

Montalbo Nursery and Primary School

Fairfield Road, Barnard Castle, County Durham, DL12 8TN

Inspection dates 29–30 April 2015

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
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The school is improving rapidly because of the good leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Working in close partnership they have been successful in raising pupils' aspirations and achievement.
- The school is a friendly, welcoming place where pupils behave well, are attentive in lessons and very keen to learn.
- Pupils are kept safe in school as well as when they are out on visits. They feel safe and well cared for. Parents agree that the school is a safe place to learn.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years and make good progress in their learning.
- Pupils' achievement has improved significantly and is now good. They make good progress throughout their time in school.
- Teaching is good and improving. School leaders ensure staff benefit from good quality training that helps them improve their skills.
- Teachers plan purposeful activities that motivate pupils and help them to learn new skills quickly.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because they are supported well.
- The curriculum is rich and varied and provides a wide range of opportunities that stretch pupils' thinking and deepen their understanding.
- A wide variety of clubs, school visits and activities is provided that develop pupils' sporting, musical and creative skills. Such activities contribute strongly to pupils' well-being and enjoyment of school. Attendance is good.
- The school promotes pupils spiritual, moral, social and cultural development successfully. This makes a significant contribution to pupils' tolerant, courteous, hard-working and respectful attitudes. They are well prepared for life in modern day Britain.
- Governors are knowledgeable about the school and how pupils' achievement and teaching are improving. They provide good challenge and support to school leaders.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of marking of pupils' work is not consistently good. Pupils are not always given precise enough guidance on how to improve their work.
- Standards of pupils' handwriting and presentation are not always good.
- Some subject leaders are at an early stage of development in driving improvements forward in teaching and learning in their subjects.

Information about this inspection

- The lead inspector observed a number of lessons; all lessons were seen jointly with the deputy headteacher. In addition, the inspector talked to pupils about their work, looked at books, listened to some pupils read and observed pupils at break time and lunchtime.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and staff with key leadership responsibilities. The inspector had discussions with pupils, governors and the school's local authority school improvement partner.
- The inspector looked at a wide range of documents including: the school's own checks on the quality of teaching; the school improvement plan; information on pupils' progress; and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- The inspector took account of the 20 responses to the on line questionnaire (Parent View) and the views of parents during the course of the inspection. The inspector also took account of returns to the staff questionnaire completed during the inspection.

Inspection team

David Wilson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are supported through the pupil premium is in line with the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those children looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is slightly below 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 by the end of Year 6.
- Children in the Nursery Year attend part time and those in the Reception Year attend full time.
- The school provides a breakfast club and after-school provision.
- There have been many staff changes since the last inspection, including appointments made at headteacher and deputy headteacher level.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching and achievement to outstanding by making sure that all teachers:
 - give pupils clear guidance on how to improve their work and check that all pupils have acted on this advice
 - insist on high quality handwriting and presentation in all pupils' work.
- Further strengthen the impact of leadership by developing the skills of subject leaders so that they make an even greater contribution to improving the quality of teaching and learning in the subjects they lead.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher, while relatively new to their posts, have been instrumental to the rapidly improving teaching and achievement across the school. Their high aspirations are shared by staff and governors. As a result, the school has improved significantly since the previous inspection.
- Senior leaders and governors have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development. School self-evaluation is accurate and correctly identifies priorities and actions to bring about further improvements. Senior leaders make effective use of regular checks on teaching, linked to teachers' performance targets, to help teachers improve their practice. As a result, pupils' achievement is improving quickly.
- School leaders make good use of data to ensure that all groups achieve as well as they can. They ensure that pupils in danger of falling behind are given timely support to help them catch up. Leaders check on the accuracy of assessments by sharing information across year groups and across partner schools. A consistent approach to planning for learning in each year group supports the improvements being made in teaching and pupil progress.
- Middle leaders are at an early stage of ensuring that teaching and learning in the subjects they lead are consistently good or better. Some are new to their role, and governors and senior leaders have identified where they would benefit from additional support and training.
- The school has made good progress in the introduction of the new curriculum with well-planned activities that capture the imagination and interest of pupils. The exciting range of activities is enriched by a wide variety of after-school clubs, educational visits and activities that develop pupils' sporting, musical and creative skills.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural is promoted effectively. The school promotes democracy and British values very well. Pupils' understanding and care for each other are linked to the school's core values, as are British values of respect, forgiveness and honesty. The school has established its agreed list of shared values and these encourage pupils to show resilience and do their very best, in both their work and their behaviour, at all times.
- Primary school sport funding is used effectively to promote healthy life styles as well as developing sporting skills. As a result, participation rates are high, including in a variety of after-school clubs. The use of skilled sports coaches has improved the quality of provision for pupils and provided opportunities for on-going staff training. Pupils state that they enjoy the extra opportunities that after-school sports provide.
- Extra funding to support disadvantaged pupils is used effectively. Care is taken to check on the impact on pupils' progress and attainment to ensure that any gaps are being addressed as quickly and effectively as possible.
- The local authority has an accurate understanding of the school's performance. It has provided effective support and training to both senior leaders and governors. This input has added to the rapid improvements being made.
- The promotion of equal opportunities is an integral part of the school's ethos and discrimination in any form is not tolerated. This ensures that equality of opportunity and good relationships are promoted very effectively. The partnership with parents is strong. Responses to the Parent View survey indicate that parents have full confidence in the school's senior leaders.
- Safeguarding and child protection arrangements meet requirements. Procedures are well established and effective systems are in place to meet the day-to-day management, care and protection of pupils.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a wide range of skills and expertise. They take full advantage of training opportunities, often with school staff, to increase their effectiveness as a governing body. They know how well pupils are doing and how good teaching is. Governors provide effective support and challenge and this has contributed significantly to the school's rapid improvement.
 - Governors make sure that all available finances, including pupil premium and primary schools sport funding, are used effectively to promote pupils' progress. Governors ensure that the school's pay policy is linked to teachers' performance and they are fully aware of how underperformance is addressed.
 - Governors are very clear about their responsibilities. They make sure that all legal requirements are met, including those related to safeguarding.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are keen to learn and try hard in lessons. They are kind and friendly, work together well and help each other.
- From the beginning of early years, pupils understand what is expected of them. They listen and cooperate well in class. They take turns and share things appropriately.
- Movement around the school, at lunchtime and at assembly time, is extremely orderly. Play times are active social occasions where friends play well together. At the end of playtime, pupils line up quickly and waste little time getting back to classrooms. Low-level disruption in lessons is rare. The school works very effectively with individual pupils who sometimes struggle to control their behaviour.
- Adults provide excellent role models of the behaviour they expect. The mutual respect in the relationships between adults and children is a key strength of the school.
- Pupils willingly take on responsibilities and carry out tasks around the school. Pupils speak animatedly about their involvement in the school council, the playground buddy system and opportunities to support younger children. In addition they take a keen interest in fundraising events for different charities at both a local and national level.
- Attendance is broadly average. The school works hard to ensure that good attendance is acknowledged and persistent absence is followed up rigorously. Incidence of lateness has reduced significantly and reflects the school's commitment to ensuring good attendance and punctuality. Good attendance is acknowledged and rewarded weekly and termly.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils feel safe in school. As one pupil said, 'The best things about school are friends and the grown-ups that look after us.' Parents agree that pupils are safe in school. Safeguarding includes checks on all visitors to the school.
- Pupils say that bullying is very rare. They are aware of the different forms that bullying may take, such as pushing, name-calling and cyber-bullying. They say that any problems are resolved quickly and are confident that they could approach any adult in school with any problems.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe when on line using computers and mobile phones. They are aware of situations that could prove unsafe and know how to stay safe, both in and out of school. For example, during the inspection Years 3 and 4 pupils took part in pedestrian safety and road safety awareness training.
- Staff are trained in safeguarding procedures, as are governors. Policies and procedures are reviewed regularly to ensure that pupils are safe.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching and learning across the school, including early years, is good. The school has established a very positive climate for learning. Teachers have high expectations of work and behaviour which pupils do their very best to achieve.
- Lessons are well planned and capture pupils' interest. Teachers' subject knowledge is good, as is their use of effective questioning. Teachers and teaching assistants are skilful in asking questions that both check on pupils' understanding and that require reasoned, detailed answers.
- Teachers ensure that tasks are appropriate to the varying needs of pupils. For example, good use is made of teaching assistants to support small groups and individuals in the development of phonic skills (letters and the sounds they represent) in early years and Key Stage 1. As a result, achievement and progress in early reading is improving quickly.
- The quality of the marking of pupils' work is variable. Pupils' work is marked regularly and often teachers provide comments to help pupils improve their work. However, this approach to marking is not consistent across the school. As a result, pupils are not always clear about what they must do to improve their work, nor are they always given time in which to carry out corrections or respond to teachers' comments.
- Teachers and skilled teaching assistants provide good levels of support to disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. They know their pupils exceptionally well and provide appropriate activities to ensure that these pupils catch up with their classmates or do not fall behind.
- The development of reading is given a high priority in the school. Reading is taught well by teachers and teaching assistants. Those heard to read by the inspector shared their enjoyment of reading and eagerly discussed their favourite books and authors. They explained how the school helped them become better readers. They highlighted how you can read unknown words by 'sounding letters out' or by 'breaking the

word down into smaller bits'. Their reading was lively and accurate.

- The teaching of writing is good. Pupils are given many opportunities to write for different purposes. Achievement in writing is improving because pupils are given clear guidance on how to structure their writing and use grammar, punctuation and spelling accurately. While the quality of writing is improving, standards of handwriting and presentation are not always good. Teachers do not always model a legible style of handwriting or encourage pupils to give more attention to the presentation of work.
- The teaching of mathematics is also good. There are instances when the provision is better than this, where high levels of challenge result in rapid improvement in achievement and progress. For example, Year 6 pupils made outstanding progress in using and applying their mathematical thinking and reasoning to solve complex problems. Pupils were totally engrossed in their work, used a variety of mathematical skills and explained their decisions and solutions confidently.
- Attractive displays in classrooms, corridors and the main hall celebrate pupils' achievements and reinforce that their work is valued.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Since the previous inspection, there has been a significant increase in the attainment at the end of Key Stage 2. In 2014, attainment in reading and mathematics showed a marked improvement on previous years' results; the proportion of pupils achieving and exceeding the expected levels in writing and mathematics was above the national average and it was well above the national average in reading.
- Achievement data and evidence of pupils' current work confirm that most pupils are making good progress across the school. They are making accelerated progress in Years 5 and 6. Rapid improvements in teaching and increased expectations of the progress pupils should make are leading to more pupils reaching and exceeding the standards expected for their age.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standards in the Year 1 screening check is above the national average. Inspection evidence shows there is year-on-year improvement, reflecting the improvements in teaching to support pupils in both reading and writing.
- There are significant improved rates of progress for the most able pupils, especially in writing and mathematics. Leaders have improved provision for this group and current evidence indicates that the most able pupils are on track to attain higher levels at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. This includes an increase in the number of pupils achieving Level 6 in mathematics and writing.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make the same progress as their class mates. Staff identify those pupils with specific learning needs quickly and provide support to address gaps in understanding and remove barriers to learning.
- The school is closing the gap for disadvantaged pupils successfully. In 2014, these pupils were two months behind in writing and six months behind in mathematics, when compared to all pupils nationally. They were 3 months ahead of pupils nationally in reading. In school gaps were wider, with disadvantaged pupils approximately a year behind their peers in reading, writing and mathematics. Current school data indicate that the gap continues to narrow because disadvantaged pupils are making good progress across the school. The pupil premium is being used effectively and the attainment of disadvantaged pupils is improving.

The early years provision is good

- Most children start the early years with knowledge, skills and understanding that are typical for their age. Children make good progress across each area of learning, with most children achieving a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year. This ensures that they are well prepared for the next stage of learning.
- Children quickly settle into early years because of the excellent care, support and guidance they receive. Expectations and routines are established quickly and children respond positively. As a result, children are happy, confident and show a high degree of independence. Behaviour is consistently good. Positive relationships ensure that children feel safe in school. They work and play cooperatively. They take turns and share toys and resources.
- Leadership and management are good. The early years leader has brought about improvements to the quality of teaching and children's achievement. She has a very clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision and has plans for its further development.
- Teaching is good. Staff plan a range of exciting activities that captures the imagination and fires the

curiosity of children. In the Nursery, children talked animatedly about the pulley system installed in the class that lifted a bucket containing bricks. They made the connection to that and cranes that lift heavy weights.

- Good use is made of the outdoor area. Building upon work completed in the classroom the previous day, Reception children were highly motivated when searching for mini-beasts in the outdoor learning area. Using view finders and magnifying glasses, children made good progress in identifying the habitats of different creatures. They carefully recorded the mini-beasts found in the soil, in flower beds and under logs.
- Early reading and writing skills are carefully planned into all areas of learning. Changes to the teaching of phonics have resulted in improved progress in early reading and writing skills. Opportunities for writing are good and children are keen to record their ideas and experiences.
- Assessment is well established and is used effectively to check on the achievement and progress of all children. Regular reviews of progress ensure that children who miss out on key learning, or those with particular needs, are picked up and receive extra support. Teachers make good use of assessment to plan next steps in learning.
- Parents are encouraged to be part of their child's learning and appreciate the opportunities to come into the early years 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	114115
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	462275

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	110
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Graham Shipman
Headteacher	Amanda Fawcett
Date of previous school inspection	1 May 2013
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