

Lumley Junior School

Cocken Lane, Great Lumley, Chester le Street, County Durham, DH3 4JJ

Inspection dates 18–19 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The school has improved rapidly since the previous inspection.
- Standards in English and mathematics have been rising for the past three years. They are currently above average.
- All pupils from Year 3 to Year 6 make good progress. They achieve well from broadly average starting points.
- Pupils' good attitudes to learning and their good behaviour are strong contributions to their good achievement. They feel very safe in school.
- The quality of teaching is consistently good. Some teaching is outstanding. Pupils say that their lessons are enjoyable, 'Because we actually do things'.
- The management of teaching and learning by the headteacher is one of the school's best strengths. It has had the greatest influence on pupils' achievement since the previous inspection.
- The governing body has supported and challenged the school well and has been an additional driving force in the school's success.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet outstanding overall. The best examples of teaching are not yet shared as effectively as they could be.
- Standards in writing are not as high as those seen in reading and mathematics.
- Expectations with regard to pupils' handwriting are too low and marking in subjects other than English and mathematics is not consistently good.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector saw nine lessons and part lessons during the inspection. Five were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspector discussed the school's work with pupils, staff members, a representative from the local authority and members of the governing body.
- Also taken into account were the responses of 16 parents who completed the online questionnaire (Parent View), questionnaires completed by staff members and the overview of a recent parental survey carried out by the school.
- The inspector observed the school's work and examined a wide range of documentation that included: national assessment data and the school's own assessments; recent local authority reports; the school's own view of its work; curriculum information; minutes from governing body meetings; samples of pupils' work and safeguarding information.

Inspection team

Kevin Johnson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Almost all pupils are White British in this smaller than average sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- A below-average proportion of pupils are supported by school action.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is a little above average.
- 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 has achieved the Artsmark Gold award.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the amount of outstanding teaching and thereby raise standards further, particularly in writing, by:
 - improving the quality of pupils' handwriting and general presentation of their work throughout the school
 - marking pupils' work in all subjects to the same standard and effectiveness as seen in English and mathematics
 - using the best examples of teaching as a model for all classes in order to raise the overall quality.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- When pupils join the school in Year 3 their achievement in reading, writing and mathematics is average.
- Pupils make good progress from Year 3 to Year 6. Their rate of progress has increased considerably since the previous inspection, along with the strength of teaching in the school. No pupils are making less than expected progress from their starting points and many are doing better than expected.
- Standards in English and mathematics have risen over the past three years. At the end of Year 6, standards in reading and mathematics are securely above average. While attainment in writing is slightly above the national average, standards are not as high as they are in other subjects.
- The school has recognised this, and has brought in measures to encourage better achievement in writing, particularly for those capable of achieving the higher levels. These measures, which include a focus on improving pupils' speaking and thinking skills, before they write, are starting to have an impact but standards in writing still lag behind those in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils' reading skills throughout the school are good. Teachers undertook training in the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) in order to fill any reading gaps that pupils may have and this has had a good impact. By the end of Year 6, pupils are confident readers who see the importance of being able to read well.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are provided for very well. Skilful support from those who teach them, backed up by careful planning and assessment, result in their good progress and enjoyment of school. Many of the pupils previously supported by school action have been removed from the register because their needs can now be met well in classes.
- The most able pupils are challenged well in lessons and the progress of those with the potential to reach the highest level in reading, writing or mathematics is very carefully nurtured. This was demonstrated by a few Year 6 pupils through some descriptive sentences about space flight such as, 'As I neared the rocket each step created an impulse of honour and pride within me' or '...dazzling rays of light danced along the floor...(as I)...flew into the unknown in a blink of the eye'.
- Those supported by the pupil premium make the same good progress as others in the school from their varying starting points. School leaders have picked up on the previous different attainment levels between some pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and others in the school. Evidence of their work currently, and school assessments, show that they are catching up rapidly from being approximately one year behind others in terms of their attainment in English and mathematics.
- The school has been congratulated by the Department for Education and the Minister of State for Schools on its successful use of the pupil premium to bring about rapid progress for those eligible pupils. This also indicates leaders' full commitment to providing equality of opportunity for all pupils to achieve their best.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers are ambitious for their pupils. Their response to support and training is good and this successfully improves teaching as new skills are put into practice.
- Well trained and caring teaching assistants are a crucial part of the teaching team. With teachers, they effectively check the progress of pupils in lessons and skilfully provide essential help where it is needed.
- Subject knowledge and teaching skills have been developed effectively. Notable examples are in the use of hand-held computers for learning and in the way that the teaching of physical education is being developed. Nevertheless, the sharing of best teaching throughout the school, to help improve overall skills and quality, is only partially developed.

- Throughout the school, a creative approach to teaching and learning is adopted. Subjects are linked together well in planning. For example, pupils in Year 3 do not just look at pictures of a pyramid or a shaduf when learning about Ancient Egypt, they make one for themselves. That is why pupils say that they actually do things that make their learning more interesting.
- The creative use of technology proved to be a 'big hit' with pupils in Year 3 and resulted in some first class writing, for example when an animated version of an Egyptian death mask was created that 'spoke' to the pupils, and asked them to write about how they would solve a particular problem.
- Learning in other subjects is often a good starting point for pupils' work in literacy. Writing skills are used in different ways, usually after much talking about the subject to make sure they have clear thoughts to write about. This makes pupils confident about their work and better able to use the language that is appropriate to their topic. Pupils in Year 4, for example, wrote opinions from both the Spanish and English points of view about why the attack by the Spanish Armada failed. This improved both their historical knowledge and their formal style of writing at the same time.
- These approaches to writing are still fairly recent. While beginning to show good results, writing in particular still has further to go before it matches standards in other subjects.
- Poor handwriting has been identified by school leaders in the checks made on pupils' work. Despite this, actions have focused on what pupils write rather than how they write. Consequently, the general standard of presentation in pupils' books is poor. This adversely affects pupils' achievement in English and does not encourage good personal development through pride in their work.
- Mathematics is taught well. A good focus is given to developing pupils' knowledge of number and calculation skills. Opportunities for pupils to use their skills to solve problems feature strongly and there is clear evidence of pupils using mathematics in other subjects.
- Teachers mark pupils' work in English and mathematics well. As a result, pupils know what next steps to take in order to improve. They also respond well to teachers' marking by correcting mistakes so an immediate improvement can be seen. This quality and effectiveness of marking does not, however, extend to all subjects and occasionally some pieces of work are left unmarked.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. One pupil described the school as a 'joyous' place to learn because everyone gets on so well together. Pupils give their own behaviour 'nine out of ten,' and, when questioned, struggled to recall a really serious incident apart from disagreements over football games.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and they are very keen to learn. They enjoy the practical side of learning as well as opportunities to work with others, but they do not show enough pride in their written work by presenting it as neatly as they can.
- Behaviour around the school is very good. Pupils are very well mannered in the dining room and enjoy the social side of lunchtimes sensibly. They are well supervised in the playground where they keep active by making best use of all of the equipment they have to play on.
- Pupils contribute well to the life of the school. They arrive punctually and smartly dressed in their uniforms and their attendance is typically above average.
- Pupils keep the playground and cloakrooms tidy and are always polite and respectful toward adults and each other. The school council is active and pupils willingly carry out a number of daily duties that help the school run smoothly.
- Pupils awareness of others' needs and lifestyles is good because of the links they make with schools in India and China, and by visiting and welcoming children from a school in France.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Effective risk assessments ensure that the building is well maintained and safe for pupils. Staff are appropriately trained to deal with emergencies and aware of procedures to be followed.

- Pupils say that they always feel safe in school and that the grown-ups take very good care of them. That view is entirely shared by parents who are overwhelmingly supportive of the school's work
- Pupils state firmly that there is no bullying or offensive name-calling. They are well aware of the different forms of bullying that could take place, including cyber-bullying, and have learned how to avoid potentially dangerous situations in and outside school.

The leadership and management are good

- Effective leadership has moved this school on rapidly since the previous inspection. The headteacher's determination to improve the school, strong support from governors and the astute appointment of new teaching staff have all had a marked impact on the school's success.
- The school's plan for the future is clear and there is a fully shared commitment from staff to become 'leaders rather than followers' in their pursuit of the best opportunities for the pupils. That commitment is recognised by the local authority. Its representatives have effectively helped the school through more difficult times in the past but now have every confidence in leaders' ability to manage future improvement themselves.
- That process has already begun in the way that teachers share their expertise in physical education, information and communication technology (ICT) and helping to agree standards of work on an informal basis with other schools.
- The headteacher's management of teaching and learning has been central to the school's improvement. She has confronted ineffective teaching robustly. By providing training, support and advice she has established a team of good teachers, who know and accept the standards expected of their work and how their performance is linked to increases in salary. All readily acknowledge that the way forward is for their teaching to produce consistently outstanding rather than good achievement for pupils.
- The deputy headteacher works well with the headteacher in checking on the quality of teaching and supporting colleagues to help them improve their work. She oversees the work of teachers new to the school, who have settled well into the school's routines and whose teaching shows good improvement since they were appointed. She also leads good improvement in ICT.
- The teacher leading physical education is highly qualified and responsible for the effective use of the primary school sports funding. This is used very thoughtfully to provide a wider range of activities for pupils, including competitive sports, and to give them some say in what is planned for them. This is leading to more pupils participating in activities. There are plans to enhance all teachers' skills over time to strengthen the quality of teaching and standards in the subject.
- Middle leadership (by teachers in charge of subjects) is mostly shared because of the small number of teachers, two of whom are in their first year of teaching. They are making good headway in their plans for the new primary curriculum in September 2014. They currently maintain a good curriculum for pupils, which enables them to enjoy learning and achieve well across the range of subjects, both in lessons and through enriching activities outside lesson time.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have responded well to the challenges of previous inspections and provided good support for the school in dealing with areas for improvement. They have worked successfully with school leaders to establish a secure basis for further success. Governors analyse national data and compare the school's academic progress with other schools. They are particularly watchful over the progress of pupils supported by the pupil premium to ensure that the funding benefits those pupils' achievement. Information about teachers' performance management is shared with governors so that they can appropriately check for improvement and apply the pay policy fairly. Other financial responsibilities, including use of the primary sports funding, are managed efficiently. There are no concerns about safeguarding procedures which at the time of the inspection fully meet all 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	114002
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	430869

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	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	136
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stephen Forster
Headteacher	Angela Vear
Date of previous school inspection	7 March 2012
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