

Nettlesworth Primary School

Front Street, Nettlesworth, Chester le Street, County Durham, DH2 3PF

Inspection dates 11–12 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- All pupils make at least good progress and achieve well over time from their starting points. They are keen to learn and they work hard to do well.
- The quality of teaching is mostly good. Teachers know their pupils well and plan learning so that pupils develop the confidence to learn and reach standards that are often above the national average, particularly in reading and mathematics. Teaching assistants are well trained and give good support in lessons.
- Children get off to a good start in the Reception class. They are exceptionally well cared for and quickly develop the confidence to explore the many exciting activities in their classroom.
- Pupils' behaviour and their excellent relationships with each other and their teachers are hallmarks of this warm, vibrant school. Classrooms and the playground are happy places where pupils show great care and support for each other.
- Excellent pastoral care from all adults makes pupils feel safe and secure. Pupils have absolute trust in adults to look after them.
- The curriculum is well planned to provide pupils with memorable learning experiences and give them frequent opportunities to develop independence and decision-making skills.
- Senior and middle leaders work closely to improve the school. Teamwork is very good and all staff contribute well to improving the school.
- Governors are well informed about teaching and learning in the school. They are fully committed to developing the school and are proud of its contributions to the local community.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally the quality of teaching is not good. Not enough of it is outstanding to result in pupils making outstanding progress.
- There are differences in the quality of what is provided in the indoor and outdoor learning areas in the Reception class. This results in children making slower progress when they are learning outdoors.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight lessons or parts of lessons, two of which were jointly observed with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with members of the governing body, senior and middle leaders, staff and pupils.
- The inspector observed the school at work and looked at a range of documentation, including that relating to the school's safeguarding policies and procedures, information about pupils' progress and attainment, the school's evaluation of its own performance and the school development plan.
- The inspector examined pupils' work on display and in their exercise books, from this current year and the previous year, and listened to groups of pupils read.
- The inspector took account of the 20 responses to the online questionnaire Parent View, and of 13 questionnaires returned by staff.

Inspection team

Moira Fitzpatrick, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is above average. (The pupil premium provides additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils and pupils looked after by the local authority.)
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- The vast majority of pupils are from White British heritage; the proportion who speak English as an additional language is very low.
- The school met the government's floor standards in 2013. These are the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- The school experiences a high proportion of pupils joining and leaving the school at other than the normal time.
- There have been some changes in staffing in the current school year, after a long period of stability.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good by:
 - sharing the existing good practice in teaching strategies
 - providing training and support for staff who are new to particular age groups to rapidly improve their skills and understanding of how these groups learn best, so they consistently ensure good progress for all pupils.
- Accelerate the progress made by children in the Reception class from good to outstanding by:
 - reviewing what is currently provided in the outdoor learning environment to make the best use of what is available and adding to it where necessary, so that it is as good as that provided indoors
 - ensuring that access to outdoor learning is available to children throughout the day.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Leadership and management roles are effectively distributed to ensure that all staff are involved in continually improving this small school. All staff and governors share the headteacher's vision for a school where children are supported to achieve well in a happy, safe environment. Improvements to pupils' attainment and progress, attendance and the curriculum since the previous inspection testify to the effectiveness of the school team.
- Senior and middle leaders monitor the school's work regularly and accurately so they are able to identify the most important areas for improvement. Well-thought-out action plans support the school's continuing improvement.
- The performance of staff is well managed. Staff have clear targets to support pupils' progress and for improving the quality of their own work. There is a clear link between teachers' performance and their salary progression.
- Pupils' progress is checked carefully, so that any risk of underachievement is spotted quickly. Close monitoring by the headteacher and acting deputy headteacher makes sure that any slowing in progress is tackled with additional support or a better match of work to pupils' needs. This guarantees pupils have equal opportunities to succeed and explains why progress is the same for all groups of pupils.
- The well-planned curriculum provides plenty of opportunity for pupils to follow their interests while developing their basic key skills through practising them in all their activities. Pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is the result of the varied and memorable activities pupils enjoy within and beyond the school day and helps to prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- The school uses primary sport funding well to enhance its already good provision and achievements in sport. Funding has been used to enhance teachers' skills through working alongside a specialist teacher, making improvements sustainable, so that the school can maintain its high achievement in sporting competitions. The range of activities has been extended both in lessons and in after-school clubs so that more pupils are joining after-school clubs and learning about healthy lifestyles.
- Pupil premium funds are well used to support disadvantaged pupils to make the same progress as their peers. Additional support, one-to-one teaching and special homework clubs are just some of the ways the school is narrowing the gap in attainment between these pupils and others in the school and nationally.
- The school makes good links with parents to involve them in their children's learning. They are invited to Stay and Play sessions in the Reception class and are helped to support their children's learning at home. Parent surveys show they are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and know that their children are well taught and well cared for.
- The local authority provides regular training and light touch support for this successful school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are well informed about the school's performance, the quality of teaching and the priorities for improvement. They visit the school regularly to monitor its work. They undertake training to enable them to both challenge and support the school to maintain its overall effectiveness. Governors have a good understanding of how pupil premium funds are used to support the pupils for whom it is intended to achieve as well as other pupils. They support improvements to teaching by holding teachers to account for the progress their pupils make and linking this to appropriate pay progression. Finances are well managed so there are good staffing levels to support pupils' learning. Governors ensure that safeguarding policies and procedures meet statutory requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding both in and out of the classroom. Children of different ages play together extremely well with older pupils keeping a look out for the younger ones. Pupils are considerate and care for each other very well. They are especially welcoming of pupils who join the school after the normal time. As one Year 6 boy explained, 'I was nervous when I joined in Year 5, but I needn't have worried, the others made me feel part of the school straightaway.'
- Being part of a Rights Respecting school is very important to the pupils, because it gives them a good understanding of what it means to show and feel respect, teaches them to accept plenty of responsibility, and play a role in decision making. Pupils of all ages relish the opportunities they have to support children who live in difficult circumstances around the world and they are now looking forward to opening their

Fairtrade Christmas shop to raise even more funds for needy children.

- Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning. They are excellent listeners, who are determined to succeed. They are resilient and keep going even when they find work difficult because they know they will be successful and please their teachers with their hard work.
- Pupils are taught the need for tolerance in modern British society. Good links with a school in Bradford help them to understand different beliefs and customs and accept them as part of the world in which they live. Consequently, pupils are accepting of difference and understand the need to uphold British values of fairness, and rules that keep everyone safe.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Staff are well trained to spot any changes in pupils' behaviour or performance. Pupils feel very safe because they know that 'The teachers can tell right away if something is bothering you and they come and find out what it is.' Rigorous systems, together with vigilant staff, ensure that concerns are promptly and thoroughly investigated.
- Pastoral care is excellent. Staff take a strong interest in each pupil's welfare, because as the pupils put it, 'We're like one big family.' Staff lead by example, so that when older pupils are given roles in nurturing and caring for younger pupils they do this very well.
- Pupils are well taught to assess risks and keep themselves safe. They are taught to tell the difference between bullying and occasional squabbles; they know about internet safety and cyber-bullying and what to do if they feel vulnerable. They have absolute confidence in adults to solve problems and keep them safe.
- The school has worked hard to improve attendance since the previous inspection. It has improved well and is now at the national average.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The quality of teaching is mostly good and some is outstanding, especially in the Reception class and Year 5/6 class. Nevertheless, there is a small proportion of teaching that requires improvement. This is evident in the work of pupils in lower Key Stage 2, where progress is not always good. Senior leaders are aware that teachers here are new to the age groups and do not always set work at the correct pitch and pace to accelerate progress to the full.
- When pupils learn well or exceptionally well it is because expectations of what they can achieve in the lessons are high. A typical example is Year 6 pupils' work in mathematics shows that they are constantly challenged to do their best and work at a rapid rate to complete tasks whatever their ability. The use of real-life problems fire pupils' enthusiasm for the subject and give real meaning to their learning.
- Good quality marking and feedback to pupils are at the heart of the school's drive to accelerate pupils' progress. Staff mark pupils' work meticulously and give good pointers for improvement to which pupils are able to respond quickly and improve their learning. However, sometimes marking is so detailed that pupils do not have time to respond and therefore they do not benefit fully from the teacher's hard work.
- Deepening pupils' understanding through careful reading is one of the literacy skills that are taught well. For example, Year 6 pupils made excellent progress in their preparation for performance poetry because activities were very well matched to each group's abilities. These activities allowed pupils to discover deeper meanings in the poem and understand how the poet had achieved this. Skilful questioning by the teacher developed their ideas further, so all were very well prepared for the next stage of their work.
- Sometimes, the progress that pupils make in lessons is hindered because work is not well enough matched to pupils' abilities or they are not involved in tasks soon enough. For example, younger pupils made a slow start on their writing about a special monster because they were confused with too much information and too many instructions at the start.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils' achievement is good, regardless of their starting points when they join the school. In recent years, all pupils have made the progress expected of them from the end of Year 2 to the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion making more than the progress expected of them in reading and mathematics has exceeded the national average.
- The proportion of Year 1 pupils that reached the expected standard in phonics (the sounds that letters make) in 2014 was above the national average. Pupils make good progress to the end of Year 2 and their

attainment was above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics in 2014.

- Good progress continues to the end of Year 6, where in 2014, pupils' attainment was well above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. This continues a pattern of average or above average standards over a number of years and represents outstanding progress for some groups of pupils, including those who join the school after the normal start time.
- Pupils who join the school partway through their primary education have their needs well assessed, so that their learning is well matched to what they can do. This helps to develop their confidence and reassure them that they will succeed, so they are motivated to learn.
- Reading skills are taught well from the earliest age so that pupils quickly develop an enjoyment of reading and are able to use their skills to find out things for themselves. For example, children in Reception learn to read instructions on the computer so they are soon able to set to work without needing any help from the teacher. Pupils' reading skills are regularly checked so that any slowing of progress is picked up and staff plan extra support to help pupils to catch-up. The school has plans in hand to extend pupils' reading further in the coming year, so that by the end of Year 6 they are able to read a broad range of texts with good understanding and enjoyment.
- Progress in mathematics is improving well as a result of recent changes to the curriculum. A stronger emphasis on mental recall of number from an early age and more opportunity to solve problems is giving pupils a good insight into how mathematics helps in real-life situations and increasing their enjoyment of the subject. Older pupils spoke with enthusiasm about the 'hard maths' they did in lessons.
- The whole-school focus on improving writing in the last year has seen pupils' confidence to write for different purposes and audiences rise. Regular teaching of spelling and grammar is bringing greater accuracy and coherence to their writing. Targets for the end of year show the school is increasingly ambitious for pupils to achieve beyond the expected standards for their age.
- Pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs are very well supported by well-trained teaching assistants, and by teachers' careful planning for their needs. Their progress over time matches that of their peers, so that some reach the expected standard for their age by the time they leave the school.
- Pupil premium funds have been used well to support disadvantaged pupils. As a result, the gap in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and others in the school has been reduced significantly, especially in reading and mathematics. This group of pupils now make the same good progress as their peers in school from their starting points and better progress than other pupils nationally. The attainment of disadvantaged pupils is equal to all pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics but behind their peers in school by approximately two terms.
- The most able pupils are provided with a wide range of experiences and opportunities designed to develop their interests and talents. An independent learning plan ensures that the most able pupils have their needs met within and beyond the school curriculum, for example through investigations at the local leisure centre. Part of this work involved pupils in learning how to calculate the purity of the water, so that managers would be sure it was safe for the public to bathe. This involved careful readings and complex calculations which stretched pupils' thinking very well, and gave them insights into aspects of health and safety.

The early years provision

is good

- Children enter the Reception class with skills below those typical for their age. By the end of Reception all children have made good progress, whatever their starting points. They are well prepared for Year 1, with excellent literacy and social skills, confidence and a thirst for learning. All children make excellent progress in their early reading and writing skills because the teacher knows exactly what each child needs to learn next and always has plenty of work with extra challenge available to keep them moving forward. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development can fluctuate year-on-year because the number of children in the group is so small.
- Planning for all seven areas of learning provides a good range of interesting activities for children, especially indoors. This range is more limited outdoors because of difficulties of access and some shortage of resources. This leads to differences in rates of learning; indoors it is frequently outstanding, while outdoors it is good. Teaching is also consistently good, with much that is outstanding. The teacher works alongside children helping them to develop their ideas and explore what interests them. Work in children's books shows how high the teacher's expectations are and how eager the children are to meet these.
- Leadership and management are highly effective in providing high-quality learning experiences that fire children's enthusiasm. There are rigorous systems for keeping children safe which are reviewed regularly. Children's excellent behaviour and willingness to share demonstrates how well the teacher has established

high expectations and good routines. Leadership is skilled at encouraging parents to support their children's learning through Stay and Play and reading sessions, while home-school journals give parents the opportunity to comment on their children's learning at home and their progress at school.

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	114005
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	448767

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	75
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kate Lawrie
Headteacher	Leonora Roberts
Date of previous school inspection	4 February 2010
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