

# Embleton Vincent Edwards Church of England First School

Embleton, Alnwick, Northumberland, NE66 3XR

**Inspection dates** 28 January 2014

<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.

- All pupils make good progress from their individual starting points in reading, writing and mathematics to reach standards that are at least in line with and often above age-related expectations by the time they leave the school in Year 4.
- The quality of teaching is good overall and in Key Stage 1 it is occasionally outstanding. This is because teachers use their good subject knowledge to enthuse and engage pupils.
- Teachers plan interesting lessons. The range of activities enables pupils of different abilities to make good progress.
- The headteacher, well-supported by governors, has ensured that rigorous monitoring of pupils' progress and well-chosen training for all staff have improved teaching and pupils' learning.
- The school offers good care and support and many exciting opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils care very well for one another and say that they feel happy and safe in school. Attendance is broadly in line with the national average and is improving.
- The headteacher and governors have an accurate view of the school's strengths and relative weaknesses and are ambitious for its further improvement.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet outstanding and so does not lead to a higher proportion of pupils making outstanding progress.
- On occasions, learning slows, especially that of the most-able pupils, when tasks do not challenge and extend their thinking.
- In some lessons, pupils do not have the opportunity to master necessary skills before moving on to the next steps in their learning.
- Pupils' progress in writing, while good, is not yet as strong as it is in reading and mathematics. Handwriting and presentation skills require improvement.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed six lessons, one of which was a joint observation with the headteacher.
- Inspectors talked to pupils about their work in lessons, looked at books, listened to pupils read and met with a group of pupils from Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body and school leaders.
- The lead inspector had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- During the inspection, inspectors took account of 10 responses to the online survey (Parent View), analysis of the school's own survey of parents' views and letters from parents. They also held informal discussions with parents during the school day.
- Inspectors looked at a number of documents including: school improvement plans; records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding; minutes of meetings of the governing body and records of school leaders' monitoring of lessons and information on the management of performance.
- Inspectors also took account of the school's data on pupils' attainment and progress.

## Inspection team

Alan Sergison, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Nicola Nelson-Taylor

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The headteacher is also headteacher of the local middle school. Consequently, the day-to-day management of the school is devolved to the two teachers on site.
- Pupils in the school are taught in two class groups. One class has pupils of Reception and Year 1 age and the other caters for pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4. This organisation of classes can change year to year due to the changing numbers of pupils on roll in each year group.
- Most children are admitted to the school from an on-site privately run nursery that is inspected separately.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage provision is within the mixed Reception/Year 1 class.
- The vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above average. The pupil premium provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those children in the care of the local authority and those from service families.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

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

- Raise standards further in all subjects, and particularly in writing, by:
  - ensuring that skills are securely mastered in lessons, before pupils move on to the next steps in learning
  - making sure that pupils, especially the most able, are given more tasks that challenge and extend their thinking
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length and across a range of subjects
  - developing pupils' handwriting and presentation skills.
- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching, by:
  - ensuring that pupils' work is marked with a greater focus on what needs to be improved and that pupils are then given enough time to respond
  - ensuring that the questioning skills of all teachers are as consistently good as the best
  - providing more opportunities for teachers to share and learn from the very best practice within the school and in other schools.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills broadly typical for their age. This can vary significantly and some children have low starting points in early literacy and numeracy skills. They settle quickly and soon become confident and happy in a very positive atmosphere. They develop an excitement for learning and develop good skills of working on their own and with each other. By the time they start in Year 1 they have made good progress.
- As pupil numbers are small and vary considerably year to year, standards vary similarly, and so caution needs to be exercised when making comparisons of national test results to that of other schools. Pupils' good progress continues over time, so that by the time they leave the school in Year 4, standards are at least in line with and often above age-related expectations, depending on the nature of the group. The most-able pupils, however, do not always achieve as well as they should.
- In most lessons, pupils make good progress and on occasions they make outstanding progress. However, in a few lessons, pupils' progress slows because the work they are given does not build well enough on the skills that they have already, and so they are not challenged appropriately.
- Pupils' progress in reading is particularly good because the teaching of phonics (the sounds letters make) is good. The school has made reading an area of high priority. Time given to the teaching of reading skills is very productive and, together with the involvement of parents, has been key to this success. Progress in writing is slower, partly because teachers do not always provide pupils with clear guidance through their marking on how to improve their work.
- The headteacher and staff use the school's good system to check individual pupils' progress, especially that of the less-able pupils. If any pupils are identified as being at risk of falling behind, support is quickly put in place because the school is committed to providing equal opportunities for its pupils.
- School leaders use the pupil premium funding well to target support for individuals and small groups of pupils who need the most help. This is proving to be very effective and, as a result, the progress of these pupils is improving. Consequently, previous gaps in their results compared to those of their peers are closing. In 2013, the gap in their performance was in fact closed and in English and mathematics they performed at least in line with their peers.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress in line with their peers. This is because their needs are identified at an early stage and teachers work in partnership with skilled teaching assistants to ensure that they receive the right support.
- The school's information about current pupils' progress indicates that their overall achievement is good, but that performance in writing is not as strong as in mathematics and reading.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching observed during the inspection was good overall. On occasions, it was outstanding. Pupils' work in books and their progress records confirm the school's own view of good teaching over time.
- The headteacher regularly checks on the quality of teaching which has brought about increased consistency and has had a strong impact on pupils' rates of progress.
- In lessons where pupils learn quickly, teachers match the challenge level of the task exceptionally well to pupils' abilities, including for the most able, and this ensures that they are fully engaged in the activity. This is not always the case, however, and so results in pupils making overall good, but not outstanding, progress.
- In most lessons pupils make quick progress and teachers' sharp use of questioning probes and extends learning. This was particularly evident in a lesson with the youngest pupils on the topic of time. Pupils were stimulated and enthused when exploring the differences between digital and

analogue clocks. The teacher's well-focused questioning ensured a brisk pace to learning and, as a result, pupils made very good progress. In less successful lessons, questioning is not as sharp.

- In a very few lessons, basic skills taught at the beginning of the lesson are not explained well enough. For example in a mathematics lesson, pupils were not given enough help to support them to solve problems in the second part of the activity. As a result, the pace of progress slowed.
- Teachers generally take care in marking pupils' books and provide comments on what pupils have to do to move on to the next stage. However, these comments are not always focused sufficiently well on what needs to be improved and pupils are not consistently given the opportunity to respond to them to improve their work, especially with regard to handwriting and presentation.
- Skilled teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to children's learning and progress, particularly when they are working in close partnership with the class teacher and supporting small groups or individual pupils.
- Pupils tackle work in mathematics with enthusiasm and make good progress because teachers provide exciting activities that are matched well to the many different age ranges and abilities in each class.
- Many aspects of writing are taught well, but teachers are not providing pupils with enough opportunities to develop their ideas in longer pieces of writing.
- Individual targets for improvement are set for every child so that they are aware of what they need to do to improve. Pupils appreciate these and the targets support them to work towards the next level of learning.

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

- Behaviour of pupils is good and the school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is also good.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. School records confirm that this is also the case over time. Pupils say that they feel happy and safe in school. They play and work together in harmony. They are polite and confident, and very welcoming. The majority of parents also support this view.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the work of the school and appreciate the care and support that their children receive. The response of one parent typified the feelings of many, 'The school is a fantastic asset to the village. It is so warm and welcoming.'
- Pupils also hold positive views about the school. As one pupil stated, 'It is a small friendly school where we are given lots of interesting things to do'. They relish the opportunity to take responsibility, for example, through supporting younger pupils as playground buddies at break and lunchtime.
- Pupils were clear that cases of bullying or poor behaviour were rare. They were confident that there was a range of adults who would swiftly tackle any issues. They have a good understanding of the different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying, and they know how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations.
- Pupils show very positive attitudes to learning and this supports their good progress. Only on rare occasions, when teaching is less stimulating and teachers' expectations are not as high, does pupils' attention wane.
- Actions taken by the school to improve attendance have been successful and attendance is now average.

**The leadership and management are good**

- The headteacher has provided strong and determined leadership and this is appreciated by staff and governors. This has led to continued school improvement. The focus has rightly been on improving the consistency of teaching and this has been successful and resulted in pupils making good progress. Decisions about pay are based on the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Discussions with staff confirm that they appreciate the training and development opportunities that they have access to, for example, through links with the partner middle school. They recognise that these lead to further improvements in their practice. However, the school has not yet ensured that the best practice found in this and other schools is more widely shared so that staff can learn from each other.
- The school has well-developed systems for tracking pupils' progress. Leaders, together with the school's two teachers, analyse the results rigorously and identify any underachievement quickly. Swift action is taken, such as providing additional help and support tailored to the needs of the pupil. They are aware of the need to ensure that the most-able pupils are suitably challenged and have already begun to implement strategies to tackle this.
- Staff are set challenging targets for performance. These are related to targets within the school development plan. Professional development opportunities and salary progression are linked to these and to the progress pupils make.
- Additional funding for physical education and sport is used well to provide additional activities for pupils. There is a clear plan for expenditure and pupils now benefit, for example, through opportunities to participate in a broad range of activities, including coaching in squash and inter-school tournaments. The school is using this in its application for healthy schools status.
- The curriculum is organised well to meet the needs of pupils in mixed-age classes. Senior leaders are aware, however, that there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to write at length across a range of subjects to develop writing and handwriting skills.
- A range of visits and visitors to school enriches learning, for example, through educational visits to Newcastle Airport and Whitehouse Farm Centre. A range of extra-curricular activities enhances the learning experience of pupils and their spiritual, moral and social and cultural awareness.
- The school values the good light-touch support it receives from the local authority, such as support with finance issues and governing body support services.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements.
- The school works well with other local schools, particularly its partner middle school, so that facilities and specialist expertise can be accessed.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. For instance they are well aware of the focus on improving the consistency of the quality of teaching even further. They share the headteacher's ambition for the school and because of this the school is well placed to improve further. They have a good understanding of performance data and support and challenge senior leaders appropriately. They know how the pupil premium and additional funding for physical education is spent and of the positive impact that this is having. They are well aware of the links between staff salary and performance and ensure that performance management systems are rigorously implemented. They are aware of the quality of teaching in the school and support the headteacher to challenge underperformance. They visit school regularly to keep up to date and access relevant training and support.

## 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>	112290
<b>Local authority</b>	Northumberland
<b>Inspection number</b>	431363

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	31
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Margaret Brooks
<b>Headteacher</b>	Julie Harris
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 July 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01665 576612
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