

Fulwell Infant School Academy

Ebdon Lane, Fulwell, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear, SR6 8ED

Inspection dates

1–2 July 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- By the end of Year 2, pupils reach levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics which are significantly above average. Pupils of all ages make rapid progress from their broadly typical starting points and learn exceptionally well.
- The achievement of the most able pupils is excellent. A well above average proportion of pupils reach the higher levels of attainment.
- The performance of pupils supported by the pupil premium has improved rapidly. They now achieve very well.
- The specialised help and support for disabled pupils and those special educational needs ensures that they make rapid gains in learning.
- Pupils, parents and staff say that teaching and learning is first rate and inspectors agree.
- Pupils receive excellent learning experiences, which are adapted very well to their varying needs and abilities. Occasionally, however, a few pupils complete too much of the same work rather than quickly moving onto more difficult work as soon as they are ready.
- The behaviour of pupils is excellent. They are considerate, polite and friendly. Their attitude towards learning is very positive and they waste little time in getting down to their schoolwork.
- Pupils are very proud of their school and of their accomplishments, as shown by the care they take with the presentation of their work.
- Pupils not only say they feel safe but prove it by their excellent knowledge about the dangers associated with computers and mobile phones.
- The headteacher and senior staff have improved the achievement of pupils and managed the quality of teaching extremely well. The school continues to improve quickly.
- A highly imaginative curriculum is tailored especially well to meet pupils' varying needs. Pupils' musical and artistic talents are particularly well promoted. Pupils' basic literacy and numeracy skills develop rapidly due to excellent opportunities to practise their skills across all aspects of their learning.
- The governing body has an excellent grasp of the school's strengths. Governors hold leaders to account, including ensuring the performance of teachers is exceptionally well managed.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 17 lessons or parts of lessons taught by nine different teachers and teaching assistants.
- The Learning Journals from the Early Years Foundation Stage were analysed. Older pupils' literacy and numeracy books were scrutinised by inspectors jointly with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and talked to them about how much reading they do.
- Discussions took place with members of the governing body, staff, groups of pupils and an external educational adviser.
- Documents were examined, including those relating to safeguarding, the school's improvement plan, records of the school's checks on teaching and learning, as well as its own assessment data.
- The views of 107 parents, who responded to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), were also taken into account, as well as the views of eight parents who were spoken with by the inspection team. Four letters were received from parents.
- Thirty-three members of staff completed questionnaires about their view of the school.
- The school sports day on the second day of the inspection and a Year 2 theatre visit involved changes to the timetable and the normal running of the school.

Inspection team

Frank Cain, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

James Hannah

Additional Inspector

Barbara Waugh

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Fulwell Infant School Academy converted to become an academy school in December 2012. When its predecessor school, Fulwell Infant School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- Fulwell Infant School Academy is larger than the average-sized infant school.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs, is below average.
- The school works in partnerships with several other schools, for example, to secure standards in the moderation of pupils' work.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensuring that pupils are always moved on to harder work as soon as they are ready so that their rate of progress is always rapid.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- When children start school their skills are usually similar to those typically expected for their age. As a result of outstanding teaching and a curriculum that is particularly well tailored to meet young children's needs and interests, children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make outstanding progress in their learning. By the end of the Reception Year, most are working beyond the expected levels of development for their age and are particularly well prepared for learning in Year 1.
- Pupils make rapid and sustained progress in Key Stage 1. By the end of Year 2, attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is significantly above the national average. Almost all pupils attain the nationally expected Level 2 and a well above average proportion reach the higher Level 3. They are very well prepared for moving on to junior school.
- Achievement in reading is outstanding. The teaching of the sounds that letters make (known as phonics) is excellent. In 2013, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 national reading check of their understanding of phonics was much higher than average. School information and inspection evidence confirms the proportion of pupils working at and beyond the expected standard currently in Year 1 is even higher. Reading is strongly encouraged by the school, with dedicated reading sessions. Even weaker readers in Year 2 are able to break down words to sound them out accurately. In 2013, almost half the pupils in Year 2 reached the higher Level 3 in reading.
- Writing is given a very high priority in both the indoor and the outdoor areas and pupils' writing skills develop at a rapid rate. Pupils are given plentiful opportunities to practise their skills, including writing at length. One Reception child had written a whole paragraph about a mountain in Africa with snow on the top with a great deal of skill and accuracy.
- Mathematics is promoted extremely well from the Nursery class onwards. For example, in preparation for sports day, two reception-aged children confidently estimated the number of repetitions that their classmates might be able to complete in a fitness test and accurately counted and recorded the results.
- Pupils of all abilities learn exceptionally well. The tasks given to pupils, including to the most able, are extremely well matched to their varying needs and offer challenge to all. Pupils rise to the high expectations of staff. Disabled pupils or those with special educational needs do much better than similar pupils nationally. They do exceptionally well in mathematics as a result of very effective teaching and support they receive. In a Year 1 physical education lesson, with adult support, these pupils developed good physical coordination skills.
- The achievement of pupils supported by the pupil premium has rapidly improved and eligible pupils are now making excellent progress in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, currently in Year 2 there is no discernible gap in attainment between those known to be eligible for free school meals and those not eligible, in reading or writing. Although pupils known to be eligible for free school meals are working about six months behind their classmates, their attainment is much higher on average than similar pupils nationally.
- The school is extremely successful in narrowing the gap in achievement between different groups of pupils and in ensuring that all pupils have equal opportunities to do well.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Outstanding teaching and learning ensures that pupils of all ages and abilities, including children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, make first-rate progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the excellent routines established means that no learning time is wasted. From a young age, children are given tasks that make them think hard, and which encourage them to form opinions, establish theories and ideas. In the Reception classes, based on their own knowledge, a group of children successfully sorted pictures of insects into

categories, using the number of legs or whether or not they had wings. Children were able to confidently and fluently explain their rationale. For example, a child who had put a winged insect into the same category as a beetle said it was because they both had 'feelers'. Although other differences were understood, the child announced emphatically, 'I had to come to a decision' about which category to use.

- Teachers use questioning extremely well to make sure that pupils' knowledge and understanding is extremely secure and so that progress is rapid. In a Year 2 literacy session, for example, highly skilled questioning enabled the teacher to recap quickly on what pupils already knew and to tackle any misunderstandings.
- Pupils know exactly how well they are doing and they have clear targets to achieve. Adults strike an excellent balance between giving pupils the help needed when they are stuck and encouragement to solve problems and to research things for themselves. Pupils often assess their own and each other's work and this ensures that they learn from their mistakes.
- The quality of marking of pupils' work in books is high. In their creative writing books, for example, on-going opportunities for pupils to respond to teachers' suggestions about how their written work might be improved contributes very well to their rapid and sustained progress in writing.
- Excellent assessments of what pupils know and can do ensures that the work provided closely matches the varying ages and abilities of pupils. The most able pupils, for example, achieve particularly well because they are often given more challenging work. In Year 2, in mathematics, all ability groups were given more difficult calculations among their work. This ensured the teacher was able to spot quickly whether they needed to move forward more quickly to the next task. Very occasionally, pupils are given different quantities of work to complete, rather than more taxing work, so slowing the rate of progress.
- Highly skilled teaching assistants, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage, are very well briefed by teachers, fully involved in planning learning and extremely well deployed. As a result, they make a very strong contribution to pupils' outstanding achievement, especially that of pupils with special educational needs.
- Teaching ensures that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is especially well developed. For example, an African market stall set up in the nursery enabled children to choose and pay for exotic fruit. As well as developing children's early counting skills very successfully, their understanding of other countries and cultures was successfully enhanced.
- Parents and pupils acknowledge that teaching is excellent.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils demonstrate a very positive attitude to learning. They are attentive in class and are particularly eager to learn. Pupils' work in books is extremely well presented, with good handwriting. Pupils are clearly very proud of their accomplishments.
- Pupils speak very positively about behaviour both in class and around the school. In class, excellent behaviour enables pupils to mix exceedingly well, helping them to develop strong social skills from discussing learning sensibly together.
- From a young age, children are taught how to behave very well and to respect their school. Nursery children during lunchtimes, for example, are 'happy and chatty'. They have excellent table manners and were keen to find out about their 'special visitors'. Children in the Reception classes keep their classroom very tidy.
- Pupils themselves recognise and reward good and improved behaviour such as, by choosing weekly class 'behaviour champions'. There have been no exclusions.
- Pupils are confident that bullying is not an issue. Through activities such as those in anti-bullying week, pupils understand the different forms that bullying can take. They are confident that any incidents will be dealt with quickly and effectively. Pupils are extremely aware of the dangers associated with new technology, such as computers. Several used the phrase 'cyber-bullying'

and understand precisely what it means.

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. A significant number of staff have undertaken high-level child protection training and have first aider qualifications.
- The school's records, including those which identify the steps taken to ensure that any vulnerable children are kept safe, those relating to any behaviour incidents or keeping pupils safe on visits out of school are all detailed, meticulous and thorough and fully up to date.
- All pupils spoken with say they feel very safe because there are 'loads of teachers'. Pupils are very well supervised, including at social times. Pupils are very well versed in what to do in the event of a fire. Pupils were shown the correct techniques for moving their bodies safely during a Year 1 gymnastics lesson.
- Attendance has improved and now broadly average. The numbers of pupils who are absent for long periods has declined significantly.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- A key factor in the school's success is the visionary and inspirational leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Their ambition to provide a fully inclusive and high quality-learning environment so that pupils reach their full potential is constantly kept in firm view. Staff and governors share the headteacher's view to continually improve the school and strive to meet it with equal determination. The school is going from strength to strength.
- The leadership of teaching and learning is very effective. Senior leaders have ensured teaching over time has strengthened even further, a result of very effective professional development. Teachers are set very challenging targets to reach regarding pupils' achievement.
- Middle leaders, such as those responsible for leading subjects, such as literacy and numeracy, or key areas such as Early Years Foundation Stage and for those pupils with a disability or special educational needs, manage their areas of responsibility extremely well. By carefully checking the standard of pupils' work through observing teachers' classroom practice, and by collaborating with other schools to validate their view of pupils' achievements, they have a particularly good understanding of the quality of teaching and where and how achievement can improve even further.
- The curriculum is very imaginative. It is tailored particularly well to meet pupils' varying needs and abilities. A strong emphasis is given to the development of pupils' musical and artistic talents. Work across the subjects is skilfully linked to enliven and enrich learning and to ensure pupils' basic literacy and numeracy skills develop at a rapid rate. An excellent three-dimensional dragon model was complemented by written work about dragons, and a display about Durham Cathedral had associated high-quality written work. During the inspection, Year 2 pupils were taking part in a production at a local theatre.
- Although not subject to local authority control, the school still accesses good training for staff, including for newly-qualified teachers.
- Parental support is very strong, reflecting the high proportion of responses on Parent View. Overwhelmingly, parents would recommend the school to others.
- The primary school sports funding has allowed new sports such as gymnastics to be introduced, which are proving very popular. The school monitors the impact of the use of the extra funding well and can show that pupils' participation in physical education and games has increased.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is extremely well informed regarding how well pupils are performing, including those eligible for the pupil premium. Senior members of the governing body have a professional background in education enabling them to be acutely aware of the quality of teaching on offer. Subject leaders, as well as the headteacher, write regular informative reports, and members of the governing body visit lessons to look at the quality of pupils' work. As a result, they are very well placed to offer support and challenge in equal measure.
 - The governors insist on making sure that central to any extra remuneration for teachers is a link to their performance, their overall contribution to the school and to pupils' achievement. A

dedicated governor responsible for safeguarding, ensures that governors thoroughly monitor the policies and school's procedures and that the school's arrangements to safeguard pupils meets government 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	139026
Local authority	Not applicable
Inspection number	440163

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	353
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Hilary Hartnack
Headteacher	Wendy Angus
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	0191 553 5548
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