

Howden-le-Wear Primary School

School Street, Howden-le-Wear, Crook, County Durham, DL15 8HJ

Inspection dates 15–16 January 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Pupils make excellent progress in all classes across the school. By the end of Year 6, they reach standards in reading and mathematics that are well above average.
- Standards and progress in writing are rising, but they are not quite as high as in reading and mathematics, particularly at the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils do not always have enough opportunity to write at length across the curriculum.
- Children have an excellent start to their learning in the Reception class.
- High-quality teaching ensures that pupils learn very well. Teaching is at least consistently good and outstanding overall.
- Staff know pupils very well. They have high expectations and set challenging work that enables all pupils to reach high standards and make rapid progress. High-quality marking ensures that pupils know what they need to do to improve their work.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work closely together to support the learning of individual and vulnerable pupils. This includes disadvantaged pupils and those who are disabled or have special educational needs.
- The progress of pupils is checked carefully, and any slower progress is addressed quickly and effectively.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is outstanding. Pupils are very proud of and greatly enjoy their school. They have excellent attitudes to learning and are very keen to do well. Pupils get on very well with one another and there are very strong relationships between pupils and staff.
- Pupils say that they feel completely safe in school and are looked after very well. They say that bullying is very rare, and that there is none in school at present.
- The curriculum is rich, varied and well balanced, and engages pupils very effectively in their learning. There is a wide range of enrichment activities.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very effectively, and pupils are very well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The school is extremely well led and managed. The headteacher, staff and governors have high ambitions. They are committed to continuous improvement and achieving the best outcomes for each child. They have successfully improved the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement since the previous inspection.
- Parents are extremely supportive and strongly appreciative of the school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed nine lessons taught by five teachers, including one observed jointly with the headteacher. The inspector also visited a school assembly.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the early years coordinator, the middle leaders and with nine governors, including the two co-Chairs of the Governing Body. The inspector also spoke with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector met a group of pupils to discuss their views of the school and spoke informally with other pupils in lessons and during break and lunchtimes.
- The inspector reviewed the work pupils were doing in lessons and in their books over time. He listened to pupils in Year 2 read and talked to them about their enjoyment of reading.
- The inspector observed the work of the school and examined a number of documents. These included data concerning pupils' current achievement, development plans and arrangements to check the performance of staff. The inspector also looked at records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding. Minutes of governing body meetings and the school adviser's reports were also considered.
- The inspector took account of 19 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire. He also considered 17 responses to the questionnaires completed by staff for the inspection.

Inspection team

Robert Birtwell, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average sized primary school.
- Pupils are taught in four classes from the Reception Year to Year 6, including three mixed-aged classes.
- Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. All pupils speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well above average. These are pupils supported by the pupil premium which is funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school shares its site, buildings and some staff with Howden-Le-Wear Pre-School. This is a private nursery run by the governing body of the school and which is inspected separately by Ofsted.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' achievement and progress in writing, particularly at Key Stage 2, so that they match those in reading and mathematics, by ensuring that pupils have more opportunities to write at length across the curriculum.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher provides very strong and effective leadership to a dedicated team of staff. School leaders at all levels, including governors, are very ambitious and have high expectations for the school. They have secured improvements to the quality of teaching and learning, achievement and behaviour since the previous inspection.
- This small school is a very calm, orderly and happy community. All staff work closely together to support pupils and each other, and there is a very clear and shared ethos. All staff readily and successfully take on responsibilities and act as middle leaders. They are committed to achieving the best outcomes for each pupil.
- The school has rigorous systems to check the progress and achievement of pupils. School leaders use this information to set challenging targets for both pupils and staff. Consequently, the school has a very clear and accurate view of how well it is doing. Although the school is performing very strongly, there is no complacency, and the school improvement plan identifies where it could do even better. For example, leaders are aware that achievement in writing is not as strong as in reading and mathematics. Plans are in place to address this, and standards in writing have risen and continue to rise.
- Any underperformance or slower progress by pupils is quickly identified and addressed, by providing extra help and support if it is needed. The school has employed extra teaching and support staff to assist with particular groups, and this is having a positive impact on raising standards. This shows the school's successful commitment to equal opportunities for all pupils.
- There is a continuing and strong focus on improving teaching. Appropriate training and professional development have led to a rise in the quality of teaching since the previous inspection, and teaching is now outstanding overall. All teachers have targets linked to pupils' achievement and progress, and these are taken into account when making recommendations about teachers' pay.
- The curriculum is rich, varied and well balanced. It engages pupils very effectively in their learning and provides excellent learning opportunities. It is enriched by a broad range of activities, clubs, trips and visits covering sport, drama and culture. For example, pupils spoke enthusiastically about a residential outdoor activities trip, as well as visits to the theatre. They also greatly enjoyed a recent visit to the Durham Light Infantry museum in connection with their work on Remembrance and the First World War.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. There is a clear focus on social and moral issues and the school works effectively to raise pupils' spiritual and cultural awareness through a variety of assemblies, visits and visitors. For example, the school has strong links with a school in Ghana. These ensure that pupils have a good knowledge of other cultures and religions, and help to foster good relations and prevent discrimination. The school also promotes British values very effectively. Pupils are very well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The school uses the pupil premium funding very successfully to provide additional support for disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils, either in the classroom, in small groups or individually. As a result, attendance has risen, and any gaps in the achievement of disadvantaged pupils have closed.
- The school is using the additional primary school sport funding successfully. It is providing staff training and specialist coaches in collaboration with the local sports partnership, and there is increasing participation in sports clubs and competitions. All pupils participated in a sporting competition or festival last year, and almost all pupils attend an after-school sports club.
- Arrangements and procedures for safeguarding pupils are fully in place and effective.
- The local authority has provided light touch but effective support for this very successful school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body meets its responsibilities very effectively. Governors are involved in the school in a variety of roles, and are very ambitious for it. They have a good knowledge of the use and analysis of data, and are very well informed about the quality of teaching and how this is linked to pupils' achievement. Consequently, they have a very clear understanding of the school's performance, and where it could improve. Governors know how the pupil premium funding is spent and the successful impact it has on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.
 - Governors are very supportive, but hold the school to account very effectively by asking probing questions and by setting challenging targets as part of the headteacher's appraisal. They make sure that pupils' achievement is taken into account when making decisions about teachers' pay and ensure that the school's finances are sound and well managed. They undertake regular training to improve their own skills, and make sure that all policies, including those relating to safeguarding, meet requirements and are implemented effectively.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is excellent. Pupils are very thoughtful and polite, and show great courtesy to staff and visitors. They enjoy talking about their work and get on very well with one another and with staff. This has a very strong impact on their learning and achievement.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. They engage themselves fully in lessons, and are keen to do well. They listen attentively, respond well to questions and challenges, and work very effectively both individually and in groups. As a result, lessons proceed very smoothly with no interruptions to learning.
- Pupils play enthusiastically and mix well during breaks, and behave safely and responsibly in the hall at lunchtime.

Pupils take on responsibility in a variety of roles. For example, there is an active school council, and older pupils act as 'buddies' and sports leaders for younger children. This makes a strong contribution to their excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

- Pupils say that poor behaviour is very rare, and school records confirm this. Pupils are very tolerant, and there have been no racist or discriminatory incidents in recent years. Pupils know how they are expected to behave, and set very high standards for themselves. They say that 'everyone gets on really well', but on the very rare occasions that pupils misbehave, staff sort it out quickly and fairly.
- A very small number of pupils occasionally show challenging behaviour, but staff manage this consistently and well. These pupils are supported in a very caring and nurturing way, and this leads to improved behaviour for the pupils concerned.
- As a result, pupils greatly enjoy coming to school. They are very proud of it and would strongly recommend it to others. Attendance has risen and is above average.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- Pupils say that they feel completely safe in school and are cared for very well. They have a very good knowledge of different forms of bullying, and understand the difference between bullying and falling out. They say that bullying is very rare, and that there is none in school at the moment. They say that if it happens the school reacts quickly and it is 'always resolved'.
- Pupils have a very good knowledge of safety related issues. They spoke confidently about personal safety, and how to keep themselves safe on roads, when cycling and when using the internet, for example. Older pupils have a very good knowledge of issues related to child abuse.
- Parents who spoke to the inspector were very supportive of the school. One said that 'the school does a great job and my child couldn't be happier'. Almost all parents who responded to the Parent View survey think that their children are happy and feel safe in school, and all think that they are well looked after and that the school makes sure pupils are well behaved.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Pupils make excellent progress because teaching is always at least good, and is outstanding overall across the school. Staff have very high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour, and pupils respond very well. Consequently, pupils grow in confidence and make rapid progress throughout the school.
- Pupils greatly enjoy lessons and show a real desire to do well and improve. They say that lessons are 'fun and fascinating', that they 'learn new things every day' and get regular homework. As a result pupils, in their own words, 'learn lots and reach high levels.'
- High quality teaching ensures pupils make rapid progress and reach very high standards, especially in reading, mathematics, and spelling, punctuation and grammar. Progress and standards in writing have lagged slightly, especially at Key Stage 2. However, this gap is closing as teaching improves.
- Pupils are set work that challenges them in their learning and leads to rapid progress. Staff have very good subject knowledge, and vary work and activities effectively to meet pupils' particular needs, based on accurate assessments of how well they are doing. Questioning is used very effectively, both to check pupils' learning and to challenge them to develop their understanding.
- In mathematics, for example, Years 3 and 4 pupils were developing their understanding and skills in recognising symmetry by drawing reflected shapes. Pupils had different tasks that were closely matched to

their abilities, and questioning was used very skilfully to ensure that all pupils were challenged and had to think hard about what they were doing. As a result, they made excellent progress.

- Staff mark pupils' work regularly, consistently and well. They use praise very effectively to motivate and engage pupils, give clear guidance about the next steps in their learning, and check that pupils respond to this advice. As a result, pupils are confident that they know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work very closely together to support pupils who find learning more difficult. This includes disadvantaged pupils and those who are disabled or have special educational needs. This support enables these pupils to make excellent progress, at least in line with that of their classmates, and better in some cases.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Pupils make excellent progress in developing their knowledge, skills and understanding throughout the school. They are very well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- Children make a strong start in the Reception Year and this continues into Key Stage 1. Pupils learn rapidly because they are set work that challenges them to improve. Standards have risen, and are now broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2.
- Pupils continue to make rapid progress throughout Key Stage 2 because they are very well taught. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics have risen since the previous inspection. Results for 2014 show that they were well above average in reading and mathematics, and above average in writing.
- Over the last two years, almost all pupils have made the progress expected of them in reading, writing and mathematics; the proportion of pupils who made more than expected progress is high in reading and mathematics, and average in writing. This represents outstanding progress from pupils' starting points, especially in reading and mathematics.
- Inspection evidence from the work in pupils' books and the school's most recent data shows that all groups of pupils are currently making very strong progress throughout the school. Currently, Year 6 pupils are on track to repeat the excellent performance in reading and mathematics in 2015, and to improve the performance in writing. This shows achievement is outstanding over time.
- Pupils make rapid progress in reading because it is very well taught throughout the school. Pupils have regular opportunities to read, and skilled teachers and teaching assistants make sure that they have a very secure knowledge of phonics (letters and the sounds they make). Pupils say that they read a lot, both in school and at home. The proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in the Year 1 national phonics check has been above average for the last two years.
- Pupils make excellent progress in mathematics. They have very secure basic numeracy skills, and can apply and use these skills effectively to solve problems in a variety of real life situations.
- Pupils achieve well and make strong progress in writing, and achievement continues to rise. However, the standards they reach and their rate of progress are not as high as in reading and mathematics, particularly at Key Stage 2. Pupils have an excellent knowledge of spelling, punctuation and grammar, and have opportunities to write in a variety of styles in different subjects. However, they do not write at length often enough across the curriculum to fully develop and refine their skills.
- The most able pupils make very strong progress because they are given more demanding work that challenges them to think hard. As a result, the proportion reaching the higher levels is well above average, especially in reading and mathematics.
- Disadvantaged pupils, those who are eligible for the pupil premium, achieve very well. They receive very effective support if they need it, either individually or in small group sessions, and make excellent progress. In 2014, the standards achieved by Year 6 pupils eligible for the pupil premium were five terms ahead of other pupils nationally in mathematics, three terms ahead in reading and half a term ahead in writing. In comparison with other non-disadvantaged pupils in the school they were around three terms ahead in mathematics, half a term ahead in reading and the same in writing.
- There are few disabled pupils or with special educational needs in any year group. Their individual needs are well understood and fully met. Progress is carefully tracked and they receive well-targeted support from teachers and teaching assistants, and their achievement progress matches those of other pupils in the school.

The early years provision

is outstanding

- Children make excellent progress in the early years because of effective leadership and management, very strong teaching and excellent provision.
- Most children join the Reception class with skills and knowledge that are generally below those typical for their age, especially in language and communication. They make rapid progress and typically reach or exceed a good level of development, and are well prepared for learning in Year 1.
- Children learn very well in stimulating indoor and outdoor learning areas. Teaching is at least consistently good, and it is outstanding overall. Staff work closely together to ensure that children are engaged and challenged in their learning. They make sure that children have opportunities to explore, investigate and enjoy their learning. For example, children were very enthusiastic about a 'winter walk' outdoors, before carrying out a variety of linked follow-up activities, making excellent progress.
- Staff use questioning very skilfully to encourage children to communicate and think about what they are doing. Staff record and assess children's progress regularly and accurately, and use this information to plan activities to further develop their learning. The needs of individual children are very well met, including disabled children, those who have special educational needs, those most in need and those for whom the school receives additional funding.
- Children's behaviour is excellent. They work happily and very well together, participate fully in all activities, and clearly enjoy their learning.
- There are very close links with the nursery. Staff are shared, and children are sometimes taught together. This ensures a seamless transition into the Reception class.
- There are very strong links with parents, and staff keep them well informed about the progress their children are making. As a result, parents are very happy that their children are achieving well in a very safe and caring environment.

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	114061
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	449745

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	89
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	W Charlton/A Gardner
Headteacher	Christopher Baines
Date of previous school inspection	8 December 2009
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