

# Gainford CofE Primary School

Low Road, Gainford, Darlington, County Durham, DL2 3DR

**Inspection dates** 14–15 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		Outstanding	1
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.

- Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds achieve well. They make good progress in a range of subjects including reading, writing and mathematics. Attainment is often above average, although there was a dip in 2014.
- Teaching is good overall and outstanding in some aspects. A relentless focus on improving reading, writing and mathematics has been very successful.
- The gaps in achievement between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils and between girls and boys are small and sometimes there is no gap.
- Provision in the early years is good. Children make a good start in Reception and a new pre-school class has been successfully launched. Adults work well together to provide skilled support.
- Pupils are very happy at school. Warm and trusting relationships underpin the enjoyment of learning and pupils' sense of being safe and valued. As a result behaviour is excellent. Parents have full confidence in the school to look after their children. Everyone is included and respected.
- The school's creative approach to topics provides exciting learning opportunities which inspire pupils and contribute strongly to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, as well as their awareness of British values.
- Leadership is highly effective at all levels. The school is continually evolving and improving the quality of teaching and pupil achievement. Governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school well and hold leaders to account for the school's performance.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not consistently outstanding.
- The school has yet to implement its new assessment systems.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed pupils learning in all year groups, both in class and when working in smaller groups.
- The inspector listened to pupils from Years 1, 2 and 6 reading, talked to pupils at playtimes and attended two school assemblies.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, members of staff, pupils on the school council, a representative of the local authority and members of the governing body.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at development plans, records of pupils' progress, arrangements for safeguarding and systems to check on the quality of teaching and learning.
- The inspector looked at the work in pupils' books in all year groups and in a range of subjects including English, mathematics, science, religious education and topic work.
- The views of parents were gained from the 13 responses to Parent View, the on-line questionnaire, the school's recent survey in June, from emails sent in to the school and from talking to parents collecting their children from school.
- The views of staff were gained from meetings and from a scrutiny of the 12 responses to the staff questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Judith Straw, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school. Some year groups have fewer than 10 pupils. Currently there are far fewer girls than boys.
- A higher than average proportion of pupils join and leave the school other than at the usual times.
- Pupils are taught in four mixed-age classes. Children join the school full time in the Reception class. The school opened a part-time pre-school class in January. This will become full time in September.
- The very large majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is well above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils for whom the pupil premium provides support is in line with the national average. The pupil premium provides additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority.
- In 2014 the school did not meet the government's floor standards which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

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

- Improve the consistency of teaching and raise pupils' achievement further by:
  - completing the development work on the new assessment system to ensure that all teachers use assessment effectively to accelerate progress for all pupils.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher are a strong and effective team, bringing different skills and expertise to the school. Under their leadership the school has evolved and improved. Teaching is consistently good, attendance is above average and excellent standards of behaviour and safety are the norm. Evidence from rigorous monitoring confirms that the dip in attainment in 2014 was not caused by weaker teaching but was as a result of high levels of mobility that have a significant impact on outcomes for small cohorts. Nevertheless, leaders have further improved the rigour with which they check on the quality of teaching this year.
- Detailed systems to check on pupils' progress ensure that all staff are aware of which pupils need extra help. Subject leaders are involved in action plans for improvement and make a strong contribution to school improvement. They collect and manage progress data, check on the quality of teaching and marking and share the responsibility of ensuring the school improves further. Their current priorities are to remove remaining inconsistencies in teaching practice, implement new assessment systems and embed the new curriculum.
- Teachers' performance is well managed. All staff are proud to be part of this learning community and know that senior leaders are well placed to provide support or coaching if it is required.
- The headteacher oversees the provision and progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. He has brought greater clarity to the school's systems so that provision which is already good is improving further.
- The early years is managed by a skilled practitioner. An initiative to introduce a part-time pre-school class has been successful. Children joining the class since it opened in January have made good progress. The class will become full time in September.
- Pupil premium funding is used to provide more staff in school so that there are numerous opportunities for targeted group work and individual attention. It is also used to ensure all children can benefit from clubs, outings, access to technology and other educational enrichment experiences. As a result there is little, and often no gap, between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and that of other pupils.
- Pupils take part in a very wide range of sporting activities and are very enthusiastic about the coaching sessions they have, as well as numerous tournaments organised through the local sports partnership. Excellent use of the sports premium funding has had a positive impact on pupils' well-being, confidence, fitness and enthusiasm for sport. Staff are better trained to teach physical education. The proportion of pupils regularly attending sports clubs has increased as a result of this funding.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development underpins the entire curriculum. The spiritual dimension is enhanced by assemblies, class prayers and areas for reflection and prayer around the school. Pupils are well aware of other faiths and learn about different religions through religious education. Pupils are encouraged to have an awareness and affinity with the natural environment and learn about stewardship of the earth's resources. Practical experience of the outdoors is provided in the well-developed school grounds where there is a wildlife area. Pupils learn about their own local culture as well as enjoying visitors from places such as Japan, India and South Africa. Leaders use the increasingly creative and stimulating curriculum to raise aspirations and inspire pupils to aim high.
- Awareness and appreciation of traditional British values are threaded through the school's work. Pupils learn about key aspects of British culture through a celebration of special events such as longsword dancing, a local tradition which has recently been revived. The school is effective in raising aspirations and producing useful citizens of the future, well equipped for life in modern Britain. British values of tolerance and respect are promoted through the ethos of the school and the wider curriculum. Pupils on the school council are democratically elected. Older pupils take on responsibilities with pride. Pupils in Year 6 are well prepared for the next stage of their education. They feel well prepared for secondary school because they have opportunities to visit before they join.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity well and tackles discrimination effectively and this is reflected in the good achievement of pupils. The headteacher and governors have successfully established a culture where the highest standards of behaviour are expected and encouraged.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding children are exemplary. The safety of the site and the child protection arrangements are rigorous and effective. Pupils are aware of the dangers of extremism.
- The local authority has provided good support for leaders and governors when required. The school works with others in the local area to provide training for teachers and to check the accuracy of assessments.
- **The governance of the school:**

- Governors fully understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They regularly visit as part of the 'governor of the week' schedule when they attend assemblies to present awards. They are clear about how well pupils are achieving in comparison with other schools. Governors question and challenge how well all pupils are making progress. Some have a professional background in education and are well placed to support the school. They understand recent developments in education including learning in the early years, new assessment systems and the new curriculum. There is a specific safeguarding governor, but all governors see this as a shared responsibility. Governors are very rigorous in the way they manage the budget. They know how pupil premium funding is allocated and check that it is helping disadvantaged pupils to achieve well. They know about the quality of teaching and oversee the performance management of staff and ensure good teaching is rewarded and underperformance is challenged. They have wide ranging links with the local community and their leadership has ensured that the school has continued to prosper and develop.

## **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are outstanding

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. They are courteous to adults and to each other. Pupils enjoy spending time together.
- Pupils have a great desire to learn and this contributes to their good progress and the calm and purposeful learning atmosphere in the school. Pupils strive to do their best and enjoy learning new skills. For example, as part of the 'music at the heart of Teesdale project' they have learned an ancient form of sword dancing.
- Behaviour around the school is excellent. At the end of playtimes there is no litter anywhere. Pupils are instantly silent when requested at playtime or lunchtimes in order to listen to instructions from staff or return to lessons. The inspection took place in the final week of term amid rehearsals and sporting events. Despite this excitement, behaviour remained exemplary.
- The members of the school council are proud of their work in representing the whole school. They are actively involved in decision-making about school menus and charity fund-raising. Older pupils act as House Captains and as buddies especially at playtimes, to make sure that no one is left out.
- Pupils enjoy supporting many community events such as the local festival, the village art exhibition and work with the Riverside Trust. They entertain members of the lunch club, residents at a nearby hospice, and support the horticultural society. They enjoy and benefit from numerous visits including trips to London and local museums as well as outdoor activity centres for residential trips.
- Pupils arrive on time and attendance is consistently above average. Pupils enjoy school and do not want to miss it.

### **Safety**

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils feel very safe in school and parents agree that their children are safe. Pupils are confident that staff care for them exceptionally well and know that if they have any concerns, there would be an adult to help them to sort it out.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of the different forms of bullying, including 'cyber-bullying' and name-calling. Pupils are confident that no one in school is picked on. There is little name-calling or unkindness, at most there are squabbles when friends fall out, but issues are quickly settled. A constant focus on rules for e-safety has reinforced the importance of this. Pupils show a very strong understanding of the importance of using the internet sensibly and are aware of the possible dangers.
- Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe in a wide range of circumstances, such as on the road, and around water. They are well aware of situations where they may be encouraged to take part in risky behaviours.

## **The quality of teaching** is good

- The quality of work in pupils' books, their attitude to learning seen in observations and the improving rates of progress of pupils show that teaching is consistently good and in some areas it is outstanding.
- All teachers have mixed age groups in their classes and are adept at planning work for a wide range of different abilities. Teachers make learning lively and interesting, often providing practical activities to encourage learning. For example, in topic work on ancient Egypt, pupils experimented by mummifying tomatoes to better observe the process. In Years 1 and 2 pupils were entranced in science by observing,

drawing and researching the habitats of the mini beasts they had collected from the wildlife gardens.

- Regular guided reading and shared reading sessions are very effective in helping pupils to look deeper into the text they are studying. Pupils keep a reading record which records their progress. Class libraries are stocked with an enticing supply of books which pupils are encouraged to borrow and read regularly. Teachers have introduced special sessions for reluctant or slower readers where they read to a handsome spaniel brought into school. This has helped them to make much better progress.
- Writing skills are fostered in every subject and right from the start in letters and sounds sessions in Reception. Pupils have several working books including writing and literacy books. They regularly practice writing at length in a wide range of genres including biography, factual recounts and writing to persuade.
- The teaching of mathematics is effective. After a dip last year school leaders have vigorously re-appraised their teaching. There is a greater emphasis on problem-solving and teachers are alert to the importance of identifying gifted and talented pupils early so as to accelerate their progress rapidly. External consultants have confirmed that mathematics teaching is strong.
- Teaching assistants and extra teachers working with individuals or targeted groups have a close partnership with class teachers. They make a strong contribution to the learning and progress of all pupils and particularly disadvantaged pupils and disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Teachers mark work regularly and conscientiously so that mistakes are identified and good advice is given as to how pupils can improve their work. There are many examples in work books of pupils responding to comments and adding to, or improving, their answers. Teachers often set an extra challenge when pupils have completed work successfully. This is an area of teaching where there remains slight inconsistency, but regular scrutiny of books by all teachers is eliminating this weakness.
- The school has yet to decide on which new assessment system it will implement in the future because leaders are waiting to consider local authority recommendations. This means that assessment procedures are not yet as specific as they need to be to maximise progress.

### The achievement of pupils is good

- The school focuses successfully on ensuring that every pupil makes good progress. By the time pupils in Year 6 go on to their next stage of education they have acquired a good understanding of the basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics. Because year groups are very small, published data at the end of Year 6 can vary widely. For example, pupils at the end of Year 6 in the last three years have twice attained well above average and once well below average.
- Published data in 2014 does not accurately reflect the achievement of pupils. The school has plenty of evidence to show that previous assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 were too generous, which made it appear that pupils made less progress than was actually the case at Key Stage 2. This has now been rectified and assessments are accurate. The high level of pupil mobility has also had an impact on overall achievement. School tracking shows that all pupils make good progress from the time they join the school. Inspection evidence, including a review of books in all classes indicates that pupils make good progress and achieve well both in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Attainment is again above average in the current year.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the nationally expected level in letters and sounds at the end of Years 1 and 2 is at least average and rising this year as a result of expert teaching and staff training. Standards have risen over the last two years at the end of Year 2 so that pupils are now reaching national standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress due to highly focused one-to-one sessions with adults. Teaching assistants are particularly effective in supporting the learning and progress of individual pupils. Class teachers plan work which ensures they regularly make small steps in progress in line with their skills and abilities.
- The number of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is too small to make comparisons with others about their attainment in English and mathematics without risk of identifying individuals. However, these pupils make good progress and sometimes there is no gap in their attainment and that of others in school or nationally.
- Teachers usually make sure they give the most able pupils demanding tasks in all classes. As a result these pupils make good progress in a range of subjects including reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils develop good skills across a range of subjects. Generally, pupils write with flair and imagination. A recent emphasis on spelling, punctuation and grammar has led to greater accuracy as well as imagery in pupils' writing. The work in their religious education books is especially impressive.
- The school fosters a love of reading and pupils have access to good class libraries. Pupils enjoy reading for

pleasure as well as recognising the value of good reading skills in preparation for secondary school. They enjoy a wide variety of books including adventure and science fiction, biographies and factual books.

- Pupils enjoy mathematics, especially when a practical aspect is involved. They use mathematical vocabulary well and successfully tackle problem-solving challenges as well as basic numeracy work.
- Pupils develop talents in musical, sporting and artistic fields as well as in basic skills. Pupils were observed speaking French, practising their musical compositions and making scary scenery for their forthcoming production of 'The Rocky Monster Show'.

### The early years provision

is good

- Children join the school in Reception with skills and understanding that are broadly typical for their age. Some have spent a year in local playgroups. The school has good links with Nursery providers so that there is some continuity and effective transition arrangements.
- Children make good progress in the Reception Year because teaching is good and their attitudes to learning and behaviour are very positive. They work and play well together and maintain concentration on their tasks for a sustained period of time. They respect each other, adults and their learning environment. Children say 'please' and 'thank you' without being reminded.
- Teaching is good because adults move learning along by asking probing questions, setting new challenges and building children's confidence in their own ability to be successful. Teachers encourage children to practice speaking and listening in order to improve their communication skills. By the end of the Reception Year nearly all children are able to make a good start in Year 1. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development is usually above average.
- Working patterns vary. Sometimes children are working together in large groups, for example, singing story time and 'dough disco', sometimes groups of two or three do focused work with an adult. Often children choose to work individually practising writing alphabet letters and enjoying the many books available in the Reception classroom.
- Adults track children's progress carefully from the start. The school rightly prides itself on recognising quickly any children who may need extra help, and children of high ability who need extra challenge.
- Children have a good sense of right and wrong and are keen to behave well. Adults foster children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well across all sessions. The school sees personal development equally as important as developing skills in literacy and numeracy. Children are very safe and well looked after. This is seen in the confident way that they talk happily to visitors.
- Leadership in the early years is effective. There is a programme of continual monitoring and improvement. Links with parents are good. The school encourages parents to involve themselves in their children's learning and progress from the outset.

## 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>	114222
<b>Local authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	461689

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>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	81
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Andie Mackay
<b>Headteacher</b>	Howard Blindt
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 September 2010
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