

# Whitehouse Primary School

Dunelm Road, Elm Tree Farm, Stockton-on-Tees, TS19 0TS

**Inspection dates** 29–30 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.

- From their often below expected starting points, pupils make overall good progress to reach average standards by the end of Year 6 in reading and writing, and above average in mathematics.
- Pupils with physical and medical needs achieve particularly well because all adults provide timely challenge and support.
- Teaching is typically good and some is outstanding. Teachers plan interesting lessons which enthuse pupils and make them want to learn.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. It is promoted very effectively through the excellent relationships in school, and a wide range of exciting activities.
- Arrangements to keep children safe are outstanding. Parents and carers say how much this is a top priority of the school's leaders. Behaviour is good.
- Governors are highly supportive and effective in holding the school to account. They share the same ambition as the headteacher to continue to improve it further. The headteacher has managed effectively the significant changes in Key Stage 1 staffing, since the previous inspection, to sustain the overall quality of good teaching across the school.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some pupils do not make the progress they should across Years 1 and 2, particularly in writing. This is partly due to changes in staffing, in recent years, which have delayed achievements in spelling, handwriting and sequencing of ideas, across different subjects.
- Pupils sometimes lose interest in some lessons that are slow to start, or that are not sufficiently inspiring.
- A small proportion of teaching in Key Stage 1 requires improvement. This is where experiences do not stimulate pupils sufficiently, and where some teachers do not check systematically the progress that pupils make in lessons.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 27 lessons, of which two were joint observations with senior leaders. Inspectors also observed adults working with pupils in small groups outside of lessons, and listened to pupils in Years 2 and 6 read.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, governors and school staff, including senior and middle managers. Inspectors also talked to parents at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors took account of 54 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- Inspectors sampled pupils' work informally in lessons, and looked at a number of Year 2 and Year 6 pupils' English and mathematics books in detail. Inspectors also reviewed a number of documents, including the school's own data on current pupils' progress, planning and monitoring documentation, minutes of governors' meetings, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents pertaining to safeguarding.
- Inspectors visited informally the daily breakfast and after-school clubs managed by the school.

## Inspection team

Andrew Swallow, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Graeme Clarke

Additional Inspector

Derek Sleightholme

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a much larger than average-size primary school.
- It has specialist provision for up to 55 pupils with learning difficulties that arise from complex physical and medical needs.
- The proportion of students supported through school action is well below that found nationally.
- The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above that found nationally. The proportion of pupils receiving support through the pupil premium is below the national 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 who are looked after.
- Almost all of the pupils are of White British heritage.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Governors make provision for daily breakfast and after-school clubs which are well attended.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been many changes to staffing in Years 1 and 2.

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

- Accelerate the progress for some pupils, especially in writing, across Years 1 and 2 by:
  - providing regular and more interesting experiences, in different subjects, that inspire pupils to want to write
  - making sure that all pupils understand what good handwriting looks like
  - paying greater attention to the spelling of common words and expressions
  - helping pupils to set out their ideas in a logical manner.
- Eliminate the small proportion of teaching that requires improvement in Key Stage 1, and increase further the proportion that is outstanding, by:
  - ensuring activities, resources and experiences are relevant, meaningful and motivating and so grab pupils' attention
  - ensuring teachers systematically check pupils' understanding in lessons, adapting work to take good account of their varying abilities, so that they learn exceptionally well.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children achieve well in the Early Years Foundation Stage. From below expected starting points, they make a good start in linking letters to the sounds they make, and become confident readers. By the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, many write sentences using correct grammar and punctuation, and reach a good overall level of development. As a consequence, they are well prepared for learning in Year 1.
- Significant changes in staffing in Key Stage 1, in recent years, have resulted in uneven progress by some pupils in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, standards in Key Stage 1 have dipped. The school's information on pupils' current progress, together with their work, shows that attainment is now picking up, and is typically in line with that usually expected for their age.
- Since the beginning of the academic year, many pupils have made good progress, especially in reading and mathematics. Some pupils still do not make enough progress in writing, largely because they are not given sufficient opportunities to develop their handwriting skills and to set out their ideas, in a range of different scenarios, in different subjects. Some teachers are not consistent enough in checking pupils' accurate spelling of common words and expressions.
- By the end of Year 6, attainment in reading is average and improving over time. It is above average in mathematics. This represents good progress from pupils' previously lower starting points. Progress in writing is particularly good because pupils have many interesting experiences to stimulate their thinking, and are clear about what good writing looks like.
- Pupils' learning in lessons is good. They enjoy their lessons and they quickly gain the knowledge and skills they need to help them improve further. They work well together in groups and pairs and make good use of opportunities to discuss their ideas with 'talk partners' which helps them to consolidate their understanding and to work through problems on their own.
- Pupils enjoy reading throughout the school. They use their phonic knowledge (sounds and the letters they represent) increasingly well to tackle unfamiliar words. As a result, many pupils across the school are reading in line with expected levels for their age, and some above.
- In mathematics lessons, pupils make securely good progress. This is because they are frequently given practical and problem-solving activities set in 'real-life' scenarios and contexts. For example, in a Year 6 class pupils thoroughly enjoyed matching differently shaped line graphs, with no labels or clues, to a series of statements about daily activities.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity well, providing effective additional support for those at risk of falling behind. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make similar progress to their peers. Those with complex physical and medical needs, and the small proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups, make particularly good progress. All of these pupils receive well-targeted support within and out of the classroom, from teachers and teaching assistants who understand their particular needs very well indeed. Boys and girls make similar progress and attain equally well.
- The most able pupils also make good progress because they are suitably challenged by the work set for them and are quickly engrossed in these activities.
- Pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding are now achieving as well as their peers in lessons. The school's information shows that former gaps between their outcomes and other pupils in the school have closed significantly. Attainment, including for those known to be eligible for free school meals, is rising and is close to national averages in English and mathematics.
- The teaching of physical education and sport is good. Teachers receive daily specialist coaching from an expert practitioner, funded from the government's recent national initiative for primary sports.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- Teachers are eager to share good practice across the school, and to improve their skills by visiting other schools to research effective teaching strategies. As a result, teaching is good and some is outstanding. Where pupils learn particularly well, they are quickly involved in the interesting and relevant activities. As a result, they are stimulated from the onset and persevere well. It is clear how much they enjoy the regular opportunities to collaborate with peers and work things out for themselves. In these successful lessons, teachers routinely check pupils' understanding, adapting activities accordingly and with a positive impact on the quality of learning.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children enjoy interesting indoor and outdoor activities which cover all the areas of learning. Close attention is paid to developing children's speaking and listening skills in the nursery which prepares children well for future learning. Reception children spoke enthusiastically about making sandcastles and using climbing equipment. They were engrossed in learning about Chinese traditions and using chopsticks to eat noodles.
- Most teachers have high expectations of their pupils and want them to do their best. Pupils, including the most able, respond to these expectations and typically try hard to rise to the challenges set for them. Year 5 pupils are hugely excited by a clip from a 'Harry Potter' film that fires their imagination when considering language that might enthuse a reader in a short story. In Year 6, pupils spontaneously interact with partners to provide 'pros and cons' to scenarios tabled by the teacher, in preparation for a persuasive writing task about internet sites.
- Significant changes in Key Stage 1 staffing, in recent years, have hindered continuity in teaching quality, resulting in some pupils not making enough progress. Staffing is now stable, although some teaching still requires improvement. This is particularly so in writing. Some teachers miss opportunities to reinforce basic handwriting skills, and make sure pupils set out logically key ideas, through interesting experiences in different subjects. Not all teachers in Years 1 and 2 check carefully pupils' accuracy in spelling common words and expressions. Sometimes, activities do not always stimulate pupils sufficiently, and teachers do not check carefully enough the progress that students are making in lessons.
- Teaching assistants are deployed very effectively and carefully guide pupils' learning. They have a very clear picture of the needs of different pupils, especially disabled pupils and those with complex medical and physical needs.
- Most teachers mark pupils' work diligently and make effective suggestions about how to improve. Increasingly, time is given for pupils to respond to their teachers' suggestions.

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

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils typically describe the school's atmosphere as 'caring and supportive', and parents say they feel part of 'one big family'. For these reasons they say that bullying is rare. They are confident that adults in the school will always be at hand to help, should it be needed.
- In the playground and in the dining hall, pupils look after each other. They talk with pride about the anti-bullying 'charter' which they have developed, and the playground signs they have produced to ensure that no pupil feels left out. Pupils have a good understanding of the different types of bullying, including homophobic and cyber-bullying. Arrangements to look after children who attend the morning breakfast club, and who stay on after school, are very secure.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. They move sensibly down corridors, between the open classrooms and shared areas, always showing due consideration for peers with physical disabilities and complex medical needs. Pupils are sociable with adults, opening doors with a smile on their face, and showing real pride in their school.
- In lessons, pupils enjoy working in pairs and groups, saying that this is when they learn the most. In many classes, they support each other really well, benefiting from sharing ideas and tussling with problems. On occasions, when learning is slow to get underway, or when activities are insufficiently motivating and challenging, some lose interest and become restless.
- Attendance has risen since the last inspection and is now above average.

**The leadership and management are good**

- The school is well led by a determined and effective headteacher who has steered the school through a recent period of change. She is ably supported by senior leaders and all staff, and by an ambitious and effective governing body. All areas for improvement raised in the previous inspection have been successfully tackled. As a result, assessment procedures in the Early Years Foundation Stage are now good, and the checking of pupils' progress across the school is efficient.
- The school has an accurate picture of its strengths and areas for development, and produces clear plans with actions to tackle these. There have been recent improvements in both the achievement of pupils and the quality of teaching. However, leaders are yet to ensure all pupils make good progress across Key Stage 1, especially in writing.
- The headteacher and key leaders carry out regular and accurate checks on the quality of teaching and learning. Governors complement this work with their own evaluations of the school's work, and accompanying notes of visit. Performance management of staff is well organised, and appraisal procedures identify precisely the development needs of individual staff. Training opportunities draw on the experience and expertise of staff within school, as well as those from the local cluster of schools. The headteacher makes the right decisions about teachers' movements up the salary scale on the basis of robust information about their quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' learning.
- The school knows its pupils as individuals and successfully removes barriers to learning. As a result, all pupils have an equal opportunity to do well. Historical gaps in performance between pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding, and their peers, are closing. In most years the gaps are slight or have entirely closed.
- The curriculum has been carefully developed to provide first-hand, interesting experiences. In most classes, opportunities are taken to develop writing and mathematical skills across all subjects. Pupils speak highly of the many visits and extra-curricular activities on offer. They enthuse about opportunities to sing, dance and play musical instruments.
- The range of sporting activities is extensive. The confidence of pupils with complex physical and medical needs is enhanced during 'creative Fridays,' and all pupils say how much they value 'theme weeks,' and the 'Whitehouse has talent' events. These experiences underpin pupils' strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Parents are positive about the ways in which the school communicates with them about their children's progress. Good partnerships exist within the local cluster of schools.
- The local authority provides appropriate 'light touch' support to check the quality of evaluation within the school, and courses for governors, when required.
- Safeguarding and child protection procedures are effective and meet current requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body receives regular and up-to-date information about the achievement of pupils. Governors have a good understanding about the quality of teaching. Minutes of governing body meetings show that they are confident in challenging the headteacher and senior staff about these aspects of the school's work.
  - Governors have perceptive discussions about the value of spending decisions, in particular the allocation of pupil premium funding. For example, governors have authorised bespoke small group teaching and additional time for teaching assistants to enhance pupils' reading, writing and mathematical skills. They have also authorised assistance for educational visits to boost pupils' self-esteem. Governors have also taken decisions to boost full-time coaching in school to develop teachers' leadership of physical education, and to support a local school's programme of competitive sport. This is part of the government's drive to enhance the provision of physical education and sport in schools through use of the primary school sports funding.
  - Governors receive detailed information about the salaries of all staff and decisions about teachers' applications for promotion. As a result, governors have a good understanding of the effectiveness of the management of teachers' performance throughout the school.

## 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>	111549
<b>Local authority</b>	Stockton-on-Tees
<b>Inspection number</b>	440807

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	405
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Angela Johnson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Shona Randle
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 June 2011
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