

St John's Chapel Primary School

Burnfoot, St John's Chapel, Bishop Auckland, County Durham, DL13 1QH

Inspection dates 4 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Pupils make excellent progress from starting points that are generally below average. By the end of Year 6, pupils reach standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are well above average.
- Teaching is consistently good, and a large proportion is outstanding. This ensures that pupils learn extremely well across the school.
- Teachers know pupils very well as individuals and deliver lessons that engage and motivate them to learn. Teachers set challenging and thought-provoking work that enables all pupils to make rapid progress, including those who are disabled or have special educational needs and those known to be eligible for the pupil premium.
- Teachers mark pupils' work to a high standard and usually give pupils very clear guidance about what they need to do to improve their work. Occasionally, this advice is not precise enough and teachers do not check that pupils react to it.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work very closely together to support effectively the learning of individual and vulnerable pupils.
- Each pupil's progress is very carefully analysed and any slower progress is quickly and effectively addressed.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding in lessons and around the school. They enjoy school, have excellent attitudes to learning and get on very well with each other. There are excellent relationships between pupils and staff.
- Pupils feel completely safe in school and very well cared for. They say that bullying is very rare.
- The school has a rich and exciting curriculum that engages pupils very effectively in their learning. There is a strong emphasis on creativity and the outdoor environment.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.
- The school is led and managed extremely well. There is a very calm, orderly and happy atmosphere. The headteacher, staff and governors have high ambitions and are committed to achieving the best outcomes for all pupils. They have secured strong improvements in the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement since the previous inspection and are well placed to move the school even further forward.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed six lessons taught by four teachers, including one observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the Early Years Foundation Stage coordinator and the special educational needs coordinator and with three governors, including the vice chair of the Governing Body. Inspectors also spoke to a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors met a group of pupils to discuss their views of the school and spoke informally to other pupils in lessons and during break and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors reviewed the work pupils were doing in lessons and in their books over time. They listened to pupils in Year 2 read and talked to them about their enjoyment of reading.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and examined a number of documents. These included data concerning pupils' current achievement, development plans and performance management information. Inspectors also looked at records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding arrangements. Minutes of governing body meetings and the school adviser's reports were also considered.
- Inspectors took account of 17 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). They also considered eight responses to the questionnaires completed by staff for the inspection.

Inspection team

Robert Birtwell, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Graeme Clarke

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average sized primary school with 43 pupils coming from 33 families.
- Pupils are taught in three classes, one comprising Reception and Key Stage 1 pupils, one class for Year 3 and Year 4 pupils and the other Year 5 and Year 6 pupils.
- Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- Only a very small number of pupils are supported by the pupil premium (funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after children and children from service families).
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure that teachers always give pupils very clear guidance about what they need to do to improve their work, and check that pupils follow this advice.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- All pupils make rapid progress in developing their knowledge, skills and understanding so that by the end of Year 6 they reach standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are well above average. They are extremely well prepared for their next stage of education.
- Inspection evidence from lesson observations, work in pupils' books and the school's data shows that all pupils are currently making excellent progress throughout the school, and that their achievement is outstanding over time.
- Pupils join the school in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge that are generally below those expected for their age. However, because of the small number of pupils, there can be a wide range of abilities within each year group and from year to year.
- Children get off to a really strong start in the Reception Year. They have many opportunities to investigate, explore and develop their confidence in the very good quality indoor and outdoor provision. Children make excellent progress and are very well prepared for Year 1 as a result of outstanding teaching and leadership in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Pupils learn rapidly in Years 1 and 2 because work is pitched at the right level for them. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 have improved steadily since the previous inspection and are now above average.
- Pupils continue to make rapid progress throughout Key Stage 2 because of the high quality teaching they receive. Consequently, standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6 have risen since the previous inspection. For the last two years, all Year 6 pupils have made at least the expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics, and the proportion that made more than expected progress is high.
- Pupils make rapid progress in reading because it is taught extremely well throughout the school. Skilled teachers and teaching assistants make sure that pupils have a good knowledge of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) and pupils say that they enjoy reading, both at school and at home.
- Pupils' writing skills are secure. They write very well in a range of styles in different subjects across the curriculum.
- Pupils have very well developed basic skills in mathematics, and they apply and use these skills very effectively to solve practical problems in real situations.
- The most able pupils make excellent progress and fulfil their potential because teachers give them demanding tasks that make them think hard. In 2013, the proportion of pupils who achieved the higher levels at the end of Year 6 was well above average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- There are few disabled pupils or those who have special educational needs in each year group. Their progress is carefully monitored and they receive well-targeted support from teachers and teaching assistants to help them learn. As a result, their progress and achievement match that of other pupils in the school.
- In this school, pupil premium funding is used effectively to support individual pupils. There are too few pupils known to be eligible for this funding to comment on their achievement and progress compared to others.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- The quality of teaching over time is excellent and enables pupils to thrive, grow in confidence and make rapid progress.
- Teachers know pupils very well and have very high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Teachers' professionalism, subject knowledge and enthusiasm ensure that lessons engage and motivate pupils in their learning so they are very eager to get down to work.

- Teachers make sure that learning proceeds at just the right pace for pupils so that all are able to attain new skills and then move on to new learning. They set challenging and thought-provoking work that is at just the right level of difficulty for the pupils in their class. They use questioning skilfully to check pupils' understanding and progress, and to develop and extend their skills and knowledge. Teachers successfully encourage pupils to work in different situations, either individually or as part of a group. As a result, pupils enjoy their lessons and show a real desire to do well.
- In a Year 3 and 4 history lesson for example, pupils acted as a group of newly arrived Saxon settlers. They each had different roles to select a site for a new settlement and design its layout. The teacher made sure that different pupils had tasks that were pitched at the right level to stretch their learning and encouraged them to share ideas. As a result, they greatly enjoyed the lesson and made outstanding progress.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding. Children learn extremely well in all areas because they are given plenty of time to investigate and explore problems for themselves. Teachers ask questions that help children to think, talk and write about their ideas. As a result, children make outstanding progress.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work very closely together to support and guide individuals, including those recognised as more vulnerable than others, so that they become more involved in their learning. This support is very well focused and ensures that these pupils make excellent progress in line with that of their classmates.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, and to a high standard. They use praise very effectively to engage and motivate pupils, and usually give very clear guidance about what pupils need to do to improve their work and challenge them to do better. It is clear that pupils respond well to this advice. Sometimes, however, the advice given is not precise enough and it is not clear that teachers check that pupils react to it.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding, both in lessons and around the school. Pupils are very polite and considerate, and show great courtesy to staff and visitors. They get on very well with each other and with adults in the school. This has a very strong impact on their learning and achievement. There is a very caring ethos throughout the school.
- Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning. They are very keen to do well and settle quickly and enthusiastically to the work they are set. They listen attentively and respond very well to their teachers' questions and participate fully in all activities. They work independently and in groups very effectively, and lessons proceed very smoothly with no interruptions to learning.
- Pupils are proud of their school and wear their uniform smartly. One pupil said that 'lessons are great fun and teachers try hard to help you to understand.' As a result they enjoy coming to school and attendance is high and rising.
- Pupils behave very well during break times. They play enthusiastically and safely together, and behave very responsibly in the school canteen at lunchtime.
- Pupils readily take on responsibility in a variety of roles. For example, older pupils act as 'buddies' for younger pupils, and they enjoy the responsibility of looking after the indoor and outdoor environment. This makes a strong contribution to their excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- School records show that poor behaviour is extremely rare and that the excellent behaviour seen during the inspection is typical. On the very rare occasions that pupils misbehave, the school acts quickly and effectively, and this leads to improved behaviour for the pupils concerned.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils say they feel completely safe in school and very well cared for. They are taught how to keep themselves safe in different situations, including when using the internet. They have a very good knowledge of the different forms bullying can take, but say that it is very rare in school. They would report it and are sure that staff would sort it out quickly.

- Almost all parents who responded to the online (Parent View) survey think that their children are happy and feel safe at school, and that they are well looked after and behave well. Inspection evidence confirms this.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher provides very principled and effective leadership. School leaders at all levels, including governors, have very high expectations for the school and have secured strong improvements to the quality of teaching and learning and achievement since the previous inspection.
- This very small school is a cohesive community with a calm, orderly and happy atmosphere. There is a strong and clear ethos and vision that is shared by all staff who work very closely to support each other. All staff readily and successfully take on responsibilities and are fully committed to obtaining the best outcomes for each pupil.
- The school has a rigorous system to check and analyse each pupil's performance. Leaders and managers use this information to set challenging targets for both pupils and teachers. As a result the school has a very clear and accurate picture of how well it is doing. Even though the school has performed strongly, there is no complacency and the school improvement plan identifies where it could do even better, with a clear focus on further improving teaching, standards and achievement.
- Any underperformance or slower progress by pupils is quickly identified and addressed by providing effective extra help and support when it is needed. This shows the school's successful commitment to equality of opportunity for all pupils.
- There is a clear focus on the continual improvement of teaching. Well-targeted training, coaching and mentoring have led to a rise in the quality of teaching since the previous inspection. Teaching is now consistently good and a large proportion is outstanding. All teachers have targets that are linked to pupil performance and this is taken into account when deciding on pay awards.
- The school's curriculum is very well organised to capture pupils' interests. It ensures that pupils have very well-developed key basic skills and promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very effectively. There is a strong focus on creativity and using the outdoor environment to enhance learning. For example, there are various forest school activities, and pupils maintain a school garden. In 2103 Years 5 and 6 pupils gained an award for planting trees in partnership with the local Area of Outstanding National Beauty and developing a pollen-rich wild flower meadow in the school grounds.
- The curriculum is enriched by a range of activities and clubs, as well as special events, trips and visits. For example, all Key Stage 2 pupils spent a week during which their lessons were held at the Bowes Museum with a focus on creative writing and mathematical investigations.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. There is a clear focus on social and moral issues, and the school works very effectively to raise pupils' cultural awareness and understanding of the wider world. For example, pupils have visited a Sikh temple and a mosque, and there are links with a school in the West Indies.
- The school is using the additional primary school sports funding successfully to improve the quality of physical education in the school. It has formed a partnership with five other small schools to bring in specialist coaches and teachers to teach lessons, run activities and train staff. This has led to a wider range of activities being offered, including dance and rugby, and the school now participates in more sports competitions. Pupils say they greatly enjoy these sporting activities.
- The local authority provides light touch, but effective support, for this successful school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body meets its responsibilities effectively. In this small community the governors are highly involved in and very supportive of the school, and are proud of its achievements. They know how well the school is doing and have high ambitions for further

improvement. They are not complacent and hold the school to account by asking some 'robust' questions at times, and by setting challenging targets for the headteacher. Some governors have been trained so that they have a better understanding of how to analyse data, and they are well informed about all aspects of the school's performance, including the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement and progress. They say that the school has 'stepped up a gear' since the previous inspection. Governors have a good understanding of performance management arrangements, and make sure that pupil progress is considered when making decisions about pay. They know how the pupil premium funding is spent, and the successful impact it is having on the few pupils known to be eligible. Governors make sure that the school's finances are soundly managed, and that they meet all their statutory duties, including those related to safeguarding.

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	114064
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	431325

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	43
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Simon High
Headteacher	Kerrie Eeva
Date of previous school inspection	23 April 2009
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