

Bedlington Whitley Memorial Church of England First School

Gordon Terrace, Bedlington, Northumberland, NE22 5DE

Inspection dates 23–24 June 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.

- Significant improvements have been made in pupils' achievement, the quality of teaching and pupils' behaviour since the last inspection.
- Pupils' achievement is now good. From typical starting points, pupils in Year 4 reach standards that are above those expected for their age in reading and mathematics, and in line with expectations in writing.
- The quality of teaching is good and some is outstanding. In particular, good teaching in reading and mathematics ensures that pupils make good progress.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. The wide range of experiences within the school and a variety of educational visits contribute well to their development. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils typically behave well in lessons and around the school. They say that they feel very safe and appreciate all that adults do to keep them safe.
- The headteacher's leadership is very effective and she has worked extremely hard to improve the quality of teaching, raise achievement and improve pupils' behaviour. She is supported well by an equally hard-working and committed deputy headteacher and other leaders within the school.
- The governors know the school well and carefully check on the progress of pupils and the quality of teaching in particular. They have played their part in helping standards to rise.
- The early years has improved significantly since the last inspection as a result of highly effective leadership and strong teamwork. Early years provision is good. Children really enjoy their learning and make good progress.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although excellent teaching practice is evident, it is not shared consistently among staff.
- Not all teachers use the school's agreed system for marking and giving feedback in the same way. Pupils do not always learn from their mistakes or are given the chance to improve their work.
- Standards in writing are not as high as in reading and mathematics. Pupils do not learn their spellings thoroughly. They do not have enough first-hand experiences to write about.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning throughout the school. They also observed pupils at work during visits to classrooms. One observation was carried out jointly with the headteacher and one with the deputy headteacher. Inspectors also listened to pupils in Years 2 and 4 read.
- Inspectors considered 89 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View) and 42 questionnaires completed by the staff.
- Inspectors held meetings with pupils in Year 4 and the school council. They also talked informally with pupils at break times and lunchtimes. They talked with the Chair of the Governing Body and four other governors, and had discussions with representative of the local authority and the diocese.
- Inspectors also held meetings with leaders within the school, including the leader of the early years provision, the special educational needs coordinator and leaders at middle level.
- Inspectors observed the school at work and looked at a range of documentation, including information relating to pupils' progress, their books, school improvement-planning and the school's procedures for gaining an accurate view of its own performance. They also considered reports written by the local authority, documents relating to the management of teachers' performance and safeguarding and child protection documents.

Inspection team

Peter Eves, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Sonia Humble	Additional Inspector
Jim Hall	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those supported by the pupil premium, is average. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or those who are looked after by the local authority.
- Most pupils are White British. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- There have been changes in staffing since the last inspection.
- Children attend the Nursery class on a part-time basis and the Reception class full time.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching further so that it is outstanding, by:
 - sharing the best practice among all staff in the school
 - making sure that all teachers use the marking and feedback system in the same way so that pupils always learn from their mistakes and are given a chance to improve their work.
- Raise achievement further in writing, by:
 - providing pupils with more first-hand experiences to write about
 - ensuring that pupils learn their spellings thoroughly.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, has been instrumental in bringing about significant improvements since the last inspection. She has a clear picture of how she wishes to improve the school. The impact of her work can be seen in the rising achievement of pupils and clear improvements in the quality of teaching and pupils' behaviour. The school's leaders know the school very well and they have created plans for addressing any weaknesses. They have fully addressed all the issues identified in the previous inspection, particularly in improving the quality of teaching and pupils' behaviour and, as a result, demonstrate a strong capacity for improvement.
- The senior leaders have worked hard to develop strong teamwork among the staff and all are committed to ensuring the best for the pupils. School leaders have thorough systems for checking on the work of the school, particularly the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. As a result, they have a detailed picture of the strengths and areas of weakness and create effective plans for addressing these areas. They hold staff to account for pupils' progress through half-termly pupil progress meetings and ensure that underachievement is addressed.
- Middle leaders are effective in identifying any areas which need to be improved in their areas of responsibility. They create useful plans and monitor the progress of these regularly and play their part in school improvement effectively. The headteacher rightly places a focus on improving the quality of teaching and there are effective procedures for appraising staff performance. All staff have targets linked to pupils' progress as well as any responsibilities they hold. There are good opportunities for staff to develop their skills through effective professional development, but the outstanding practice evident in the school is not fully shared among all staff.
- The curriculum meets the needs of all groups of pupils effectively and the different topics capture pupils' interest and fire their imagination. Pupils say how much they enjoyed the Pirate topic, for example. While there is an appropriate focus on English and mathematics, due regard is paid to other subjects. Pupils develop a good understanding of life in modern Britain. The school council or Whitley Parliament, for example, is an elected body and this helps pupils develop an early understanding of democracy.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements and are very effective. Child protection and safeguarding have a very high priority for all the leaders. They are extremely thorough in ensuring that the detailed policies are translated into very effective practice to ensure that all pupils are as safe as possible, both in school and while on trips.
- The school works successfully to foster good relationships, tackle discrimination and to remove any barriers to learning, so that all pupils have the same opportunities to realise their potential. Equality of opportunity is central to all that the school does.
- The pupil premium funding is used wisely and effectively to support eligible pupils. Extra support and resources are provided, both in class and in individual and small-group sessions. As a result, these pupils are able to make increasingly rapid progress.
- The primary school sport funding is used effectively to give pupils opportunities to enjoy many different sports and activities, such as yoga and cycling. Pupils are now able to take part in a greater number of sports competitions and festivals. Teachers benefit from working alongside specialist sports coaches and, as a result, the quality of physical education teaching has improved.
- The local authority and the diocese have provided much appreciated and effective support since the last inspection, especially in improving the quality of teaching and improving the early years provision.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have successfully addressed issues identified in the last inspection. They know the school well and provide robust challenge to school leaders. They keep a close check on different aspects of school life, particularly the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. Governors have a good understanding of the pupil performance information provided by leaders and use this information effectively to challenge leaders and hold teachers to account. They bring a range of skills which they use to good effect. Where there are any skill gaps, they arrange appropriate training and are strategic in recruiting new governors with the desired skills. Governors have the same ambition as the headteacher and the staff to make the school the best it can be for their pupils.
 - There are appropriate procedures in place to reward teachers when pupils' progress is good or better. Underperformance is not tolerated and action is taken, if necessary. Governors oversee the spending of pupil premium and sport fund effectively and are aware of the positive impacts these funds are having on eligible pupils' progress and their physical well-being. Governors ensure that safeguarding and child protection has a high priority.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. There are good relationships between adults and pupils, and pupils typically show very positive attitudes to their learning. Pupils settle to work quickly and respond rapidly to teachers' instructions. They take a pride in their work and are keen to do their best.
- Pupils say that behaviour is usually good. There is a well-understood system for managing behaviour and the school's records show that the number of incidents recorded has decreased markedly since the last inspection. However, the behaviour of a small number of pupils occasionally does not come up to the high standards that staff and other pupils expect.
- Pupils are very polite and well-mannered at all times. They welcome visitors warmly and are keen to talk about their school. They appreciate the work that adults do to make learning fun and enjoyable, as well as the wide variety of after-school clubs and activities.
- Pupils attend school regularly and attendance is improving as a result of the hard work of the school. Pupils understand the importance of attending regularly and on time and typically say that they want to come to school to learn. Attendance is now average.
- Pupils willingly take on roles of responsibility, such as play leaders. They take their responsibilities very seriously. During the inspection, the play leaders organised games for other pupils to play at lunchtime, including a game of football, which they refereed themselves, with no arguments.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils say how much they appreciate all the efforts of adults to keep them safe and that they feel extremely safe while in school or on visits.
- Pupils develop a very good understanding of the different risks they may face, particularly when riding their bicycles or using the internet. They know how to keep themselves safe. This awareness is developed from an early age when children in the Reception class take it in turns to be danger detectives and carry out daily safety checks on equipment in the early years provision.
- Pupils say that incidents of bullying have reduced and are now uncommon. They know what to look for and are aware of the different forms that bullying can take, including cyber bullying. They say that they are confident that bullying is dealt with promptly when it occurs.
- The school's approach to safeguarding and child protection is exemplary and all those involved often go beyond the statutory requirements, especially in checking that the suitability of any adults working in the school is rigorously checked. There are thorough systems in place to manage visitors to the school. Identities are checked and visitors are briefed well on the child protection and safeguarding arrangements in force.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching has improved. It is now good and there is some that is outstanding. As a result, pupils in all key stages make good progress over time in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers and other adults have very good relationships with pupils who respond to instructions promptly and lessons proceed without interruption. Classrooms are stimulating places in which to learn and walls are adorned with aids to learning and examples of pupils' work.
- The teaching of reading is very effective. Daily lessons in phonics (the sounds that letters make) help ensure that pupils get off to a good start in the early years. Through regular opportunities to read and to use their developing skills in all subjects, pupils become proficient readers.
- Mathematics is taught well. Teachers make sure that pupils develop good foundations on which to build and provide regular opportunities to use their mathematics skills. Pupils say how much they enjoy mathematics and how they see mathematics as skills they can use in everyday life. Pupils in a Year 3 class described their enjoyment in learning about fractions by dividing pizzas and chocolate cake.
- Writing is not taught as effectively as reading and mathematics. Throughout the school, pupils do not learn their spellings thoroughly and so their writing contains unnecessary spelling mistakes. While pupils have frequent opportunities to write from their imagination, they do not have enough first-hand experiences to write about. When they do, their writing is of a higher standard.
- Teachers mark pupils' work using an agreed whole-school system. In some classes, this is very effective and pupils respond to suggestions for how to improve their work and make good progress. However, not

all teachers use the system in the same way. Consequently, some pupils do not learn from their mistakes or get the chance to make their work more successful.

- Teaching assistants play an effective role in supporting pupils' learning, both in and out of class, individually and in small groups. Through effective training, they have acquired the skills they need to help pupils make more progress.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start Nursery with the skills and abilities that are typical for their age. They make good progress throughout their time in school. The school's data and work in pupils' books show that by the end of Year 4, attainment in reading and mathematics is above that typical for their age and average in writing. Progress in reading and mathematics is faster than in writing. The rates of progress and the standards reached have increased since the last inspection.
- Pupils of all ages enjoy reading. They read regularly in school and at home, and older pupils talk enthusiastically about their favourite authors. Reading has a high priority in school and books are given as awards in the weekly Wow celebration assemblies. As a result, standards in reading are above average by the end of Year 4.
- Progress in mathematics is good and pupils enjoy any opportunity to use their mathematics skills to solve genuine problems. They acquire the basic skills they need at an early age and build on these throughout their time in school. They are given regular opportunities to be involved in practical and problem-solving activities.
- Achievement in writing is not as high as it is in reading and mathematics. Pupils' spelling is weaker than their grammar and punctuation skills. In addition, they do not have enough first-hand experiences to write about and have to draw on their imagination too often in all year groups. As a result, their progress slows and the standards reached are not as high as they are in reading and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs generally make progress similar to that of their peers, often from lower starting points. They receive effective support from skilled adults who know the pupils and their particular needs well.
- The most-able pupils make good progress. They are given work that is challenging and receive extra support in small groups to help them to reach the standards they are capable of.
- From their starting points, pupils supported by the pupil premium funding make better progress than their peers. The gap between these pupils' attainment and that of their peers is narrowing throughout the school. They are approximately half a term behind that of other pupils by the end of Year 4 in writing and mathematics, and there is no gap in reading. Disadvantaged pupils make similar progress to other pupils nationally.

The early years provision is good

- The early years is led very well by a very determined and effective leader. She has formed a close-knit team and together they have improved the early years provision. The leader has a very accurate view of the provision's strengths and has clear ideas of where the team need to focus their attention in order to bring about further improvements.
- Teaching is typically good and there is some that is better. Teachers and other adults plan learning that covers all the required areas. There are plenty of opportunities for children to investigate and be inquisitive inside and outside. Learning is reviewed on a daily basis and the next day's plans flow from these reviews. Teachers and other adults know their children well and so can plan activities that meet their needs accurately.
- Children join the early years with the skills and abilities that are typical for children of their age. They now make good progress over time and the proportion that reach a good level of development and are ready for learning in Year 1 is rising. The school's assessment information shows it to be 69% this year, compared to 37% in 2013 and 57% in 2014.
- Behaviour is good. Children settle in well and quickly learn the routines and practices that ensure that they can prosper in a caring environment. They play and learn together effectively, and their personal and social skills develop well, so that by the end of the Reception year they become inquisitive and determined learners.
- Safety is of a high priority, as it is throughout the school. Parents say how safe the early years is and

appreciate the well-considered systems for the safe arrival and dismissal of children. Children play their part, too, and act as danger detectives, making daily safety checks on play equipment.

- Parents welcome all the opportunities they have to play a part in their children's learning. There are regular workshops to guide them in how to support their child; they contribute to the Wow wall, which celebrates children's achievements and they also add to their child's learning journey document.

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	122281
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	462214

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	297
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pam Lee
Headteacher	Sally Hobson
Date of previous school inspection	19 June 2013
Telephone number	01670 822994
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