

Oakley Cross Primary School and Nursery

Lomond Walk, West Auckland, Bishop Auckland, County Durham, DL14 9UD

Inspection dates 1–2 July 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	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.

- From their individual starting points, which are well below or below those typically seen, pupils achieve well and make good progress. By the time they leave the school, they reach the national average for their age in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching is good overall and occasionally outstanding, especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Years 5 and 6.
- Teachers make it clear to pupils what they are learning, how they will know they have been successful and what they need to do next to improve their work.
- Pupils' good, and sometimes exemplary behaviour in lessons, helps them make good progress. They respect each other, care well for one another and say they feel safe.
- Parents express positive views about the school and feel that their children are well supported and achieve well.
- The headteachers leadership is very effective and she is well supported by governors. They have high aspirations for the school and a clear vision for continuous improvement.
- Leaders, managers and governors are committed to improving the school, with strong team work and a clear focus on securing improvements in teaching and the achievement of pupils.
- Teachers are held directly to account for the progress pupils are making in their class. They are well supported in getting the training they need to improve their practice.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The best practice seen in some classrooms is not yet shared consistently across the whole school.
- The data provided to governors lacks sufficient detail in some areas to fully track the impact of the planned actions.
- While boys are making quicker progress from lower starting points than other groups, including girls, they still do not attain as high standards as girls by the time they leave the school.
- Subject leadership is inconsistent and some subject leaders are unclear about the progress that pupils make in their area of responsibility.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in seven lessons, two of which were observed jointly with the headteacher. Inspectors also listened to pupils read in Year 2, Year 4, Year 5 and Year 6 and made a number of short visits to lessons.
- Inspectors took account of 25 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and 11 questionnaires completed by staff. Inspectors also spoke to parents informally and took into account the school's own survey of parents' views.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, subject leaders, groups of pupils and the governing body. The inspectors also spoke with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a range of evidence including the school's improvement plan; the school's data relating to pupils' progress; the work in pupils' books and the school's documentation relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Jonathan Brown, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

John Pattinson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Almost all pupils attending the school are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium is well above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils or those with special educational needs supported through school action is average and declining.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The results in 2013 show that the school does not meet the government's current floor standard. The floor standard is the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school provides a breakfast club for pupils.
- The school has achieved a level 1 'Rights Respecting School' status.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is outstanding in order to further raise standards and rates of pupils' progress by:
 - speeding up the progress boys are making so that they are reaching standards closer to those currently reached by the girls, especially in writing
 - sharing the best practice that exists more consistently across the school.
- Increase the impact that leaders at all levels have on pupils' attainment and progress by:
 - ensuring information provided to governors is more precise and gives them sufficient clarity to sharpen their challenge to school leaders about all aspects of the school's performance, including pupils' achievement
 - further developing the role of subject leaders so that they impact more directly on the progress pupils are making in their subject area and on the teaching of their subject across the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils' attainment across the school is rising rapidly. Whilst cohorts are small and vary considerably in size, inspection evidence and provisional data provided by the school show that pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is currently better than that seen in the test results in 2013. It is now on track to be in line with national expectations in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. This demonstrates good and sometimes very good progress from pupils' individual starting points.
- Children make a good start to their education in the school. They make good progress across the Nursery and Reception classes. Most children come into school below and some well below the levels seen typically. They enter Year 1 below expected levels but the gaps have begun to close. This is because the quality of teaching and the provision made for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and sometimes outstanding.
- Pupils are doing well in using their knowledge of the sounds letters make to help them with their reading. By the end of Year 1, pupils are using these skills to a standard just above that seen nationally. This is because teachers provide clear and consistent approaches and teach this aspect well.
- Progress of pupils currently in school is accelerating as the result of recent improvements in the quality and consistency of teaching. The proportion of pupils making expected and better than expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics across Key Stage 2 are on course to match and sometimes exceeds that seen nationally.
- By the time pupils leave the school, most of them can write at length, demonstrating an effective use of grammar, spelling and punctuation. They can write with imagination and adapt their writing style for different purposes. Although most boys are attaining the required standard in writing, the most able boys do not do as well. This is because previous weaknesses in teaching and assessment, although now dealt with, led to some under achievement and complacency. Some pupils are still catching up on lost ground.
- Pupils are encouraged to read aloud fluently, using punctuation to aid expression. Pupils have a keen interest in books and authors and are enthusiastic about reading.
- All groups of pupils, including those who need extra help and those pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding, make at least expected progress and some make more than expected progress.
- In both English and mathematics, the pupils eligible for pupil premium funding now make faster progress from their starting points than their peers. However, they do not always attain as highly at the end of the key stage.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make progress at a faster rate than other pupils in the school. This is because they benefit from targeted support from well trained teaching assistants in a calm and purposeful learning environment. Successful interventions have seen a decline in the number of pupils needing individualised plans.
- The most able pupils are making progress in line with other groups of pupils in the school. The pupils reported that work was getting 'much harder' but they were encouraged by a 'we can achieve anything' attitude promoted by teachers. The raising of expectations of what they can achieve is reflected in the number of pupils now being entered for Level 6 tests for the first time.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The quality of teaching is good and sometimes outstanding. It has recently seen considerable improvements and continues to improve. This is because school leaders have robust processes in place to manage teachers' performance. Teachers now work effectively as a team, have good subject knowledge and plan stimulating lessons to engage learners.
- There are not yet enough instances of outstanding teaching to ensure the sustained, rapid progress that needs to be seen to further close the gap between boys' and girls' performance,

especially in writing.

- The tracking and assessment of what pupils can and cannot do are secure and are used to inform the next steps in pupils' learning. The ability of teachers to use this information effectively to plan lessons is evident, with pupils receiving learning opportunities that match their needs and speed up their progress.
- Where teachers use questioning skills to deepen learning and challenge pupils' thinking this is accelerating pupils' progress. A positive climate for learning is established and very good relationships between adults and pupils help to develop a secure environment where pupils are challenged and challenge themselves. Evidence provided by school leaders show that where teachers are overly concerned with managing pupils' learning and there are limited opportunities for them to get down to work quickly enough, the progress pupils made was slower.
- Work in books is marked regularly. Feedback and next steps for pupils are evident. Evidence of different activities for pupils with different needs is consistent, especially for those pupils requiring harder work or those requiring additional support. Pupils' supported each other's learning by reviewing each other's work and providing effective feedback as to how the work could be improved.
- Teachers' subject knowledge in English and mathematics is good. This ensures good and better teaching in reading, writing and mathematics. It enables teachers to develop a broad and stimulating curriculum, recognising opportunities to develop basic skills in other subjects. Some opportunities to challenge pupils' speaking and listening skills, and thereby promote more effective communication were missed.
- The vast majority of parents agree that their children are taught well in the school.
- Teaching assistants are deployed effectively and are skilled in guiding pupils' learning. They have a good understanding of the needs of individual pupils and how to support their learning. This is because they are highly trained, well supported by teachers and know their pupils, and their needs, very well.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. This is because the school systematically promotes a 'respect and rights' agenda based on understanding the impact behaviours have on others. Staff and parents express very positive views about the behaviour of pupils in school.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe and are well looked after in school and the vast majority of parents agree.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe, including how to stay safe on the internet, is embedded in the curriculum.
- Pupils have good and often exemplary attitudes to their learning. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school makes a very positive contribution to their learning and personal development
- The school provides a stimulating and well cared for learning environment for pupils. This is reflected in the care and pride that pupils have in the school and their willingness to take responsibility to ensure the school is a good place to play and learn.
- Pupils behave well at playtimes and in the lunch hall. They enter and leave the school punctually and in an orderly fashion. This creates a calm atmosphere that promotes learning, and lessons start promptly.
- Behaviour is not outstanding because, in the instances where teaching is less effective, pupils do not always maintain their concentration and can become distracted.
- Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes bullying. They say bullying rarely happens in school but, when it does happen, it is dealt with effectively.
- There have been no recent recorded instances of homophobic or racist bullying. Pupils are clear about the issues surrounding this kind of bullying and how it links with the school's 'respect and rights' agenda.

- Attendance is improving rapidly in the school and is now much closer to national averages. This is because teachers, ably supported by a key learning mentor, have worked relentlessly to tackle previously poor attendance and punctuality. The very successful breakfast club has had a particularly positive impact.
- Pupils' points of view are valued by the school and contribute to the school's self-evaluation.

The leadership and management are good

- Following the last inspection, there was a steady fall in the standards achieved by pupils. The actions to tackle this decline led to a period of instability in staffing. The determined and resolute leadership of the headteacher has ensured that actions taken to address the previously inconsistent performance of staff, are now helping the school to move forward at a good pace.
- The school has an accurate and honest view of its own strengths and areas for development and produces plans with appropriate actions to address these. However, when gauging which areas should be prioritised, insufficient weight is given to some important aspects. For instance, despite being below the floor standard in 2013, some of the information that triggered that judgement was not sufficiently clear to governors for them to ensure the school was not vulnerable to similar outcomes this year. This is because some of the information used by school leaders is not precise enough.
- Senior leaders carry out regular checks on teaching that provide an accurate view of its quality. Where improvements are required, teachers receive effective support and training to improve their skills. Where teachers' performance continues to cause concern, this is tackled robustly.
- The links between the management of the performance of teachers and arrangements for pay and promotion of staff are closely tied to the pupils' progress.
- There are systems in place to check on the progress of pupils in school. Where there are gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills, or progress begins to wane, the school leaders quickly take action to address these. This includes the redeployment of teaching assistants across the school on a regular basis to provide extra support both in and out of lessons.
- Subject leaders are well supported in carrying out their roles. They are clear about what they should be doing and engage well with governors when reviewing provision in their subject area. They have good subject knowledge and increasingly play a role in informing school senior leaders about matters that require their attention. Their knowledge of the progress pupils make in their subject areas and their direct impact on the practice of teachers are still developing.
- Curricular provision is good and has captured the pupils' imagination. This is because, while there is a strong focus on developing pupils' basic skills in reading writing and numeracy, they also benefit from a broad and exciting range of other experiences including a wide range of visits and visitors. For instance, the school has links with a school in Bangladesh from where they receive visitors.
- The curriculum promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination and this is at the heart of the school's work. This is an inclusive school where pupils understand each others' unique qualities. Pupils have a good range of extra-curricular activities including opportunities provided through additional primary school sports funding. This all contributes to pupils' social moral, spiritual and cultural development within a framework of mutual respect.
- Statutory safeguarding requirements are met and child protection procedures and policies are in place.
- The local authority has provided good support for the school with an appropriate level of challenge which is appreciated by the school. They have worked closely with governors and school leaders to address, and start to reverse, the decline in standards seen following the last inspection.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are very knowledgeable about the school. They have supported the headteacher well in her quest to drive up the quality of teaching and learning in the school. They have ensured that good teachers are appointed to the school. They have clear systems to monitor

the quality of teaching, the achievement of pupils and the curriculum and teachers' performance management. They receive information about how the pupil premium funding and the primary school sports funding are allocated and are very knowledgeable about their impact. They ensure that the school fulfils its statutory responsibilities for safeguarding. All staff have been vetted and are trained appropriately to keep pupils safe and free from harm. The oversight and use of the budget is managed well. As a result, teaching, pupils' achievement and behaviour, and school leadership, are good. Some of the information provided to governors is not sufficiently precise or clear enough about key outcomes to help them understand fully the challenges facing the school to improve further.

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	114069
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	440820

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	179
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Ferguson
Headteacher	J Hornsby
Date of previous school inspection	29 January 2008
Telephone number	01388 833186
Fax number	Not applicable
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