

Birtley East Community Primary School

Highfield, Birtley, Chester-le-Street, County Durham, DH3 1QQ

Inspection dates 28–29 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 headteacher has consistently high expectations of what all pupils can achieve and, ably supported by other leaders, has taken successful steps to improve school performance.
- Early years provision is good. It gives children a secure and happy start to school life. They make good progress from their starting points.
- Standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 have risen steadily since the last inspection and in 2014 were at least in line with the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' progress is good and continues to improve.
- Pupils in Key Stage 1 and upper Key Stage 2 are well on their way towards the school's end-of-year targets. This is because of actions taken by school leaders to ensure that teaching is good.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make at least good progress because their individual needs are met well.
- Staff provide a calm, orderly and positive learning environment that celebrates pupils' successes. Strong, respectful relationships ensure that pupils get the most out of their lessons.
- The school's family support worker is improving links between the school and families.
- Pupils are very proud of their school. They feel safe, behave well, give their best and value the opportunities they get to learn and play.
- Pupils display clear values of respect, honesty and open-mindedness. Their spiritual, moral, social and emotional development is developed through much of what they do in school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- While teaching in Years 3 and 4 is improving, not enough pupils in these year groups make fast enough progress. Teaching does not always provide these pupils with sufficient challenge to achieve well.
- Disadvantaged pupils in Years 2 and 6 do not perform quite as well as their classmates.
- Attendance is improving but remains below average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited nine lessons and learning sessions across all classes and listened to pupils reading. The headteacher took part in two joint observations with inspectors and joint scrutiny of pupils' work in all classes.
- Separate discussions were held with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, staff, groups of pupils, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. The opinions of 18 members of staff were also considered from their questionnaire responses.
- Inspectors observed the school's work, looked at children's learning journals, staff planning journals, data on pupils' progress, planning and monitoring documentation and information relating to the welfare of children and safeguarding.
- Inspectors took account of the 12 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the results of the school's most recent questionnaire to parents (July 2014). An inspector also talked to parents at the beginning of day two of the inspection.
- Inspectors observed pupils during morning playtime, lunchtime and in assembly.
- A further visit was made to the school by Eithne Proffitt and Joanna Sharpe, Senior Managing Inspectors at CfBT, after the inspection was completed, to gather further evidence in relation to pupils' achievement.

Inspection team

Kate Pringle, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Barbara Martin	Additional Inspector
Eithne Proffitt, Lead Inspector	Additional Inspector
Jo Sharpe	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those supported through the pupil premium funding, is considerably higher than average. This additional funding is allocated to support those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and pupils looked after by the local authority.
- The vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above the national average.
- Children attend the Nursery class part-time, for 15 hours per week. Children in the Reception Year attend full-time.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.
- A breakfast club is provided each morning by a private provider. The work of this provision, which is registered through Ofsted, was not considered during this inspection and is subject to a separate inspection at a different time.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the quality of teaching in Years 3 and 4 and hence ensure consistently strong progress throughout the whole school, by:
 - raising expectations of what pupils can achieve in these year groups
 - ensuring teaching offers sufficient challenge and builds upon previous learning
 - introducing more frequent monitoring of pupils' progress in these year groups
 - sharing the school's existing best practice in teaching.
- Close the gaps between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils currently in Years 2 and 6, by continuing to develop the wide range of strategies that have been put in place to support this group of pupils' learning.
- Improve pupils' attendance by continuing to work with parents to reduce the number of learning days lost through the frequent absence of a small number of pupils.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- School leaders have high expectations and are ambitious for all pupils. They provide a safe and nurturing place where pupils thrive and make good progress. The school fosters good relationships and tackles discrimination and all pupils have equal opportunities to succeed in their learning.
- The headteacher, other leaders and staff create a positive culture for learning and for good behaviour. All share the same unwavering commitment and determination to continually improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. As a result, teaching has improved, standards have risen year-on-year and the school is well placed to continue to improve.
- Evaluation of the school's overall effectiveness is accurate, ensuring school leadership has a clear understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. Plans for improvement identify the correct priorities and these are regularly reviewed and updated.
- School leaders check pupils' performance and the quality of teaching regularly. The outcomes identify the most effective practice and also any training required to update or sharpen teachers' and teaching assistants' skills. Teachers who are in the early stages of their careers are particularly well supported and typically comment on how much they appreciate this.
- Effective performance management systems are in place. The headteacher and governors are unafraid to address significant concerns in teaching and have done so in the past.
- Leaders have invested time and effort to improve the overall quality of teaching and to bring about greater consistency in pupils' learning. Teaching has improved strongly and, as a result, standards have risen securely in the early years, Key Stage 1 and upper Key Stage 2. There is some less-effective teaching in Years 3 and 4. However, in recent months, individual support programmes have brought about improvements in teaching and progress for pupils in these year groups.
- Middle and subject leaders demonstrate a positive impact on improving pupils' skills in literacy, mathematical calculations and in the provision for children in the early years. This year's considerable improvements in standards at the end of the Reception Year mean these children will enter Year 1 better equipped than any previous group. They will be ready to benefit from their new curriculum and to start making more rapid progress through their new subjects, especially literacy and mathematics.
- The broad curriculum reflects the school's commitment to pupils' enjoyment of learning. Leadership of this aspect of the school's work is good and pupils' development of skills is frequently monitored and assessed.
- The school provides many opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils enjoy a number of different experiences through visits and visitors to the school, which enrich the curriculum and help them to understand and celebrate people's similarities and differences. School council members are elected from each year group and are currently leading the pupils' contribution to achieve 'Rights Respecting' status. This supports pupils' preparation for life in modern Britain.
- The pupil premium funding is used well. It provides additional individual and small-group support for disadvantaged pupils and enables these pupils to participate fully in all school activities. It also helps the school to provide a very effective family support worker, who has already made considerable inroads into assuring parental engagement with school and in improving the attendance of some pupils who are persistently absent.
- Leaders know the pupils well and are swift to identify any child at risk of underachievement. They have a firm grip on the current dip in the attainment of some disadvantaged pupils this year. Interventions have been put into place and these pupils continue to make good progress.
- The school makes good use of the primary sport funding to improve pupils' physical education and their knowledge of healthy lifestyles and well-being. Specialist sports coaches provide knowledgeable and effective teaching. Pupils are keen sporting enthusiasts and enjoy all the extra sporting opportunities.
- Arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements and are effective. Day-to-day procedures for the care and protection of children are firmly established and practised.
- The local authority has worked closely and effectively with the school over the past 18 months, helping to support developments in leadership and management, and in teaching and learning.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is effective. Governors are highly supportive and have a good day-to-day knowledge of developments in the school. Many are regular visitors to the school. Governors receive detailed reports from the headteacher, including information about performance data, that keep them well informed about pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching.
 - Governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses and how the school compares with others

nationally.

- Performance management arrangements are in place to reward good teaching and tackle underperformance. Governors confirm that there is no automatic reward if staff performance is not effective.
- Finances are managed well. Governors check the pupil premium funding is used in the most appropriate way to support disadvantaged pupils in their learning and that the primary sport funding is improving pupils' fitness.
- Governors, including those who are new to roles, have undertaken a range of training to ensure they are up to date with all requirements and that they develop the skills to hold the school to account.
- Systems to keep pupils safe and free from harm are effective and revised regularly. Safeguarding requirements are met.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are well mannered, friendly and polite. They show kindness and respect to each other and to adults.
- Pupils are well motivated. They have very positive attitudes to learning and take pride in their work. Presentation in books right across the school is of an exceptionally high standard.
- All pupils know the school rules and say that the adults apply these fairly. They enjoy the very positive relationships with all members of the school community. Staff provide an encouraging and stimulating learning environment and the school abounds with recognition and celebration of pupils' efforts and achievements.
- Pupils say behaviour is typically good around school and in lessons, although they are aware that a small number of pupils do cause some distractions. The school's family support worker works very closely with pupils who struggle to remain focused on their learning. Pupils confidently say they appreciate this work and cite improvements in how staff manage pupils' behaviour in lessons.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Staff know their pupils well and quickly recognise when pupils need help. A range of measures supports those pupils identified and staff use their skills and knowledge to find and provide the appropriate help needed.
- Day-to-day safeguarding of pupils is good, with all of the relevant policies and training in place.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and know who to go to for help if they are worried or need to talk. They demonstrate a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe. They have an age-appropriate understanding of the different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying and name-calling and insist that that if any issues do occur, they trust the adults to listen and deal with problems swiftly.
- There are effective systems to keep vulnerable pupils safe. There is clear evidence to show that the school's family support worker works well alone and with outside agencies to protect those who are vulnerable.
- Attendance is below average, although the effective work of the family support worker has lowered the percentage of pupils who are persistently absent. As a result, attendance is improving.
- Parents who expressed an opinion support the view that their children are safe and well looked after in school.

The quality of teaching is good

- The impact of good teaching over time has resulted in rising standards and accelerating progress. Increasing proportions of pupils are now making more than expected progress in mathematics, reading and writing.
- The headteacher has maintained a sharp focus upon improving the quality of teaching and learning. Together, senior leaders have worked diligently to raise achievement. Consequently, teaching is typically good and improving strongly, although some inconsistencies remain
- Teachers know their pupils well and most plan activities in lessons that help pupils across a wide range of abilities to make good progress.
- Learning in Key Stage 1 is consistently good and has been since the previous inspection. Many pupils still

in the school left the early years with skills and knowledge below expected levels. Teachers in Years 1 and 2 have consistently high expectations of what pupils can do and achieve and this has driven their relentless push for their pupils to do better.

- Currently, pupils' work and the school's tracking of progress show that there are some inconsistencies in the rates of progress for pupils in Years 3 and 4. Lower expectations of what pupils can achieve has led to activities that do not always focus on deepening and extending pupils' knowledge and understanding. Better planning and more engaging teaching in recent months have brought about improvements in both year groups. However, teaching in this part of the school is not yet strong enough to assure consistently brisk progress. Teachers are very well supported by the school and are totally committed to improving their teaching. Improvements have been noted in recent terms and pupils' achievement, in both year groups, has started to pick up.
- In Years 5 and 6, learning builds well on what pupils already know and teachers have high expectations of what pupils can do and achieve. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to question pupils in order to assess their progress.
- The teaching of reading across the school is effective. All pupils are heard to read regularly and teachers have been successful in encouraging pupils to read at home. The most able pupils read fluently with good levels of comprehension and use of higher-order reading skills, such as inference. They are aware that their reading may serve a range of purposes, including for pleasure, information and instruction.
- Work to improve pupils' writing is bringing benefits. Older pupils enjoy using their skills to write in a range of subjects and can adapt their writing for a range of purposes and audiences. High-quality pieces of writing are displayed around the school and inspire pupils of all ages to strive for higher standards. The writing that inspectors reviewed in pupils' books from all classes was beautifully presented, well constructed and of a good standard.
- Teachers are developing the school's new approach to mathematics and are seeking to provide even more opportunities for pupils to develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills. Many pupils are currently making much stronger progress in this subject than was seen at the time of the previous inspection.
- Teaching assistants are skilful and well trained. They interact effectively with teachers and pupils and undertake specific interventions to support a range of learning and behavioural needs. For some pupils, progress over the course of these interventions is rapid.
- Feedback given to pupils during lessons helps them to move on quickly and ensures that progress in lessons is, in the main, good. Pupils' work is effectively and consistently marked in accordance with school policy. Pupils are impressed with the opportunities to act on advice, correct their work and understand clearly how to move on to the next step in their learning. They are also aware of their responsibility for ensuring that they learn from any mistakes. One Key Stage 2 pupil stated, 'Our teacher keeps a real close eye on our work. She checks to see if we continue to get them right'.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils achieve well and make good progress from their individual starting points.
- The overall standards achieved by different groups of pupils can vary because the proportion of pupils with additional needs is much higher in some classes than others. The proportion of pupils who have arrived mid-year also varies from one year group to the next. School data show that once pupils settle into the school, they make good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils have joined Year 1 with skills that are below those typical for their age and the below-average results in 2014 Year 1 phonics screening check reflect this. Pupils' work in reading, writing and mathematics books in Year 1 and 2, however, show that the majority of pupils soon pick up and make rapid progress in Key Stage 1.
- Since the last inspection, standards have improved year-on-year. Achievement peaked in 2014, with attainment levels in both Year 2 and Year 6 at least in line with the national average in all subjects. Pupils' achievement was notable, with large proportions making better than expected progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics. This strong picture of good achievement was reflected in other year groups.
- Progress for disadvantaged pupils was equally impressive. In 2014, the majority of disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 made at least the progress expected of them and a good proportion did better than this. These pupils out-performed their classmates, and other pupils nationally, in the standards they attained in mathematics, reading and writing. Some of these pupils reached extremely high standards in all three subjects.

- Forecasts for the current Year 2 and Year 6 pupils, point to a gap in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and others in their year groups. School leaders had already identified this and check regularly that targeted support and intervention is working to good effect. As a result, while standards for these pupils are not as high as those of their peers, pupils' work and the school's tracking of their performance, show they are making good progress.
- The standards reached by pupils in the current Years 1 and 5 pupils indicate that the attainment gap for disadvantaged pupils is closing.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs benefit from staff who have a clear understanding of their needs and tailor the support to enable these pupils to make good progress.
- The most able pupils make good progress. In 2014, for example, a much larger than average proportion attained the higher levels in reading and mathematics in both Key Stages 1 and 2. Assessment information is generally used well to help teachers plan activities to deepen these pupils' understanding and challenge their thinking.

Early years provision

is good

- The majority of children enter the early years with knowledge and skills below those typical for their age, a proportion of whom have significant challenges to their learning. Recently, an increasing proportion display more typical skills, especially in their personal development.
- Children settle into the calm, stimulating setting and are keen to learn. Many of the children who enter with skills below those typical for their age, make rapid progress and catch up quickly.
- By the end of the Reception Year, the proportion of children who reach a good level of development has risen steadily over recent years and is now in line with the national average. This represents good and sometimes better progress from the children's individual starting points and prepares children well for Year 1.
- Leadership of the early years is good. There is a clear vision and determination to extend the good learning. There are effective systems to record and track all children's progress, with a sharp focus on increasing the proportion of children who exceed age-related expectations. This is the focus for the early years action planning. School data and inspection evidence indicate that it is already having a marked impact.
- Good teaching based on careful planning and assessment helps children, including those who are vulnerable, the disabled and those with special educational needs and the most able, to make rapid progress. Teaching is enthusiastic and engaging and children respond by being keen learners after only a very short time in the early years. Staff has a highly-developed understanding of how young children learn and make sure that all the activities and experiences provided both indoors and outdoors promote active learning, independence and creative thinking. Very occasionally, opportunities to extend and push learning from adult-led sessions into children's independent play are missed.
- Children are confident about how much they are valued and respected. This extends to respecting others and children have a keen sense of fairness and of the difference between right and wrong. They are willing to take turns and to share. Consequently, their behaviour is good.
- Procedures are in place to keep children safe and their welfare is a high priority.
- Good, knowledgeable leadership has created a united team whose members work closely and effectively to teach and care for children.

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	108337
Local authority	Gateshead
Inspection number	462262

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	234
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Bowater
Headteacher	Anna Diggle
Date of previous school inspection	1 May 2013
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