

St Andrew's Primary School

St Andrew's Road, Bishop Auckland, County Durham DL14 6RY

Inspection dates 12–13 November 2015

Overall effectiveness **Good**

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The dynamic, inspirational and determined headteacher, well supported by her deputy, has transformed learning at St Andrew's. The school is rapidly improving because leaders and governors have tackled previous weaknesses.
- The quality of teaching is consistently good or better. Pupils learn at a good pace. Teachers assess their work carefully and pupils appreciate this and respond thoughtfully to guidance.
- Pupils now make good progress and achieve well. The most-able pupils and those with special educational needs also achieve well from their starting points.
- In 2015, almost all pupils in Year 6 made good or better than expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics and their attainment was above average.
- Pupils are kind and respectful towards one another, are adept socially and equipped with strong spiritual and moral values. They have a deep understanding of tolerance and equality, both of which lie at the very heart of British fundamental values.
- Pupils' excellent behaviour and positive attitudes to learning underpin their good progress. They feel very safe and secure in the school. Pupils are thriving in this safe environment and attendance is improving rapidly.
- Leadership in the early years has transformed learning. Children are now making rapid progress in all areas of development in this safe, stimulating and creative provision. The teacher and teaching assistants know the children very well and know exactly how to help them learn.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding and so pupils do not yet make the substantial and sustained progress needed to develop excellent knowledge, understanding and skills.
- Some pupils' use of grammar, punctuation and spelling hold back the quality of their written work.
- The curriculum, in particular humanities, needs further development in order to strengthen, deepen and broaden pupils' learning and to provide richer opportunities for writing.
- Outcomes in the early years are not yet outstanding.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that an increased proportion of children work at age-related expectations by:
 - increasing the proportion of outstanding teaching by ensuring that all teachers challenge pupils sufficiently in lessons and through the questions they ask
 - broadening and deepening the curriculum further and ensuring that pupils benefit from the subsequent rich opportunities for writing
 - improving the quality of pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar, particularly for the least able.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher is unwavering in her determination to secure an excellent education for pupils in the school. The governing body and staff share this vision. They have successfully driven the school forward by improving the quality of teaching, eradicating poor practice and accelerating pupils' learning.
- Commitment and dedication to each unique child is a striking feature of the school. One member of staff captured the essence of the school when saying, 'I feel all staff at this school have the best interest of every single child as number one priority every single day'.
- Leaders and governors are creating a culture where high expectations are the norm and the barriers some children face in their learning are not allowed to impact negatively on their future. The focus on strong personal development, emotional well-being and a very caring, safe learning environment is central to these aspirations becoming reality.
- Parents and carers all have the highest regard for the headteacher. They believe she has transformed the culture of the school and is inspiring in their children a love of learning. The school has embraced mobile technology in order to facilitate regular communication with families.
- Training for all staff is carefully planned to meet both individuals' needs and whole-school priorities, so that all are fully equipped in the task of ensuring all pupils make increasingly rapid and sustained progress. Individual performance management objectives for staff are challenging and reflect the high expectations of the school.
- The school's curriculum is broad and balanced. Pupils' strong personal development is in part due to a curriculum that strongly contributes to their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and prepares them very well for life in modern Britain.
- The curriculum is imaginative and develops a strong sense of responsibility for others. It is substantially enriched by the wide range of trips and visits and by visitors to the school. For example, pupils spoke enthusiastically about a recent visit to Durham Cathedral where they learned of their local history and cultural heritage. They avidly recounted an earlier visit to Auckland Castle where they learned of the role of the Prince Bishops. Visits to local secondary schools to see drama productions are highly valued, as are the visits to the school by language specialists who work with pupils on a fortnightly basis. However, learning in humanities does too little to enrich and extend pupils' writing skills.
- The sports funding for primary schools is used well. There has been a significant increase in the number of pupils taking part in sports after school. Both pupils and parents report that they particularly appreciate the opportunities that are now available.
- Leaders and governors have carefully managed pupil premium funding. A large part of the funding has been used for additional staffing to reduce class sizes and enabling, for the most part, single-age classrooms. In addition, the learning mentor is now able to support work relating to safeguarding. The impact of these actions is clearly seen through the progress made by disadvantaged pupils, who are the largest group in the school. It has accelerated significantly and these improvements are seen in every classroom.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school is proactive in all areas relating to the safeguarding of pupils. The headteacher and her senior team are very experienced and highly effective in working with external agencies, including the local authority and the police, in seeking to keep pupils safe. They are exemplary in attention to detail and tenacious in securing the help needed for children and their families.
- A culture of safety pervades the school. Pupils feel safe and have an acute awareness of what constitutes an unsafe situation. They know how to respond in a variety of circumstances to keep themselves safe.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governance has been transformed since the last inspection. Governors are highly professional and clear about their role. They are dedicated to school improvement. They have a very clear and accurate understanding of the school, gained not only from reports and meetings, but also from their own first-hand experience.
 - Governors provide both challenge and support to the school. They are rigorous in their examination of the school's performance data, including internal assessment records, and regularly ask questions regarding the progress of groups of pupils in different classes.

- Governors have a detailed knowledge of the arrangements for checking teachers’ performance and are robust in the execution of their duties. They reward only good teaching and effectively tackle any underperformance.
- They have a deep understanding of the needs of their school community and a sense of urgency as they talked with the inspector regarding what still needs to be done to take the school forward.
- Governors have a high level of expertise regarding the efficient management of financial resources and keep a careful eye on the future, knowing where pressures might come and how to plan for change.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- All lessons throughout the school are carefully planned with very clear, challenging objectives that are tightly tied to pupils’ previous learning. In this way, teachers ensure that they are highly responsive to pupils’ needs. Teachers are highly skilled in identifying when pupils begin to fall behind due to gaps in their knowledge from earlier years and plan additional lessons for them so that they can catch up.
- Lessons are interesting and lively and learning proceeds at a good pace. Pupils are given time to grapple with problems and are encouraged to think hard. Perceptive staff know when to intervene to improve learning and when to give pupils time to think and work things out for themselves.
- Most teachers use their good subject knowledge to question and probe pupils’ understanding. Challenge is high in many lessons and pupils need to think carefully before responding. Teachers are adept in perceiving where misunderstanding might lie and in reworking explanations to aid and secure learning.
- Pupils enjoyed learning using concrete, practical activities in mathematics lessons. Year 6 pupils designed nets of prisms and pyramids with faces and bases ranging from triangular to hexagonal. They enjoyed checking whether the net could then successfully make the shape. Not all were successful, which laid the foundations for careful enquiry as to the reasons why some nets failed. A high level of challenge and the freedom to test ideas out led ultimately to a deep understanding of concepts.
- Year 5 pupils were equally engaged in their learning as they tackled the ordering of fractions. All pupils had access to practical equipment including ‘fraction walls’ to explore their learning. The most-able mathematicians moved quickly to applying formal calculation methods, working with equivalent fractions. Throughout the school, mathematics is well taught, underpinned by an increasingly secure grasp of number concepts.
- Reading and the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) are carefully developed throughout Key Stage 1. Skills are deepened and extended as pupils progress through the school. Opportunities for reading are innovative, wide and varied. Pupils are encouraged to explore different genres and texts and this helps them to develop a love of reading.
- Creative ideas encourage pupils to read. The whole school recently took part in the Big Book Swap. Pupils dressed as characters from books, shared stories and swapped books they had read with each other. Each term, a ‘bedtime’ reading evening encourages parents to bring their children to the school hall to share in reading together with other children and their teachers. Staff go the extra mile to ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to read frequently to adults. Pupils value these times.
- The youngest pupils learn to write in a variety of styles, enjoying working with ‘talk’ partners as they plan their writing. They use electronic tablets as an effective tool to explore which words would help them to write to good effect. The oldest pupils write securely in a variety of styles as exemplified in creative work inspired by *The Wind in the Willows* by Kenneth Grahame. Writing included instructions on ‘How to successfully row a boat’ and creative work on ‘Planning to get out of jail’. Pupils wrote letters to Mother Mole. Carefully drawn artwork of the main characters in the book was used to describe the features and characteristics of Mole, Rat, Toad and Mr Badger.
- Pupils display very good attitudes to learning and they work hard. Marking is very helpful and pupils willingly improve their work, sometimes writing notes of thanks to their teachers for their help. Teachers are careful to check and develop pupils’ grammar, punctuation and spelling so that the quality of their written work improves further.
- Parents are regularly invited to evenings to discuss their children’s progress and read their reports with staff. This enables parents and teachers to work closely together to support each child’s learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils show respect for each other's opinions and value their support in both learning and play. Older pupils readily take on responsibilities around the school including helping younger children as playground buddies, looking after the school pets and becoming librarians to name but a few. They readily volunteer to help around the school.
- Attitudes to learning are excellent. Pupils settle quickly in lessons and listen carefully to teachers' explanations and instructions. They work with tremendous diligence and self-discipline and so make rapid progress. Pupils have great confidence in their teachers, knowing they will value their efforts. They thrive in the caring, positive environment of the school where praise is used regularly and always given when deserved.
- Emotional well-being is a high a priority within the school. Staff work closely with external agencies to develop self-awareness and resilience.
- The very open culture within the school develops confidence in the pupils that they are in a safe environment. They say they feel safe, although they are highly aware of dangers around them. The school works closely with the police and other agencies in ensuring that pupils really do understand how to keep themselves safe. As appropriate to their age, pupils know how to stay safe when using mobile phones, the internet and social media, when out on roads and at key times in the year such as Guy Fawkes night.
- Pupils say there is no bullying in school and records confirm this. They know what to do should they experience bullying. There is very little use of derogatory language, which is dealt with effectively on the rare occasions it occurs.
- Pupils recognise that many different people from different cultures and with many different religious views make up the world we live in and that all should be treated with tolerance and equality. They displayed great compassion for others less fortunate than themselves and a concerned awareness of the needs and feelings of others. This demonstrated the depth of pupils' social, spiritual and moral learning through the curriculum and also mirrored the care they have experienced from the school.
- The school is innovative in its drive to raise expectations and has held a careers fair for the whole school, despite their young age. The pupils greatly valued talking to a university student and members of the RAF. They enjoyed visiting local factories and having visits from the police, prison officers, dentists, surgeons and the Dogs Trust. The impact on pupils' aspirations was such that this event is to become a regular feature of the school's calendar.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils are courteous, friendly and polite.
- Pupils' conduct during the day is exemplary. No misbehaviour or low-level disruption of lessons was seen during the breakfast club, lessons, lunchtimes or playtime. Behaviour records show that the school's systems are effective and when pupils have tested their boundaries, subsequent actions by the school have resulted in rapid improvement without further incident.
- Education is highly valued by pupils. This is clearly demonstrated by the care they take in all their written work and by their close attention to learning in lessons. Attendance is improving strongly, particularly for those who have been persistently absent. The underlying causes of absence are carefully examined and strategies are put in place to help ensure attendance improves.
- Pupils also respect their school. They keep it tidy, help to look after their classroom pets and help to keep the school free from litter and too many fallen leaves.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- All groups of pupils in the school currently make at least good progress in English and mathematics. This is a crucial change since the last inspection. School data and analysis of pupils' work show that they are steadily gaining ground and beginning to catch up with the standards expected for their age. Books show that pupils respond carefully and thoughtfully to the regular and helpful feedback given by their teachers.
- The progress of pupils is carefully monitored by the school's leaders and swift action is taken if it slows. The school is careful to be sure that the causes of any underperformance are clearly identified. Strategies are then put in place to help pupils catch up. Leaders are vigilant in checking for emerging special educational needs and to identify quickly any additional support that may be needed.
- The most-able pupils thrive in an atmosphere of high expectations. Their work is very carefully planned to ensure they have opportunities to grapple with more complex problems and extended writing.
- Children with disabilities or who have special educational needs are well provided for through careful adaptation of work and sensitive support within the classroom. They make good progress in relation to their starting points and capabilities. One parent commented on how pleased she was with the effective additional help and care that her child had received in order to enable him to make good progress.
- Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 rose swiftly in 2015 and were above average in reading, writing and mathematics. These results represent exceptional progress from very low starting points for all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, those who are disadvantaged and the most-able.
- Standards also rose markedly at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2015. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was well above average although in English grammar, punctuation and spelling, results were below average. Every pupil made the nationally expected rate of progress in both writing and mathematics and most pupils did so in reading. The proportions of both disadvantaged and other pupils who made better than expected rates of progress in reading, writing and mathematics was well above the proportions that do so nationally. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- Less written work than might be expected has been carried out in curriculum areas such as humanities. Learning has taken place through the very extensive range of trips, visits, theatre experiences and visitors to the school and these have enriched pupils' experiences. Plans are now in place to integrate learning in humanities as a more formal part of classroom teaching.
- Enjoyment of reading is evident throughout the school as a result of the school's creative work in this area. Older pupils read regularly with confidence, fluency and enjoyment. Results in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 are below average. However, they represent good progress from pupils' starting points at the start of the year.

Early years provision

is good

- Children are eager to learn. The air of excitement and anticipation is striking as children explore the wide range of vibrant, stimulating activities both inside and outside the classroom. A sense of urgency amongst staff pervades the classroom, driven by the knowledge that most children enter Reception Year with skills that are well below those typical for their age and there is no time to lose. Expectations are high.
- Children's play is lively, creative and imaginative. Adults skilfully and sensitively intervene in order to develop and enrich their use of language. Through careful observation and perceptive questioning, they stimulate children's imagination and creativity, enhancing and extending their learning through play.
- In the classroom, children were gentle as they touched the fur of a range of the school's pets, and inquisitive as they explored each other's knowledge of how to care for pets. Adults quickly capitalised on children's interest, introduced new vocabulary and encouraged children to use and recognise the new words whilst examining carefully selected animal picture booklets.
- Children rapidly gained confidence in number through counting objects under the direction of the adult 'pirate' in the large sandpit outdoors. On discovering and recognising number instructions on buried cards, they had to collect items such as leaves and sticks to place in a treasure chest, but only if correct and counted. Every child was absorbed and entranced by the role-play, giving complete concentration to the task at hand. They were keen to help each other and enjoyed shared success. Indoors, a different group of children engaged well with the difficult task of estimating heights. They were captivated by the task as they were estimating the heights of miniature cut-out figures of themselves. Learning was closely matched to children's developing understanding of number concepts.

- Rigorous, accurate assessment of children's learning is used well to design lessons that capture children's interests and build rapidly on their existing foundations. Staff have an acute awareness of the unique learning needs of each child and use this knowledge to capitalise on every opportunity to both check and further each child's development.
- The school works very hard to ensure parents and carers are very well informed and encouraged to support children's learning and development. At weekends, children enjoy taking home an 'activity bag' with books and games to share with their family and develop literacy and social skills.
- Children are well behaved, keen to help, polite, friendly and kind to each other. They listen carefully and respectfully to both their teachers and each other. They take turns in activities and ensure that no one is left out of games, demonstrating good levels of social interaction.
- The new early years leader, who is also the deputy headteacher, is inspirational. With enthusiasm and energy and through accessing external support and training, she has led her team in transforming learning in this setting. She has dramatically improved the quality of teaching, ensured assessment informs incisive planning, restructured the whole of the indoor and outdoor provision and developed strong partnerships with parents. The journals of learning that chart children's progress in detail are exemplary.
- Historically no groups of children left Reception with good levels of development and therefore few had been ready for the next stage of their education. The early years leader is now ensuring that all children, including those who are disadvantaged, those who have special educational needs and the most-able are making rapid and sustained progress so that in future they will be able to make a flying start in Year 1.
- Leaders are vigilant and rigorous in all aspects of safety and safeguarding. Judging by the confidence with which children play and learn in this setting, they clearly feel safe and secure.

School details

Unique reference number	114188
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10002146

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	114
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Canon Neville Vine
Headteacher	Andrea Norman
Telephone number	01388 605385
Website	www.st-andrews-pri.durham.sch.uk
Email address	standrews@durhamlearning.net
Date of previous inspection	25–26 September 2013

Information about this school

- St Andrew's is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Due to the small size, pupils are taught in one mixed-age class in Key Stage 1. All other classes are taught in single-age year groups including the Reception class.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils whose learning is supported by the pupil premium is well above the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or children looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils with disabilities and those who have special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school other than at the usual times is above average.
- The school has experienced significant changes to staffing since the last inspection including appointment of the headteacher in January 2014.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in all classes including one lesson jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector looked at examples of pupils' work and talked with them about their learning. She listened to groups of pupils in Year 2 and 6 read.
- Groups of pupils talked with the inspector both formally and informally during playtime and dinnertime.
- The inspector talked to parents at the end of the school day and took account of the school's own survey of parents' views. There were not enough responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, to register parental views.
- The inspector also took account of 17 questionnaires completed by staff.
- A range of documents were examined including minutes of meetings, the school's self-evaluation, development plans, assessment information, safeguarding documentation (protecting children and making sure they are safe), and attendance and behaviour records.
- The inspector also looked carefully at a range of other evidence, including information for parents on the school website and documentation relating to events, visits and trips that have taken place at the school.

Inspection team

Janice Gorlach, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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