

New Brancepeth Primary School

New Brancepeth, Durham, County Durham, DH7 7EU

Inspection dates

26–27 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		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress over time to reach standards that are above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science.
- The quality of teaching is good. Expectations of pupils are high particularly in English, mathematics and science. Marking and feedback to pupils are particularly effective and this helps them know how to improve their work.
- Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. There is a well organised and orderly atmosphere where pupils feel valued, know the boundaries and want to do well. As a result, pupils work hard, cooperate well with each other and adults, and take pride in their work.
- Pupils say they feel safe because they are taught how to look after themselves, for example, when using the internet.
- All leaders, including governors, are determined and ambitious to ensure that every pupil makes the best possible progress. Leaders of English, mathematics and science carefully and regularly check the progress of pupils. This ensures any pupils falling behind receive additional help as soon as it is needed.
- The headteacher regularly checks the quality of teaching and provides good advice to help teachers to improve their practice. As a result, teaching is now always at least good and achievement and standards are rising.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of teaching is usually good rather than outstanding. Tasks are not always adjusted as pupils work, in order to increase their progress.
- In subjects other than English, mathematics and science, especially geography, history and religious education, pupils often all work at the same task, rather than on work that matches their ability.
- Leaders, other than the headteacher, who are new in post, are not yet fully involved in checking what is happening in the subjects they lead and in offering advice to other staff.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed five lessons taught by five teachers, as well as making shorter visits to look at pupils' work. Some observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspector talked with pupils at break and dinnertimes, and heard others in Year 1, Year 2 and Year 6 read.
- The views of 13 parents who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View) were taken into account, as well as the views of parents gained informally at the start of the school day.
- The inspector met with senior and middle leaders, teachers, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- The school's improvement plan and records of pupils' achievement, records of the quality of teaching, pupils' behaviour and safeguarding were examined.
- Six staff submitted their views via a questionnaire and the inspector took these into account.

Inspection team

Christine Cottam, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- New Brancepeth Primary is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium is higher than average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- All pupils are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is lower than average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is higher than average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which is the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- The headteacher is a local leader of education and provides support to newly appointed headteachers in other schools.
- The deputy headteacher and middle leaders are new in post this academic year.
- The school has a range of awards, including the Basic Skills Quality Mark and Healthy School status.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' progress and the quality of teaching still further by:
 - checking on pupils' understanding as they work and adjusting tasks if needed to ensure pupils make as much progress as possible
 - ensuring the work set in subjects other than English, mathematics and science, especially history, geography and religious education, is at the right level and is challenging enough for different groups of pupils, particularly the most able.
- Increase the effectiveness of leaders by ensuring the new deputy headteacher and new middle leaders are more involved in checking what is happening in their areas of responsibility, so they are more informed about how to help their colleagues.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- All pupils make good progress because the quality of teaching is consistently good.
- Children enter the Nursery class with skills and abilities that are below those typically found for their age. They settle quickly and make good progress, particularly in their reading and writing skills, although their mathematics skills are a little lower than this. Many children have acquired the skills they need for their next stage of learning by the time they start school in Year 1.
- This good progress continues in Key Stage 1, so that Year 2 pupils reach broadly average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. This has been the case for a number of years.
- Results of the Year 6 national tests in 2013 dipped so that attainment was broadly average. Small numbers in each year group make year-on-year comparisons unreliable. This, together with a mid-year change of teacher and new pupils arriving, reduced attainment. All pupils currently in Year 6 are making good progress so that standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science have returned to the above average levels of previous years.
- Children in the Reception class and pupils in Key Stage 1 have a good knowledge of letters and sounds and use their skills well to read and spell accurately. By the end of Year 6, pupils are fluent and knowledgeable readers.
- Achievement in writing is good because it is taught consistently well throughout the school. For example, children in the Reception class use their knowledge of letters and sounds to write the names of mini-beasts legibly and accurately. By the end of Year 6, pupils use punctuation correctly and write neatly.
- Achievement in mathematics is good. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are not yet able to count reliably to 20 or carry out simple addition and subtraction calculations. However, pupils' progress accelerates as they move through the school, so that standards are above average by the end of Year 6. For example, in Years 5 and 6 mathematics, pupils worked out the percentage price increase on a range of products using common sense methods and showing excellent mental arithmetic skills and good understanding.
- The most able pupils make good progress and an increasing proportion of pupils are reaching higher than average standards because teachers plan work that challenges the most able pupils in English, mathematics and science. This is not as consistently the case in other subjects, such as history, geography and religious education. A scrutiny of pupils' work shows that too often all pupils work at the same tasks with too few opportunities to tackle more challenging work.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress to reach higher standards than usually found. This is because the school tracks their progress closely and provides additional support where it is needed.
- The attainment of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals at the end of Year 6 in 2013 was above those not eligible in reading, spelling, punctuation and grammar and about the same in mathematics. Eligible pupils did less well in writing, where they were two terms behind their peers. The attainment of eligible pupils is much higher in the current Year 6 so that there is no longer a gap within the attainment of writing. Overall, the progress of these pupils supported by the pupil premium is good.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is at least good and a small amount is outstanding.
- The quality of marking and feedback is excellent because all teachers follow the same agreed system effectively. Pupils' work is marked regularly and accurately and tells pupils what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. Pupils then correct or improve their work and make more rapid progress as a result.
- Information about pupils' attainment is used effectively to plan work that stretches pupils

appropriately according to their ability, particularly in English, mathematics and science. Teachers have high expectations, set challenging targets and then support pupils effectively so that they make good progress. This is less evident in other subjects, especially when pupils are set similar work.

- When learning is most effective, expectations are high and tasks constantly push pupils on to achieve their very best. Tasks are adjusted as pupils work if they are either struggling too much or making more rapid progress than originally expected. This does not always happen when plans are followed regardless of pupils' responses and not enough account is taken of pupils' progress.
- All pupils extend their speaking skills as well as their knowledge during question and answer sessions. For example, pupils write the answers to questions on small whiteboards as they are all expected to answer. This helps to make sure all pupils are thinking and helps to gauge the level of understanding of the whole class very effectively.
- Reading, writing, mathematics and science are taught particularly well because teachers are knowledgeable and confident. Explanations are clear and pupils know what to do and have a clear idea of how to proceed with their work and of the standards expected. In this way, pupils are helped to produce good quality work. Teachers constantly reinforce these expectations when they mark pupils' work.
- Teaching assistants contribute well to good teaching, for example when they teach letter sounds to small groups of pupils or provide support to pupils who are struggling.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are friendly, polite and enjoy school. They thrive in an atmosphere where adults have consistently high expectations and model the behaviour they want to see. As a result of these good relationships, incidents of poor behaviour are rare and exclusion is hardly ever necessary.
- All parents who responded to Parent View and the parents spoken with during the inspection say that behaviour is good, their children are happy to come to school and that they are safe.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress in their personal and social development. They speak politely to adults and cooperate well with each other by sharing and taking turns when they need to. They are able to concentrate with encouragement and already take great care to produce their best work.
- Pupils have good attitudes to their work. They take great care with their presentation, respond positively to teachers' marking and feedback and always try to do their best.
- Pupils are proud of their school. They appreciate the opportunities they are given to make decisions and take greater responsibility, for example, they recently purchased new playground equipment.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe, including what to do in an emergency, the dangers of electricity and how to protect themselves when on the internet. They are confident that rare instances of bullying will be dealt with effectively.
- Attendance has improved over time so that it is broadly average. Very few pupils are persistently absent.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is a thoughtful leader who puts the achievement of pupils at the heart of everything the school does. He has created a culture where all staff share his determined approach.
- The headteacher and senior leaders have an in-depth understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. This is because the headteacher regularly visits lessons and checks

the standard of work in pupils' books. Teachers have good feedback on areas they need to develop so that the quality of teaching is improving. This information is used effectively to improve the performance of teachers and make decisions about pay awards.

- The headteacher is providing good support for the new middle leaders and the new deputy headteacher so that they can play a greater role in advising their colleagues. As yet, they are not fully involved in checking what is happening in their areas of responsibility, especially the quality of teaching. Some subject leaders do not keep a close enough check on ensuring work is set to meet the differing needs of pupils.
- Leaders use assessment information to keep a careful watch on pupils' progress in English and mathematics. If any pupils start to fall behind, they are picked up quickly and given extra help so that they catch up as a result and almost all pupils make good progress. This demonstrates the school's good commitment to promoting equal opportunities.
- The curriculum is varied and interesting. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have access to a stimulating outdoor learning area and this is helping them to make good progress in their physical development. Older pupils have many opportunities to widen their horizons and develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. For example, they have celebrated cultural events, such as the Chinese New Year by working with a Chinese artist. Ongoing work with a local university is helping pupils to have higher aspirations for their own futures.
- All the parents who responded to Parent View would recommend the school to another parent and those spoken with at the school gate all find the school approachable.
- The primary school sport funding has been used to extend the range of sports being offered and provided the associated training for teachers. There are exercise sessions for pupils before the start of each school day followed by a healthy breakfast. This is having a good impact on pupils' health, fitness and well-being.
- The local authority provides good support through the work of a school improvement adviser who works alongside the headteacher and the governing body. Governors value the training the local authority provides.
- The school is a safe place where safeguarding practices meet statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, including a good understanding of data about pupils' achievement because they have had good training. Governors visit the school to see how well things are going for themselves, for example, all governors visit during 'Governors' Week'. They also carry out surveys of the views of parents and talk with pupils about their perceptions of the school.
 - Governors have a good understanding of the performance of teachers and other staff. They appoint new staff carefully by making sure teaching staff are observed in their own classrooms before they are interviewed. They are involved in any decisions about pay to reward good teaching.
 - Pupil premium funding is used to provide additional support for pupils who experience 'barriers to learning' and is central to the school's improvement priorities. As a result, pupils who are eligible for this support achieve at least as well as their peers.

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	114119
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	431333

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	126
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Bell
Headteacher	Chris Armstrong
Date of previous school inspection	7 July 2009
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