

Barley Mow Primary School

Pembroke Avenue, Barley Mow, Chester le Street, County Durham, DH3 2DJ

Inspection dates 19–20 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
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.

- Most pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. From starting points below typical levels, they reach standards in line with those found nationally.
- The headteacher, ably supported by senior leaders and the governors, has successfully led the drive to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Leaders check on the quality of teaching and learning closely and standards have improved as a result. Governors regularly check on pupils' progress and challenge leaders to secure the best outcomes for pupils.
- Pupils behave well, enjoy coming to school and attend regularly. They are polite and courteous and manage their behaviour with maturity.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and parents agree that the school is a safe and secure place for their children.
- Teaching is consistently good and sometimes outstanding. Teachers have high expectations and plan interesting lessons based on a detailed knowledge of each pupil's progress.
- Governors know the school well. They make sure that the curriculum provides a broad set of learning experiences which promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and that pupils develop a sound understanding of traditional British values.
- Provision in the early years is good. Skilful teaching and caring staff ensure that children are happy, learn well and make good progress.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Achievement in writing and mathematics is not as good as in reading.
- Teachers' expectations of writing in topic work are not as high as they are in pupils' literacy work.
- Pupils do not always make the improvements teachers suggest when marking work.
- Too many pupils do not learn basic mathematical skills thoroughly by the end of Year 4.
- Middle leaders do not have the skills to monitor progress in their subjects.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in lessons and part-lessons and there was a joint observation with the headteacher.
- Inspectors observed pupils at play at breaks and lunch times. Inspectors talked to pupils informally and also met with the school council and pupils from Years 5 and 6.
- Inspectors held discussions with key members of staff, including the leaders of the early years, literacy and numeracy. Inspectors also met with the special educational needs coordinator and her team. Inspectors also met with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of 16 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and 20 questionnaires completed by the staff. Inspectors also considered the school's own survey of parents' views.
- Inspectors examined a range of documents, including samples of pupils' work, information about pupils' progress, information about the monitoring of teaching and learning, the school's development plan and view of its own performance. The inspection team also looked at the minutes of governing body meetings, records of any poor behaviour, attendance information and safeguarding and child protection documents.

Inspection team

Peter Eves, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lesley Richardson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is approximately twice the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or are cared for by the local authority.
- The proportions of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' achievement in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- Children attend the nursery part time.
- The headteacher and most of the senior leadership team are relatively new in post.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop the skills of middle leaders further in checking on progress in their subjects.
- Improve the quality of teaching and so raise attainment, especially in mathematics and writing, by:
 - ensuring that pupils learn the basic mathematical skills securely by the end of Year 4
 - insisting that pupils make the improvements that teachers suggest when marking their work
 - insisting on the same high standards of writing in pupils' topic work as in their literacy work.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The school is led very well by a determined headteacher ably supported by a relatively new senior leadership team and governing body who all share the same unswerving drive to make the school as good as it can possibly be.
- There is a shared understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement through thorough self-evaluation. Key priorities are identified, leading to a detailed school improvement plan.
- All leaders are committed to continuous improvement. There are rigorous systems for checking on the success of teaching against the progress pupils make and these give leaders a clear understanding of areas which need to be improved.
- Results from checks on pupils' progress are used to set appropriate targets and to make judgements about staff performance and decisions about pay increases.
- The curriculum is designed to capture the interests of all pupils, with regular visits to give pupils real experiences to think and write about. Visitors to school and the wide variety of activities and clubs extend pupils' learning opportunities still further. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a high priority for the school and traditional British values are woven throughout the topics pupils study.
- The expectations of what middle leaders do in their roles as subject leaders have increased significantly. While they have the same passion for improvement as the senior leaders, middle leaders do not have the skills necessary to monitor the progress of what happens in their subjects.
- Leaders ensure disadvantaged pupils receive the support that they need to catch up with other pupils in the school, often from significantly lower starting points.
- The local authority has provided a much-appreciated level of support since the last inspection.
- Expert coaching and increased participation in a wider variety of sports and competitions are provided for pupils as a result of the primary sport funding. The quality of physical education teaching has improved because teachers benefit from effective professional development and opportunities to team-teach with specialists.
- Equality of opportunity is promoted well and the school is free from discrimination or bullying.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are dedicated to ensuring that the school's trend of improvement continues. They are well informed and have a good understanding of the information presented to them by the headteacher and other leaders. Governors regularly visit the school and each governor is linked to a particular area of the school. Although a number are quite new to governance, they actively seek the training they need and bring a variety of skills to their roles, which they use to good effect. They know the school's strengths and the areas for development, particularly in terms of pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching.
 - The school's finances are managed well. The governing body appraises the headteacher's effectiveness against agreed targets and checks that staff appraisal is conducted properly. Governors have an oversight of the spending of pupil premium and sport funding and are aware of the differences these funds make to pupils' success in school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and this helps them to make good progress. They concentrate on their work, persevere when they are presented with challenges and do their best in lessons.
- There are strong relationships between pupils and staff and as a result, pupils have a high regard for staff and trust them. Pupils are polite and courteous at all times and care for, as well as about, one another.
- Disruption to lessons is uncommon, because pupils are motivated to make good progress and the reward systems celebrate such attitudes. Pupils wear their achievement badges with pride and are zealous in protecting their 'golden time'.
- In the main, pupils manage their own behaviour well, but there are a few who rely on adults to direct their conduct.
- Pupils speak very positively about their school and their teachers who some describe as 'brilliant'. They wear their uniform with pride and enjoy the sports and clubs outside lessons.
- Pupils play a full part in the life of the school. Older pupils take on roles of responsibility such as prefects

and librarians and carry out their duties conscientiously.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Safeguarding arrangements go beyond statutory requirements and staff and pupils follow school policies consistently well to ensure everyone's safety.
- Pupils say they feel very safe and parents agree that the school is very safe and secure. There are thorough systems in place to monitor entrances to the school and security is a priority for the school, particularly at the start and end of the school day.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations, including when using the Internet and when near water and main roads.
- Pupils understand the different forms that bullying can take, including cyber-bullying. They say that bullying is not common and that staff would deal with it quickly and effectively if it occurred.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching has improved and is typically good or better throughout the school. Evidence from pupils' books and information about pupils' achievement, the school's own records and learning observed during the inspection show that good teaching is making an important contribution to raising pupils' achievement.
- Teachers plan work that captures pupils' interests and stimulates their imagination. A Year 3 class was entranced by a film reconstruction of Mt Vesuvius erupting, which helped to prepare them for later writing.
- Pupils are encouraged to read regularly, both in school and at home. Pupils get off to a good start and build on their skills as they move through the school, becoming competent and often enthusiastic readers who are happy to discuss their favourite authors and recommend books to inspectors.
- Pupils are given a variety of interesting things to write about and do so with increasing length and accuracy. They develop the ability to adjust their style to suit different purposes and a recent focus on handwriting has resulted in greater fluency in pupils' writing. A Year 4 class demonstrated real independence and skill in taking notes to help them write instructions for inserting images into a document. However, teachers' expectations of the standards of writing which pupils do in their topic work are not as high the expectations in literacy work and as a result, standards in other subjects are lower.
- Pupils enjoy their mathematics lessons and are given plenty of opportunities to use and apply their skills, However, they do not all learn their basic mathematical skills thoroughly at an early age and so they make simple mistakes and are slow to carry out relatively straightforward calculations.
- Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to learning, particularly through their skilled help and support for any pupils who are at risk of falling behind in their work.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and provide pupils with accurate feedback on where they have been successful and suggestions for what to do next to improve their work. This is a significant recent improvement in the quality of teaching. However, not all pupils always make the improvements suggested and opportunities to make progress are lost.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Most pupils, including the most-able pupils, make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Progress in reading is more rapid than in writing and mathematics.
- Pupils typically leave school at the end of Year 6 having reached standards that are at least in line with national expectations.
- Published information for the attainment of pupils in 2014 gives a misleading impression and suggests that standards have declined. Evidence collected during the inspection shows that this is not typical and the rising trend of attainment continues in early years, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
- Pupils increasingly enter Year 1 ready for learning. The proportion of pupils who reached the required standards in the phonics screening check is rising and this is helping pupils to make faster progress in reading and writing.
- An increasing proportion of pupils in Year 2 achieve standards that are close to those expected nationally, especially in reading and writing. This represents good progress from their low starting points. Good progress continues throughout Key Stage 2, with almost all pupils making the progress expected of them and a growing proportion make more. Standards reached at the end of Year 6 continue to rise and the school's information indicates that current Year 6 pupils are on track to reach standards that are above

those expected nationally.

- Pupils develop a real enjoyment of reading early in their school life. The youngest pupils are enthusiastic readers and this continues to grow as they move through the school.
- Pupils develop their writing skills in their literacy lessons and particularly enjoy their 'magic writing' lessons when pupils produce a piece of writing that they can be particularly proud of. Teachers have accurate expectations of what pupils can achieve in their writing in the literacy lessons. However, when given opportunities to write at any length in other subjects, the standards expected are not as high.
- Pupils develop their skills in using and applying mathematical skills not only in mathematics lessons, but also in topic and cross-curricular work. However, the rate of progress is slower because not all pupils master basic mathematical skills at an early age and as a result, their speed and accuracy in making calculations are not as good as they could be.
- The most-able pupils are challenged and supported well in class. As a result, they make good progress. In a Year 4 class they were really stretched when learning about equivalent fractions, but rose to the challenge.
- The number of pupils with special educational needs or disabilities is small. However, they are identified accurately and supported by skilled adults who know their needs well. As a result they make good progress, with some making rapid progress.
- Extra support is provided for disadvantaged pupils who often start school from very low starting points. As a result of the extra support both in and out of class and individually or in small groups, they are making good progress and the rate of improvement is increasing. The gaps between them and other pupils in the school and nationally are closing. They are approximately two terms behind others in reading and writing and five terms behind in mathematics by the end of Year 6.

The early years provision

is good

- The early years is led well by an experienced and dedicated leader, ably supported by an enthusiastic and effective team. They know the children well and make sure that they settle in quickly and get off to a good start. All staff work hard to create a place where children are happy and able to thrive.
- Teachers use their knowledge of children's needs to plan learning that children enjoy and which allows them to make good progress. During the inspection, children made excellent use of a very heavy rain shower to explore the sounds rain can make and set about working together to make a car wash, much to the enjoyment of all concerned.
- Safety and the welfare of children are paramount and all adults follow the well thought-out practices to ensure that children are safe and secure at all times and especially at the start and end of the school day.
- Children typically join the nursery class with skills and knowledge that are below those expected for children of their age. These children make good progress, so that by the end of the Reception year the majority are ready or almost ready for learning in Year 1. There is a small proportion of children who join with skills and knowledge that are well below those necessary for learning and have special educational needs or disabilities. These children are supported well by skilled adults who know the children's needs well and they too make good progress.

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	108373
Local authority	Gateshead
Inspection number	448370

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	229
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bryan Skipsey
Headteacher	Nicola Watson
Date of previous school inspection	15 July 2010
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