

North Fawdon Primary School

Brotherlee Road, Fawdon, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear NE3 2SL

Inspection dates

10–11 December 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	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.

- The school's motto of 'learn together, aim high and succeed' has quickly become a reality in this rapidly improving school.
- The relentless focus of the headteacher on improving the quality of teaching has been pivotal in raising the expectations of staff and pupils.
- Teachers know their pupils well. They use accurate assessment information to plan lessons that build on what pupils already know and move their learning forward.
- Most pupils make good progress from their starting points so that they quickly make up for the lost ground of previous years.
- Children in the early years make a strong start to their learning because teaching prioritises the development of their personal, social and communication skills.
- Pupils' positive attitudes to learning and their good behaviour make a strong contribution to their learning and enjoyment of school.
- A caring and nurturing atmosphere contributes effectively to pupils' safety and their strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Attendance has improved so that it is now broadly average. The number of pupils who are persistently absent has reduced significantly.
- Pupils work and play alongside their friends harmoniously. They show respect and tolerance for those of other faiths, cultures and communities.
- Pupils' interests are enriched by a wide range of clubs and activities that develop their sporting, musical and artistic talents.
- Governance is skilled, knowledgeable and dedicated to making the school the best it can possibly be. Governors frequently make their own checks on the school's performance through regular visits to classrooms to see teachers and pupils at work.
- Parents are highly supportive of the school. They appreciate the advice and guidance they receive to help their children and families to succeed.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' progress is not as strong in Key Stage 1 as it is in the rest of the school.
- The most able pupils are not always given work that challenges them to reach their full potential.
- Pupils are not always sure what they have to learn next to reach a higher level of achievement. They do not always understand how to respond to their teachers' marking to enable faster progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 17 lessons or part-lessons delivered by nine different teachers, including those within the Additionally Resourced Centre (ARC); the special resource unit which is part of the school. They observed the quality of teaching and learning, looked at the current standard of pupils' work and entered into informal discussion with pupils about their learning and progress.
- A number of shorter visits were also made to observe groups of pupils receiving additional support outside of their classroom sessions and to lessons where pupils are taught about grammar, punctuation and spelling. Inspectors also visited four class assemblies.
- Four lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors observed pupils during playtimes, lunchtimes and around the school. They also listened to a number of Year 1 and Year 2 pupils read.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, the headteacher and deputy headteacher, school leaders with responsibility for reading, mathematics, the early years and special educational needs and a group of governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body. A discussion was also held with a representative from the local authority.
- Too few responses were received to the online questionnaire (Parent View) during the inspection. Instead, inspectors evaluated the school's own, most recent, parental survey and spoke to a group of parents who were attending the school's Christmas performance.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and examined a range of documentation including the school's own records of pupils' learning and progress, the checks made on the quality of teaching and performance of staff and those relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Lee Owston, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Belita Scott

Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Information about this school

- North Fawdon is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- A special resource unit known as the ARC forms part of the school. It caters for a small number of pupils from across the local authority who have complex needs, some of which are related to social, emotional and behavioural issues. It is managed by the governing body of the school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils (those eligible for support through the pupil premium) is well-above average at over double the national figure. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is above average.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage though an above-average proportion of pupils are from other heritage groups. The proportion of pupils who are new to English, or speak English as an additional language, is higher than found nationally.
- The number of pupils who transfer in and out of the school during the school year is well-above the national figure.
- When the school was previously inspected in December 2013, it was judged to require special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education. One of Her Majesty's Inspectors subsequently visited the school on two occasions to monitor its progress.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics.
- The school has been part of the Newcastle North West Learning Trust, a collaborative partnership of local schools, for just over one year.
- Three new teachers joined the school at the beginning of the academic year. All other teachers followed their classes into the next year group to teach them for an additional year. A number of new governors have also been appointed since the time of the last inspection.
- The early years operates as one classroom for both nursery and reception children. Nursery children attend on a part-time basis in the mornings only.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching further so that it is consistently good and moves rapidly towards outstanding, enabling all pupils, especially those in Key Stage 1, to reach their full potential, by:
 - providing more challenging tasks for the most able pupils so that they can reach the higher levels
 - strengthening the quality of teachers' comments in pupils' books so that pupils can provide a more meaningful response to move their learning forward
 - reviewing the individual learning targets given to pupils so that they are aware of where they are in their learning and understand what they have to do next to reach a higher level of achievement
 - ensuring younger pupils have more frequent opportunities to practise their reading at home through greater engagement with parents.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The passion and determination of the headteacher to provide all pupils with the very best educational experiences has been pivotal in the school's journey out of special measures. Staff, at all levels, share the headteacher's high expectations and ambitions for the school. As one member of staff commented, 'it's all about teamwork here; reflecting on your weaknesses and working together to improve them quickly.'
- The strong leadership of teaching has been instrumental in the school's rapid improvement. All leaders check relentlessly on the difference new initiatives are making to the quality of teaching. Detailed and regular feedback to staff about their performance is used well to reward good teaching and tackle poor performance. The fundamental weaknesses of the past have been overcome swiftly.
- Staff development is at the heart of the school's improvement agenda. A carefully crafted training programme has enabled all teachers to raise their game. Opportunities for staff to collaborate with colleagues on the most pressing priorities have been successful in developing a culture of continuous reflection and improvement.
- Subject leaders have strengthened their skills considerably over the last year. They are making great strides in sharing aspects of best practice with their colleagues and checking that their work is making a discernible difference to the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils.
- The curriculum prioritises the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics so that all pupils have a firm grounding in grammar, spelling and calculation skills. Leaders have worked hard to ensure that pupils are equally well-prepared for life in modern Britain. For example, a programme of assemblies and class discussion is improving pupils' respect and tolerance towards those from other faiths, cultures and communities. This promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- Additional money, such as the pupil premium or the primary school sports funding, is used wisely and targeted specifically at improving the achievement, engagement and well-being of pupils. Staff training, a wide-range of extra-curricular activities and the use of expert coaches are all having a positive effect in engaging pupils in sport, raising their confidence and self-esteem and narrowing the gap between the performance of disadvantaged pupils and their peers.
- Senior leaders have benefitted from the effective support of the local authority in changing the school's fortunes. The impact of this work can be seen in the school's impressive recovery, most noticeably in the improvements to teaching. Overall, time given by the local authority officers has reduced as the school's ability to manage and direct its own improvement has strengthened.
- Partnership working with other schools in the locality is strong. Membership of the Newcastle North West Learning Trust has enabled leaders and teachers to observe best practice and share ideas on a wider scale. This has contributed to the significant pace of change since the last inspection.
- Statutory responsibilities to safeguard and protect pupils meet requirements with much best practice in the care and support offered to both pupils and their families. Parents are fulsome in their praise for how the school reaches out to its community. When asked to express their views with inspectors they commented, 'the headteacher has done wonders for me and my child during a difficult family time; we wouldn't want to go anywhere else' and 'everyone is so dedicated and willing to go the extra mile to help.'
- Considering the school's recovery from causing concern in 2013 to a good school in 2014, senior leaders and governors are well placed to sustain improvement. As the headteacher and deputy headteacher both commented, 'this is only the start of the journey'.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have played a significant role in getting the school back on track. Astute decision making on the part of the Chair of the Governing Body has led to the recruitment of experienced and knowledgeable members. Together, actions over the last year have demonstrated a clear understanding of the school's priorities and a resolve to challenge senior leaders and hold them to account.
 - Oversight of the school's work is effective. Governors are secure in their knowledge of the school's performance data and possess a confident understanding of both the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' progress. They are not content to receive updates from the headteacher alone. Members regularly cross-reference senior leaders' views, for example, by visiting school themselves to observe at first-hand the work going on in classrooms.
 - The links between teachers' pay and their performance are understood. Governors ensure that child protection and safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. Statutory responsibilities are met well.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- As the quality of teaching has strengthened, pupils' attitudes to learning have improved. The number of lessons disrupted by poor behaviour has reduced substantially. Pupils are now showing greater effort to engage in lessons because they are eager to gain their 'Super 7' badge; a whole-school initiative to reward seven attributes of effective learning, for example, sustained effort or eagerness to respond to questions. Around one quarter of pupils currently hold this accolade and the proportion is rising each term.
- Pupils' behaviour has improved dramatically since the previous inspection because of increased expectations by staff and greater consistency in the application of the school's behaviour policy. Even where pupils' behaviour still has to be checked, teachers employ a range of strategies so that incidents are resolved quickly and do not impact on the learning of other pupils.
- Staff within the ARC provision are skilled at managing the behaviours of pupils who attend. Consistent routines and the prioritisation of pupils' social skills ensure that pupils develop the vocabulary to talk about their feelings and resolve disputes. This equips them well when they are ready to re-join the main school.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils are knowledgeable about the risks to which they may be exposed, such as when using the internet, and understand how to minimise these to keep themselves safe. Recently appointed safety officers, in the words of pupils, 'are there to look after younger pupils and make sure they do not come to any harm.'
- Prejudice-based bullying, such as that connected to racism or sexual orientation, is reducing quickly. Pupils show increasing respect and tolerance towards those from other faiths, cultures and communities because assemblies and lessons now raise such important topics and allow them to understand issues of equality. As a display in the school hall advocates, 'we may all be different fish, but in this school we swim together.'
- Pupils' attendance has improved so that it is broadly average. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent or arrive late for school has reduced significantly because parents are more acutely aware of how many hours of learning time their children have lost when they are absent.

The quality of teaching**is good**

- Senior leaders have done a great deal to improve the quality of teaching and place pupils' learning at the heart of every classroom. Teachers themselves have an increased understanding of what constitutes effective learning and are far more aware of their impact on pupils' progress as opportunities for them to observe best practice has become routine. Teaching is typically good and most pupils achieve well.
- This year, the vast majority of teachers have followed their classes up to the next year group. Teachers have been able to hit the ground running because they already have a clear understanding of their pupils' strengths, weaknesses and interests; no learning time has been wasted.
- Teachers assess pupils' understanding accurately and use this information to plan lessons that build on what pupils already know and introduce new learning. Most pupils are given work that provides just enough challenge for their abilities. However, the most able pupils are not always stretched to reach their true capabilities; some pupils complete tasks that they have already mastered. This slows their progress and stops them from reaching their full potential.
- The basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics are taught well. Pupils are clear in the 'one big thing' they must learn each lesson and can see the usefulness of the skills they are taught because work is set within meaningful contexts. This motivates pupils to try their best. For example, Year 6 pupils enthusiastically tackled percentages because they were challenged to find the best reductions in a sale.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly. Increasing amounts of time are set aside for pupils to address their teachers' comments but the quality of pupils' responses vary. Sometimes pupils reply with a simple 'ok' or 'yes Miss' because their teacher's comment has not been phrased in a way that allows them to respond more meaningfully. For example, few pupils have the opportunity to rework a clumsily phrased sentence or attempt an alternative method for an incorrect calculation so that progress is more rapid.
- A consistent approach to setting individual learning targets for pupils is in place. Pupils understand what they have to do in English and mathematics to reach these objectives but are less clear about how their skills should develop further, once their target has been reached. Pupils, especially the most able, are unsure how they can secure a higher level of attainment and this places a glass ceiling on achievement.

The achievement of pupils**is good**

- Achievement data and pupils' current work confirm that most pupils are now making good progress across the school so that they quickly make up for lost ground. Rapid improvements to teaching and increased expectations by both leaders and teachers of the progress pupils should make have led to a greater proportion of pupils reaching the standards expected for their age. For example, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected level in writing by the end of Year 6 is now broadly average.
- Nevertheless, leaders are aware that the progress of pupils in Key Stage 1, while accelerating, is not yet as strong as the rest of the school due to more prolonged periods of staffing disruption in these year groups. For example, while the proportion of pupils achieving the expected level in mathematics by the end of Year 2 almost doubled in 2014, it remains well below the national average.
- Pupils' currently in Year 2 and Year 6 are on-track to achieve well. Progress data, inspectors' observations and the quality of pupils' work all indicate that the school is likely to be at least in line with the standards found nationally in 2015. These will be the highest results the school has ever achieved.
- Such significant gains in attainment are due to pupils' much improved reading, writing and mathematics skills. Teaching has prioritised the basic skills of grammar, spelling and mental calculation so that pupils are more confident to tackle longer pieces of writing and use their knowledge of number to solve problems and think for themselves. Meticulous attention to handwriting has given pupils an obvious pride in the presentation of their work.
- Pupils are eager to read. Attractive reading areas in each classroom and the giving of books as a reward have all raised the profile of reading for pleasure. Teachers rightly focus on both phonics and comprehension so that more pupils now read with fluency and understanding. However, some younger pupils do not get to practise their reading frequently enough at home to move their learning on at a faster pace. Where books have been chosen for sharing because they enable pupils to explore issues such as homophobia, pupils' moral, social and cultural awareness is developing strongly.
- Pupil premium funding has been used well to appoint additional staff, train teachers in specific support programmes and enrich the wider experiences of disadvantaged pupils. The impact of this spending on disadvantaged pupils can be seen in their raised attendance levels, increased participation in extra-curricular activities and better rates of progress across the school. While disadvantaged pupils are working approximately two terms behind other pupils nationally across subjects by the end of Year 6, they have caught-up to their classmates so that they achieve equally as well. The narrowing of these gaps over time shows leaders' commitment to equality of opportunity.
- Disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and pupils who speak English as an additional language make the same good progress as their peers. Staff are quick to identify their specific needs, alongside outside agencies where necessary, to address gaps in understanding and remove barriers to learning. Teaching assistants play a fundamental part in teaching these groups of learners, offering just the right level of intervention so that pupils feel supported but are able to learn for themselves.
- The most able pupils are not always challenged to reach their true potential. Teachers do not always plan as carefully for this particular group in their class so that they find some work too easy. As a result, not enough pupils are reaching the higher levels across the school, despite showing the capability to do so.
- Pupils who attend the ARC make good progress from their starting points. The dedicated team of staff carefully craft their lessons to constantly address pupils' social and behavioural skills. Testament to the quality of this work is the high proportion of pupils who successfully reintegrate back into the mainstream classrooms of North Fawdon, even when they have originally arrived from other schools. Parents cannot speak highly enough of this provision and the difference it has made to their children.

The early years provision**is good**

- Leaders have worked hard to secure the accuracy of assessments. Effective liaison with the children's centre and an initiative for teachers to work alongside health visitors during their home visits are strengthening the quality of information available to staff so that teaching can be focused from the start.
- Children arrive in Nursery with skills and abilities that are below those typically expected for their age; a few arrive significantly below, particularly in their personal, social and language skills. Children make good progress from these starting points because staff are relentless in providing targeted sessions, often one-to-one or in small groups, to address children's weaknesses.
- By the start of Reception, children have caught-up quickly and are ready to learn but not all children have

had this good start. Some children arrive in Reception having not attended any form of pre-school setting. Nonetheless, staff quickly get to work to address children's gaps in learning so that they make equally good progress to those who have been in the setting longer.

- By the time children are ready to enter Year 1, those who have been in the early years since Nursery are fully prepared for the demands of school. Some children who start in Reception are less well prepared and this leads to a lower overall proportion than found nationally reaching a good level of development. However, this proportion has more than doubled over the last year, showing the accelerated progress now being made in the early years. School records and inspectors' observations show that achievement is set to increase again in 2015 so that figures are likely to be at least in line with those found nationally.
- High expectations, clear rules and routines and the constant reinforcement of good speaking and listening are the bedrock of the setting's work. Children learn and play together well because they have good relationships with adults and are kept safe. Children cooperate with each other and are increasingly independent of adults, for example, when putting on their coats and shoes to enjoy the outdoors.
- Teamwork has ensured swift and effective improvement. Leaders understand their strengths and weaknesses and have clear plans in place to progress further. Visits to other settings have been crucial in learning from the best; the setting is now in a strong position to share their own emerging expertise with others.

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	108471
Local authority	Newcastle Upon Tyne
Inspection number	450648

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	175
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christine Wright
Headteacher	Alison Cairns
Date of previous school inspection	4 December 2013
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