

Brunton First School

Roseden Way, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE13 9BD

Inspection dates

3–4 November 2015

Overall effectiveness

Good

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- From starting points which are typical for their age, pupils make good progress to reach standards in reading, writing and mathematics which are above those typically seen by the end of Year 4.
- Good teaching in the early years enables most children to make better than expected progress in the Reception year. A much higher than average proportion are well prepared for the curriculum in Year 1.
- Leaders have taken effective action to ensure that teaching is consistently good across the school. The proportion of pupils reaching higher levels of attainment by the end of Year 2 has increased over time.
- The teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) is effective. The proportion of pupils meeting the national standard at the end of Year 1 is above average.
- Leaders pride themselves on knowing children and families well. Parents value this and the vast majority would recommend the school to others.
- Carefully planned support enables disadvantaged pupils and those with disabilities and special educational needs to progress well.
- Pupils enjoy this happy school. Their attendance is above the national average.
- Pupils are polite and courteous. A strong culture of mutual respect results in positive relationships between adults and children.
- Senior leaders have enabled pupils to have a strong voice in improving the school. Pupils have a well-developed understanding of their democratic rights and responsibilities.
- Pupils enjoy a wide variety of extra-curricular sporting and artistic opportunities. They benefit from a range of visits which enrich their learning in the classroom.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Leaders do not ensure that teaching enables all groups of pupils, including some boys and some of the most-able pupils, to make rapid progress.
- Current systems to check on pupils' attainment do not enable leaders to evaluate pupils' progress sharply enough compared to national expectations.
- Teachers do not consistently set work which deepens pupils' understanding or requires them to explain their reasoning.
- Pupils' understanding of different forms of bullying and the diverse nature of modern Britain is not sufficiently well developed.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all groups of pupils, including boys and the most able, make substantial and sustained progress in all subjects by:
 - refining assessment systems so that leaders can more precisely evaluate the proportions of pupils making better than expected progress
 - setting more ambitious targets for what pupils can achieve
 - checking that teaching is enabling all pupils to make rapid progress over time
 - making sure teachers consistently challenge pupils to think deeply about their learning and explain their thinking and reasoning.
- Improve the effectiveness of the curriculum so that:
 - pupils have a good understanding of different faiths and cultures
 - pupils recognise different types of bullying and understand how they can be combated.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher has managed the rapid expansion of the school effectively over recent years. While taking on new staff each year to cope with the increase in the number of pupils, she has continued to improve the proportion of good teaching and sustain and improve academic outcomes for pupils.
- Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the headteacher and value the support she provides to them. She has an impressive knowledge of pupils and their families and this is appreciated by parents. As one parent commented, 'The school has quickly grown in size but still maintains its personal relationships with children and parents.'
- Leaders have used pupil premium funding effectively to provide support for disadvantaged pupils. This has enabled pupils to make good progress and reach the standards expected for all pupils nationally.
- Additional funding for physical education and sport has been used well to improve outcomes for pupils. A wide range of curricular and extra-curricular sporting opportunities is on offer to all pupils. Additional provision is in place for those pupils who show interest in or aptitude for particular sports. Leaders have carefully monitored the impact of their work and can demonstrate the increased participation of pupils in physical activity.
- Leaders have supported pupils effectively to develop their understanding of the democratic process. While the general election was taking place, each class wrote their own manifesto and presented it to the whole school. The winning manifesto was put into action and all pupils enjoyed the construction day which took place as a result of their votes.
- Leaders have ensured that safeguarding practices meet current requirements. All staff have received child protection training and they ensure that the school is a safe place for all pupils. Leaders and governors involved in recruiting staff have been appropriately trained.
- The curriculum is enriched effectively with educational visits which complement pupils' learning in school. As part of their 'Hip, Hop and Healthy' week, a group of pupils visited the media centre at a local cricket ground and recorded radio-style jingles to be played in their school dining hall to encourage healthy eating. The whole school community benefited from their learning.
- The curriculum is planned well to secure above-average academic outcomes for pupils in most subjects. Leaders have also ensured that pupils become confident and successful learners who are ready to move to the next stage of their education. Leaders recognise that while they promote respect and tolerance effectively through the curriculum, opportunities for pupils to understand different types of bullying are not developed well enough. Similarly, pupils' understanding of different faiths and cultures is less secure than other aspects of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Senior leaders provide effective professional development for staff. Middle leaders have been given the opportunity to undertake qualifications to develop their emerging leadership skills. All staff have opportunities to observe teaching regularly in other classrooms. This has improved the quality of teaching and enhanced the culture of teamworking.
- Systems are in place to manage the performance of teachers and have resulted in an improvement in the proportion of good teaching. However, targets set for teachers are not ambitious enough to secure more rapid progress from all pupils and from particular groups of pupils such as boys and the most able. Consequently, outcomes for pupils are good, rather than outstanding.
- Leaders undertake regular checks on the quality of teaching and provide feedback to teaching staff. However, these checks focus too much on the actions of the teacher in individual lessons and do not take enough account of the impact of teaching on pupils' progress over time.
- Leaders have recently introduced a new system of assessment. During this period of transition, they have not been able to quickly and accurately measure the progress made by pupils and compare this to pupils' prior attainment and national expectations. As a result, leaders have been over-generous in their assessment of the proportions of pupils making better than expected progress.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors are committed to improving the school. They visit the school regularly to review aspects of the school's work including arrangements for safeguarding pupils. Governors receive information from the headteacher about the performance of teachers and use this to determine pay progression. They challenge senior leaders to ensure value for money.
 - The headteacher reports pupils' assessment information regularly to governors. However, while this information is reviewed, governors have not challenged senior leaders to set ambitious targets to secure good or better progress from all groups of pupils.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Leaders have taken action to improve the quality of teaching over time. As a result, all teaching is at least good and is enabling most pupils to make good progress to achieve high standards by the time they leave the school.
- Adults take time to build positive and productive relationships with pupils which are founded on mutual respect. As one parent commented, 'I love how well the staff know my children.' Because of this, pupils are keen to please their teachers and comply quickly with their instructions.
- Teachers assess what pupils can do accurately and take account of pupils' interests when they plan lessons. Pupils are regularly involved in leading their own learning by determining the questions and concepts they would like to explore. Consequently, pupils are enthusiastic about their learning.
- Teachers ensure that teaching assistants are well informed and understand their role in each lesson. Teaching assistants provide effective support to individuals and groups. As a result, those pupils, particularly pupils with disabilities and with special educational needs, make good progress.
- The teaching of phonics in Reception and Key Stage 1 classes is targeted precisely at the needs of different groups of pupils. Pupils have appropriate strategies to help them tackle new words and they enjoy reading. The proportion of pupils who meet the expected level in the national phonics check in Year 1 has steadily increased and is above the national average.
- Homework is set regularly to consolidate pupils' learning. In some year groups, helpful homework guidance is provided to parents so they can support their children at home. Parents are regularly updated with 'next steps' targets so they know what their child needs to do to improve their work.
- Teachers mark pupils' work frequently in line with the school's policy. Their feedback has enabled pupils to improve their imaginative writing. Occasionally, teachers do not focus on the most important priorities in their feedback to pupils or miss opportunities to correct pupils' basic skills.
- In the lessons where teaching is most effective, teachers set tasks which require pupils to think deeply about their learning. In a science lesson in Year 2, pupils speculated about the process of oxidation on copper coins. Grappling with this concept and explaining their reasoning developed pupils' understanding well.
- However, teachers do not consistently challenge pupils to develop their understanding as well as they can. For example, pupils' workbooks in mathematics show that they are sometimes asked to complete problems which require them to repeat the same type of calculation. As a result, some pupils, particularly the most able, do not need to think deeply about their work and this limits their ability to make rapid gains in their learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupil's personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils feel safe in school. The school's curriculum provides opportunities to learn about online safety, road safety and healthy living and eating. As a result, pupils are well equipped to make choices to keep themselves safe and healthy.
- Leaders are committed to preparing pupils to be successful lifelong learners. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their learning and take an active role in deciding their next steps. Good opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development ensure that pupils are becoming more emotionally resilient and that they are ready for the next stage of their education and their life ahead.
- Pupils are extremely proud of 'Brunton Voices', their school council. Leaders enabled a group of pupils to visit another school where pupils were impressed with handwriting. Pupils worked with senior leaders to suggest strategies for improving handwriting at Brunton First. Pupils report that teachers now give pupils more opportunities to practise their handwriting and that it is getting better.
- Leaders have worked hard to create a climate where tolerance and respect are prized by the whole school community. They recognise, however, that they have not done enough to help pupils to recognise different types of bullying and that pupils would benefit from opportunities to work with leaders to minimise the risk of bullying occurring in their school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The vast majority of pupils enjoy school and this is reflected in above-average rates of attendance. There are no pupils who are persistently absent. The headteacher monitors attendance closely and works with families to address any emerging issues.
- Pupils are overwhelmingly proud of their school. They are respectful, courteous and well mannered as they move around the school. The very few pupils who do not consistently behave well are managed appropriately.
- Pupils understand the traffic light system in place to manage behaviour in school. They are confident that this promotes good behaviour and that incidents of inappropriate behaviour are few and far between.
- Teachers keep detailed notes of any behaviour incidents that occur in class or at social times. Leaders have recognised that they need to keep sharper records of their actions to deal with any challenging behaviour so that they can check for any patterns in behaviour and address them more rapidly. They have developed a new system of recording which is in the early stage of implementation.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- From starting points which are typical for their age, all pupils make expected progress and most pupils make better than expected progress across the school. By the time they leave the school, the standards reached by pupils are above those typically seen at the end of Year 4 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the national phonics check at the end of Year 1 has improved and is above national average. The very few pupils who do not reach the standard are well supported to develop their basic reading skills as they move through the school.
- Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, particularly their writing skills, are developed well through other subjects such as history, science and geography.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress and reach standards which are at least in line with other pupils nationally by the time they leave the school.
- Pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs make good progress due to carefully planned support.
- The proportion of pupils attaining the highest levels at the end of Key Stage 1 and at the end of Year 4 in reading, writing and mathematics has increased over time and is well above the national average.
- A higher proportion of girls attain the highest levels in literacy and, in some year groups, fewer boys are making better than expected progress. Leaders have begun to address this. They have increased the number of boys making rapid progress in reading in Year 2 so that gaps in attainment are beginning to narrow. However, leaders recognise that they need to increase the proportion of boys making better than expected progress in writing to reach the highest levels.
- Although pupils reach standards which are above those typically seen in most subjects by the end of Year 4, their attainment in religious education is less secure. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of Christian traditions, but their knowledge and skills are less well developed in relation to other faiths.

Early years provision

is good

- From starting points which are typical for their age, all children make expected progress across the Reception year. Most children make better than expected progress and a higher than average proportion reach and exceed the level expected at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are well prepared for the Year 1 curriculum.
- Leaders have taken effective action to improve the curriculum in the early years. They have reviewed the proportion of time that children spend choosing their own learning, as well as the opportunities that children have to work in small groups with an adult. This has enabled adults to meet children's needs more effectively and consequently more children are making better than typical progress.
- Children behave extremely well and cooperate well with each other and with adults. For example, children collaborated outside to create firework pictures using conkers dipped in paint which they balanced and

rolled on their sheets of paper. They used negotiation skills to agree on their paint colours and showed very good progress in their social development.

- Excellent relationships with parents are forged at this early stage of children's school life. During the inspection, groups of parents worked with their children in class as part of an open morning. Parents were overwhelmingly positive about the many opportunities to engage with the school and the support they are offered to help their children's learning.
- The learning environment is well organised and provides opportunities across all areas of learning. Opportunities for mark-making are developed particularly well. While adults recognise the importance of language development for children at this stage, some role play areas are not planned effectively enough to encourage high-quality talk from all children.
- Teachers and other adults encourage children to make choices and think about their learning. In a writing task where children made good progress, they selected a character from a range of options and created their own sentences, using their phonic knowledge to sound out their words. Occasionally, some of the most-able children are not challenged enough by the tasks set for them and this limits their ability to make the more rapid progress of which they are capable.
- Teachers' assessments are accurate. They correctly identified that some boys were not attaining as well as girls and have used this information to plan activities to begin to address this issue. They recognise that they need to continue their focus on this work to ensure that all boys make better than typical progress and to narrow this attainment gap.

School details

Unique reference number	135286
Local authority	Newcastle Upon Tyne
Inspection number	10001124

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	331
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Helen Sykes
Headteacher	Gill McKay
Telephone number	0191 217 0045
Website	http://www.bruntonfirst.newcastle.sch.uk
Email address	admin@bruntonfirst.newcastle.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	15–16 February 2011

Information about this school

- This school is a first school, catering for pupils aged 4–9, and is larger than the average-sized primary school. The school has expanded significantly since the previous inspection.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils for whom the pupil premium provides support is well below the national average. The pupil premium is government funding provided for those who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is well below the national average.
- Pupils attend the Reception year on a full-time basis.
- The school is part of the Gosforth Schools' Trust.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed the quality of teaching and learning across all classes, including observing teaching jointly with the headteacher. Inspectors looked at the standard of current pupils' work, listened to pupils read and talked to them about their learning and their experiences at school.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, the Chair and Vice-chair of the governing body and groups of pupils. An inspector also met with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspection team evaluated a wide range of school documents, including the school development plan, the school's self-evaluation, information on pupils' progress, records of the checks made on the quality of teaching, minutes of governing body meetings, information on safeguarding and a range of policies.
- The inspection team considered the views expressed in 22 questionnaire returns from staff. Inspectors talked to parents and reviewed the 118 responses made by parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.

Inspection team

Claire Brown, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Suzanne Lithgow	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jonathan Brown	Her Majesty's Inspector
Lucie Stephenson	Ofsted Inspector

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