

# Holy Trinity Church of England First School

Bell Tower Place, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Northumberland, TD15 1NB

## Inspection dates

12–13 March 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		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Pupils of all abilities make good progress and achieve well during their time in the school. An increasing proportion of pupils make outstanding progress.
- Children get off to a flying start in the Nursery and Reception classes. Excellent care and well-designed routines help them become confident, curious learners who delight in finding out things for themselves or with their friends.
- Teachers know their pupils well, so learning is skilfully developed by activities that are well matched to pupils' needs. Teachers make learning fun which motivates pupils to work hard.
- Teaching assistants are well trained and give good support in lessons. This adds much to the quality of learning and ensures that all groups of pupils progress at the same rate.
- Pupils' outstanding behaviour makes this a warm, welcoming school where all are able to do their best. Excellent pastoral care from all adults in the school community ensures that pupils feel safe and secure. Pupils know that teachers, teaching assistants and lunchtime staff all take great care of them.
- The excellent curriculum is a strong factor in pupils' good achievement. It inspires a love of all learning, through numerous community links which fire pupils' enthusiasm, especially in music and the arts.
- This vibrant school is moving forward at a good rate because of the headteacher's vision for an outstanding school. There is excellent teamwork between staff and governors, and all are committed to getting the best for every pupil. Governors are rightly proud that 'This school is so much more than just classroom education.'

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Progress in writing is not as consistently good as in reading and mathematics.
- Leadership roles do not define clearly enough the differences in accountability and responsibility between senior and middle leaders.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 14 lessons or parts of lessons. Two of these were shared observations with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with three members of the governing body, the headteacher and deputy headteacher, staff and pupils.
- Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at documentation including that relating to the school's safeguarding procedures, assessment and progress information and the school's development plan.
- Inspectors examined pupils' work on display and in their exercise books, and listened to pupils in Year 2 and Year 4 read.
- Inspectors took account of 54 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View); they also took account of 21 questionnaires returned by staff.

## Inspection team

Moira Fitzpatrick, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Timothy Nelson

Additional Inspector

# Full report

## Information about this school

- The school is broadly average in size for a primary school.
- There is a below average proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium. The pupil premium provides additional funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is well below average.
- The proportion of pupil supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The vast majority of pupils are from White British heritage, with a small proportion who speak English as an additional language.
- The government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils attainment and progress in English and mathematics, do not apply to this school because pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4.

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

- Improve pupils' progress in writing by:
  - capturing the most effective methods to develop pupils' skills and confidence in writing and sharing these with all staff, including teaching assistants
  - planning lesson observations of good practice and examination of the best writing, so that staff learn directly from each other.
- Improve the school's overall effectiveness further through the development of leadership roles by:
  - clarifying the specific roles of senior and middle leaders to support the school's priorities for improvement
  - making clear to all leaders who is responsible and accountable for different aspects of school improvement
  - encouraging middle leaders to take the initiative and use their expertise fully to accelerate school improvement
  - ensuring that leaders have sufficient time allocated to do this work.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

**is good**

- Children enter the Nursery class with skills typical for their age. They make outstanding progress in their social and personal skills because of excellent care and high expectations of staff. This supports children of all abilities to grow in confidence and make rapid progress in their learning from the start of nursery. By the end of the Reception Year nearly all children achieve a good level of development and are very well prepared for Year 1, with good basic literacy and numeracy skills and very good levels of independence.
- Pupils continue to make good, and sometimes excellent, progress to the end of Year 2. They reach standards that are at least expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics, and some exceed this. Despite this overall strong picture of attainment and progress, the school rightly has improvement to pupils' writing as a priority in the current year, because pupils' attainment in this lags behind their high attainment in reading and mathematics.
- In Year 4, pupils' progress again accelerates to sometimes outstanding in many areas of their learning. By the end of Year 4, pupils frequently exceed the expected level for their age and they are very well prepared for the challenges of middle school. They have overall good literacy and numeracy skills; they are able to think for themselves and explain and defend their views well.
- Pupils read fluently and with good understanding and expression. The recent introduction of a new programme for teaching phonics (sounds that letters make) is helping those pupils who were falling behind to catch up, as well as accelerating the progress of other pupils. Good links with parents to support reading in and out of school help pupils to consolidate and develop their skills well. Year 3 and Year 4 pupils benefit from regular in-class reading support from parents, which drives their learning at a good rate.
- The most able pupils are well challenged, especially in Years 2 and 4 where teachers are very ambitious for pupils to make the best possible progress. They are helped to achieve well by challenging tasks and the development of good thinking and reasoning skills.
- Teaching assistants are well prepared through teachers' planning, to give good support to pupils who have special educational needs, or speak English as an additional language. This ensures that these pupils make the same progress and achieve as well as their peers.
- Pupil premium funding is used well to provide any necessary support for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, to enable them to achieve as well as other pupils. Pupils who are eligible for these funds are attaining at the same level or above their peers in the current year.
- Pupils' high quality work in art and music is a result of the school's strong commitment to developing these skills from the earliest age through visiting experts and its connections with centres for the arts across the region.

### The quality of teaching

**is good**

- Teaching is consistently good and there is a good proportion that is outstanding. School tracking data and the work in pupils' books confirm that this is the case over time.
- Pupils are encouraged, from the earliest age, to find things out for themselves. They are provided with plenty of resources so that they can do this. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes have no difficulty in organising their own play, and work together very well to create their own world for learning, either by 'running' the Palm Tree Café or by sitting quietly together 'telling' each other stories from the pictures in books. Reception children showed how listening closely to instructions helped them become scientists who could work together to make monkey medicine.
- Teachers know their pupils well. Work is planned that will bring success to pupils of all abilities, and spur them on to further learning. Year 2 pupils made exceptional progress in their mathematical skills because a variety of tasks had been planned that would challenge them to do their best when measuring and estimating. Pupils were able to use their good number

knowledge to calculate and record their results, while those who needed extra support found they could change groups to work at the right level. As a result, all pupils worked at their own best rate and achieved success.

- Skilled questioning, by teachers and teaching assistants, is a hallmark of some of the best learning. Probing questions are asked to develop pupils' thinking and to assess what they know and do not know. Pupils in Year 4 showed they are very competent thinkers, prepared to refine their ideas carefully before sharing them with others. These skills are exceptionally well developed through the use of searching questions to challenge pupils' initial ideas and deepen their thinking. Their writing shows how well these pupils are able to transfer these reflective skills to refine and improve their understanding.
- Marking and feedback to pupils are always regular and conscientious. They are most effective when pupils are advised on what and how to improve their work. Where this is followed up regularly by pupils, there is clear evidence of improvement. However, a lack of consistency between classes means that there is some variation in how quickly different groups of pupils progress.
- Regular homework for the youngest to the oldest pupils in the school is well supported by parents. It builds very well on pupils' enthusiasm for learning by boosting their learning very well.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. They conduct themselves extremely well in and out of classrooms. Pupils are kind and supportive of each other, and very welcoming and helpful to visitors. Their thoughtful behaviour creates a warm, happy school where learning thrives.
- Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning because they learn from the earliest age that they will succeed. They work hard to meet their teachers' high expectations and are delighted when they surprise their teachers with how well they have worked in a lesson. From the youngest age pupils are confident, independent learners determined to do their best.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. They are taught well to understand potential risks to their safety and well-being, for example those connected with roads, water safety and the internet. They are very clear about fire drill procedures and know that these are planned to keep them safe.
- All pupils willingly take on responsibility for keeping classrooms tidy and smooth running. Older pupils follow the excellent example of staff by caring for and supporting younger children in the playground and inside school.
- Pupils are able to distinguish between bullying and occasional squabbles and name-calling because of the school's assiduous work in this area. Pupils are sure that bullying hardly ever happens because, 'teachers know everything that goes on and they won't put up with bullying.'
- Excellent pastoral care ensures that pupils and their families are always very well supported and that any barriers to children's well-being and learning are removed. The school's work with families in the last year has seen attendance rise to above average.
- Parents are unanimous that their children are safe and happy in school.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The headteacher's ambitious vision and determination have driven good improvement since the previous inspection. The headteacher is very well supported by the deputy headteacher in improving the quality of teaching, the curriculum, including Early Years Foundation Stage provision, and the achievement of pupils.
- School evaluation is robust and accurate. Senior leaders are astute in identifying the key priorities to accelerate pupils' learning and move the school forward. All staff are eager to be involved in improving the school, teamwork is excellent and morale is high.

- Currently, the roles of senior and middle leaders are not defined sharply enough to give clear lines of accountability and responsibility for leading improvements. Senior leaders recognise that middle leaders are now ready for more autonomy in their leadership roles. They plan to develop these roles in the coming year to support the school's drive towards outstanding effectiveness.
- Staff performance is well managed, with clear targets linked to the school's priorities. All staff understand their accountability for the progress that their pupils make.
- Pupils' learning and progress are well tracked. Regular checks and pupil progress meetings ensures that any pupil who needs additional support or challenge receives it promptly. This ensures that equal opportunities are well promoted.
- The rich and diverse curriculum provides many opportunities for pupils to follow their interests and develop new talents, including with visiting coaches and musicians. The arts are particularly well promoted, and pupils learn much about life in different communities and different ages. Displays of pupils' high-quality artwork and photographs of them enjoying a wide range of activities testify to the provision for pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school has used the new primary sport funding wisely to extend the breadth and improve the quality of physical education and sport provision to attract pupils who are not tempted by traditional games. This has resulted in an increased uptake from pupils who formerly would not join in after-school sports activities.
- The local authority provides effective, 'light touch' support for this successful school.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are very well informed about the school's performance, the quality of teaching and how additional pupil premium funding is used to ensure these pupils' achieve as well as others. They visit the school frequently to monitor its work and undertake training to maintain their effectiveness, for example in monitoring pupils' progress data. Governors ensure that safeguarding arrangements meet requirements and that regular health and safety checks make sure staff and pupils are safe on site. Finances are well managed so that there are good levels of staffing and resources to support good learning for pupils. They know how the headteacher sets targets for staff appraisal and only reward those staff who fully meet their targets.

## 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>	122282
<b>Local authority</b>	Northumberland
<b>Inspection number</b>	440868

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>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	164
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Stuart Faed
<b>Headteacher</b>	Dawn Groves
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	18 November 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01289 306142
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