

# Brandon Primary School

Carr Avenue, Brandon, Durham, DH7 8NL

**Inspection dates** 3–4 June 2014

|                                |                      |                      |          |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>   | Previous inspection: | Requires improvement | 3        |
|                                | This inspection:     | <b>Good</b>          | <b>2</b> |
| 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.

- Achievement across the school is improving rapidly. Most pupils make good progress because they are taught well and given effective support to catch up if they fall behind.
- Children get off to a good start because of the highly effective provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage. As a result most children make rapid gains in their learning and in their personal and social development.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well because they receive good levels of support and work is well matched to their particular needs.
- Teaching has improved since the last inspection. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and make lessons interesting. Teaching assistants provide effective support and help pupils of all abilities to achieve well.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They learn and work together in a calm and caring environment. They are considerate to each other, to staff and to visitors.
- Attendance has improved significantly. Pupils enjoy coming to school, they like learning new things and appreciate the wide range of sporting opportunities available.
- The school is well supported by parents, who recognise the impact it has on their children's learning.
- The school is well led and managed by a strong and impressive senior leadership team. Working with governors, it has successfully tackled weaknesses identified in the last inspection and it has significantly improved the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- The school is in a good position to continue to improve.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In some classes pupils do not make as good progress in their spoken language as they do in others because they have fewer opportunities to respond to well-thought-out questions and to share ideas.
- School leaders do not fully evaluate the impact of teaching in lessons and in intervention groups on pupils' progress. As a result next steps in learning are not identified as clearly as they could be and occasionally this slows learning.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors made observations in 20 lessons, several of these were observed jointly with the headteacher or senior leaders.
- Inspectors made short visit to other classes, looked at work on display and listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors completed a detailed analysis of pupils' work. Part of this work was completed with school leaders.
- Discussions were held with members of staff, pupils from both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, representatives of the governing body and with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors considered the response from the online questionnaire (Parent View). A total of 21 responses were considered.
- Inspectors considered the 15 responses from the staff questionnaire.
- A number of documents were examined including: the school's own information on pupil progress, planning and monitoring documents, the school's own view of its performance; records of how funding is used, especially how the pupil premium funding is allocated; records relating to behaviour and attendance; as well as records relating to safeguarding.

## Inspection team

David Wilson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Steven Horne

Additional Inspector

Geoffrey Seagrove

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average-sized primary school.
- Almost all pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (the extra government funding for pupils looked after by the local authority and those known to be eligible for free school meals) is above the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is similar to the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is almost three times that found nationally.
- Pupils are taught in 14 classes, each having single year groups.
- The school provides before- and after-school facilities.
- A pre-school day care provision operates from the school site. This facility is inspected separately.
- The school also provides a base for local authority outreach staff working with pre-school children with additional or special educational needs. This team works with a number of other local schools to support children with additional needs before they start school.
- The school met the government's current floor standards for English and mathematics in 2013. These are the minimum expectations for pupils' achievement and progress by the end of Year 6.

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

- Ensure all pupils are given good opportunities to improve their use of spoken language by responding to well thought out questions, sharing their ideas and through explaining their learning to others.
- Further develop the role of school leaders, particularly those with subject responsibilities, by:
  - using the outcomes of lesson observations and evidence in pupils' work books to evaluate the impact of teaching and ensure next steps in learning enable all pupils to achieve as well as they can
  - evaluating fully the impact of intervention work and using information to plan more accurately next steps in learning for individuals and groups.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Most children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with a level of development below that typical for their age. A few have speech and communication skills well below that typical for their age. As a result of high-quality provision, children are making good and sometimes outstanding progress from their individual starting points. The excellent focus on developing language is having a significant impact on children's ability to share their ideas through speaking and through writing. Although children are well prepared for the next stage in their learning, a significant minority enter Key Stage 1 with a level of development below that typical for their age.
- Pupils in Key Stage 1 are currently making rapid progress in their reading, writing and mathematics. Over time, attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 has been below that seen nationally in reading and writing. Evidence from lessons and from pupils' work books indicate that currently almost all pupils are making expected progress and an increasing proportion is making more than expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The proportion of pupils meeting the expected level for the Year 1 phonics (letters and the sounds they make) screening check in 2013 was slightly below the national average with boys and those eligible for the pupil premium below that of similar groups found nationally. The school tackled this problem and all current Year 1 pupils, including boys and those eligible for the pupil premium, are now making rapid progress in their reading and phonic skills.
- By the time pupils leave Year 6 most pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their school life. Overall attainment in reading is improving rapidly as a result of very effective teaching and the impact of reading interventions across all ability groups so that current pupils are in line to achieve above the national average. Attainment in writing is broadly similar to the national average whilst attainment in mathematics is nearly a term ahead of that recorded nationally. Attainment in English grammar, punctuation and spelling is nearly two terms above that found nationally.
- Pupils' progress is improving rapidly because the quality of teaching is consistently good. In most lessons, teachers plan activities that match the different needs and abilities of pupils. However, in a few lessons, learning does not fully build upon what pupils already know, understand and can do. As a result progress slows and this is not always picked up by the school's checks on progress.
- The most able pupils make good progress because tasks set closely match their needs and additional intervention work is used effectively to challenge and extend learning. For example, in a very effective Year 3 reading intervention group, the most able pupils made excellent progress in reading for information, reading for inference and reading around a subject to gather information to enable them to answer complex questions.
- Inspection evidence confirms that pupils eligible for pupil premium do as well as other pupils and they make good progress from their starting points. As a result the gap in reading and mathematics has been closed and the gap in writing has reduced to less than a term between the attainment of these pupils and others in the school
- Pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs make similar progress to that of their peers. Effective and timely support has resulted in most pupils making at least expected progress and most making more than expected progress.
- All parents who responded to the online questionnaire felt their child was well taught and made good progress.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- Reading, writing and mathematics are taught well resulting in pupils making good progress with most set to reach or exceed personal targets. A high priority is given to the development and appreciation of reading. As a result pupils talk confidently about their enjoyment of reading. For

example, Year 6 pupils expressed their reading preferences, linked to favourite authors, and compared and contrasted the style and themes the authors wrote about. One pupil stated that, 'Jacqueline Wilson wrote about characters that you could identify with and you could put yourself in their shoes.'

- Pupils' written work is of high quality across all subjects. This demonstrates the pride they have in their work and also reflects the high expectations of teachers and support staff. Pupils are encouraged to write in a variety of styles. In an excellent piece of written work, linked to child poverty in Victorian times, Year 5 pupils wrote a dramatic story about the trials of child labour in the form of a play script complete with directions and settings.
- Teachers are skilled in the use of questioning to establish pupils' levels of understanding and then plan next steps in learning. Some teachers are also particularly skilful in the use of questioning that challenges pupils' thinking and encourages the precise use of language. However, in some lessons, pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to improve their spoken language in response to questions and have limited opportunities to share their ideas with others which then limits their progress.
- Teachers mark pupils' work consistently and accurately in all subjects. Feedback to pupils is clear and informative and gives details of how pupils can improve their work even further. Most pupils are given opportunities to use this advice and are keen to follow up and improve their work further. Homework is carefully matched to work done in school and is a good extension to the work completed in lessons. A good range of activities ensures pupils are engaged and eager to complete homework tasks.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work well together and see themselves as a strong team. Expertise and key strengths are shared. This is ensuring continued improvements in the quality of teaching in all year groups.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. This is typical in lessons and around the school. Staff have excellent relationships with pupils. They provide very strong levels of care, support and guidance and encourage and promote good behaviour. As a result pupils respond well and show respect to their classmates and adults in school.
- Pupils say incidents of bullying are rare and if they happen adults deal with it straight away. They believe that most pupils are friendly and work and play happily together. Inspection evidence confirms this. Pupils have a good awareness of the different types of bullying, including racist, homophobic and cyber-bullying, and are clear about how to prevent it.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning, they work hard and are determined to succeed in lessons and this enables them to make good progress.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils move around the school in a safe and orderly way. They stay safe in lessons handling resources and equipment sensibly. At break time and lunch time organised play and opportunities for sporting activities ensure high levels of engagement and cooperation. In team games, they play safely and abide by the rules of the game. Pupils have a good awareness of internet safety. The vast majority of parents, pupils and staff agree that pupils are safe in school.
- The school is successfully working with parents to ensure regular attendance and punctuality. As a result attendance rates have improved rapidly and are now broadly in line with that seen nationally. Significant progress has been made in reducing the proportion of pupils with persistent absence and this has improved their achievement and rate of progress.
- Systems to support pupils' social and emotional development, for example the school's Oasis Project, are effective in providing pupils with the opportunity to share any worries or concerns they may have at school or at home. This provision is now being developed as a secure online option for pupils to access.
- Through the work of the parent support adviser good progress is being made in working with vulnerable pupils and their families. As a result of supportive intervention, attendance and

individual rates of achievement and progress are improving steadily for identified pupils.

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

- The headteacher has maintained a relentless focus on school improvement. Under her purposeful and impressive leadership the quality of teaching has improved rapidly. This has resulted in pupils attaining much higher standards and making rapid progress from their starting points. The headteacher is supported by a highly effective senior leadership team and an increasingly effective middle leadership team. School improvement is supported by relevant school development planning and on-going school self-evaluation.
- School leaders keep comprehensive data on pupils' achievement and progress. However, pupils' progress data and information from lesson observations and from pupils' books are not always considered together to judge the impact of teaching on pupils' progress. Similarly, leaders do not fully evaluate the impact of intervention work on progress. As a result subject leaders are not always able to judge whether pupils have achieved as well as they can or whether next steps in learning will fully meet the needs of individuals and different groups.
- Middle leaders, relatively recent in post, are having a positive impact in terms of coaching and mentoring staff across the school and they have been successful in identifying and promoting the use of best practice in the school.
- The school's system for performance management is well established and successfully links the performance of staff to the achievement of pupils. Performance targets are set against the national guidelines and progress towards meeting them are used by senior leaders and governors to inform pay awards and identify appropriate professional development.
- The school's curriculum is carefully planned to meet the needs and interests of its pupils. It is outstanding in the Reception Class where activities are exciting, challenging and promote high levels of engagement and enthusiasm. As a result children make rapid progress in their learning. Good use is made of visits to places of local interest to develop pupils' understanding of the wider world. Such visits, as well as opportunities to work with authors, artists, musicians and theatre groups, support pupils' wider spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In addition, pupils have the opportunity to find out about different world religions and cultural differences in parts of the wider United Kingdom.
- The school makes excellent use of its additional funding to support the development of sport and improve the physical well-being of its pupils. The use of qualified coaches before, during and after school has had a significant impact on pupils' level of skill, physical stamina and enjoyment of sport. Typically pupils say how much they enjoy playing in team games and appreciate the opportunity to compete against their friends as well as against other schools. In a very effective athletics coaching session Year 3 pupils made excellent progress in their understanding of keeping to their own lane and in the difference between jogging, running and sprinting.
- Arrangements for safeguarding and health and safety meet requirements. Policies linked to these areas are reviewed and agreed by governors on a planned cycle. Staff have a clear understanding of child-protection procedures and those charged with overseeing this work complete regular training updates.
- The local authority works closely with senior leaders and governors and continues to provide effective support to move the school forward. It has brokered a range of support to improve the quality of provision and to enable governors to undertake their role effectively. In addition it has challenged the school to demonstrate continuous school improvement. The school has valued its support.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governance is very effective. The governing body has an accurate view of school performance. It has worked closely with senior leaders since the last inspection to improve the quality of teaching and raise levels of pupils' achievement and progress. Regular visits to school and a commitment to on-going training means they are well informed about the school and are clear about what they need to look for when judging how well the school is doing.

Governors monitor the performance of all staff and ensure pay progression is set against the nationally agreed Pay and Conditions framework.

- Resources are well managed, including making certain that those pupils receiving pupil premium funding achieve as well as their classmates. They are also clear about the impact of school sports funding. Governors continue to provide high levels of support in resolving issues linked to the new school build and are determined school finances achieve good value for money.

## 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> | 135207 |
| <b>Local authority</b>         | Durham |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 442289 |

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

|                                            |                            |
|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Primary                    |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Community                  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 3–11                       |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed                      |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 350                        |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body         |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Meshiel Brown              |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Judith Hodgson             |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 7 November 2012            |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 0191 3780124               |
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