

Butterknowle Primary School

Butterknowle, Bishop Auckland, County Durham, DL13 5PB

Inspection dates

12 September 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		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Good teaching and effective classroom help enable pupils, including the most able, to achieve well. Disabled pupils, those with specific needs and those supported by extra funding achieve as well as their peers.
- Pupils' behaviour in and around school is outstanding. Their consistently high levels of attendance reflect their great enjoyment and commitment to school work.
- The quality of pupils' learning is enhanced by a wide range of first-hand experiences. This includes an interesting variety of visits and visitors.
- Senior leaders have ensured that well-led teaching has improved since the previous inspection.
- Reception and three-year-old children make rapid progress developing their confidence, independence and self-control. This prepares them really well for Key Stage 1.
- The headteacher's passion to provide high quality care for the development and well-being of pupils ensures that, regardless of starting points, all can achieve success.
- The school works highly effectively with partner schools and support agencies.
- Effective governance has an accurate and increasingly assured grasp of school performance. Excellent relationships with parents add significantly to the quality of their children's learning and development.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet outstanding because it does not always excite, inspire and stretch pupils' knowledge and understanding relentlessly in all subjects.
- Although pupils' progress in writing is good overall, progress is not always as consistently good across the ability range compared to reading and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed six lessons and completed paired work scrutiny with the headteacher. In addition, the inspectors made a number of short visits to lessons, and walks around the school to check the quality of what is provided for pupils.
- The inspectors held discussions with pupils, parents, seven members of the governing body, school staff, including those with responsibilities for subjects, and the local authority educational development partner.
- The inspectors took account of the 14 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- The inspectors observed the work of the school and examined a range of documentation including the school's own records of pupils' current progress, records from the observation of lessons, pupils' books and school improvement planning. Records relating to behaviour, racist incidents, complaints and attendance and documents relating to safeguarding were also taken into consideration.

Inspection team

Clive Petts, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Ben Harding

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Butterknowle is a much smaller than average-sized primary school. The number in year groups varies considerably. Currently, there are no pupils in Year 1 and Year 4.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above the national average.
- A below average proportion of pupils is known to be eligible for pupil premium funding. (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.)
- All pupils are from White British communities with none who speaks English as an additional language.
- The school's most recent results cannot be compared with the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress, because there were not enough pupils to make such a comparison reliable.
- The school extends its services in that it provides a breakfast and after-school club each day. It also works in close collaboration with local schools.
- Effective from September 2013, the school offers provision for children in the year prior to starting Reception for 15 hours per week.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- In order to increase the proportion of teaching that is outstanding, teachers should:
 - ensure that imaginative and thought-provoking teaching methods enable all pupils to think for themselves and provide the correct level of challenge to enable rapid and sustained progress
 - match questions more closely to the abilities of each pupil to excite and stretch their thinking and constantly test their knowledge and understanding even more
 - provide well-defined written steps for improvement in pupils' books to improve the quality of their work.
- Quicken the progress and raise the achievement even more of low and middle-ability pupils in writing by:
 - increasing teachers' expertise developing the early speech and language of younger children
 - maximising opportunities that exist for children to practise their early reading and writing
 - expecting even more of the quality of pupils' creative and expressive writing and ensuring the often rich learning experiences are used to develop a wider range of writing style.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start school with skills lower than typical for their age. Speech, language and calculating skills are sometimes underdeveloped. All children, including those who are three-years old, settle exceptionally quickly, rapidly acquiring essential early confidence, independence and self-control.
- By the time they join Key Stage 1, almost all are working positively towards the goals expected of them for their age. Yet, opportunities are occasionally missed to increase the demands made of younger children practising their letter and sound skills, learning new words and having a go writing letters and words.
- Good progress is made in Key Stage 1, as pupils become increasingly confident working things out for themselves and explaining their thinking. Typically, pupils make good progress in Key Stage 2 with rates accelerating, especially in reading and mathematics. There is an overall trend of rising achievement and attainment, although it does fluctuate in view of the considerable variation in each cohort size and composition.
- The checks made of lessons, pupils' work and the school information of the current Year 6 cohort point to attainment in all subjects that is likely to be above average by the end of the year. Increasing numbers are firmly on course to exceed what is expected of them. The thought-provoking methods adopted to improve pupils' descriptive writing are proving very effective, especially for the most-able pupils. Less skilled writers do not always make progress at the same rapid pace, when interpreting texts and writing to put into words messages, moods or feelings.
- Pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs make the same progress as their classmates, because their needs are accurately identified. In individual cases, the exceptional level of care and support has led to some quite remarkable turnarounds in progress.
- Pupils' progress is carefully checked and accurately pinpoints any slips in progress. Yet, this information is not always used relentlessly enough to raise demands and challenges even more.
- Pupil premium funding is used successfully to enhance the quality and effectiveness of pupils' learning. Consequently, there are no gaps in the attainment of those pupils supported by the funding and that of other pupils and they make the same good progress.
- The school works hard to foster a love of reading. The skills of younger children in this subject are broadly typical for their age. Older pupils in Year 6 are keen to talk about their reading, excitedly recalling their favourite themes and authors. For example, one pupil talked very knowledgeably about their keen interest in horses and how this led to reading *Black Beauty* and *War Horse*. Overall, the skills of older pupils are above average for their age.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is typically good. Senior leaders have worked diligently to eliminate underperformance since the last inspection. This has ensured an increasingly even pattern of good progress and achievement, although occasionally teaching is insufficiently inspiring and exciting to sustain rapid progress.
- Teachers plan lessons thoughtfully, taking time to match activities to individual needs. Relationships between pupils and adults are exemplary. Classrooms are well-ordered, calm, happy places in which pupils of all ages can thrive and succeed.
- In lessons when progress is most rapid and achievement highest, teachers:
 - organise activities and plan methods that are closely tailored to individual age and ability
 - adopt methods that are thought-provoking and generate high levels of interest and interaction
 - use questions to constantly test understanding and keep a careful check on each pupil's progress
 - ensure that classroom support staff play a full and active part in all aspects of the lesson.
- When the level of challenge and pace in lessons is inconsistent:

- demands made of pupils do not always constantly challenge their thinking, knowledge and understanding enough or lead to pupils developing a wider range of writing styles
 - questioning does not always follow pupils' thinking sufficiently closely and build rapidly enough on their thirst for learning
 - opportunities to add to pupils' interest and practise their skills in meaningful ways are missed
 - marking in books does not consistently challenge pupils to correct their mistakes and extend their skills enough.
- When teaching successfully inspires pupils' thinking, such as in the imaginative interpretation of poetry by more-able pupils, their writing is brought to life through skilled use of descriptive language, for example, describing the impact of global warming in the Arctic. Good use is made of specialist support to enhance pupils' skills and accelerate their progress preventing any gaps in attainment.
 - In the Early Years Foundation Stage, adults provide high quality care and support in warm and friendly environments. For example, two three-year-olds worked very happily and confidently alongside older children identifying the names of animals in photographs. Nevertheless, opportunities are sometimes missed to extend the richness of their language, whether working in or outdoors.
 - Marking is positive and helpful, constantly informing pupils when they have done well. Their efforts are rewarded and celebrated, but written comments do not always make it clear precisely how pupils can improve.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding which creates a safe, friendly and happy school atmosphere. They benefit from excellent staff role models. Pupils respond extremely well to staff expectations and are very aware of the boundaries for their conduct that are set for them.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy the breakfast club which provides a calm, happy start to the day. In lessons, whether in groups, pairs or working independently, pupils are extremely eager to learn and display the highest levels of commitment and cooperation.
- There is an exceptionally caring and supportive atmosphere in school supported by their good and sometimes excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Consequently, pupils are thoughtful, considerate and kind, evident when a group spontaneously collected money for the air ambulance after a serious road traffic accident involving two of their friends. All pupils are made to feel precious and valued.
- In discussions, pupils reveal a very good understanding of what leads to bullying. They feel totally confident that staff would deal with any instances of inappropriate behaviour promptly and firmly. Conversations with parents confirm this to be the case. Scrutiny of school behaviour, racist and complaints records reveal that disruption in lessons and at social times is extremely rare.
- Pupils' highly positive attitudes and pride in their school is reflected in their consistently high levels of attendance and excellent punctuality.

The leadership and management are good

- Since the previous inspection the school has improved continuously, because senior leaders and staff display a strong commitment to providing high quality teaching and learning. Any weaknesses are promptly tackled. Consequently, pupils are well prepared for the move to secondary school.
- The checking of school performance is insightful and as a result, senior leaders have a good grasp of strengths and areas for improvement. Staff performance management is effective setting clear targets for their improvement and ensuring that incentives and rewards are only awarded on merit. Staff training, closely linked to development priorities and well supported by

the local authority, provides positive support for teachers to get even better.

- The good curriculum provides a wide range of well-thought-out first-hand experiences that promote essential subject skills well, such as using a visit to the battlefields of the Somme to stimulate pupils' writing. Good use is made of the partnership with local schools and a French partner school to enhance the quality of activities provided for pupils.
- The school ensures funding for sport leads to good quality provision. This results in good levels of participation, including pupils taking part in an after-school programme. Pupils show a clear and informed understanding of the health benefits of sport by keeping active and by playing sport with enthusiasm.
- Equal opportunities are strongly promoted and underpin the school's strong sense of family. Any discrimination is tackled swiftly. All pupils, regardless of starting point, are provided with an equal chance to succeed.
- Parents play a full and active part in their children's well-being and development and greatly appreciate the lengths to which the school goes to help and support their children.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements with much good practice, especially related to child protection, supporting the high quality of care and support provided for children.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The strong governing body has an accurate view of school performance. It has a clear insight into the quality of teaching and pupils' progress and achievement, because of the checks that it makes. Resources are managed efficiently, including making certain that those pupils who are known to be entitled to pupil premium funding achieve as well as their classmates. They take full advantage of local authority training. Performance management is used well to ensure the school continues to improve.

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	114102
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	425802

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	35
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jeanette Newell
Headteacher	Paul Ruane
Date of previous school inspection	24 January 2012
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