

Mowbray Primary School

Stakeford Lane, Stakeford, Choppington, Northumberland NE62 5HQ

Inspection dates 24–25 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	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Strong leadership and governance have turned this school around. The recent appointment of the new headteacher has significantly strengthened, sharpened and hastened the improvements, with renewed focus and drive.
- Governors know the school well and share the headteacher's determination to further improve the quality of teaching and achievement for all pupils.
- Teaching is much improved and is now good. This is because teachers have high expectations of what all pupils can achieve. They use assessment techniques to establish a climate in which successful learning can take place. Teachers are now confident in their subject knowledge and use this to plan lessons that motivate pupils more.
- Standards are improving rapidly and securely and pupils make good progress. Achievement gaps between different groups, such as disadvantaged pupils and others in the school, are closing quickly in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
- The curriculum is well planned to interest and engage pupils. The 'forest school' enhances pupils' enjoyment by giving them opportunities to develop their understanding and skills using the natural environment as inspiration.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are proud of their achievements and show respect to adults and to each other.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Most-able pupils are not always challenged and stretched enough which means they are not achieving the higher levels they should be.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to investigate and problem solve to deepen their understanding in mathematics.
- Some children in the early years are not identified quickly enough when they are falling behind, which is stopping them from making rapid progress.
- The outdoor environment is not used as effectively in the early years as the indoor area.
- Children need more opportunities to develop their number skills in the early years.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Secure a greater consistency of high-quality teaching and outcomes for all pupils by:
 - making sure that teachers consistently challenge most-able pupils
 - giving all pupils more opportunities to investigate, problem solve and reason to deepen their mathematical understanding and skills.
- Continue to improve provision and outcomes in the early years for all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, by:
 - having a tracking system which ensures that pupils receive targeted support at a quicker pace so that they can make faster progress
 - making more use of the outdoors area to further develop children's skills and understanding
 - giving children more opportunities to develop number skills in all learning areas.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher and other senior leaders are ambitious for the school and provide a good quality of education for their pupils. They have worked closely with the governing body to drive improvement successfully. Staff are committed to working with the leaders in the school and are determined to continue to improve the consistency of highly effective teaching and learning across the school.
- Since his appointment in September this year, the headteacher has built upon the solid foundations put in place since the previous inspection. However, his fresh and clear sense of direction has brought a much-needed sense of urgency to the upward direction of travel of the school.
- All leaders have an accurate picture of the school's strengths in addition to the areas which need further improvement. There are well-focused plans for teachers and support staff to build on the improvements to their teaching.
- Middle leaders share the headteacher's high expectations. They have a good understanding of the subjects and projects they are leading on, and have detailed action plans in place for further improvement. They frequently check the impact of their work and identify the next steps for development well.
- The quality of teaching and learning is checked effectively by leaders and governors. They visit lessons regularly, have discussions with pupils and check their work. The regular sharing of good practice is proving successful.
- Over time, leaders have implemented a range of strategies to close the gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers. These are monitored and adapted regularly to determine if they are making a positive difference. Pupil premium funding is being well used to employ additional staff to support disadvantaged pupils, particularly through providing an extremely effective 'forest school' programme, offering a nurture group to develop social and emotional skills, and smaller, very precise intervention programmes which focus on the individual needs of vulnerable pupils.
- Rich and interesting activities through the curriculum are making a strong contribution to pupils' good learning. The newly revised curriculum covers a range of topics which interests pupils, but is also underpinned by a relentless focus on developing reading, writing and mathematical skills. The forest school is widening pupils' opportunities to use the outdoors for inspiration and motivation. For example, pupils were studying Rennie Mackintosh in art, and were looking for curves and lines in the natural environment to create their own masterpieces. This not only excites pupils, but allows them to gain a real understanding in order to develop their own ideas, skills and creativity.
- Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They play an active role in decision making in the school through their role on the school council. They learn about a range of different customs, cultures and religions across the world. They are taught well about how to stay safe in school, online and in the community. Such work is embedded across the curriculum successfully and, alongside extra-curricular activities, visitors into school and trips, is having a significant impact on pupils' good social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. A recent visit to Woodhorn mining museum to see the remembrance poppy display resulted in some inspiring poetry, with one pupil describing the poppy as 'a ruby red, glistening jewel'.
- The school uses the primary school physical education and sport premium effectively to promote pupils' physical development and to extend their sporting opportunities. Specialist coaches are used to provide good-quality teaching for pupils and training for staff. This has resulted in pupils having far more opportunities and confidence to participate in competitions and festivals throughout the year.
- Most parents are overwhelmingly positive about the work of the school staff and leaders. They are pleased with the information they receive about their children. They also appreciate the improvements which have occurred since the previous inspection, while highlighting more recent improvements as being particularly successful.
- The local authority has provided appropriate advice, support and challenge since the previous inspection. In addition, it recognised when some support was impeding the rate of improvement and intervened effectively to rectify this.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governance is strong. The governing body has strengthened its membership by appointing governors with relevant skills and knowledge to support the strategic leadership of the school. Governors have worked closely with senior leaders since the last inspection to make sure that areas of weakness are

tackled successfully and they have been instrumental in ensuring that school leaders have made the improvements necessary to transform the school.

- Governors' good knowledge of the school's performance enables them to hold senior leaders firmly to account. They also understand clearly how the performance of teachers is managed, which is linked directly to pay and derived directly from the school's identified priorities for improvement.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders implement robust systems and ensure that staff are well trained to use them. The headteacher checks these carefully, and responds quickly to any areas which can be refined further. School records show that staff are vigilant and diligently follow through any concerns they have.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Observation of lessons, along with a scrutiny of pupils' work and their assessment information shows that teaching is now typically good across the school. Teachers plan lessons which interest and engage pupils, which means they learn well.
- The pitch of lessons reflects higher expectations of most pupils across the school. Teachers expect pupils to do well according to their age and stage of development. Effective support from both teachers and teaching assistants helps pupils who are behind to catch up with their peers, including those who are disabled and have special educational needs and disadvantaged pupils.
- The relationships between staff and pupils are rooted in respect. Pupils work well together in class to discuss their ideas and to challenge each other. Those pupils who need additional support are not afraid to tackle more difficult tasks, and do not give up when they do not find it easy. They know that staff will support them and direct them without telling them the answer, and this is enabling them to make good progress.
- Most teachers mark pupils' work diligently and provide good pointers for improvement showing pupils clearly the next steps in their learning. In line with the recently revised and improved school policy, pupils have time to make these improvements in their own work, and they can articulate clearly to inspectors how to be more successful in their work. Recent monitoring of this by governors and leaders has ensured that more teachers are now doing this in a much more effective way.
- Most tasks and activities are well planned to ensure that they meet the varying needs and abilities of pupils in the class. Adults use well-developed questioning skills to draw out key learning points and to check for understanding. They listen well to pupils' responses and encourage them to explain their thinking and extend their answers using the correct language and vocabulary.
- A sharp focus on language is developing pupils' literacy skills well. Every opportunity is used for pupils to read out loud, which means they are becoming more confident and fluent in their reading skills.
- The teaching of mathematics is more inconsistent across the school, and staff's subject knowledge and confidence vary. Leaders have recently secured support from an advanced skills teacher for mathematics to address these issues. The teaching of calculation skills is improving as a result of this. However, other areas of mathematics are not taught with the same degree of understanding about how to develop concepts. This results in pupils not always being challenged or stretched sufficiently. Most-able pupils are not consistently given activities which will deepen their reasoning skills when solving more complex mathematical problems. Consequently, not enough of the most-able pupils are achieving the higher levels they should be.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils feel very proud to attend Mowbray and are very keen to show off their successes and achievements. One pupil summed up this view when he stated 'This is the best school I have been to.' Staff are committed to ensuring that all pupils not only receive a high-quality education, but also benefit from strong care, guidance and support.
- Pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem are priorities for all staff and leaders right from the time the children enter school in the early years. Pupils who need additional help and support to aid them in their learning, social activities and emotional well-being receive good-quality direction and support through

well-timed nurture group sessions. Pupils know who to go to for help in times of need and are not afraid to ask for it.

- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in school, in the community and in the wider world. Pupils talk confidently about keeping themselves safe online. They say they have benefited from taking part in anti-bullying campaigns, working with ChildLine and learning about using tools safely when taking part in the forest school.
- Staff encourage pupils to take on responsibilities around the school, including becoming members of the school council. Pupils learn about democracy as part of this process. Older pupils also take on the role of buddies at playtime to assist younger pupils in their games and activities.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Most staff set high expectations of behaviour, which results in pupils behaving well in lessons and around the school. There are appropriate systems in place to deal with incidents of inappropriate behaviour effectively, and pupils know that incidents are always dealt with swiftly.
- Pupils are well mannered and polite, take turns, share and help each other when needed. They demonstrate the values which underpin the school including respect, resilience and justice. They are keen to do well and to succeed, and know that good behaviour and positive learning attitudes will help them in their learning.
- Pupils know about bullying and the various forms it takes, including cyber-bullying and racism. They are very clear about what to do if they experience any issues in this area, and are confident that staff will deal with them sensitively and swiftly. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of issues regarding bullying and have benefited from special events to highlight these such as the 'Show racism the red card' discussion.
- Senior leaders work hard to engage with pupils and their families who are regularly absent. As a result, attendance is now slightly higher than the national average and persistent absence has reduced from 7.2% to 4.1% over the last year. Most pupils arrive in school promptly, ready to learn with positive attitudes.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Leaders have successfully improved the quality of teaching and learning. Staff and pupils are set challenging targets and this has been successful in improving outcomes for pupils. Good teaching and higher expectations have improved standards right across the school.
- Work in pupils' books confirms that pupils are making good progress across the school in reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers are ensuring that pupils are developing the skills which will enable them to move on quickly in their learning.
- The teaching of phonics within lessons is mainly accurate and teachers and support staff have a good subject knowledge of early reading development. Pupils now acquire the necessary reading skills as soon as they are ready. A recent project has meant that reading is now strongly promoted throughout the school and pupils understand the importance of this in their own development.
- From low starting points, pupils are now making good progress across Key Stage 1, reaching levels which are in line with others nationally in all subjects.
- Outcomes for Year 6 pupils in 2015 look as though pupils left this school working below where they should be, and did not make enough progress. However, 64% of those pupils only joined this school at the start of Year 6. The remaining 36% transitioned into the feeder middle school at the end of Year 4, and rejoined Mowbray Primary at the start of Year 6. Work in books demonstrates that all of these pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those who are disabled and have special educational needs, made rapid progress from extremely low starting points on entry into Year 6.
- The attainment and progress gap between disadvantaged pupils and others in the school is closing across Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 in all subjects. Disadvantaged pupils are now making similar progress to their peers in most classes and this is improving quickly. Similarly, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are making good progress.

- Senior leaders and governors recognise that there is still room for improvement in all subjects, but particularly in mathematics and specifically for most-able pupils. Not enough pupils are reaching the higher levels they should be and are still not making the accelerated progress needed to be able to achieve this.

Early years provision

is good

- Most children enter the early years with skills, language and knowledge below those typical for their age. Children settle well and are happy to come to school because strong routines are quickly established.
- The proportion of children achieving a good level of development is increasing over time, and in 2015 this proportion was closer to the national average. This is a result of an improvement in the quality of teaching, enabling children to make a good start in their education. This ensures that more children are now ready for a successful transition into Year 1.
- Teaching in the early years is good. Work in books and observations show that children are making good progress. Accurate assessments of what children can do allow teachers to plan activities which will develop their knowledge and understanding briskly. Adults are careful to tailor activities to children's abilities and interests both indoors and outdoors. However, there are occasions when the outdoor environment is not utilised as well as that indoors, resulting in learning opportunities being missed.
- There is a high level of adult support in the early years which enables staff to correctly focus on developing children's speaking and listening skills. Furthermore, reading and writing are promoted well through the use of directed activities in all areas of learning. For example, children are surrounded by prompts on the wall to read nursery rhymes and write messages and notes for specific purposes. This is ensuring that children are starting to catch up quickly in these areas and staff can build on their skills and understanding at a much faster pace. However, there are not enough similar opportunities for children to develop their number skills.
- Staff build positive relationships with parents right from the start of their child's education and, more recently, before children start school. Daily discussions with parents and consolidation activities for children to carry out at home are helping children to learn successfully.
- Behaviour of children in the early years is good. Children work and play well together and can concentrate on their learning for sustained periods of time. Right from the start of their education in Nursery, children are afforded opportunities which promote the development of their independence skills. This ensures that children are now learning at a faster pace.
- Regular teaching of phonics is through a structured approach which incorporates games and activities. This enables children to use their skills well in their reading and writing activities.
- Teachers and other staff use good questioning techniques to enable children to deepen their understanding and develop a wider range of vocabulary.
- The early years provision is well led. The early years leader knows the unit well, has identified what needs to be improved, and demonstrates that she can improve the quality of the provision quickly and effectively. Recent improvements are already having a positive impact on the amount of progress children are making.
- Child protection and safeguarding arrangements are thorough and there are no breaches in welfare arrangements. Staff ensure that children's individual needs are catered for and that they are kept safe and know how to stay safe.
- Disadvantaged children in the early years are not achieving as well as their peers from their starting points. Recent improvements to the tracking of these pupils, and the provision of more focused and precise activities to support the development of their knowledge and skills, are starting to show that these children are now catching up.

School details

Unique reference number	122243
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	10002055
This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.	
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	302
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tania Clark
Headteacher	Andrew Miller
Telephone number	01670 823198
Website	www.mowbrayprimary.northumberland.sch.uk
Email address	admin@mowbrayprimary.northumberland.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	15–16 October 2013

Information about this school

- Mowbray First School became Mowbray Primary School in September 2014.
- A new headteacher has been recently appointed.
- The number of pupils on roll at the school is above average for primary schools.
- Children attend part time in the Nursery and full time in the Reception class.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above average. The pupil premium is additional government funding for looked after children and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is in line with the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.
- The school manages its own breakfast club and offers a range of after-school activities.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in a range of lessons and also made some short visits to classrooms. The headteacher jointly observed the quality of teaching in two lessons with the lead inspector.
- Inspectors listened to a range of pupils read and reviewed the work in pupils' books alongside school leaders.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and during break and lunchtime was observed.
- Inspectors talked informally to pupils in lessons and around the school and held formal meetings with pupils from across Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders, class teachers, governors and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation including the school's evaluation of its own performance, school improvement planning, documents monitoring the effectiveness of teaching and learning, minutes of governing body meetings, and the school's policies and documentation relating to safeguarding and attendance.
- Inspectors took into account the views of parents at the start and end of the day, in addition to 43 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- Inspectors took into account the 31 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire, in addition to the school's own survey of pupils' views.

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