

Walkergate Primary School

Sutton Street, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear, NE6 4SD

Inspection dates 18–19 March 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher provides inspirational leadership. She is supported by an extremely strong senior and middle leadership team. Together they have made changes that have rapidly improved pupils' progress and teaching. Excellent teamwork and mutual support are evident across the whole school.
- The governing body very effectively challenges all aspects of the school's work and provides high-quality support to leaders to help the school improve.
- The school provides a very safe, harmonious and nurturing environment. As a result, the behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding.
- Attendance is average and has improved significantly as a result of leaders' actions, and because pupils want to come to school and are very eager to learn.
- Pupils show high levels of respect to adults and each other. They are very proud of their school and show that the school's values 'Respect, Resilience and Responsibility' are very evident throughout the school.
- Pupils make good progress in reading and writing and an above average proportion do better than this, from their starting points.
- The quality of teaching is good and improving rapidly because of the excellent support and training staff receive to increase their skills. As a result, pupils learn quickly.
- The marking of pupils' writing across different subjects is excellent and so pupils are very clear how to improve their work.
- The school is very well placed to get even better.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet outstanding.
- Teachers' marking in mathematics is not as helpful as in writing.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics is not as fast as it is in reading and writing.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of 20 lessons, including four joint observations with the members of the senior leadership team. In addition, inspectors listened to pupils read and reviewed their written work.
- Meetings were held with different groups of people involved with the school. These included pupils, members of the governing body, the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, other members of teaching staff and an officer from the local authority.
- There were insufficient responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) for inspectors to consider. The school's October 2013 survey for parents, which includes the same questions as Parents View was examined. The Ofsted questionnaire completed by school staff was also examined. The school's website was reviewed.
- A range of documents was reviewed, including information on pupils' achievements, the school's data on pupils' current progress, documents relating to planning for improvement, procedures for checking the quality of teaching, documents relating to safeguarding and records relating to behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Barbara Hudson, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
James Hannah	Additional Inspector
Carol Gater	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a very large primary school. The school is federated to a nearby nursery school which is subject to a separate inspection from this one. Many of the children join the school from the federated nursery but the school also takes in children from other nurseries and some children who have not experienced any pre-school education. About one tenth of the pupils join the school other than in the Reception Year.
- Due to some local reorganisation, over the last two years, the school has increased in size by 100 pupils, which is a quarter of its original size.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement for special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well above average. The pupil premium is additional funding allocated for pupils in the care of the local authority, known to be eligible for free school meals or whose parents are in the armed services.
- The current senior leadership team has been in place for nearly two years. All but one of the teachers on the team already worked in the school.
- Since the last inspection one third of the teaching staff are new. Staff appointments have been made to teach the additional pupils as well as to replace the staff that have left.
- The school exceeds the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has achieved many external awards such as the Investors in Children.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on the excellent start already made to lift teaching to outstanding and so increase pupils' progress in mathematics to match that made in reading and writing by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to investigate and solve mathematical problems across the curriculum
 - improving the marking of pupils' work in mathematics so that pupils see what they need to do next to improve.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Over the last two years, pupils' achievement has improved rapidly because teaching has improved significantly. In 2012, most pupils made the expected rate of progress from their starting points and very few exceeded this. In 2013, nearly all pupils made expected progress and over a third did better than this. The proportion of pupils who exceeded the expected rate of progress was better than the national average in reading and writing and was close to average in mathematics.
- Current school data and work in pupils' books show that pupils' progress across the school is continuing to rise, especially in reading and writing. Pupils' writing is particularly strong because of their excellent presentation skills and productivity. They are given many opportunities across the curriculum to practise their writing skills and this also aids their progress. Progress in mathematics is not quite as strong because pupils are not given as many opportunities to use and enhance their skills in other subjects.
- Children join the Reception class with a very wide range of skills and abilities. Most children's skills are well below those typical for their age. Children's progress has improved significantly since 2009 because teaching and activities now capture their interest, so they really enjoy learning. Children make the most progress in learning to read, write and understand numbers because of the effective small-group and whole-class teaching. They are well prepared for their learning in Year 1, and children's skills are now much closer to the expected level for their age.
- In Key Stage 1 pupils now make good progress. Nearly two thirds of the children achieve the expected levels in their letters and sounds at the end of Year 1. Most of the others achieve this at the end of Year 2. Last academic year, pupils' progress improved significantly and, for the first time since 2010, standards in reading, writing and mathematics were in line rather than significantly below what is expected nationally.
- Pupils in Key Stage 2 now make at least good progress. In 2013, standards by the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics were average. A third of the pupils attained the higher level 5 in these subjects.
- All groups of pupils, including the most able, make similar levels of progress because the different ability groups in each class are closely checked and additional support, such as one-to-one support and small-group work is provided for those who are in danger of falling behind.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similar good progress to others. This is because they receive good teaching that is very well matched to their learning needs.
- Extra provision, funded by the pupil premium, has provided more staff. This enables more focused one-to-one and small-group support to take place. It also enhances the pastoral provision for those pupils and families with particular social and personal needs. As a result, pupils supported by this funding make good progress from their starting points. In the 2013 tests, pupils eligible for free school meals attained as well as the other pupils in their class and were one term ahead of the same groups nationally.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good and improving rapidly. This is because senior leaders have focused on developing high-quality teaching through effective training, support and a rigorous evaluation of its impact on pupils' learning. Teaching staff are given clear areas for improvement, which they very willingly implement. Teachers and teaching assistants work exceptionally well together and are constantly striving for excellence.
- The very high expectations of pupils' work and their behaviour, consistently applied by teaching staff, are driving up pupils' achievement. Pupils are very clear about what they are to learn and are motivated and confident to 'have a go'.

- Where pupils' learning is rapid, teachers' explanations grab pupils' interest, for example, in a Year 5 English lesson when the teacher introduced a book and then provided the pupils with a photograph of the author and a quotation from him. This simple activity made learning more relevant to pupils because they could identify with another person.
- The speed at which pupils are moved on to the next stage of learning is very fast. This was shown in a Year 2/Year 3 mathematics lesson, because after pupils had completed three sums correctly, they were moved onto the next level of work.
- The most able pupils learn quickly because their work is challenging and they use their learning journeys well to challenge themselves; consequently, the most able reach the higher levels in their work.
- Pupils use their targets very well so they have a clear understanding of what they do well and what they need to do next to improve.
- The marking of pupils' writing in all subjects is excellent. Teachers' comments are supportive and helpful. In most classes, pupils are given time to respond to the comments and are expected to apply the improvements in their next pieces of work. Marking of pupils' mathematics work is not as good as in writing because teachers do not always show pupils what they need to do next to make their work better. There is, however, an excellent example of marking pupils' mathematics work in Year 6.
- Teachers are very adept at linking subjects together. Pupils are provided with many opportunities to apply their reading, writing, and information and communication technology across the curriculum. Teachers expect pupils to apply the same standard of work across all subjects and this is having a positive impact on pupils' progress in reading and writing. In mathematics there are some, but too few, opportunities for pupils to use and apply their skills in other subjects.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The school's values 'Respect, Resilience and Responsibility' are evident in all aspects of the school's work.
- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. This is because of the very high standards and expectations set by all staff.
- Pupils have a very clear understanding of the school's system to secure good behaviour. The school's welfare team, along with the teaching staff, works tirelessly and successfully to help pupils overcome or manage their problems. As a result, learning is not interrupted.
- At lunchtimes and playtimes pupils get along extremely well. They talk and play harmoniously, showing respect for each other and taking responsibility for their own behaviour. Staff provide a wide range of activities at lunchtimes and playtimes such as computer clubs and football, and these choices help pupils to behave exceptionally well.
- The school's very clear focus on pupils' personal, physical and creative development contributes to pupils' happiness and their motivation to learn. They thoroughly enjoy their lessons. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very effectively. As a result, exceptionally positive relationships between teaching staff and pupils are evident. Pupils work very cooperatively together and this contributes much to how quickly they learn.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils say they feel very safe in school.
- Pupils are aware of the different types of bullying and are confident that, if it should occur, the staff would quickly help them to resolve the problem. The school's records confirm bullying is rare.
- They have a very good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations because they are taught a wide range of aspects about staying safe, including those relating to the use of computers.
- Pupils' attendance has improved significantly because of the work the staff have done to encourage parents to ensure their children attend regularly and on time. This year, for the first

time, attendance is above the national average. Punctuality has improved markedly. Pupils say they thoroughly enjoy coming to school.

- Pupils receive very high-quality support and care. The thorough procedures to safeguard pupils are implemented rigorously and very effectively throughout the school. Staff liaise effectively with a wide range of support agencies to ensure that they are providing the very best possible guidance for each individual.
- All parents are very positive about the management of pupils' behaviour, indicating that their children feel exceptionally safe in school and that they are very well cared for.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher provides excellent, inspirational leadership. She has developed an extremely effective whole-school team with the support of a very proactive senior leadership team. Senior leaders have clearly defined roles and responsibilities. They carry out their duties rigorously. Their evaluation of how things stand is used exceptionally well to provide an accurate understanding of the strengths and areas for development across the whole school.
- Senior leaders develop the leadership skills of all staff very actively and successfully. As a result, middle leaders provide excellent support to senior leaders within a variety of teams such as those looking at the standards and quality of teaching in the different subjects within the curriculum. Together, they make a very strong contribution to driving school improvements.
- Exceptionally robust procedures to check the quality of teaching and the accuracy of teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment and progress have been instrumental in improving both the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Every pupil's progress is rigorously reviewed every half term. Actions, whether for academic or pastoral support, are very quickly put in place if any pupil is not making better than expected progress from their starting point; consequently, any gaps in learning close quickly. This relentless drive to do the very best for every individual pupil, academically and personally, ensures the school's commitment to providing equality of opportunity is outstanding.
- Systems to manage staff performance are used very well to support and challenge their work. Staff highly value the range of well-targeted training opportunities offered within and beyond the school.
- School leaders and governors willingly seek advice when necessary. They value the high-quality advice they receive from the local authority. Leaders work very productively with other schools: for example, they organise opportunities for teachers to show their pupils' work to other schools so as to ensure their assessments of pupils' abilities are accurate.
- Pupils are given a well-planned rich curriculum which contributes to their eagerness to learn. Pupils also have access to a wide range of sporting, academic and creative activities before and after school. Educational visits and visitors to the school are also extensive. These opportunities help pupils to develop into mature young people.
- The new primary school sports funding is well used to increase the teachers' expertise and to provide pupils with opportunities to take part in a wide range of physical activities. Many activities occur before, during and after the school day. The sports coordinator is crucial in ensuring the provision is enabling pupils to develop their interests, potential and, for some, many new skills. The work also has a positive impact on pupils' understanding of how to keep healthy.
- Rigorous financial monitoring and evaluation ensure the funds the school receives are well used, including the pupil-premium funding.
- The staff have built exceptionally strong links with parents. Parents are very appreciative of the education that their children receive.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are very proactive and have the skills and expertise to both challenge and support the leaders appropriately. They know the school exceptionally well. The governors are extremely good at following through the information that they are given by asking pertinent

questions and through making frequent visits to the school. This means that they are confident that what they are told is accurate. They have an excellent understanding of the way in which the school evaluates itself and sets areas for development. They use information about pupils' progress well when they review staff performance and pay progression. They have a clear understanding of the school's finances, including pupil premium and primary sports funding. The school's safeguarding arrangements meet the statutory requirements.

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	108478
Local authority	Newcastle-upon-Tyne
Inspection number	440791

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.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	565
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Karen Heslop
Headteacher	Debi Bailey
Date of previous school inspection	2 March 2011
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