

# Spittal Community First School

Main Street, Spittal, Berwick Upon-Tweed, Northumberland, TD15 1RD

**Inspection dates** 7–8 July 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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 resolute leadership of the acting headteacher has ensured an uninterrupted drive to continue to improve. Effective middle leadership and governance ensures strong leadership. A close-knit staff team share their high ambitions.
- Teaching is good. Now and then, it is inspiring and exciting. This enables pupils, including those with special educational needs, the most able and the disadvantaged to make good progress and achieve well, at times from below average starting points.
- Strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development underpins the considerate, caring and hard-working attitudes of the pupils. It also ensures that pupils' behaviour is good and sometimes exemplary.
- Children have a good start to their education in the early years. Good teaching helps them acquire new skills quickly. Leadership is good and parents are encouraged to help their children learn.
- Pupils' relationships with staff are excellent. As a result, pupils are clear about the boundaries that are set for their conduct and disruptions to learning are rare.
- Pupils feel safe, well cared for and protected. They are confident that staff will always be on hand to take excellent care of them.
- The school works hard to ensure that pupils of all backgrounds are able to achieve success. They are particularly welcoming to those pupils who are potentially vulnerable and those who join with little or no English.
- The well-informed governing body keeps a close check on the school's performance. Governors are challenging and hold staff to account for the performance of pupils.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not always inspiring enough to ensure a pattern of rapid progress and high achievement.
- Teachers' questions do not always probe and check pupils' understanding well enough.
- Now and then, insufficient is expected of pupils. Their work is not presented as accurately as it could be. Guidance for improvement does not always add sufficiently to the level of challenge in their learning.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in lessons and four paired observations were carried out with the acting headteacher. Detailed work scrutiny was carried out with the acting headteacher. In addition, the inspector made a number of short visits to lessons and undertook walks around the school in order to check the quality of provision.
- The inspector spoke with pupils and had discussions with: the acting headteacher; middle leaders, including the special educational needs coordinator; staff; governors and the local authority early years and primary commissioner.
- The inspector examined a range of documents, including those related to safeguarding, the school's view of how well it is doing, the monitoring of staff performance, the school's improvement plan and records relating to pupils' progress and behaviour.
- The inspector took account of the 31 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and of the 17 responses to the staff questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Clive Petts, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average sized primary school.
- A very large majority of the pupils are from White British backgrounds with a few who speak English as an additional language. This represents a significant increase in the proportion of those who speak English as an additional language since the previous inspection.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- Currently, there is a much higher-than-average proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are eligible for support through the pupil premium funding. The pupil premium is additional funding to support those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The early years full-time provision consists of Reception children in two mixed-aged classes with pupils from Year 1.
- The school provides a breakfast and after-school club each day for pupils.
- The acting headteacher has been in post since May 2015.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure that teaching is always inspiring and exciting enough to ensure a consistent pattern of rapid progress and high achievement in all subjects by:
  - raising expectations of how highly pupils can achieve and how much work they can do
  - using questioning effectively to probe and challenge pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding
  - making certain that the layout of all of pupils' work is accurate and done with care, especially in mathematics
  - ensuring that concise written guidance for improvement in pupils' books adds to the level of challenge provided for them in their learning.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- Senior and middle leaders are ambitious for pupils of all abilities and starting points. They have established a vibrant school atmosphere in which all pupils can thrive and achieve well. This includes those with complex needs, the most able, disadvantaged pupils and those with English as an additional language.
- The school's procedures for establishing a judgement of its performance are rigorous. This includes those to check the quality of teaching and classroom support. Consequently, judgements of performance are accurate. The performance management of staff is thorough and ensures that there is no automatic pay progression. Staff training is well matched to the school's improvement priorities and the needs of individual members of staff.
- Middle leaders are successful in ensuring that pupils' reading, writing and mathematics are improving steadily. They assiduously check each pupil's performance to ensure that any gaps or inconsistencies in their attainment are quickly spotted and addressed.
- The interesting curriculum develops pupils' essential skills fully. It helps to prepare them well for the next stage of their education. Good manners, respect, consideration for others and kindness, and key British values are securely embedded in all aspects of school life. Pupils enjoy a broad range of visits and visitors, which often present learning in relevant real-life situations adding much to its richness. For example, the mobile planetarium visit to the school triggered great excitement and fired pupils' imagination as they gained a first-hand view of the galaxy. The pupils' visit to Dynamic Earth gave them a journey through time to witness the story of planet earth.
- The extremely positive engagement of parents and families is having an increasingly positive influence in helping families to support their children's achievement, such as in reading and writing. Parents are very appreciative that their views are valued and that their children are given an equal chance to succeed. Discrimination in any form is not tolerated by staff and this helps the school foster good relations with all of its partners.
- The additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils is used successfully. Care is taken to check the impact on pupils' progress and attainment to make certain that any gaps are addressed effectively.
- Primary school physical education and sport funding is used well to promote healthy lifestyles and develop pupils' sporting skills. As a result, participation rates are high, including in a variety of after-school clubs. Improved staff coaching helps to foster pupils' higher levels of skill and present wider sporting opportunities. Effective partnerships with local clubs provide opportunities for pupils to develop advanced skills, such as in rugby, football and gymnastics.
- The local authority works closely with leaders and governors to provide effective support to help to move the school forward. It has brokered collaboration with local schools to add to the rigour of monitoring and the accuracy in the assessment of pupils' performance.
- Safeguarding and child protection meet requirements. Procedures are securely established and much highly effective practice is adopted in the day-to-day management, care and protection of pupils of all ages.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The strong governing body is resolute in the push to achieve its high ambitions in all aspects of the school's performance. Governors have played a full part in the drive to secure continuous improvement and adjust to the changing make-up of the school's intake of pupils.
  - Governors have an accurate view of the quality of teaching and interpret school performance information correctly using data provided nationally. Governors ensure performance management is rigorous and that the pupil premium funding has the required impact in closing any gaps in disadvantaged pupils' attainment.

### The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

#### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are considerate and kind towards each other. They are polite, courteous and happily tell visitors about life in school. Their good and at times exemplary behaviour helps create a friendly, happy and busy atmosphere in classrooms where learning is enjoyed.

- Adults provide excellent role models which help to add to the high expectations for pupils' behaviour. All parents who responded to the online questionnaire agreed the school keeps their children safe and happy.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. In classrooms, they are eager and keen to learn. Older pupils in particular display much perseverance when resolving challenging puzzles and tasks. Now and then, pupils' concentration drifts, but this is skilfully managed and has little impact on the flow of learning in the classroom.

### Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. High quality work with specialist agencies underpins the extremely good quality care and support the school provides for both pupils and their families. This includes those pupils who are potentially vulnerable and those with English as an additional language.
- In conversation, pupils display a good awareness of the various forms that bullying can take. They report that mean and unkind behaviour is infrequent and any inappropriate behaviour is 'quickly sorted out' by staff.
- Pupils are well aware of how to keep themselves safe and adopt sensible and safety conscious attitudes when faced with risk and danger. For example, pupils are very aware of the potential dangers of using new technology.
- Attendance is consistently above average because pupils enjoy coming to school. This includes arriving early to attend the breakfast club. Systems to check attendance are rigorous and are firmly and consistently applied to ensure all pupils are safe.

### The quality of teaching

**is good**

- Teaching is good. Now and then it is imaginative and thought-provoking. Since the previous inspection, senior leaders have maintained a firm focus upon improving and enriching the quality of teaching and learning to enable pupils to acquire skills systematically. Staff expect pupils to work hard and achieve the standards of which they are capable.
- Relationships between staff and pupils in classrooms are excellent. Staff are particularly skilled in identifying the precise needs of each pupil. Gaps in pupils' skills in reading, writing and mathematics are precisely pinpointed, and tasks adapted and shaped to suit. This includes for pupils who arrive with little or no English, or no pre-school experiences. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to consolidate and extend their skills, such as in reading.
- When activities inspire pupils' thinking and achievement is at least good:
  - tasks take full account of pupils' earlier learning and constantly build upon their knowledge and understanding
  - probing questions promote pupils' speaking skills and ensure a good understanding of the language used
  - activities are set that require pupils to analyse, reason and explain their ideas and thinking
  - frequent marking spots any misconceptions or misunderstandings and corrects them.
- In learning which does not always provide the essential trigger to promote high achievement:
  - opportunities are missed to raise expectations even higher of what each pupil can achieve
  - not enough is expected of the accuracy of pupils' setting out of their work, including in graphs in mathematics.
  - opportunities are sometimes missed to enliven pupils' thinking and quicken progress in all subjects
  - marking does not provide concise guidance for improvement which adds to the level of challenge provided for them in their learning.
- Positive actions taken by the school have led to the good teaching of reading and writing. Pupils have good opportunities to practise their reading and writing skills in a wide range of activities. Younger pupils are given frequent opportunities to use their new skills to make sense of new words and sentences. As a result, pupils are increasingly confident and expressive readers and writers.
- When achievement is high, thought-provoking activities encourage pupils to work and to think analytically, reason and find solutions. Teaching in mathematics is good. For example, in mathematics, pupils mastered complex multiplication and division problems with accuracy and confidence. Real-life problems are used to enable pupils to extend their analytical skills, for example, when a group of older pupils were observed

totally absorbed simulating the action of a robot moving coloured bricks firstly from one dish to another and then to a third dish.

- Marking is completed frequently. Teachers make it clear how well pupils have achieved and assessments made are thorough and accurate. However, not all teachers demand corrections and provide pupils with opportunities to respond.

### **The achievement of pupils** is good

- Although cohorts vary markedly in size and make up, pupils make consistently good progress and achieve well to reach at least nationally expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 4. This is the result of good teaching, effective intervention and guidance, and the high quality care and support each pupil receives.
- The proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard in the Year 1 national screening test for phonics (the sounds that letters make) is consistently above the national average. This includes disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and disadvantaged pupils. As a result of successful interventions, almost all pupils who fail to meet the standard pass when re-tested in Year 2.
- By the end of Year 2, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard for their age is broadly typical in reading, writing and mathematics. While the proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels in reading dipped a little in 2014, this continues to represent good progress.
- Whole-school strategies to nurture a love and enjoyment of reading are well established. Wide-ranging learning opportunities are provided for pupils of all ages to read frequently. Those pupils for whom English is an additional language are provided with interesting opportunities to learn to communicate successfully. Extremely effective use is made of specialist local authority support to improve pupils' language skills and to enable them to catch up. This is paying dividends because pupils' reading skills continue to improve at a good rate. As a result, an increased proportion of current Year 2 pupils are reaching higher levels and matching those in writing and mathematics, despite over two thirds of the year group being boys.
- By the end of Year 4, achievement is good in reading, writing and mathematics. Scrutiny of pupils' work and the school's progress information confirm that most pupils make expected progress, with an increasingly above average proportion exceeding what is expected of them.
- The most-able pupils achieve well because they are presented with the right kind of challenge. The tasks they are presented with enable them to work at higher levels. Inspection evidence confirms that an above average proportion of the most-able pupils are on track to achieve higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The abilities and needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are quickly and precisely pinpointed. Well-planned interventions and support are effectively addressing any gaps in their learning or in their skills. In individual cases, progress is rapid in developing their social and emotional skills.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress. The school is successfully reducing the gap in attainment between the disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils, both within the school and with others nationally. In the 2014 tests at the end of Year 2, there was no gap in attainment between the disadvantaged pupils in the school and others nationally in writing; there was half a term's gap in mathematics and just over one term in reading. Current school information indicates that disadvantaged pupils' attainment in both writing and mathematics is broadly similar to others nationally and the gap in reading reduced to less than one term.

### **The early years provision** is good

- Children enter the Reception Year with a range of experiences and skills below those typical for their age. Speech, language, number and social and emotional skills are weaknesses. A very few children arrive with no pre-school experience. Children settle quickly and happily on arrival in the warm, friendly and lively atmosphere. Children rapidly acquire vital social, emotional and communications skills. As a result, children's self-confidence and independence are gained speedily.
- Children start to catch up quickly because they make good progress in acquiring skills and experiences in all areas of learning. Even though their skills are below those typical for their age, particularly among the boys, children make good progress and by the end of the Reception Year they are well prepared for the rigours and demands of Year 1.

- The particularly caring atmosphere, bolstered by the excellent relationships with staff, help to nurture children's positive attitudes to learning and play and result in them behaving well. Staff accurately assess children's starting points and interests. This makes sure activities are carefully shaped to match children's individual needs.
- Teaching and classroom support are good. They are motivating and engaging. Good opportunities are provided indoors for children to build systematically upon their speaking, listening and early reading, writing and number skills. Nevertheless, when outdoors, opportunities are occasionally missed to build upon speech and language at a faster rate when children are exploring and investigating the world around them. A firm focus on developing confidence, fostering independence and perseverance is proving successful as children are systematically adding to their skills.
- Frequent and accurate checks on children's development, well-being and progress inform all planning of activities well. Good quality observations are thoroughly embedded in daily practices to make sure that any gaps in children's learning and skills are quickly recognised and tackled. Progressively more parents are involved in their children's learning and development in ever more helpful and meaningful ways.
- Leadership and management are good. High expectations underpin all learning activities and play. The early years leader ensures that all children, including the newly arrived, are happy, safe and secure. Performance is accurately judged and areas for improvement, such as developing outdoor learning, are systematically tackled. As a result, achievement is good and rising, and any gaps in children's skills successfully addressed.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	122185
<b>Local authority</b>	Northumberland
<b>Inspection number</b>	449640

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	132
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Geraldine Cowan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Catherine Taylor
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5 October 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01289 307413
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