

Bullion Lane Primary School

Bullion Lane, Chester le Street, County Durham, DH2 2DP

Inspection dates 30–31 January 2014

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.

- Pupils make good progress overall from their starting points, which are at least below, and often well below those typical for their age. They achieve average standards by the time they leave Year 6.
- Teaching is good. Staff give clear explanations and use their understanding of pupils' abilities to challenge pupils to progress well.
- Teachers have good relationships with pupils, who show respect and respond very well by being active and attentive learners.
- The school is extremely calm and supportive and nurtures individual pupils exceptionally well, particularly those who find it more difficult to engage in learning.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is of the highest quality. Pupils feel very safe in school. They are happy, behave well and want to learn. Parents support these views. They say that staff care for their children very well and any concerns are addressed quickly and effectively.
- The school is led by a highly effective headteacher who has driven improvement very successfully since the last inspection. She is ably supported by senior leaders who carry out their roles and responsibilities to improve teaching and the achievement of pupils well.
- There is a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Leaders and governors work very well together to identify where improvement can be made and work closely with staff to achieve this.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Most teaching is good rather than outstanding. In some classes, pupils are not always challenged or supported enough to achieve as well as they can and this means their progress is variable.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 15 part-lessons. In addition, the inspection team made a number of short visits to other lessons and listened to reading. The headteacher and deputy headteacher took part in two joint observations with inspectors.
- Separate discussions were held with the headteacher, staff, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. The opinions of 10 members of staff were also considered from their inspection questionnaire responses.
- Inspectors observed the school's work, looked at children's learning journals, lesson plans, data on pupils' progress, planning and monitoring documentation, and information relating to the welfare of pupils and safeguarding.
- Inspectors observed pupils during morning playtime and at lunchtime, and attended an assembly.

- There were insufficient responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) to be taken into account. Therefore, the inspectors took account of the results of the school's own recent questionnaire to parents and held a discussion with parents on the second day of inspection.

Inspection team

Kate Pringle, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lucie Stephenson

Additional Inspector

James Hannah

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average-size primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those children in local authority care and for children from service families, is significantly above average.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British background.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also above average.
- At the end of Nursery Year, a proportion of children leave the Early Years Foundation Stage to enter the Reception Year in other local primary schools.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school provides a breakfast club each morning.
- The Bullion Lane after-school club, which operates from a different building on the school site, is subject to a separate inspection report which can be found on the Ofsted website at www.ofsted.gov.uk.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all teaching is consistently good and increase the proportion that is outstanding by:
 - making sure that teachers plan tasks for pupils of different abilities which fully challenge them at the right level and helps them to make their best possible progress
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to return to past work and to use teachers' comments to see where they have made errors or have misunderstood their learning, and to make corrections to increase their learning and progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children gain confidence quickly in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They enter Nursery with skills below, and often well below, those typical for their age and make good progress, although their attainment is still below average when they leave the Reception Year.
- Learning in letters and sounds (phonics) is good and improving, enabling pupils to achieve levels which are average in the Year 1 screening check. This helps pupils to make equally good progress in their reading skills. They confidently sound out simple and more difficult words using their understanding of the sounds made by individual letters and groups of letters.
- The better quality of teaching has had a positive impact on pupils' learning and is reflected in the greatly improved standards by the end of Year 2. Pupils now achieve in line with national averages in all subjects and show good and sometimes outstanding progress from their starting points in Year 1.
- There has been a similar improvement in the attainment of pupils at the end of Year 6. From levels which were well-below average two years ago, pupils reached standards in line with the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics in 2013. Attainment for the present Year 6 indicates that pupils are currently on track to maintain, and even improve upon, these levels. This level of attainment represents good progress from these pupils' starting points.
- The school is successfully addressing the different interests and learning needs of boys in particular, and this is having a good impact upon their attainment in writing to bring their achievement in line with girls. In mathematics and reading, there is no difference between girls' and boys' attainment and progress.
- Overall, pupils' progress is good and, in a number of instances, it is outstanding, particularly in mathematics. Progress is not as fast when teachers' expectations are lower.
- Progress in most classes is good and in some it is rapid. Here, these teachers continually use their knowledge of what pupils can do to set tasks which provide appropriate challenge to meet the differing learning needs of groups of pupils and ensure their good progress. As a result, the progress of the most able pupils is much improved and is now good with more pupils achieving at the higher levels. However, in lessons where work is not pitched at the correct level so that some pupils find it is too easy and others too difficult, pupils do not do as well.
- By the end of Year 6, pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals make good, and often better progress compared with other pupils. Their standards are higher than those of others nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. Funding allocated to support these pupils has been spent wisely to support reading and writing skills in particular and their attainment compared to others in the school indicates that the gap is narrowing. Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals are reaching levels of attainment in reading and writing which are within one term of their peers in school. In mathematics, the attainment of these pupils is approximately one term behind that of other groups in the school.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs also achieve in line with others. Their progress has improved because their needs are better met by teachers and their assistants. Present tracking information indicates that their progress is equal to that of others in the school.

The quality of teaching is good

- In most classes, teaching is good and in some it is outstanding. Pupils are attentive and work hard to achieve what their teachers ask of them. They respond very well to questions and make good use of 'talk partners' when asked to consider the ideas of their friends. Books are well presented and pupils take pride in their work.
- In the Nursery and Reception classes, children settle quickly and show confidence as they learn both indoors and outside. They are happy and enjoy the different activities provided for them. Staff understand their emotional and welfare needs particularly well and show considerable care

for children, nurturing them through these early years. Overall, learning is good and children progress well from their starting points. However, the quality of teaching and learning can vary from session to session.

- In most lessons, most pupils are eager and interested to learn. For example, in a mathematics lesson, a money problem concerning a pet parrot created much laughter as pupils eagerly addressed their tasks. They diligently checked place value and the position of the decimal point. Confident pupils happily set problems to challenge each other and those less sure were quickly noted and effectively supported by teachers and other staff to achieve at least well.
- Most teachers use their understanding of what pupils know to set activities which challenge at the appropriate levels and so pupils make good progress. In lessons where this is not the case, tasks do not fully interest pupils and they can become distracted and less involved in learning. At these times, pupils do not learn as well as they should.
- Increasingly, teachers are making good links between subjects because pupils use their skills in reading, writing and mathematics to share information in a wide range of ways. This is seen in their use of graphs in geography and their research to write a diary entry for Anne Frank.
- Books are marked regularly to the agreed scheme and are well presented. Teachers use comments to share successes with pupils and indicate how to improve work, or what pupils need to learn next. This sharing of information is most effective for pupils who are given the opportunity to return to marked work and respond to teachers' comments. As they correct errors and misunderstandings, they see where they have gone wrong and are able to use this to make better progress. Where this does not happen, pupils are less likely to understand their mistakes and take longer to move on to the next stage in learning.
- Well-trained teaching assistants work closely with teachers. They complement learning very successfully, supporting groups and individuals within, and outside, the classroom. Their work with those who find learning more difficult is particularly effective.
- Parents say that they have 'seen the school go from strength to strength'. They believe that teaching is good and that their children make good progress. They rightly believe pupils are well prepared, socially and academically, for their move to secondary school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- In this inclusive school, all children are encouraged to make the best of themselves. Pupils are encouraged to be thoughtful and to care for others. They consider carefully how their actions may affect their friends.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils are extremely happy in school, they enjoy their work and play and believe that school is a really safe place to be. Parents completely support this view and recommend the school wholeheartedly.
- Pupils are very well supported to become increasingly responsible for their actions as they move through the school. In lessons, pupils learn how to recognise different dangers they might face and they are taught to make sensible choices, for example, safe places to play. The school benefits from a swimming pool on site and safety procedures in this area are clear and consistently applied.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. Staff consistently apply the code of behaviour which pupils understand well. They are not happy if they receive a 'growly' report. Pupils believe that behaviour is good but that some pupils can have 'an off day'. In most lessons, they listen carefully and are highly focused and behaviour in lessons is good and often outstanding. In some lessons when they are not sufficiently challenged or motivated to learn, some pupils can lose interest and become distracted.
- Pupils are polite and well mannered as they move around the school sensibly and safely. Older pupils take pride in a number of roles of responsibility, acting as buddies, monitors and members of the school council. They are proud to represent their friends in school.
- Pupils understand the different forms that bullying can take. They recognise that it can occur but strongly believe that instances are rare. Pupils say that staff are very approachable and listen

carefully to their concerns which are quickly, and effectively, dealt with.

- Attendance has improved over the past two years and is now average. Most absence is due to illness and the vast majority of pupils get to school on time. The levels of fixed-term and permanent exclusions have greatly reduced because of the excellent work by staff to support pupils and their families.

The leadership and management are good

- There have been considerable improvements since the last inspection. The headteacher has been inspirational and relentless in her drive to improve the quality of teaching and raise standards. She values the skills of all staff and is ably supported by the deputy headteacher.
- There is an excellent understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. A well focused development plan identifies areas for improvement and how these will be achieved. There is constant review against a clear timeline for actions and this monitoring is used well to redirect development when needed.
- Middle leaders are at differing stages in their roles. The most effective manage their responsibilities very successfully. They show how well past actions have improved pupils' progress and have a very clear idea of their next goals towards further improvement. This can be most evidently seen in the work of the English and mathematics leaders who have worked relentlessly to improve the progress of pupils.
- Senior leaders regularly check the quality of teaching. They accurately assess where weaker teaching is identified and support teachers through appropriate training. Although there can be lower levels of challenge in some classes, this school is committed to equal opportunities for all pupils. Any form of discrimination is not tolerated.
- Each teacher has the quality of their teaching linked to the progress pupils make in their class, which is then reflected in any pay award. This process is rigorous and there are expectations of staff to meet required levels in order to work in posts of responsibility.
- The curriculum meets the needs of pupils well. Subject leaders are presently working together to introduce the new curriculum in September 2014. Pupils make a variety of visits to learn about different places and times, and Year 6 enjoy the challenges of an annual visit to an outdoor activities centre. Visitors to the school extend pupils' experiences through sport and the creative arts of music and drama.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very well and is reflected in their good behaviour and their care for each other. Pupils are actively encouraged to recognise and celebrate different religions and cultures, both locally and in other countries. Two groups of older pupils have visited Australia to develop links with two schools, one urban and one in the Outback, to understand different lifestyles.
- The pupil premium and primary school sports funding are carefully allocated to make sure pupils make good progress and to become more physically active. The use and impact of the pupil premium funding is shared with parents through the school website. Leaders are now monitoring the impact of the new 'trim trail' on pupils' general fitness, the increased uptake in sports and developing pupils' performance. Improvements to the teaching of physical education are being developed by trained coaches and are also being checked.
- The local authority recognises the improvements the school has made since the last inspection and now provides light touch support. Over the past two years, the school adviser has been involved in the analysis of pupils' work and the evaluation of school data.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The strengths and weaknesses of the school are very well understood and carefully monitored by the governing body. The governing body draws on the individual expertise of governors to challenge school improvement. Governors fully recognise the considerable improvements to teaching and the good, and now often better, progress of pupils across the school. There are close working relationships between senior leaders and governors to use the school's development plan and to analyse performance data to ensure that the present actions for

further improvement are on schedule.

- Governors manage finances carefully, including how staff are rewarded. The school is held to account for the spending of additional funding, such as the pupil premium and primary school sports funding which are accounted for on the website. Safeguarding practices are well documented and meet statutory requirements.

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	114209
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	430866

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	314
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Bailey
Headteacher	Sarah Barningham
Date of previous school inspection	25 April 2012
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