

Rothbury First School

Rothbury, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE65 7PG

Inspection dates

14–15 January 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The school is improving rapidly under the excellent leadership of the recently appointed headteacher who is very well supported by governors and all staff.
- Following a slight dip in pupils' achievement after the last inspection, weaknesses are now being tackled successfully and future goals clearly identified. Consequently, the school is well placed to improve even further.
- New ways of teaching reading and writing, better tracking of pupils' progress, careful monitoring of the quality of teaching and good management of the performance of staff are all helping to raise achievement and improve teaching.
- Pupils attend regularly, feel safe and behave well in school. Most work hard and want to learn.
- Pupils are taught well. Carefully planned work, varied and interesting tasks and knowledgeable teaching all contribute to pupils' enjoyment of learning and their good achievement.
- Work in pupils' books shows that progress in Years 1 to 4 in reading, writing and mathematics is good. In 2014 pupils reached at least expected and often above expected standards by the end of Year 4.
- Pupils speak enthusiastically about taking part in the wide range of outdoor activities, clubs and visits which the school offers. The broad curriculum promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness well. It also ensures pupils gain the confidence and skills needed to be successful when they move on to the next stage of their education and are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The provision for children in the early years, although getting better, still requires improvement. New ways of assessing children's progress and of teaching phonics (the sounds that letters make) have been introduced very recently and have yet to have their full impact on improving achievement.
- The roles of middle managers in monitoring and improving the work of their areas of responsibility are not yet fully developed.
- On a few occasions, the most able pupils are not given the extra challenge they need in lessons.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight lessons being taught to full classes and smaller groups of pupils of all ages and in a range of subjects including mathematics and English. The headteacher and the inspector made several shorter joint visits to classrooms. The inspector listened to pupils read.
- Discussions were held with parents, pupils, staff, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at pupils' books, progress data, safeguarding information and other documentation.
- Thirty-nine responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) were considered as well as those from school staff.

Inspection team

Ann Ashdown, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This first school is much smaller than an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is about 14% which is average.
- The proportion of pupils, who are disadvantaged and so eligible for the pupil premium, is about 9%. This is below that found nationally. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils eligible for free school meals and those in the care of the local authority.
- Most pupils are White British.
- Children in the early years are taught in separate Nursery and Reception classes. Those in the Nursery class attend in the mornings only and those in the Reception class attend full time.
- Pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4 when most transfer to the local middle school.
- The headteacher has been in post for two terms.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' achievement further, particularly in reading and writing, by ensuring that the most able pupils are always fully challenged in all lessons.
- Accelerate the progress of children in the early years by further improving;
 - systems to assess and track children's progress
 - the teaching of phonics in the early years.
- Further develop the roles of middle managers in monitoring and improving the work of their areas of responsibility.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

are good

- The headteacher's strong leadership has been instrumental in creating a culture in which good teaching and learning can flourish. Strengths of the school are celebrated but weaknesses quickly identified and tackled. A raft of improvements to the teaching of reading and writing and the way pupils' attainment is assessed and their progress tracked are having a marked impact on raising achievement.
- Teaching is carefully monitored and staff performance is very well managed. Staff know what is expected of them and have access to high quality training to help them improve their teaching and leadership skills. Staff feel valued and well supported in their work. Middle leaders have embraced opportunities to take further responsibility for subject areas but at present they are not fully involved in monitoring the work of their subjects.
- Pupils have good equal opportunities to succeed. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. Pupil premium funding has been spent wisely on new resources and extra tuition for teaching reading and writing to ensure disadvantaged pupils make the same good progress as their peers. The most able pupils also make good progress but in some lessons opportunities are missed to provide them with even greater challenges so they can reach the highest standards.
- Extra funding for sport has also been well used to provide specialist coaching and to allow pupils to take part in competitions and a wider range of sports. This has both promoted pupils' fitness and enabled them to perform to the highest standard of which they are capable.
- The curriculum is broad and develops pupils' basic skills well. It also promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness and so ensures they can move on to the next stage of their education with confidence. It ensures they have a good understanding of people of other faiths and cultures and are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Pupils enjoy a wide range of activities which enrich the curriculum. These vary from singing on stage at the Sage in Gateshead to doing yoga, visiting the moon exhibition, viewing Newcastle at night and taking part in community events such as the Rothbury lantern project.
- Arrangements for safeguarding are good. Staff are well trained and they are fully aware of child protection and risk assessment procedures.
- The local authority, through the school improvement partner, has provided good support for the headteacher in her first year of headship. Good support and advice have been given, for example, on data analysis and leadership and management issues.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors monitor the work of the school closely and are kept very well informed by the headteacher. Consequently they are knowledgeable about the quality of teaching and the schools' performance data. They use their considerable range of skills to ensure resources are well used and staff performance is well managed, good teaching rewarded and underperformance tackled. Finances are also well managed and governors ensure extra funding such as the pupil premium is spent wisely.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are sensible and polite when moving around the school, playing in the yard and eating in the dining hall. Pupils are usually kind to each other and show respect for adults. They have good attitudes to learning. Most take a pride in producing their best work and are keen to answer questions in lessons.
- Records show that there are few incidents of poor behaviour or bullying and if these occur the school deals with them promptly and effectively. Staff manage pupils' behaviour very well and provide good extra support for pupils whose behaviour is challenging.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance is above average. They also enjoy taking responsibility and talk enthusiastically about being members of the school council and acting as buddies and play leaders.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say how very safe they feel in school. Parents also agree that the school keeps their children safe and the overwhelming majority are very pleased with the care and the quality of education their children receive.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and have a sensible attitude to taking risks. They are aware that there are different types of bullying and are, rightly, confident that should this happen in school it will be

quickly dealt with.

- Staff are well aware of safeguarding issues. They know pupils' personal and social needs well and ensure appropriate records are kept. Checks to ensure adults in school are suitable to work with children are firmly in place.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Work in pupils' books shows that they make good progress in Years 1 to 4 as a result of the good teaching they receive in reading, writing and mathematics. In the early years improved teaching, particularly of phonics is accelerating the progress children make.
- Teachers plan lessons carefully and provide interesting tasks which capture pupils' interest. In mathematics, for example, pupils improved their addition and subtraction skills very successfully by working out the cost of each item of clothing needed to dress and undress snowy bear.
- The school has adopted a more consistent approach to the teaching of reading and writing and is providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length in all subjects. Consequently most pupils read and write fluently and many develop a real enjoyment of reading for pleasure.
- Teachers are knowledgeable and their clear explanations develop pupils' skills and deepen their understanding. For example, Year 1 pupils sounded out and quickly spotted words which were 'alien' (nonsense) words and those which were real words.
- Teachers mark and assess pupils' work regularly. The school has now adopted a consistent approach to marking and consequently the quality of feedback to pupils on how to improve their work is good and continues to improve. The results of assessments are increasingly used well to plan future work particularly in Years 1 to 4.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs receive sensitive and timely support in lessons from teachers and teaching assistants. This enables them to access the curriculum and make good progress.
- In a small minority of lessons opportunities are missed to provide extra challenge for the most able pupils to enable them to make even faster progress and reach even higher standards.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Work in books, that displayed on walls and the school's own improved tracking system all confirm that pupils in Years 1 to 4 are now making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Following a slight dip in pupils' attainment at Key stage 1 after the last inspection standards are now rising. Current pupils are on track to reach average standards at the end of Year 2. Year 4 pupils reached at least expected and often above expected standards in 2014.
- The numbers of disadvantaged pupils who took recent national assessments are so small that their attainment cannot be reliably reported in detail. Disadvantaged pupils who are supported by pupil premium funding make the same good progress as their classmates. Extra funding has been spent wisely to ensure they receive extra help and support if this is needed.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are given good support and specialist help when this is needed. Consequently they make good progress and complete the same or similar work to their classmates.
- The most able pupils make good progress. However opportunities are missed in some lessons to accelerate their progress further so that they can securely reach the higher levels of attainment at the end of Year 2.

Early years provision

requires improvement

- Provision for children in the early years is improving rapidly. However it still requires further improvement because new approaches to the teaching of phonics and to assessing children's progress are very recent and have yet to have their full impact on improving children's achievement.
- Following a period of staffing turbulence, good leadership and management of the early years and much good teaching is now resulting in better provision for children's learning. More opportunities for children to learn outdoors, a smoother transition to Year 1 and higher expectations of what children can do are all raising achievement and adding to children's enjoyment of learning. There is a very clear vision for further

improvement including appropriate priorities such as making better use of existing resources and providing additional resources for indoor learning in the Nursery class.

- Children enter the nursery class with skills which are broadly typical for their age although sometimes weaker in communication and language. Children's progress, although requiring further improvement, is now accelerating as they move through the Nursery and Reception classes. Consequently most of the current Reception children are on track to acquire the skills needed to succeed in Year 1.
- Children quickly learn school routines and behave well. They soon learn to share and take turns and play happily together.
- Children relish the increased opportunities they have to learn outdoors. They gain confidence and learn new skills through such exciting activities as being taken out to explore the forest and making marks in the pristine snow covering their outdoor learning area.

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	122221
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	453351

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	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	128
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Robert Famelton
Headteacher	Nicki Mathewson
Date of previous school inspection	21 September 2010
Telephone number	01669 620283
Fax number	-
Email address	admin@rothburyfirst.northumberland.sch.uk

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