know who to turn to if they need support. They have a good awareness of the different forms bullying can take and say bullying would not be tolerated in their school. In the words of one pupil, 'Nobody bullies in our school!'
- Pupils welcome the opportunity to take responsibility. Many pupils have special jobs and all are proud to do them. Pupils act sensibly as 'school councillors', 'playground buddies' and 'eco council members'. One good example of their work can be seen in the way they worked together cooperatively when planting apple trees in the new 'Blaydon Orchard'.

The leadership and management is good

- The headteacher and members of the governing body share a strong determination to improve achievement and the quality of teaching. They have managed well the significant changes in staffing since the last inspection. More stable staffing and the appointment of a deputy headteacher have led to improvements in the quality of teaching. These changes show the

school's ability to improve its performance.

- Senior leaders robustly check on the quality of teaching across the school and take effective action through the management of staff performance to improve any areas of weakness.
- A new system has been implemented to check on pupils' progress, but it is not as effective as it could be. This is because the procedures are too complicated and do not give leaders a standardised and accurate overview of the performance of different groups of pupils in every class.
- The school has been quick to rectify any shortcomings in its practice in order to ensure safeguarding requirements are met. However, school records show that although minor accidents are reported immediately, actions taken are not always followed through quickly enough.
- The curriculum is good. Pupils particularly enjoy topic work. For example, pupils spoke knowledgeably about the unique features of their local area. Opportunities to extend their skills in other subjects are stronger in reading and mathematics than in writing. This is because not enough time is allocated to promoting pupils' skills in writing across the curriculum.
- Visits and visitors enhance the curriculum. Older pupils very much enjoy the benefits of a residential visit to an outdoor pursuit centre. A good range of extra-curricular activities also enhance pupils' learning and personal development. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well by the quality of the subjects and experiences on offer.
- The school involves most parents well. However, the school's website does not provide parents with up-to-date information about several aspects of the school's work.
- The local authority has provided intensive support to help the school develop effective systems to check on the quality of teaching.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors offer a range of professional expertise to support the school. They review data about pupils' achievement and use this information to challenge the school to make more rapid improvements. Governors understand that the allocation of pay rises is linked to good teaching. They tackle underperformance through individual support plans. However, the governing body is not clear about the impact of new initiatives on outcomes because the school improvement plans do not indicate what level of success is expected at regular intervals throughout the year. Currently, safeguarding requirements are met, but the governing body needs to ensure that the school's website contains up-to-date information for parents.

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	108349
Local authority	Gateshead
Inspection number	405162

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	153
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jill Chaplin
Headteacher	Nicola Watson
Date of previous school inspection	28 June 2011
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