

Tudhoe Colliery Primary School

Front Street, Spennymoor, County Durham, DL16 6TJ

Inspection dates

12–13 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	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.

- Pupils achieve highly in all key stages. Rapid progress typifies their learning in reading, writing and mathematics, although now and then progress is a little less rapid in writing.
- Children make good and often rapid progress in the vibrant Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The most able pupils make particularly fast progress, because their thinking is constantly stretched and their understanding deepened.
- There is no gap in achievement between pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding and their peers.
- The quality of teaching is outstanding. Teachers have high expectations and they plan and organise work skilfully to ensure that all pupils are clear about what is expected of them.
- Highly effective intervention and support makes certain that pupils with complex needs can make rapid progress and achieve highly.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary and relationships with staff are extremely warm, trusting and friendly. Pupils are considerate and kind with each other. All feel safe and secure in school.
- The headteacher provides strong, inspirational leadership. He is ably supported by a talented deputy headteacher. Together leaders, managers and staff form a strong team who are all equally determined to ensure that pupils achieve as well as they possibly can.
- The excellent curriculum is rich in opportunities to promote pupils' academic and personal development. It supports the development of their critical thinking, reasoning and creative skills exceptionally well.
- Parents are making an increasingly positive contribution to the quality of their children's learning and development.
- A dynamic and highly effective governing body provides valuable support and challenge. It holds the school to account in positive ways. Its members have an excellent understanding of school performance and provide clear direction for the school's future.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has made considerable progress at a very brisk pace.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 13 lessons, including five paired observations and work scrutiny carried out with senior and middle leaders. In addition, the inspectors made a number of short visits to lessons and undertook learning walks around the school in order to check the quality of what is provided for pupils.
- The inspectors spoke with pupils and had discussions with the headteacher, staff, parents, governors, the Director of the Tudhoe Learning Trust and the local authority education development adviser.
- The inspectors examined a range of documents including those related to safeguarding, self-review, the monitoring of staff performance, the school's improvement plan and records relating to pupils' progress and behaviour.
- The inspectors took account of 48 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and 10 staff questionnaire responses.

Inspection team

Clive Petts, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

John Pattinson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average sized primary school.
- Almost all children are of White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is twice the national average. The proportion at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- Currently, very few pupils are eligible for pupil premium funding. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children who are looked after by the local authority and children from service families.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school provides a breakfast and after-school club each day.
- The school became an academy in December 2012 and is part of the Tudhoe Learning Trust, a group of four primary schools of which the headteacher of Tudhoe Colliery Primary is the executive headteacher. It was subject to an HMI monitoring visit in October 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Add even more to the teachers' imaginative and very effective skills to ensure that pupils' rate of progress and level of achievement in writing closely match those in reading and mathematics.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Most children start school with skills that are below those typically expected for their age. Their communication and social skills are sometimes weak. They make brisk progress settling into the happy, friendly and interesting Early Years Foundation Stage classroom environment. A strong emphasis on developing early reading and writing skills prepares children really well for Year 1.
- Concerted school action to improve pupils' skills of blending letters and sounds together to form words is accelerating their progress in acquiring early reading and writing skills. As a result, pupils make increasingly rapid progress in Years 1 and 2 to reach standards that are broadly typical for their age by the end of Year 2.
- Pupils continue to make excellent progress in Year 3 to Year 6. Published information from 2013 tests shows that standards in reading, writing and mathematics are above average by the end of Year 6. Current school information, together with the work in pupils' books and the evidence of progress made in lessons, confirms the rapid progress and high levels of achievement that they make. Consequently, pupils are on course to reach standards well above the national average.
- The most able pupils make strong progress in all subjects because teachers make sure that they get plenty of opportunities to work through problems and deepen their understanding. Inspection evidence shows that one fifth of pupils are on track to reach the highest levels in English and mathematics.
- The school uses the pupil premium funding exceptionally well. Highly effective targeting of resources is successfully eradicating the attainment gap between pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and other groups of pupils. Currently, there are no attainment gaps between pupils in Year 6. This demonstrates the school's outstanding success in promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination.
- A sharp focus on developing literacy skills is embedded in all classes and subjects. Imaginative school approaches to reading enable groups of pupils to earn cash tokens to spend at a Durham bookstore, for reading four or more times per week. This is successfully fostering a love and enjoyment of reading. Reading skills are better than those found nationally at age six and well above average in Year 6. Older pupils of all starting points are keen readers. They are well informed and speak enthusiastically about a range of reading themes and authors' styles.
- Pupils with special educational needs make the same outstanding progress as their classmates. This is because their highly personalised support pinpoints their precise needs. Thought-provoking methods quickly capture and hold their interest to ensure that their progress is relentless.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Teaching is outstanding because staff are determined to ensure that no pupil is at risk of falling behind. All staff are ambitious for pupils to do their very best. This is reflected in the high expectations, part of the 'non-negotiable contract' which each pupil signs up to. As a result, pupils are keen to seize the opportunities that staff offer to do well.
- Classrooms are busy, happy, lively and interesting places to be. Imaginative methods challenge pupils' thinking and this leads to high levels of pupils' involvement and motivation. Tasks are carefully planned and organised to encourage pupils to think critically, exchange ideas with a partner and justify their thinking or solutions.
- When pupils' progress is fastest and achievement highest, it is because :
 - there is a clear view of each pupil's level of development and this is used well to ascertain what they need to learn next, to set exactly the right levels of challenge and to motivate pupils
 - pupils' work is marked accurately, so that pupils clearly understand what they have completed well and quickly correct any misconceptions

- pupils are questioned skilfully to probe their thinking and increase their understanding
- extra vitality to learning is added, setting pupils challenging and interesting problems.
- High-quality marking and verbal feedback to pupils on how to improve their work is an established feature of all pupils' learning. In addition to the high quality of feedback given to pupils, they are given dedicated time to make corrections and overcome any mistaken notions. This helps them to move their learning on independently.
- In mathematics, interesting methods, such as, incorporating Fairtrade principles, ensured that activities pupils were provided with the correct level of challenge for all abilities. Pupils were engrossed in learning about aspects, such as buying, selling and making a profit. As a result, pupils were able to make the best possible progress.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children really enjoy the way that teachers make learning interesting and fun. For example, well-informed children were seen totally absorbed discussing the characteristics of their favourite dinosaur. This helped them to improve their observation skills and expand their language skills.
- Teaching assistants closely follow pupils' thinking, probing and testing their understanding. This makes certain that all pupils learn at a brisk rate. Every now and then, opportunities are missed to extend pupils' writing skills even further, so as to help them to achieve as highly in this subject as in reading and mathematics.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Most of them behave impeccably whether in the classroom, corridors, the dining hall or in outside areas. This also includes their behaviour in the very popular before and after-school clubs. Excellent relationships with staff are a consequence of pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school is a very happy place. This is typified by pupils singing along to the Pharrell William's song, 'Happy' which reverberates around the school as they walk into assembly. They are keen to get to classes and get on with their work, settling calmly and without fuss.
- In conversations, pupils confirm that they rarely fall out with each other. Mean and unkind incidents are rare. Pupils confidently talk about how highly they value their friendships and how helpful staff are in sorting out any worries or concerns that they may have. School records confirm that any incidents are rare.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils are really well taught to identify and judge risk and danger. Pupils are able to explain the risks of internet use and cyber bullying. They are well aware of the different forms that bullying can take. They thrive on the responsibilities that they are given and provide positive models for younger pupils.
- Those pupils whose circumstances are likely to put them at risk are particularly well cared for and supported in order to get the best out of them. Attendance is much improved since the previous inspection and is now above average. The well-attended breakfast club encourages prompt arrival and provides a calm and happy start to the day.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher leads the school with passion and determination in the highly successful drive to continually move it forward. Senior leaders have relentlessly built upon the school's many strengths. Recent changes in middle leadership have had a considerable impact, adding to the momentum of improvement. Staff at all levels feel valued and work collaboratively, sharing ideas and helping to add to each other's skills. They also challenge each other, especially when they are comparing their assessment judgements.
- Rigorous systems are in place to check the school's performance. Leaders and managers use the information skilfully to eliminate any inconsistencies in pupils' performance and sustain high achievement. Consequently, the judgements that senior leaders make are accurate.

- Teaching is exceptionally well led and managed. Regular checks of the quality of teaching make it clear to staff what their strengths are and how they can improve even more. Staff training programmes are carefully matched to school and individual staff development priorities. Effective performance management closely links the outcomes for pupils to staff salary progression.
- The rich and varied curriculum leads to excellent outcomes for pupils of all abilities and interests. For example, the imaginative use of themes often captivates and holds the interest for pupils of all ages really well, such as when younger children learn about Mexican culture and lifestyles. Outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is central to the whole curriculum.
- The school makes excellent use of the primary school sports funding. Participation rates are high and a broad range of sport is provided for pupils, including after school. The award in Sports Leadership helps older pupils to develop their leadership skills in a wide variety of sports, preparing them well for the future.
- The learning trust uses the expertise of the local authority very successfully to challenge and hold the school to account and establish an accurate external view of school performance.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements, with much best practice supporting the outstanding quality of care and support provided for pupils.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governors bring a broad range of expertise to their role. They are tenaciously led and display an accurate understanding of school performance. They are resolute in their challenge and provide excellent support when needed. Members of the governing body display an accurate view of the current quality of teaching. They oversee performance management effectively and understand the arrangements to link salary progression to the classroom performance of teachers. Governors regularly check the impact of pupil premium funding and demonstrate the ability to unpick all available performance information.

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	138557
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	441390

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	162
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ivan Whitfield
Headteacher	Jim Smith
Date of previous school inspection	25 June 2013
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