

# Bamburgh School

Norham Avenue, South Shields, Tyne and Wear , NE34 7TD

**Inspection dates** 11–12 December 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.

- The starting points for most pupils here are much lower than the national averages. Nevertheless, all groups progress well including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Their achievements are good.
- Teaching is good overall and teachers skilfully manage their classrooms to enable all pupils to contribute in lessons.
- The care and support offered by adults are extremely high quality. The excellent relationships that result ensure that all pupils are included in learning, whatever their learning difficulties or disabilities.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and often outstanding. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural developments are good. On their journey through the school, the personal developments of some are outstanding.
- The leadership and management of the school are good. The new headteacher, supported by senior leaders and the governing body, has successfully and rapidly improved the quality of teaching and pupils' learning.
- The good governing body demonstrates the necessary skills to challenge and support school leaders and managers effectively.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A small proportion of the teaching requires improvement because, in some lessons, pupils do not work on tasks that develop their knowledge and understanding.
- Occasionally, teachers' marking contains insufficient information for pupils to know how to improve their work.
- The rate of progress made by pupils in most lessons is not as great as it could be because pupils' targets for learning are not always as clear as they should be.
- Teachers do not always direct teaching assistants to support pupils' learning as effectively as they could.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed eight lessons given by eight teachers, spending approximately four hours in classrooms watching teaching and learning. Some observations were undertaken jointly with the headteacher. Inspectors heard pupils read as they were working in lessons.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, other senior and middle managers, teachers, a member of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. An inspector met with members of the school council. Pupils were spoken with informally throughout the inspection.
- Important documents were scrutinised concerning safeguarding, the curriculum, records of pupils' progress and their achievements and plans for the future development of the school. The inspectors looked closely at teachers' planning and pupils' work.
- There were insufficient responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) but three parents were interviewed and the inspectors took note of written feedback that had been received by the school from parents. Questionnaires were received from 39 staff.

## Inspection team

Terry McKenzie, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Angela James

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Bamburgh School admits pupils from three to 16 years with a wide range of special educational needs and disabilities that include specific learning difficulties, autistic spectrum conditions and physical difficulties. Some have additional difficulties such as speech and language impairments and behavioural, emotional, social difficulties and complex physical and medical difficulties.
- Pupils are admitted at any stage of their school career and at all times of the year. In September 2012, the numbers on roll increased following the closure of a nearby school for pupils with moderate learning difficulties, all of whom have been placed on the roll here. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs.
- The great majority of pupils is of White British heritage and, for almost all, their first language is English. Approximately, two thirds are entitled to support from the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, from service families or looked after by the local authority) and this is much higher than the national average for most schools. Around 40% are girls.
- The school does not use alternative education but has made an informal alliance with a number of other local schools. Very occasionally, pupils attend mainstream schools part time.
- A new headteacher was appointed in January 2013. Around 50% of the governing body has changed within the last year and a new Chair has been appointed since the previous inspection.

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

- Leaders and managers must continue to improve the quality of teaching to consistently good or better by ensuring that:
  - pupils do not spend time in lessons on tasks which result in little or no improvement to their skills and that they have opportunities to learn by working through tasks themselves
  - teachers' marking provides pupils with a clearer understanding of how well they are doing and how to improve.
- Teachers must ensure that pupils have opportunities to make the maximum possible progress in lessons by:
  - providing pupils with targets which they understand and which represent at least good progress for each individual
  - planning for teaching assistants to understand fully how to support pupils' targets for learning.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Almost all pupils arrive with levels of attainment well below those in mainstream schools. Since the introduction of robust methods of measuring progress, the school can show that all of the different groups of special educational needs and disabilities progress well and their achievements are good for the boys, girls and those from different key stages.
- The records indicate those entitled to support from the pupil premium funding maintain parity in their achievements with all of the other groups. Thus, good leadership and management by the senior team and middle managers in using the information about pupils' attainments and progress ensures that all are included in learning and none is discriminated against. This demonstrates the school's successful promotion of equal opportunities.
- Pupils make good progress throughout both primary and in secondary. Staff are rapidly gaining better understanding of the expectations of progress from one key stage to another. Consequently, pupils' gains in learning have accelerated as teachers' challenges have sharpened. A very few pupils work at standards closer to those in mainstream schools. The staff ensure that they are provided with opportunities to reach their potential in learning and gain qualifications at an appropriate level.
- Recent analysis of progress information indicates those with moderate learning difficulties make slightly less progress than other groups do. Leaders and managers suggest this is a consequence of the upheaval in transferring from the school that closed. Nevertheless, these and all other groups of pupils learn well in English throughout the school because there is consistency in the teaching of communication skills and reading.
- New leadership of mathematics in both primary and secondary is helping pupils benefit from common standards of teaching and support when using numbers. Teachers increasingly embed mathematics into other areas of work, particularly in primary.
- The mostly good progress shown by the school's records is confirmed through observations of lessons. Pupils of all ages are clearly gaining knowledge, skills and understanding in all areas of the curriculum because of the strong focus on reading, writing and communicating.
- Where progress is slower it is because teaching requires improvement. Occasionally, the rate of progress in lessons falters because pupils work on unnecessary writing tasks or do not have enough time to work by themselves.
- Pupils' rates of progress and their achievements are not yet outstanding because pupils are unsure of exactly what targets they are working towards and teachers expectations are unclear. Last year the majority of school leavers gained a qualification in English and mathematics at GCSE or its equivalent. The predictions for this year are that pupils will gain even better grades as a result of the higher expectations instilled by the new headteacher and the greater range of qualifications introduced in the last 12 months.

### The quality of teaching is good

- In all areas of the school, including the Early Years Foundation Stage, teaching is mainly good. Some teaching is outstanding and even where teaching requires improvement, there are generally some good features.
- Teachers in the primary classes rightly focus on improving pupils' basic skills in literacy and numeracy. The recent introduction of a new reading scheme has helped ensure a consistent approach to the teaching of reading throughout primary. Almost all staff have undertaken training in using phonics (the sounds that letters make) and improving pupils' reading.
- Throughout the secondary department, the emphasis is on moving pupils forward in basic skills so they can gain, in accordance with their ability, appropriate qualifications to help them to move on from school. In all parts of the school, pupils are able to use and develop their basic skills in a range of subjects.

- In lessons where pupils make at least good progress, teachers have high expectations and adults are deployed well to support their learning. Pupils' intense involvement in these lessons which capture their interest particularly well and provide a high degree of challenge, results in them succeeding in the tasks set and behaving outstandingly well.
- When pupils do not learn well enough, they do not have enough chance to work out problems or how to do things for themselves. In some lessons, pupils undertake writing tasks that contribute little to their learning but which require a significant amount of time to complete. These are lessons where valuable learning time is wasted.
- Occasionally, when marking pupils' work, teachers are too congratulatory and do not provide sufficient help for pupils to improve. Consequently, pupils are sometimes left wondering how well they are doing and how to improve.
- Teachers ensure that the quality of display and the arrangement of the learning environment are good. Teaching assistants are generally deployed well to assist learning. However, teachers do not always direct teaching assistants to know, understand and support the targets for learning provided. Teaching assistants are not well enough involved in gathering the evidence of achievement and helping pupils to record their successes.
- The care and support provided by all of the adults in school is extremely high. Staff skilfully ensure that excellent relationships are fostered and maintained with all pupils. This high-quality support is appreciated by pupils and their parents. Indeed, pupils state that one of the main reasons for wanting to come to school is because of the strong relationships they enjoy.
- When questioned, parents and pupils state the quality of teaching and learning has improved since the appointment of the new headteacher. One parent reported there is now more challenge and more targeting undertaken by teaching staff and that this has had a profound effect on the progress his son is now making.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Aspects of their behaviour are outstanding. In lessons pupils display positive attitudes to their work and respond well to the high expectations of the adults. Generally they concentrate well and demonstrate good listening skills. In such ways they make an exceptional contribution to the development of their own knowledge and skills.
- Pupils work well individually and in groups, and this contributes to their good achievement. Outstanding behaviour is evident in the dining room, upon arrival and departure from school and during break times. Where behaviour wavers in lessons it is because pupils are unable to get on with their work quickly enough.
- All groups of pupils report that they greatly enjoy school and feel very safe here. Their parents agree. Members of the school council were emphatic that bullying is very rare and any incidents are quickly dealt with by the adults. Throughout the school behaviour is managed consistently well by adults. Pupils understand the rewards and sanctions used and respond appropriately.
- In lessons, pupils learn how to keep themselves safe through personal, social and health education. Specific courses organised by the school help them to develop the important skills for moving on and keeping themselves safe, for example, when using public transport.
- Pupils report that they appreciate the work of the adults. The relationships they build are important to them and instrumental in encouraging them to attend regularly. Rates of attendance are high and there is very little unauthorised absence.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural developments are good because the school encourages them to work and play together productively. They make strong relationships with each other. Pupils explain enthusiastically that what they liked most about the school is 'making friends'.
- In all areas of the school, pupils are prepared well for moving on to the next stages. Last year, all of the leavers from Year 11 went on to further education, training or employment and some are studying A-level courses at a local college. For some pupils, their journey through the school results in outstanding personal development.

**The leadership and management are good**

- Leadership and management are good overall. Since the appointment of the headteacher just under a year ago, there have been significant improvements in the way that teachers undertake their work. This has led to better outcomes for pupils in respect of their attainments and progress. Given this track record, the school is well-placed to improve further.
- Following his appointment, the headteacher quickly introduced new systems to record pupils' attainments and progress accurately. Consequently, the school can demonstrate that pupils make good gains from their starting points in accordance with national expectations.
- The roles and responsibilities of some middle managers have been redefined and all teachers have been subject to performance management. Although the measures have not yet been fully implemented they have had a significant impact on the improvement of teaching throughout school. The staff have welcomed these measures. There is a renewed sense of purpose amongst them and morale is high. When questioned, several commented that they appreciate the clear direction provided by the senior team.
- New measures have successfully increased pupils' rates of attendance to be almost in line with those of mainstream schools nationally and well in excess of the averages for special schools nationally. This aspect of leadership and management is outstanding.
- The parents spoken with during the inspection were supportive of the school and several also commented on the changes made by the new headteacher. One stated 'the school is as much now about teaching our children as it is about caring for them'.
- The new funds for physical education and sport for primary pupils have been managed and targeted well to strengthen the existing provision for activities such as swimming. There is a clear focus on helping those of primary age to develop physical fitness and stamina to decrease the effects of disability. The funds have also been used to help pupils participate in sports more widely with the aim of encouraging them to gain a lifelong interest in physical activity.
- Throughout its recent period of great change the school has been supported very well by the local authority. It has helped leaders and managers with issues of staffing and funding. The high quality support provided by the school improvement adviser has been instrumental in guiding the headteacher through his first year at the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Following the previous inspection the governing body experienced considerable change in membership. Nevertheless, it is now functioning well and providing appropriate support and challenge to the school. For example, members scrutinise the information about how pupils attain and make progress to ensure that all are included and none discriminated against. Governors have almost succeeded in eliminating a significant budget deficit. They are at the early stages of understanding the impact of the pupil premium funding in raising the educational standards of those entitled to its support. The governing body has been kept fully informed throughout the first round of performance management undertaken by the headteacher with staff. They are fully aware of how links have been made between performance and pay, for example in the consolidation of some middle management posts. The Chair of the Governing Body has established performance management with the headteacher and appropriate targets for improvement have been set and reviewed. All of the requirements for safeguarding are met.

## 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>	108738
<b>Local authority</b>	South Tyneside
<b>Inspection number</b>	425678

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

<b>Type of school</b>	All-through
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	147
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jill Osborne
<b>Headteacher</b>	Peter Nord
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 February 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 427 4330
<b>Fax number</b>	0191 427 4331
<b>Email address</b>	info@bamburgh.s-tyneside.sch.uk



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