

# Benfieldside Primary School

Moorlands, Blackhill, Consett, County Durham, DH8 0JX

**Inspection dates** 26–27 November 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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.

- Pupils' achievement is good. All groups of pupils make excellent progress in Key Stage 2, in reading and mathematics, to achieve standards that are typical for their age at the end of Year 6.
- Attainment and the rates at which pupils make progress have improved in the early years provision and Key Stage 1.
- The headteacher has an excellent understanding of what constitutes good teaching and gives clear and effective advice on how learning can be better. As a result, teaching is good and improving.
- Children in the early years provision enjoy learning in the woodland classroom. Older pupils welcome the opportunity to learn from visits and visitors.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They say they feel very safe in school and look after one another very well.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. All adults offer sensitive care and support for pupils, especially those who have a range of learning, emotional and behavioural needs.
- The school provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, their understanding of British values and their knowledge of other faiths and cultures.
- The headteacher and the governing body have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and relative weaknesses in teaching and achievement. They have effective systems to check on how well the school is doing.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Attainment in writing is lower than in reading and mathematics. Pupils have too few opportunities to write at length in English and other subjects. Pupils' handwriting and the presentation of their work are untidy.
- Pupils are not always given plenty of challenging work to do in mathematics, history and geography.
- Pupils are not always clear about how to improve their work, including their spelling, or given time to act upon any advice they receive.
- There are no clear, measurable, rigorous targets for pupils' attainment in the school's plan for the future.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors held meetings with staff, groups of pupils and the vice-chair and other members of the Governing Body. The inspectors also spoke to a representative of the local authority.
- The 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. The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during assemblies, lunchtimes and break times.
- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 19 lessons taught by 11 teachers. They listened to groups of pupils in Years 1 and 2 read. In addition, the inspectors made a number of short visits to lessons.
- The lead inspector conducted one lesson observation jointly with the headteacher. He also observed the headteacher reporting back to the teacher on his findings regarding the quality of teaching, learning and pupils' achievement.
- The inspectors took into account the 12 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and the school's own canvassing of parental opinion. The inspectors also spoke informally to parents.
- Twenty-six staff completed questionnaires and the responses were analysed.

## Inspection team

Gordon Potter, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Karen Holmes

Additional Inspector

Frank Cain

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This school is slightly larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Almost all pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those eligible for support through the pupil premium, is well above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is well above average.
- There are lunchtime and after-school clubs run by school staff and external coaches.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment in English and mathematics.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment by:
  - ensuring that work is hard enough for all groups of pupils and offers them more opportunities to complete more challenging work in mathematics, history and geography and write at length in English and other subjects
  - ensuring that pupils are given clear guidance about how to improve their work, including their spelling, and time to act upon that advice
  - improving pupils' handwriting and the presentation of their work
  - ensuring that there are specific, measurable, rigorous targets for pupils' attainment in the school's plan for the future that are regularly checked against pupils' work and progress.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is clearly focussed in his drive and desire to improve the school. Pupils' excellent progress by the end of Year 6 in reading and mathematics and their good progress in English did not stop him recognising that progress and the quality of teaching were variable across school and that outcomes for children in the early years and for pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 were not high enough.
- As a result of the headteacher's leadership, teaching is now good, pupils make progress more consistently across the school and standards have risen in the early years provision and at the end of Year 2. The school is a calm learning environment where there is a clear focus on pupils improving their basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The headteacher reviews the quality of teaching regularly and he has an exceptionally clear view of what constitutes good teaching and learning. He ensures that assessment of pupils' attainment is accurate and rigorous and that there are clear procedures to ensure that work is well matched to pupils' learning needs. Teachers welcome his advice and know that it will be supported by highly effective continuing professional development.
- The management of teachers' performance has been extremely well used to ensure that all staff have clear targets. These have been successful in helping to improve their teaching, ensure that pupils have made excellent progress in reading and mathematics by the end of Year 6 and raised pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2.
- However, because of the experience profile of almost all the teachers, targets can no longer be linked to financial rewards in all cases. It is testimony to the headteacher's respected leadership and strong motivational skills and to the commitment of all the teachers that they willingly take on leadership responsibilities.
- The school's plans for the future have appropriate areas for development and clear procedures to check that they are being put in place. However, there are no specific, rigorous, measurable targets for pupils' attainment. As a result, when leaders check the quality of teaching or scrutinise the work in pupils' books, they have no milestones to check that pupils are on track to raise their attainment.
- Pupil premium funding has been spent effectively on programmes to develop reading, writing and mathematics and to provide smaller group sizes, extra resources and support where this is necessary. As a result, disadvantaged pupils currently make similar rapid progress overall as other pupils in school do in reading and mathematics and good progress in writing.
- The primary school sport funding has been used effectively to employ coaches who have introduced new sports, such as fencing and cycling. Coaches are also helping to develop teachers' own expertise in teaching physical education, especially athletics and gymnastics. Pupils say that they very much enjoy their lessons and opportunities for competitive sport with other schools. This is contributing very well to pupils' physical development and well-being.
- While the school focuses on developing pupils' basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics, it also offers many exciting opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness and their understanding of British values. They enjoy a range of educational visits and visitors, including to the places of worship of different faiths and events that help them find out about other countries.
- However, pupils have too few opportunities to write at length in English and other subjects. Leaders and teachers are clear about how to teach the basics of writing, but lack confidence to develop a more imaginative and creative approach that would allow pupils more opportunities to develop their own ideas at length.
- While pupils have plenty of chances to solve problems in mathematics, they are not required to do plenty of sustained challenging work. Learning in geography and history is not yet planned well enough so that work becomes harder as pupils grow older. Pupils are not encouraged sufficiently to explore the links that exist between subjects.
- The school is extremely clearly focused on identifying any pupils who are at risk of falling behind and has ensured that all pupils make excellent progress in reading and mathematics and good progress in writing by the end of Year 6. This clearly shows the school's commitment to promoting equal opportunities and tackling discrimination.
- The school welcomes the support and advice that it receives from the local authority and from its education development partner. This has helped to improve governance and the early years provision.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors offer extremely strong support and increasing challenge to the school. They have improved their effectiveness through training and establishing a stronger focus on visiting classrooms and

analysing information about pupils' achievement. The Chair of the Governing Body is experienced and is very well supported by other governors whose own professional expertise is used to monitor learning and the school budget through a programme of meetings and school visits. As a result, governors are very clear about the school's plans for the future, the quality of teaching, pupils' achievement and the curriculum.

- Governors know how the pupil premium funding and the primary physical education and sport funding are spent. They ensure that they have a strong impact on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and all pupils' health and well-being. Governors understand the arrangements to check on teachers' performance and any rewards for good teaching.
- Governors ensure that the school fulfils its statutory responsibilities for safeguarding. All staff are trained appropriately to keep pupils safe and free from harm and have been cleared as suitable to work with children.

## The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Inspection evidence shows that behaviour is good in lessons, in assemblies, around school, in the dinner hall and during presentations by visitors. Indeed, when pupils are fully engaged in their learning, their behaviour is excellent. Pupils say that behaviour is typically good, although occasionally some pupils can be silly in their lessons and a very few pupils find it difficult to behave well.
- The school's records show that instances of poor behaviour are rare, because pupils understand and accept the school's system of rewards and sanctions for good or poor behaviour. Indeed, the school council is closely involved in reviewing the behaviour policy. There have been only two unavoidable fixed-term exclusions in the past three years.
- Pupils are very polite to adults and keen to talk about their school and their work. Pupils show clear respect for one another, show maturity and enjoy taking on responsibilities as school councillors and playground friends, helping others play safely and enjoyably together. The school council has developed the playground equipment and raised funds for charities and discusses issues related to pupils' safety and welfare.
- Pupils develop social skills through the many opportunities to learn together in the classroom, in school clubs, on visits and in the outdoor classroom.
- Pupils do not take sufficient pride in their handwriting or the presentation of their work.

### Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Parents and pupils are certain that pupils are safe and happy in school. There are rigorous procedures to ensure that this is indeed the case, with all adults offering very effective and highly sensitive care to pupils.
- Pupils feel extremely safe. They are very aware of different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying and homophobic or racist name-calling. They say that there is very little bullying and this is quickly dealt with.
- There are clear systems to check on attendance and encourage pupils and parents to see the importance of coming to school regularly. As a result, far fewer pupils are persistently absent and the overall rate of attendance has improved significantly and is now average. While incidents of lateness have also been reduced, there remains a number of pupils who are persistently late for school.

## The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching of reading, writing and mathematics is good overall. While some outstanding teaching over time is helping pupils to make rapid progress in Key Stage 2, it is not yet sustained enough to ensure that pupils make outstanding progress overall, especially in writing.
- Pupils across school are encouraged to write in a range of styles and genres and for different audiences. They are challenged to understand the difference between formal and informal writing and to understand when they can use colloquialisms and what that means. Their reading is used well to give them ideas for

writing, for example J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Father Christmas Letters*. They are helped to understand how to structure their writing and punctuate it accurately. They are given advice on how they can start and develop their writing.

- However, progress in writing is good, rather than outstanding, because pupils have too few opportunities to practise these skills and develop their imagination and creativity in extended pieces of writing in English and other subjects.
- Pupils in Year 2 are helped to understand mathematical ideas, such as the relationship between fractions and the whole and begin to understand the terms numerator and denominator. In Key Stage 2, pupils enjoy tackling word problems related to real-life situations which help them to calculate percentages. Any misconceptions they have are quickly addressed and they are helped to make good progress.
- However, although pupils have made outstanding progress in relation to their starting points in mathematics tests over Key Stage 2, work in pupils' books indicates that teaching of mathematics is good, rather than outstanding. Pupils have too few opportunities to do sustained work in their books or wrestle with difficult calculations. Occasionally, work is not well enough planned to ensure that all groups of pupils, especially the most able, are engaged in challenging activities all the time.
- The school's marking policy is used consistently to help pupils understand how successful they have been in their work. However, it is applied less successfully in telling pupils how to improve their work or in giving them time to act upon any advice given, including their spelling.

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Standards at the end of Year 2 have typically been below and well below average in reading, writing and mathematics. However, unvalidated data indicate that standards at the end of Year 2 in 2014 are now average in mathematics, reading and writing. This represents good progress for these pupils whose attainment was below the expectation for their age when they entered Year 1.
- Standards at the end of Year 6 are average in mathematics and reading and slightly below average in writing. In 2014, pupils in Year 6 made outstanding progress in reading and mathematics and good progress in writing.
- Evidence in pupils' books and the school's data about pupils' progress show that pupils currently in Year 6 are on track to attain standards that are in line with those expected for their age. They are making good progress from starting points at the end of Year 2, which were below average.
- The school has introduced plans which have been highly successful in ensuring that pupils across the school are now making consistently good progress in their reading, writing and mathematics. Phonics teaching is typically good. As a result, almost all pupils have a clear awareness of letters and the sounds they make and understand how this helps them to read words which are new to them. Pupils increasingly enjoy reading at home and in school and enjoy a wide range of authors and books.
- Unvalidated data indicate that in 2014 the most-able pupils in school achieved standards that were above the expectations for their age in reading and writing and well above in mathematics. They had made more than the progress expected of them in reading and mathematics, although too few did so in writing.
- The most-able pupils currently in Year 6 and across the school have been clearly identified and work is targeted to help them attain standards that are above or well above the expectations for their age.
- However, very few of these pupils achieved standards that were above the expectations for their age at the end of Year 2. Improvements in attainment in Year 2 have not yet had time to have an impact on standards at the end of Year 6. While, measures of progress in Key Stage 2 are a strength of the school, leaders are aware that the challenge is to ensure that standards improve, especially in writing.
- Unvalidated data indicate that in 2014 disadvantaged pupils made the same excellent progress as that of other pupils in the school in reading and mathematics and the same good progress in writing. As a result, a significant proportion of them had attainment which was above the expectations for their age in reading and well above in mathematics, although this was not the case in writing. Overall, they were two terms behind other pupils in school in mathematics and a year behind in reading and writing. They were two terms behind other pupils nationally in mathematics and reading and four terms behind in writing.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make excellent progress in reading and good progress in mathematics and writing, because of the very effective teaching and support they receive from teachers and highly skilled teaching assistants.

**The early years provision****is good**

- Most children start the Nursery class with skills and knowledge that are below those typical for their age. Children make good progress in the Nursery class. However, because some children leave and others join the early years provision in the Reception class, the skills and knowledge of the children remain below those typical for their age. This is especially the case in speaking and listening, reading, writing, understanding the world and their understanding of numbers and counting.
- In the past too few children were ready for more formal learning when they entered Year 1. In 2014, good teaching helped children to make good progress. As a result, more pupils than in the past now have skills in line with the expectations for their age and had achieved a good level of development when they entered Year 1.
- However, while girls had skills and knowledge above those typical for their age, boys' skills and knowledge were below. Teachers in the early years provision have recognised this and are offering boys more opportunities to write and practise their skills in numbers and counting in activities that appeal to them, including learning outdoors.
- Indeed, improvements to the outdoor provision are helping all groups of children to make good progress. Their interest in the natural world, their imagination and their desire to explore are developed in the school's woodland classroom. They are encouraged to talk about what they see, although occasionally some questioning does not allow children to develop their own answers and ideas.
- Learning outdoors has also had a strong impact on children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness and understanding of how to stay fit and healthy. Allied to clear procedures to involve them and their parents both before they start school and in their learning, this has helped children settle extremely well.
- Adults ensure that requirements regarding children's safety are rigorously met. There are excellent teaching and support for those children who have significant learning needs. As a result, children feel very safe and their behaviour is excellent.
- Indoors and outdoors, there are many opportunities for children to develop their early writing, number recognition and counting skills, both when learning with their teachers and teaching assistants and when learning on their own. The learning of phonics is very well managed by teachers and teaching assistants. Children are engaged by books and traditional tales such as *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* and encouraged to talk about them and re-enact what they have read and heard.
- The leadership and management of the early years provision are good. The early years leader has developed a strong team ethos and all adults are committed to improving learning opportunities for all groups of children. They are keen to improve their expertise and seek and act upon advice from school leaders, local authority advisors and teachers in other schools. As a result, teaching is good and improving strongly.
- Teachers have a clear understanding of children's skills and abilities when they enter the Nursery and Reception classes and leave for Year 1. This information is well used to ensure that work is well-matched to the learning needs of different groups of children.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	114045
<b>Local authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	448752

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	287
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ivor Williams
<b>Headteacher</b>	David Kerry
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 February 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01207 591369
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