

Kielder Community First School and Little Squirrels Nursery

Kielder, Hexham, Northumberland, NE48 1HQ

Inspection dates 13 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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.

- The school has improved rapidly since the previous inspection. It provides an outstanding education for all pupils and this includes their personal development as well as their academic achievement.
- Pupils make rapid progress from their generally average or below-average starting points.
- Most pupils reach high standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they leave at the end of Year 4.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those eligible for the pupil premium make rapid progress.
- Teaching is of a high standard. Teachers plan very interesting lessons and pupils learn quickly. However, pupils do not have enough interesting first-hand experiences to write about and do not practise their writing skills enough in other subjects.
- Pupils behave very well indeed. They work hard and are very enthusiastic about learning. They are very proud of their school and are always polite and welcoming.
- Pupils say that bullying is extremely rare and parents and staff agree with this view.
- Throughout the school, pupils are known and cared for as individuals.
- Pupils feel very safe. Older pupils look after younger ones and everyone plays happily together at break and lunchtimes.
- The school is extremely well led and managed.
- The leadership of teaching is excellent. The headteacher sets and expects high standards in her own and in her staff's teaching.
- Members of the governing body know the school very well and know exactly what it needs to do next to continue to improve.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed five lessons, one of which was a joint observation with the headteacher. They listened to pupils read in Years 2 and 4.
- Inspectors took account of five questionnaires completed by the staff. There were insufficient responses to the online survey (Parent View) for the results to be published but inspectors considered the school’s own parental surveys.
- Inspectors talked informally with pupils at break time and lunchtime. Inspectors also talked to members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. They also talked to members of staff with leadership roles.
- Inspectors observed the school at work and looked at a range of documentation including internal and external information relating to pupils’ progress, their workbooks, school improvement planning and the school’s procedures for gaining an accurate view of its own performance. Inspectors considered reports written by the local authority, documents relating to the management of teachers’ performance, minutes of the governing body meetings, and safeguarding and child-protection documents.

Inspection team

Peter Eeva, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Anne Vernon

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is very much smaller than the average-sized first school.
- The proportion of pupils with disabilities or special educational needs supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average. At the time of the inspection, there were no pupils receiving support at school action.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is lower than average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families, and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- Pupils are taught in two mixed-age classes.
- There has been a significant change in the number of staff in recent years including the appointment of a full-time Early Years Foundation Stage teacher.
- The numbers of pupils in each year group are very small; most have fewer than 4 pupils.
- A significant proportion of pupils join the school after Year 1.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement even further in writing, by:
 - providing pupils with more first-hand experiences to write about
 - giving pupils a greater range of opportunities to use their developing writing skills in other subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Achievement is outstanding. All groups of pupils make rapid progress and reach high standards in English and mathematics by the time they leave at the end of Year 4.
- Most children start Reception with skills and abilities that are broadly typical for children of their age, but some enter with skills that are below those expected. They make very good progress and leave the Reception Year very well prepared for learning in Year 1.
- In Years 1 to 4, pupils make rapid progress and attainment has risen. The school's own data and pupils' work show that attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 4 is well above that typically expected for their age. This is because, from their starting points, pupils make rapid progress in reading and mathematics. Although their progress in writing is strong, it is not as impressive as in the other two subjects.
- Achievement is outstanding for all groups of learners including the most able, pupils with disabilities or special educational needs, and those pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium. This is because pupils work on tasks that exactly match their needs; they benefit from very high levels of individual attention and they thrive as a result.
- Pupils read very well for their age using expression and with careful attention to punctuation. They employ good strategies to tackle new or difficult words and typically show a love of reading. There are ample opportunities for pupils to develop their reading skills in all subjects.
- Pupils write well in literacy lessons; they write at length and with increasing accuracy in their spelling, punctuation and grammar. They write particularly well when they are enthused by subjects which really interest them.
- Achievement in mathematics is outstanding. Pupils calculate accurately and use their developing mathematical skills in a range of different subjects and contexts. In a Key Stage 1 mathematics lesson, for example, a group of younger pupils enthusiastically estimated, then measured, the capacity of the porridge bowls in the 'Three Bears' house and created a pictogram to display their results.
- The most able pupils rise to the challenges set for them and typically work at Level 4 in all subjects by the time they reach Year 4. Level 4 is the national curriculum level that most pupils are expected to reach by Year 6.
- There are too few pupils known to be eligible for free school meals to make meaningful comparisons of their achievement with that of other pupils. However, all groups in the school make similar rapid progress and reach high standards because the school works very hard to remove any barriers to their learning and to provide equal opportunities for all to succeed.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- The quality of teaching over time has improved and is outstanding, as is shown by pupils' outstanding achievement.
- Teachers use their very detailed knowledge about each pupil's progress to plan really interesting and stimulating lessons that give every pupil the opportunity to make rapid progress. As one pupil said, 'School is great, you learn something interesting every day.'
- There are warm relationships between teachers and pupils and there are well-established class routines, which mean that high expectations and calm purposeful discipline are maintained. As a result, lessons proceed without interruption. Pupils willingly and enthusiastically ask questions and offer their opinions and ideas.
- English and mathematics are taught in very imaginative and creative ways. Older children responded enthusiastically to being given a range of objects to create a story. They were inspired to write at some length using their imagination very well and thoroughly enjoyed reading their stories to an audience.

- Teachers mark pupils' work thoroughly. They show pupils where they have been successful and where improvements could be made. Pupils always respond to these suggestions and, as a result, they develop their skills rapidly.
- All staff have an excellent understanding of pupils' needs and what they are expected to learn. Skilful teaching assistant support in class helps pupils to overcome any difficulties or misunderstandings which might slow their learning.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is excellent and their enthusiasm for what they are teaching is infectious. As a result, pupils are very keen to be involved and do their best.
- Teachers have very high expectations of what pupils are capable of and all pupils are challenged to achieve as well as they can. They willingly respond by trying their very hardest.
- The teaching of mathematics is consistently strong and pupils regularly have opportunities to use their rapidly developing mathematical skills in other subjects. When measuring, recording and analysing their performance in a physical education lesson, for example, they used their data to draw graphs, calculate averages and to work out their personal best performances.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. It is impeccable both in and out of lessons and when on educational visits. The records kept by the school confirm that pupils' behaviour is of a high order.
- All adults in the school insist on the same high standards of behaviour. Pupils say that they know how to behave well and that they expect others to behave as well as they do.
- In the playground, pupils play very well with each other. Older pupils look after younger pupils and act as impressive role models.
- Pupils willingly take on roles of responsibility, such as making sure the bird feeders are well stocked. They take these jobs seriously and are conscientious in carrying out their duties. They are also in the process of being trained to act as sports leaders and coaches.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils say that they feel very safe and parents agree that their children feel extremely safe in school. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe including when using the internet.
- Pupils say that bullying is extremely rare. They have a very good understanding of the different forms of bullying and are confident that, should any occur, they would recognise it and it would be dealt with swiftly.
- Attendance is typically above average but, with such small numbers of pupils, a single pupil illness can have a disproportionate effect on statistics. Pupils are encouraged to attend regularly and on time.
- Pupils enjoy different activities and clubs available to them, especially the different sports activities.
- Through the curriculum, pupils develop an excellent understanding of different faiths and cultures and show consideration and respect for others. Pupils typically view their school as a 'big family'. There are many opportunities for pupils to think about and express their feelings and to reflect on their learning and behaviour, often during 'snack and chat' time. This does much to promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which is a real strength of the school.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The school is extremely well led by a very determined and highly effective headteacher, ably supported by all the staff and by a very well-informed and active governing body.
- There have been improvements in all of the main areas of the school's work. Specific attention to improving the quality of teaching, supported by the concerted efforts of all the staff has led to the outstanding achievement now being seen.

- The school has a very clear view of its strengths and areas for development and produces clear plans to tackle these. All staff and governors play an important and well-informed part in creating these plans and in checking on the progress being made.
- The headteacher carries out regular checks on the quality of teaching and learning, which provides a very accurate picture of its quality. There is no sense of complacency and teachers are able to continually improve their skills through effective professional development.
- The links between performance-management systems and professional development opportunities are very effective. Arrangements for pay and promotion of staff are closely linked to staff performance and pupils' progress.
- This is a very caring and inclusive school where all pupils are valued and are able to access all the school has to offer. Staff work very hard to make sure that all groups of pupils do as well as they can; for example, by making sure that there is no gap in achievement between any of the different groups of pupils.
- Parents and carers have an extremely positive view of the school, which they regard as an integral part of their community. Although the number of responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, was below the minimum required for the publication of results, it was in fact 78 per cent of the parents. The school's own data and records show just how highly the parents and carers regard their school.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and caters very well for the individual needs of pupils, particularly in relation to developing their literacy and numeracy skills. There are excellent opportunities for pupils to engage in a range of additional activities and clubs, such as the religious education club, and pupils appreciate the opportunities to go on school visits and residential visits.
- The recent funding to promote pupils' physical development and extend sporting activities is being used very well. Extra support is provided to: enhance teachers' skills in teaching a range of different sports; to provide additional sporting opportunities; and to train older pupils as sports leaders and coaches. The school has excellent links with other schools and this provides all pupils with opportunities to meet, and work, with other pupils.
- Safeguarding and child-protection procedures are effective and meet all current statutory requirements.
- The local authority provides a level of much appreciated support, particularly in helping the school in its change of staffing and in its successful drive to improve the achievement of pupils and the quality of teaching within the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors know the school very well and visit it regularly. They keep themselves very well informed about all aspects of school life and have a clear overview of why teaching is so successful in bringing about such high achievement for pupils. Governors bring a range of skills which they use to very good effect and, whenever their skills need enhancing, they are quick to seek relevant training. Governors monitor the school's performance rigorously and systematically. They ask challenging questions to gather information and promote further development and school improvement. Governors are very familiar with the Teachers' Standards and use these to help them manage teachers' performance. They oversee the spending of pupil premium funding and are aware of the very positive impact this is having on pupils' achievement. They are also involved in planning the spending of the primary school sport funding and in considering how its impact will be measured.

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	122233
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	430917

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	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	12
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Deborah Iden
Headteacher	Fay Hartland
Date of previous school inspection	11 July 2012
Telephone number	01434 250257
Email address	admin@kielder.school.northumberland.uk

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