

Diamond Hall Junior School

Well Street, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear, SR4 6JF

Inspection dates 26–27 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher's drive and rigorous approach to improving the school have had a positive impact on teaching and pupils' achievement. She is supported well by a skilful leadership team and a developing team of teachers who are keen to ensure that the school continues its drive for improvement.
- With their good range of skills governors have supported and challenged the school on its journey of improvement. They have accurate knowledge about the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement and regularly check how well the school is doing to ensure that it continues to improve.
- Pupils achieve well as the school checks on pupils' progress regularly and rigorously. It uses this information effectively to ensure that pupils are not falling behind. Consequently, pupils make good progress across the school. From a below average starting point they reach standards that are broadly average by the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching is good and an increasing proportion is outstanding. Teachers use questioning effectively to increase pupils' progress. They have high expectations and plan lessons that meet pupils' needs so that they can achieve well. Teachers use a wide range of methods to engage pupils in learning and this motivates pupils to make good progress. Teaching assistants are used well to enable all pupils to achieve well, particularly those who are disabled or have special educational needs.
- Pupils behave well both in and out of the classroom. They work and play in harmony and relationships are strong between staff and pupils. Pupils enjoy their lessons and have good attitudes to learning. Teachers provide exciting activities that stimulate pupils to learn. Pupils work well together in lessons. They have a good understanding of how to manage risk and keep safe. They understand about different forms of bullying and say that it rarely happens in school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet outstanding. Marking does not always help pupils improve the quality of their work. Pupils do not always know how to be successful in lessons so they can check on and improve the quality of their own work. Outstanding practice is not always widely shared to improve teaching.
- Standards in writing are not high enough, especially handwriting and presentation skills, which inhibit the effectiveness of pupils' writing. Pupils' grammar and spelling skills are not always used effectively to improve their writing.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 28 lessons or parts of lessons of which two were observed jointly with the headteacher and two with the deputy headteacher, including the teaching of reading and spelling across the school.
- Inspectors observed groups of pupils, as well as individual pupils, working with teaching assistants. They listened to Year 3 pupils read and heard other pupils read in lessons.
- Inspectors talked to a range of pupils about their work, including the school council. They also examined a wide range of pupils' work across the school.
- Meetings were held with four governors as well as teaching staff, including middle leaders and the headteacher. Inspectors also spoke to a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the overall work of the school and studied a number of documents including the school's data about pupils' current progress. They also examined documents relating to safeguarding, governance, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors were unable to take account of responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) as there were too few current responses. They did, however, consider the school's parent and staff questionnaires.
- Inspectors looked at the school's website and a range of other evidence regarding the school's work.

Inspection team

David Shearsmith, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Barbara Waugh

Additional Inspector

Julie McGrane

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Diamond Hall Junior School is larger than the averaged-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium which provides additional funding for children who are looked after by the local authority and pupils who are eligible for free school meals is well above the national average.
- An above average proportion of pupils come from other ethnic minority groups. These pupils are often at the earliest stages of learning English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- A significant number of teachers have joined the school since the last inspection.
- A number of pupils enter and leave the school at different times of the year than at the normal starting time.
- The school runs a breakfast club managed by the governing body.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that is outstanding by:
 - ensuring that marking shows pupils precisely how to do better and that pupils always have opportunities to apply what the marking tells them
 - making sure that pupils know how to be successful in lessons so they can check on their own learning and progress
 - using existing outstanding practice more widely to improve teaching further.
- Improve standards in writing by:
 - improving pupils' handwriting and presentation skills in their work, so they write more efficiently
 - using pupils' developing skills in spelling and grammar to improve the quality of their writing.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher's tenacious and exacting leadership has enabled the school to improve its teaching and the progress of pupils. She is supported well by a skilful leadership team and a developing team of staff, some of whom are relatively new to the school. All work hard to bring about improvements.
- Performance management is rigorous and has been used effectively to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' overall performance. All staff have an increasing understanding of how to use data to bring about improvements. Regular checks on pupils' progress with staff have also helped to increase pupils' progress. As a result, achievement overall is good and is continuing to improve.
- Training and professional development linked to teachers' targets for improvements have also been used to improve the quality of teaching. Although staff work very much as a team, best practice and outstanding teaching strategies have not always been shared sufficiently to improve teaching. The school is aware of this and has identified it as one of its priorities in its planning.
- The school regularly checks on its own performance. This is accurate and shows that the school knows itself well. It then uses this information to develop the school further. These plans are very thorough and have supported the school's drive to improve the quality of teaching, pupils' progress and their attendance.
- Middle leaders have also been instrumental in driving up standards and bringing about improvements in teaching. Regular checks by middle and senior leaders on pupils' work in books, teachers' planning and teaching have helped to secure further improvement. This information is used to report to governors, so ensuring that they have accurate, reliable information in order to support and challenge further improvements.
- Although the school has had a strong focus on developing pupils' basic skills in mathematics and English work, the curriculum ensures that spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is developed well across the school. Pupils enjoy a good range of artistic, musical and aesthetic experiences to promote their understanding. They also get a good range of opportunities to explore other cultures and life in modern democratic Britain.
- The school has been effective in using its pupil premium funding to ensure that no pupil underperforms. It has used it in a variety of ways to raise pupils' aspirations, as well as improving pupils' basic mathematical and English skills. It has also used it specifically to ensure that every pupil has an equal opportunity to achieve as well as each other. Consequently, it has successfully improved pupils' progress and the gap in standards is closing.
- The school has identified good ways to use its primary school sports funding. Pupils have increasing access to a wider range of sporting activities, including 'street dancing', which has been highly successful in the school. Sports coaches have been used to improve teachers' skills, although this is still in its infancy with the school planning to develop this more widely across the school.
- The school uses the good support from the local authority and other expertise to improve the school.
- Safeguarding meets requirements as the school is keen to ensure that all pupils are safe and secure.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors challenge the school to do even better as they receive good information from leaders about how well the school is performing. They regularly visit the school to check on the quality of teaching, and look at work in books. They have a wide range of skills and use these to good effect to support the school. Governors also have a sound understanding of the school's and national data and know where it has strengths and where it needs to improve.
 - Governors use the school's finances wisely. They know how the pupil premium funding is spent and the difference it is making to those pupils who are eligible. They are aware of the use of the sports funding and are keen for more pupils to participate in sport. They ensure that they are meeting their statutory duties for safeguarding, including making sure they follow the correct procedures when employing new staff. All staff have been cleared to work with pupils and are trained in keeping pupils from harm. They understand about checking on teachers' performance both in and out of the classroom and how to reward teachers appropriately. They also have a clear understanding of the need to eradicate any underperformance to ensure that all pupils achieve well.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good as the school has a very strong commitment to pupils' personal development. There is a strong focus on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which in turn creates a harmonious hard-working school.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school to work and to play with their friends. They play together well at playtimes and lunch times. Pupils move around the school with care, are well-mannered and courteous and take a pride in their school.
- In lessons, they relate well to one another during discussions as partners. When asked to work in groups, pupils collaborate well in solving problems, sharing their learning with each other, and helping each other when they find learning difficult.
- The school's work concerning pupils having respect for each other's rights has a very positive effect on relationships. Pupils are considerate and have good social skills. They readily take on responsibility around the school and, as school councillors, make suggestions for how the school can improve.
- The school's records show that instances of poor behaviour are rare. Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes racism. The school takes any name-calling and inappropriate language very seriously and any incidents are dealt with well by the school.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils have a good understanding of how to manage risk in different situations. The school uses its curriculum effectively to ensure that pupils know how to keep safe when crossing the road. This was seen during the inspection when pupils were given sound advice by 'Road Safety' experts visiting the school.
- The school has good systems in place to ensure that pupils feel safe and secure, with pupils confidently stating this about the school. A number of pupils enter and leave the school at different times of the year. The school ensures that it keeps a careful track of this so it is confident that pupils are enrolled in another school again.
- Pupils are now attending more regularly as the school has rigorous systems for improving attendance. The school keeps a very careful watch on pupils' attendance to ascertain which pupils are in school. There are a number who take extended holidays or holidays in term time. The school recognises that this inhibits pupils' learning and progress and has informed parents who are becoming more aware of this fact. As a result of the school's good systems, attendance is now average.
- Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes different types of bullying. Pupils say that if bullying does happen they know that staff will deal with it. They also said that bullying was rare and that it was usually due to pupils falling out.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is consistently good and a growing proportion is outstanding, as the school regularly checks on this and its impact on pupils' progress. Systems for checking on the quality of teaching are very rigorous. As a result, teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection. The school recognises that it needs to spread good practice across the school.
- Teachers have high expectations and challenge pupils with targeted questioning. They provide stimulating and well-planned activities that are tailor-made to ensure that pupils have tasks that promote good and sometimes outstanding progress.
- The school has implemented a short teaching session in the morning for teaching spelling. Teachers use this to good effect. Where there is a focus on spelling rules followed by recording words in sentences, pupils' spelling is improving. Teachers use time effectively in most of these lessons and pupils' progress in improving their spelling skills is increasing.
- Teachers mark pupils' work diligently. They provide comments and, in mathematics, sometimes correct mathematical misunderstanding. When teachers give a clear point for improvement and time for pupils to improve, pupils make better progress and often reach a higher standard in their work. This is not applied consistently across the school. In some classes, advice does not make a difference to pupils' progress or the quality of their work.
- When pupils knew clearly how to successfully tackle a task in lessons they made the best progress. They made good use of the advice they had been given to check their work and make it better. This clear and helpful focus on how to improve is not consistently evident in all books and classes.
- Pupils respond well to the school's systematic approach to teaching writing. In these lessons, they make

good and sometimes outstanding progress as they link reading and writing skills closely together. Pupils enjoy discussing their writing and different texts and make good progress as they discuss their thoughts and prepare for writing. Reading is also taught systematically across the school with reading workshops and activities tailored to pupils' needs and which ensure that they improve their reading skills.

- Pupils enjoy solving problems in mathematics. They have developed a good understanding of different aspects of mathematics and are developing good calculation skills. They like the emerging focus on chances to use problem-solving and investigations. This is still in its infancy, but is improving pupils' flexibility in applying their mathematical skills and improving their progress.
- Teaching assistants make a positive contribution to pupils' progress, both in and out of lessons. They work flexibly with different group sizes according to need and pupils enjoy and benefit from these sessions. Tasks are targeted at pupils' learning needs and they make good progress.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils achieve well as rigorous checks are kept on their progress across the school. Pupils enter the school with skills that are below average compared with similar pupils nationally at the end of Year 2. They also often arrive with weaker literacy skills.
- They generally make good progress across the school and leave with standards that are broadly average by the time they leave in Year 6. In 2013, they reached standards well above average in all subjects due to improved teaching. In 2014 they had a dip in performance due to pupils arriving and leaving at differing times during the year. Some pupils also had significant needs.
- Pupils often make good progress in mathematics. They sometimes reach standards that are well above average. This is due to the school's strong focus on teaching basic calculations and ensuring that pupils are taught a range of different skills in mathematics systematically.
- Similarly, they also make good and sometimes outstanding progress in reading and reach above average standards. The school has adopted a systematic approach to the teaching of reading and writing and this is having a very positive impact on pupils' achievement in reading.
- Although the school has been successful in improving pupils' progress in writing, improvements in standards are not as significant. Standards in writing are relatively weaker, as pupils have less secure handwriting and presentation skills. They also do not reach a high enough standard in their writing because they do not always use their grammar and spelling skills to good effect to improve the quality of their writing.
- Pupils who are from ethnic minority groups make good progress. They are supported well by teaching assistants and specialist language support. By the time they leave in Year 6 they are above average in reading and writing and well above average in mathematics.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress across the school, as there has been a focus on ensuring that these pupils make better progress. The school uses its resources effectively to ensure that pupils have an equality of opportunity to do as well as their peers. By the time they leave in Year 6, this group is just behind other pupils in the school by half a term and two terms behind other pupils nationally.
- The most able pupils make good progress across the school and reach standards that are above average in reading, writing and mathematics overall, although their performance in writing is not as strong as in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs are supported well and generally make good progress. In 2014, they made good progress from a very low starting point on entry. They did not reach the same standard as similar pupils nationally, as they had complex needs.

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	108759
Local authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	422197

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	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	305
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Margaret Snaith
Headteacher	Kim Bennett
Date of previous school inspection	12 February 2013
Telephone number	0191 553 7630
Fax number	0191 553 7631
Email address	diamond.hall.junior@schools.sunderland.gov.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2014

