

Benton Park Primary School

Corchester Walk, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear, NE7 7SS

Inspection dates 24–25 June 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.

- The school meets the needs of all its pupils extremely well. Pupils make excellent progress in all year groups. By the end of Year 6, they achieve high standards in reading and writing and above-average standards in mathematics.
- Children get an excellent start to their learning in the early years provision.
- Teaching is at least consistently good across the school, and outstanding overall. Staff have high expectations and set challenging work that motivates pupils and enables them to make rapid progress. High-quality marking ensures that pupils know exactly what they need to do to improve.
- There are rigorous systems to check how well pupils are doing, and very effective support is provided when it is needed.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work very closely together to support the learning of vulnerable pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those who are disabled or who have special educational needs.
- The school's provision for severely hearing impaired pupils is excellent.
- Pupils' achievement in mathematics is strong, but slightly less so than in reading and writing. This is because pupils do not have enough opportunity to investigate and solve more open-ended problems.
- Pupils behave outstandingly well in lessons and around the school. They have excellent attitudes to learning. Pupils are very proud of, and greatly enjoy, their school. They get on extremely 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 very well looked after. They say that bullying is almost unknown and that there is none in school at the moment.
- The curriculum is rich, varied and well balanced. It engages pupils very effectively in their learning. There is a wide range of stimulating enrichment activities.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very effectively. Pupils are very well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The school is very well led and managed. The headteacher, staff and governors have high ambitions. They are committed to continuous improvement and achieving the best for each child. They have successfully brought about improvements to teaching, achievement and behaviour since the previous inspection.
- Staff share best practice within the school, and work effectively to improve provision in other schools.
- Parents are highly positive about the school and very supportive of it.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning on 26 occasions. Two lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with school leaders and with four governors, including the Chair and two vice-chairs of the Governing Body. Inspectors also met a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors met two groups of pupils and also spoke informally to other pupils in lessons and during break and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors looked at the work pupils were doing in lessons and in their books over time. They listened to pupils read and talked to them about their enjoyment of reading.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and examined a number of documents concerning pupils' current achievement and progress, development plans and information about the quality of teaching and learning. They also looked at records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding arrangements. Minutes of governing body meetings were also considered.
- Inspectors took account of the 93 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire. They also spoke to parents informally and received several emailed comments. They also considered the 43 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Robert Birtwell, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
David Shearsmith	Additional Inspector
Lesley Richardson	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Pupils are taught in 13 mostly mixed-aged classes from the Nursery to Year 6. The early years provision includes a part-time Nursery class and full-time Reception classes.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is just below average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average. These are pupils supported by the pupil premium, which is funding the school receives 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 with special educational needs is average.
- The school includes specialist provision for 12 profoundly or severely deaf pupils, some of whom have complex needs.
- The school is part of the Ouseburn Learning Trust, a partnership involving seven local primary schools and a high school. Staff from Benton Park offer support and training to other schools in the Trust and other local schools.
- 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.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and progress in mathematics so they match those in reading and writing, by ensuring that pupils develop their mathematical reasoning skills and providing more opportunities for them to investigate and solve more thought-provoking problems.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher provides very strong and effective leadership to a dedicated team of staff. School leaders and managers at all levels, including governors, are very ambitious and have high expectations of pupils. Their actions have secured improvements to the quality of teaching and learning, achievement and behaviour. They have successfully addressed the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection.
- The school has a clear and accurate view of its strengths and areas for development. All adults who work with pupils in the school are committed to the school's values and consistently apply its policies. This contributes to pupils' overall rapid progress in all aspects of their learning in all classes.
- Although the school is performing very strongly, there is no complacency. There is a culture of continuous improvement, and the school development plan identifies where the school could do even better. For example, leaders are aware that there is room for still better performance in mathematics, and action is being taken to address this.
- The school has rigorous systems to check the achievement of pupils. School leaders use this information very effectively to monitor the quality of teaching, and middle leaders closely evaluate pupils' performance. Any underachievement is quickly identified and is successfully addressed by providing pupils with extra support if they need it. The impact of this intervention is carefully evaluated. As a result all groups of pupils in the school are making rapid and sustained progress.
- The school uses the pupil premium funding very effectively to support the learning of disadvantaged pupils in the classroom, individually and in small groups. In addition, it is used to provide extra support for vulnerable pupils and to improve links with parents. As a result disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils make excellent progress and achieve well.
- Pupils with severe hearing impairment are extremely well supported either in the specialist provision or in the main school and make excellent progress. This shows the school's very successful commitment to equal opportunities for all pupils.
- There is a clear focus on further improving teaching. High-quality training and professional development have led to a rise in the quality of teaching since the previous inspection, and it is now outstanding overall. Teachers are committed to securing the best outcomes for each pupil. All teachers have targets linked to pupils' achievement and these are taken into account when making recommendations about teachers' pay.
- The curriculum is rich, varied and well balanced. It provides excellent learning opportunities, engages pupils very effectively in their learning and promotes excellent behaviour. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to develop their mathematical reasoning skills by investigating and solving open-ended and more thought-provoking problems across the curriculum.
- Pupils participate in a wide range of activities, clubs, trips and visits, covering sport, drama and culture. For example, during the inspection pupils worked very enthusiastically with musicians from Sage Gateshead in preparation for a concert. The school has also won awards from the Royal Television Society for its innovative work in film. Pupils were excited to learn that the BBC would be coming to the school to record for the Ten Pieces music and film project in which they are involved.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils are considerate, reflective and responsible and do not tolerate discrimination in any form. The school promotes British values very effectively. For example, the importance of democracy is successfully highlighted through elections for the school council. The school is very inclusive and actively celebrates its own diversity. 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. These ensure that pupils have a good knowledge of other cultures and religions, and help to foster good relations and prevent discrimination. The school prepares pupils very well for life in modern Britain.
- The school's safeguarding arrangements meet and exceed statutory requirements. The school's work in some of these areas is exemplary. Staff and governors are well trained, and systems and procedures are consistently and effectively implemented to ensure the safety of pupils and staff.
- The additional primary school sports funding has been used to improve provision in games and physical education. A specialist teacher takes lessons, runs activities and trains staff, and the school participates successfully in a wider range of sporting competitions. Consequently, more pupils now take part in sporting activities both within and outside school, and this has a positive impact on their physical well-being and lifestyles.
- The school works well to share best practice, both within the school and the Trust. School leaders and

staff continue to be successfully involved in work to improve teaching and raise standards in local schools through secondment and by providing training and professional development.

- The local authority provides light touch but effective support for this very successful school.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body meets its responsibilities very effectively. Governors have an excellent understanding of the school's performance, and are very ambitious for it. They have very secure 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. Governors know how the pupil premium funding is spent and the very positive impact it has on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. Governors evaluate their own performance, and have taken positive steps to improve the skills and expertise of the governing body through training and the active recruitment of new members.
- Governors visit the school regularly in a variety of roles. They are very supportive, but hold the school to account systematically by asking searching 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 make sure that all policies, including those relating to safeguarding, are regularly reviewed and updated, and that they are implemented effectively.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils are very positive and enthusiastic in lessons and are keen to do well and succeed. This makes a strong contribution to their learning and achievement. They listen attentively, respond well to questions and challenges and work very well both individually and in groups. Lessons proceed smoothly with no interruptions to learning. There are very strong relationships between pupils and staff.
- Behaviour is exemplary at all times. Inspectors saw excellent behaviour in lessons, in assembly and around the school. Pupils mix well and play enthusiastically during breaks, and behave responsibly and safely in dining halls at lunchtime. They are very respectful of each other and are polite and courteous to adults and visitors. Pupils say that everyone gets on and that the school is a very friendly place.
- Pupils say that poor behaviour is extremely rare, and school records confirm this. Pupils know how they are expected to behave and set very high standards for themselves. They do not tolerate racism or discrimination. They say that 'everyone gets on really well', and that 'When sometimes pupils fall out they soon make it up.' On the very rare occasions pupils misbehave, pupils say that 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.
- Pupils take on responsibility in a variety of roles. For example, there is an active school council, which meets with other school councils in the Ouseburn Learning Trust, and older pupils act as play leaders for younger pupils. This makes a strong contribution to their excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- 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. They have a very good knowledge of different types of bullying and understand the difference between bullying and falling out. They say that bullying is almost unknown and that there is no bullying in school at the moment. If it occurred they say they would try to sort it out themselves as well as reporting it to staff. They have every confidence that it would be sorted out quickly if it happened.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of how to keep themselves safe in different situations, including personal safety, on roads, when cycling and when using the internet.
- Parents who spoke to or contacted inspectors were very supportive of the school. Almost all parents who responded to the Parent View survey think that their children are happy, feel safe and are well looked after at school, and that pupils are well behaved. Inspection evidence confirms this view.

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 achieve very well throughout the school.
- Pupils greatly enjoy lessons and show a real desire to do well and improve. They enjoy being challenged, and say that lessons are 'really interesting and fun' and that they enjoy learning. One pupil said that she very much liked being challenged by harder questions.
- High-quality teaching ensures that pupils make rapid progress overall and reach very high standards by the end of Key Stage 2, particularly in reading and writing.
- Reading is taught very effectively. 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 teaching of writing has improved since the previous inspection. Pupils write very effectively in a variety of styles in different subjects. For example, inspectors saw some powerful writing related to the Second World War.
- Mathematics is taught well and pupils have very secure basic numeracy skills. They can apply and use these skills to solve practical problems. However, pupils do not have enough opportunity to fully develop their mathematical reasoning skills by investigating and tackling open-ended tasks that require pupils to think deeply about how to approach and solve them.
- Staff set work that mostly challenges pupils 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. Pupils are successfully encouraged to work individually or as part of a group, and information and communication technology is used innovatively to support learning. Questioning is used very effectively, both to check pupils' learning and to challenge them to deepen their understanding.
- In English, for example, Years 5 and 6 pupils were developing their skills in writing a balanced argument. This was modelled very effectively and pupils worked very well in pairs to debate points, before writing their own responses. Tasks were matched closely to pupils' abilities, and questioning was used skilfully to ensure that pupils were challenged to think hard about what they were doing.
- The quality of marking and feedback has improved since the previous inspection. Staff mark pupils' work regularly, consistently and well. They use praise effectively to motivate and engage pupils and give very clear advice about what pupils need to do to improve their work. They also ensure that pupils respond to this advice. Consequently, pupils are very confident that they know how well they are doing and what they need to do to get better.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work very closely and effectively together to support pupils who find learning more difficult. This includes disadvantaged pupils and those who are disabled or have special educational needs. The teaching and support for severely hearing impaired pupils is exemplary. This support enables disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils to make excellent progress in line with that of their classmates.

The achievement of pupils**is outstanding**

- Pupils make outstanding 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 early years and this continues into Key Stage 1. Pupils learn rapidly because they are set work that challenges them to improve. Standards have risen sharply and are now broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. This represents outstanding progress from this group of pupils' overall starting points.
- Pupils continue to make rapid progress in Key Stage 2 because they receive high-quality teaching. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6 have risen and are well-above average. For the last two years all pupils have made the progress expected of them in reading, writing and mathematics, and the proportion of pupils who made more than the expected progress is well-above average. This represents outstanding progress from pupils' starting points and places the school in the top three percent of schools nationally when comparing pupils' progress.
- Inspection evidence from lesson observations, the work in pupils' books and the school's data, show that all groups of pupils are making excellent progress throughout the school. Current Year 6 pupils are on track to maintain very high standards and excellent progress this year. This shows that achievement is

outstanding over time.

- Pupils make rapid progress in reading because it is very well taught throughout the school. The proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in the Year 1 national phonics check has been well-above average for the last two years.
- The school has focused successfully on improving pupils' writing skills. Standards are high and pupils make excellent progress in writing.
- Pupils achieve well and make very good progress in mathematics. However, the standards they reach and their rate of progress are not quite as high as in reading and writing.
- Disadvantaged pupils, those who are eligible for support through 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 attainment of Year 6 disadvantaged pupils was a term behind other pupils nationally in reading and two terms behind in writing and mathematics. In comparison with other pupils in the school they were around three terms behind in reading and mathematics and four terms behind in writing. However, all disadvantaged pupils made the expected progress and the proportion making more than expected progress was well above that of other pupils nationally. School data show that disadvantaged pupils continue to make excellent progress and attainment gaps are closing.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make very strong progress. Their individual needs are well understood and their progress is carefully checked. They receive well-targeted, very effective support from skilled teachers and teaching assistants. Pupils with severe hearing impairment are extremely well supported in class, in small groups or individually, with specialist staff assistance as and when needed. As a result these pupils make excellent progress.
- 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 writing.

The early years provision

is outstanding

- Children make excellent progress in the early years as a result of very effective leadership, excellent teaching and very strong provision.
- Most children join the early years with skills and knowledge that are in line with or below those typical for their age. They make excellent progress and most children reach or exceed a good level of development and are very well prepared for learning in Year 1.
- Children learn very well in stimulating and well-organised indoor and outdoor learning areas. Teaching is at least good, and is outstanding overall. Staff work very closely together to ensure that learning is always focused, stimulating and engaging, and that children have opportunities to explore, investigate and enjoy their learning.
- For example, children in the nursery worked very well together to improve their recognition of shapes and numbers. The children rose very well to the challenges set by staff and made excellent progress.
- During the inspection, the early years children greatly enjoyed participating in their own sports day, which was attended by around 150 parents. All children participated enthusiastically in a wide range of activities, which demonstrated the excellent progress they had made in their physical, social and emotional development.
- Staff rigorously assess how well children are learning and use this information to plan activities to further develop their learning. Questioning is used very effectively to encourage children to communicate and think about what they are doing. The needs of individual children are well met. This includes disabled children, those who have special educational needs, those who have severe hearing impairment and those for whom the school receives additional funding.
- Children are very keen to learn and their behaviour is excellent. They are curious about the world and listen carefully to staff. They work happily and very well together and participate fully in all activities.
- There are very close links with parents and with other nursery providers. Parents are very happy that their children are well taught and make excellent progress in a safe and caring environment.
- The leadership and management of the early years are excellent. Staff are well trained and highly motivated, and this has a very positive impact on children's achievement and development.

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	108459
Local authority	Newcastle Upon Tyne
Inspection number	448358

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	353
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jane Edminson
Headteacher	Alice Witherow
Date of previous school inspection	12 January 2010
Telephone number	0191 266 5122
Fax number	0191 226 8206
Email address	admin@bentonpark.newcastle.sch.uk

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