



Corbridge Church of England Aided First School

St Helen's Lane, Corbridge, Northumberland NE45 5JQ

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	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The school is improving quickly as a result of stable, clear-sighted leadership. The headteacher, fully supported by the staff team, has improved teaching and as a result standards have risen and rates of pupils' progress are increasing.
- Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 make consistently good progress in all subjects. Those pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding and those with disabilities or special educational needs make the same good rates of progress as other pupils.
- Teaching is good. School staff have received well-targeted training to develop their expertise. They assess children's capabilities accurately and throughout Key Stages 1 and 2 plan activities which extend pupils' learning.
- Pupils arrive to school punctually and attendance is above the national average.
- Pupils behave well both in class and at lunchtime. The vast majority cooperate well, are polite and have a positive attitude to learning.
- Pupils feel safe. They have trusted relationships with adults in school. They have a well-developed understanding of how they can keep themselves safe, including when using technology.
- The curriculum in Key Stages 1 and 2 is well organised to ensure that children make good progress. Tailored programmes help pupils catch up when they fall behind and the use of specialist teachers enhances pupils' skills and capabilities.
- Governance is effective. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They use their knowledge well to hold school leaders to account.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The early years requires improvement. Not enough children make the good or better progress of which they are capable. They are not challenged sufficiently to think deeply and the activities provided do not stretch them enough.
- Sometimes teachers' challenge to pupils is not enough to help them make more rapid progress.
- Middle leaders do not yet check the quality of teaching and as a result they do not contribute fully to driving school improvements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the early years so that all children make at least good progress by:
 - supporting children’s play more effectively to help them to make links in their learning, deepen their understanding and solve problems for themselves
 - using assessment more effectively by capitalising on children’s interests and capabilities to offer more challenge to individuals
 - ensuring that equipment, resources and activities in the Reception class build upon those experienced in the Nursery class.
- Further develop the roles of middle leaders, including the early years leader, so that they all have the necessary skills to check the quality of teaching and so contribute fully to driving school improvements forward.
- Ensure that teachers’ questioning and feedback consistently provide challenge to enable pupils to make rapid progress.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- After a period of turbulence in the school the headteacher, supported by governors and other senior leaders, has established stability and a firm platform for future success. She has effectively communicated the need for high expectations so that pupils achieve well. This has been coupled with the introduction of clear systems so that all staff know what is expected of them. All staff are fully supportive of senior leaders and recognise the improvements that have been made.
- All staff appreciate the focus on improving the quality of teaching and the opportunities they have been given to develop their expertise further. For example, training to teach letters and sounds (phonics) has resulted in outcomes in phonics which are now well above the national average. Through regular checking of teachers' performance the headteacher has a clear view of individual strengths and areas for development, and carefully targets professional development.
- School leaders including governors take effective action when there is any underperformance. Procedures are in place which reward those who enable pupils to make good or better progress. There has been an improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection. However, school leaders are not complacent and are determined to continue raising the quality of teaching even further.
- Very regular checks are made on the quality of teaching and on pupils' performance. This ensures that school leaders have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and areas for development. Plans are in place to address any shortcomings. Further improvements in the early years have already been identified as a priority but developments have not yet had time to support more children to make consistently good progress.
- Procedures to check the progress of the small number of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding are thorough. Using this information school leaders ensure that well-targeted support is put in place to enable them to achieve as well as other pupils.
- The curriculum is well organised so that skills and knowledge build up progressively, enabling pupils to deepen their understanding and become more skilled. Visits and experiences such as 'Victorian day' contribute effectively to ensuring pupils' enjoyment and interest. The use of specialist teachers enhances pupils' understanding and skills further. Tailored programmes support those in danger of falling behind to catch up. A range of sporting and musical after-school clubs add to pupils' learning. Pupils enjoy playing the guitar, for example, and enhancing their tennis skills.
- Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good and contributes well to preparing them for life in modern Britain. They learn about different faiths, such as during a visit to a mosque, and an understanding of democracy is fostered through the way pupils vote for their class representative on the school council.
- The school uses sports funding well to enable pupils to learn swimming and gain skills more typically expected of older children. Additionally staff confidence and expertise have been enhanced in the teaching of gymnastics, and the range of sports and games on offer to pupils has been increased.
- Relationships with parents are good. Most parents have confidence that their child is safe and well looked after in school. Parents are kept well informed about their child's progress and about events in school.
- The roles of middle leaders are developing and not all have the same level of expertise to drive improvement and fully check the difference their actions have made. Although they check the progress that pupils make, they do not yet check the quality of teaching in their area of responsibility and are still too reliant on the headteacher for guidance in this area. This prevents them from making a full contribution to school improvement.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors know the school very well. They make regular visits and talk to parents, pupils and staff. They use this knowledge effectively to hold school leaders to account and to provide the support the school needs to develop.
 - They regularly check that they have the appropriate skills and knowledge to be effective in their role, and undertake training where they have identified the need for further development.
 - Governors are ambitious and have clear plans for the future of the school. They manage finances astutely ensuring value for money. The allocation of funds, such as that for pupils with special educational needs, has ensured that all pupils make the same good rates of progress.

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Governors maintain a keen oversight to ensure that policies and procedures are followed and that staff are suitably trained.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2 has improved so that pupils now make consistently good progress in all subjects. Teachers now check pupils' understanding carefully and plan the next step for their development accurately. Knowledge and understanding build up logically during a lesson and over time. Homework is used well to help pupils deepen their understanding.
- All staff have good subject knowledge which enhances pupils' understanding. The accurate, regular teaching of letters and sounds, for example, now means that nearly all pupils reach the required standard by the end of Year 1.
- Support staff are highly effective. They work closely with teachers, are well briefed and know pupils well. They provide good guidance to small groups of pupils both in class and when supporting those who require extra help to overcome difficulties in their learning.
- Teaching is enhanced by the use of specialists to teach some subjects. They use their expert knowledge and skills well to enable pupils to make good progress. For example, pupils' acquisition of Spanish words and phrases and knowledge of Spain is aided by precise, confident teaching and constant interchange between Spanish and English.
- The school has adopted new assessment procedures, which have been shared with parents. Pupils' depth of understanding in reading, writing and mathematics is checked each half term. This enables teachers to identify where there are gaps in learning which can be addressed so that pupils stay on track to meet end-of-year expectations.
- Teachers generally ask probing questions, which develops pupils' understanding. Occasionally these opportunities to enable more rapid progress are missed.
- Written feedback in pupils' books is regular and follows the school policy so that pupils' learning is usually developed. However, sometimes this is not the case. Equally, when pupils are given verbal feedback, there are times when learning is not enhanced.

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 have good relationships with adults. They know there is a trusted adult to help if needed and this contributes to their feeling of safety.
- The atmosphere in school is relaxed yet purposeful. Pupils display confidence in lessons and when talking about their work. Older pupils have a good grasp of what they need to do next to improve, and how well they have done in lessons.
- Pupils have a good awareness of bullying and the different forms it can take. Those pupils who were spoken to during the inspection report that bullying occurs rarely and is quickly resolved. Pupils understand the dangers of using technology and how to keep themselves safe from harm.
- The different games and activities that are available in the playground enhance the opportunities pupils have to play together and to cooperate. This results in calm and purposeful play.
- Buddies and games monitors are respected and help pupils who feel alone. Pupils know that the 'friendship bench' can be used if anyone feels lonely or upset.
- Pupils' emotional well-being is supported through a programme of lessons and in worship. They consider themes such as 'Treat others as you would like to be treated.' Some pupils receive sensitive, tailored support to enhance their well-being.
- There are good opportunities to develop pupils' physical well-being through the range of sporting and physical development lessons and in after-school clubs. They study topics such as 'healthy eating' which is enhanced by eating vegetables from the school allotment.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Nearly all pupils want to do well. They are keen to learn, enjoy school and work hard. Very occasionally some pupils are less attentive and this slows learning.
- Pupils take pride in their work and in the school. They move around school in a quiet and orderly manner and hold doors open for adults. Staff and pupils make sure that the school is kept clean and tidy. High-quality work is attractively displayed and celebrated.
- Pupils arrive punctually to school and attendance overall is above the national average. Very few pupils are persistently absent.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- From their different starting points pupils now make good progress in Key Stages 1 and 2.
- They now rapidly acquire knowledge of letters and sounds so that above-average proportions reach the standard expected of them by the end of Year 1.
- This knowledge is used to help pupils make good progress in their reading and writing so that in 2015 nearly all pupils reached the expected standard at the end of Year 2, a proportion which is above average. Above-average proportions reached standards higher than that. Most older pupils in Year 4 are on track at least to meet the standards for their age, with some pupils demonstrating a deep and sophisticated grasp of the skills and knowledge expected.
- In mathematics the same good progress is evident with pupils showing that they are capable of using different calculation skills to solve problems in line with the expectations for their age. In 2015, as with reading and writing, nearly all pupils reached the expected standard at the end of Year 2 with half reaching standards higher than that. Older pupils are on track to reach expectations for their age.
- The very few disadvantaged pupils in the school make the same good progress as other pupils as a result of the tailored support they receive. Where individuals have gaps in their learning they are supported effectively to catch up.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress similar to that of other pupils because of the sensitive and well-targeted support they receive.
- Most-able pupils are now making good progress in all subjects. Teachers challenge them well to extend their learning by providing activities which stretch their capabilities.
- Pupils are well prepared to move onto the next stage of their education as a result of the standards they reach and good liaison to support transition to their new school.

Early years provision

requires improvement

- Too few children make good or better progress throughout the early years. Most children begin school with levels of development which are at least typical for their age. They communicate effectively, using a wide range of vocabulary. They have good social skills and can play together. However, these capabilities are not consistently or effectively built on.
- Although an above-average proportion of children have the necessary skills in reading, writing and mathematics to prepare them for Year 1, too few are reaching the higher standards of which they are capable, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development, physical development, and communication and language.
- Adults do not consistently challenge children sufficiently or extend their learning as they play. Opportunities to deepen their thinking, to solve problems and to help them see links in their learning are missed. This prevents children from making more rapid progress.
- Some of the resources, equipment and activities in Reception class do not build effectively on what has been experienced in Nursery. For example, there is no difference in expectation of what children should achieve while they are painting, or of the help they are given to choose resources independently. While children in Nursery have to decide themselves when to eat a snack and have a drink, they are not expected to make the same choices in Reception.

- Assessments are accurate and made regularly. They are used to plan what to do next but they are not sufficiently fine-tuned to take into account individual children's capabilities and interests to ensure that the progress they make in all areas of learning and development accelerates.
- The recently appointed leader in early years is new to the role and has not yet had the opportunity to fully develop the skills necessary to make further improvements, such as checking the quality of teaching. The new system to assess children's learning has ensured that these checks are now accurate and the early years leader has already recognised the need to ensure that experiences in Reception build on those in Nursery.
- Children are settled in the early years. The atmosphere is calm and they show good levels of concentration. Routines in the day such as tidy-up time are well established. Children respond to these appropriately.
- Children behave well. They cooperate and share with each other. Relationships with adults are warm and adults are caring. They act as good role models.
- Adults work well with parents, and parents' knowledge of their child is beginning to be used to plan appropriate experiences for children.
- Funding to support the very few disadvantaged children in the early years is appropriately used to help them reach the expected standard by the end of Reception.

School details

Unique reference number	122287
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	10002054

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

Type of school	First
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	160
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Watson
Headteacher/Principal/Teacher in charge	Jennifer Ainsley
Telephone number	01434 632534
Website	www.corbridgefirst.northumberland.sch.uk
Email address	jennifer.ainsley@northumberland.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	18–19 September 2013

Information about this school

- Corbridge Church of England Aided First School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage and nearly all pupils speak English as their home language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those supported through the pupil premium, is well below the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have been in post since September 2014. Nearly all members of the governing body have been appointed since the previous inspection.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes. One lesson was observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work with the headteacher.
- Inspectors met with pupils to discuss their work and school life.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, other staff, members of the governing body, and representatives from the local authority and the Church of England diocese of Newcastle.
- Inspectors observed pupils moving around school and during breaks.
- Inspectors had discussions with parents at the beginning of the school day, analysed 43 responses from the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the school's own survey of parents.
- A range of school documentation including the school's view of its own performance, attendance and safeguarding was scrutinised.
- The 14 responses to the Ofsted questionnaire completed by staff were also considered.

Inspection team

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