

# Ellison Primary School

Ellison Street, Wolstanton, Newcastle ST5 0BL

<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 January 2016
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
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

- The headteacher and the governing body have created a culture where all staff are encouraged to work together to improve outcomes for pupils. As a result, the school has improved well since its last inspection.
- Senior leaders have implemented a new curriculum which motivates and engages pupils in their learning. They have ensured that teaching and outcomes continue to improve. Both are now good.
- Pupils of all abilities, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, make good progress, particularly in reading. They leave school well prepared for their secondary education.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are good, with teachers and teaching assistants using their strong subject knowledge to develop pupils' learning in all subjects.
- Children in the early years make good progress due to the good teaching they receive and from learning in an environment that is now well suited to their needs.
- Pupils are proud of their school. Their attendance is good and they value the support they receive in developing a good understanding of British values.
- Pupils' behaviour around school is good and they show positive attitudes to learning. Such attitudes contribute well to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils are safe and they say they feel safe. Leaders have developed effective safeguarding practices and ensure all staff follow them.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Subject leaders do not rigorously evaluate the progress of pupils in writing and mathematics. As a result, teachers do not challenge pupils as well as they could.
- Teachers do not always set sufficiently demanding work in mathematics or insist that pupils improve specific grammar, punctuation and spelling in their writing.

## Full report

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

- Improve leadership and management through subject leaders:
  - being more rigorous in their evaluation of pupils' progress in writing and mathematics
  - supporting teachers to challenge pupils more effectively.
  
- Improve teaching, and accelerate pupils' progress, by ensuring that all teachers:
  - provide more difficult mathematical activities for pupils to work on in their lessons
  - identify specific grammar, punctuation and spelling improvement points in pupils' writing and then ensure pupils make the necessary improvements.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher, working closely with governors, sets a clear ambition for all. Senior leaders work effectively as a team. They have created a positive and welcoming atmosphere where pupils can learn and thrive.
- The headteacher has a good awareness of how well staff and pupils are performing. Improvements in monitoring and her knowledge of pupils' progress have informed her discussions with staff. As a result, all teachers continue to improve their practice.
- Teachers value the system for managing their performance as it provides them with an understanding of what they need to do to improve and how to achieve this. Newly qualified teachers, and staff new to the school, receive a thorough induction with time made available for them to become familiar with school policies, including those for safeguarding and marking.
- Staff are keen to develop leadership skills and take on leadership responsibilities when opportunities arise. As a result, there is a broad middle leadership structure. Subject leaders have fully implemented recent changes to the National Curriculum. They work well in teams, which ensures that key skills are taught in the relevant year groups. Leaders are now working closely with other schools to revise their assessment arrangements so that they reflect new national requirements.
- Leaders and staff ensure that the curriculum places a firm emphasis on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Good provision in the early years ensures children develop strong values from an early age.
- All leaders and staff ensure that pupils tolerate and respect people who have different faiths or no faith. Strong relationships between staff and pupils lead to pupils feeling safe and secure in school. Discrimination does not occur. Leaders make sure all pupils understand democracy and have an equal opportunity to succeed. As a result pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The local authority knows the school well. It has provided effective support as the school has continued to improve since being placed in special measures in 2012. The local authority recognises the positive changes made since the appointment of the headteacher.
- As a result of effective leadership, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress, especially in reading. Senior leaders ensure that teachers and teaching assistants know what individual pupils need to do to make better progress and carry out regular reviews to check how well they are progressing. If pupils are not making the desired progress then changes are made to the programmes of support.
- Senior leaders ensure that all staff and governors are familiar with safeguarding processes. All relevant policies are kept up to date and reviewed in light of local and national guidance.
- The school has made effective use of the primary school physical education and sport funding. It has provided pupils with more opportunities to both participate and compete in a wide range of activities, including cricket, cross-country running and crown green bowling. Leaders' monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching of physical education shows that the funding has helped improve lessons.
- Leaders keep detailed information about how well disadvantaged pupils are progressing. The school uses its pupil premium funding effectively. For example, a role has been created for a member of staff to work with families in order to improve both attendance and rates of progress. Currently, progress of disadvantaged pupils is similar to other pupils in the school. However, leaders are determined to improve progress to close the gap further with other pupils nationally.
- Subject leaders show their commitment and passion by providing pupils with relevant and exciting opportunities in their subjects. For example the science leader has supported teachers in planning space topics which encourage pupils to follow the current International Space Station developments. Senior leaders recognise that subject leaders are not rigorous enough in evaluating the work pupils produce, particularly in writing and mathematics. This means that they are not as effective as they could be in supporting teachers to ensure pupils make better progress.
- **The governance of the school**
  - Governors have played an important role in improving the school since the last inspection. They have challenged and supported the headteacher effectively and have ensured that other staff have been given the opportunity to develop leadership skills.

- Governors gain a good understanding of the performance of the school by visiting regularly. Governors have specific roles, including those relating to finance and safeguarding. They check the extent to which pupils are enjoying and engaged in their learning. They use this, and other information provided by senior leaders, to check that pupils' progress in every year group is good. Governors ensure that the pupil premium is used effectively to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils.
  - Governors are kept well informed about how well teachers are performing and only approve salary increases proposed by the headteacher where there is evidence that teaching is good. In recent years, governors have supported leaders' efforts to tackle weaker performance effectively. This has resulted in typically good teaching.
  - Governors have a broad range of skills and experiences which they use to good effect. The Chair of the Governing Body ensures these skills are used well to inform the appointment and induction of new members and hold the school to account effectively.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good**

- Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to ensure that all pupils receive the support they need during lessons. Staff have secure subject knowledge and use this to ask questions skilfully in order to check and develop pupils' understanding.
- Teachers ensure that pupils enjoy the interesting activities they set. At the time of the inspection, pupils across the school were reflecting on their recent theatre experience. Children in the early years demonstrated good knowledge and empathy when they talked about the characters in Robin Hood. Staff were skilful in asking questions which supported children in developing their own opinions.
- Teachers have high expectations about how pupils should present their work. Pupils respond well and consistently display their work neatly. This shows that pupils have good attitudes to their learning.
- Lessons are well planned, with all adults managing pupils' behaviour well. Routines are well established. This results in orderly classrooms where pupils can concentrate on their learning. Positive relationships are seen throughout the school and, consequently, pupils get on sensibly and enjoy their learning. Teachers treat pupils with care and fairness, which means that pupils, in turn, like and respect their teachers. They are keen to please them by working hard and behaving well.
- The teaching of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is effective. This is because all relevant staff know precisely what these pupils need to do. Pupils enjoy this teaching and, as a result, look forward to the sessions and make good progress.
- Homework has improved over the last two years, with parents keen to support their child's learning at home. This is because parents were involved in creating the current homework policy. The policy makes it clear what is expected from pupils and how much time pupils should spend completing homework in each year group.
- Reading is taught well, with teachers and teaching assistants using their strong subject knowledge to support pupils effectively in developing their reading skills. Children in the Reception classes are quick to secure their understanding of letters and the sounds they make (phonics). Good practice is maintained through Key Stages 1 and 2, where pupils enjoy reading in a range of subjects.
- Teaching of writing is consistently good in every year group, with pupils of all ability groups making good progress. Innovations, which are designed to enable pupils to write longer pieces in a variety of styles, have shown a positive impact in pupils' books. Teachers do not always identify specifically what pupils need to do to make further improvements to their work. Examples include accuracy in the use of apostrophes and in sentence structure. Progress is slower when pupils' errors are not addressed effectively and so they do not make the necessary improvement.
- Mathematics is taught well to all ability groups. Pupils' books show they have made good progress from the start of this academic year and they have responded well to guidance provided by their teachers. Teaching of mathematics is not yet outstanding as pupils are not always set challenging enough tasks. When teachers do set appropriately demanding tasks, pupils thrive on the harder work. They make faster progress as they have to think harder, responding to skilful questioning from both teachers and teaching assistants.

## 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 talk about their understanding of British values, such as democracy and rule of law, and where examples can be seen around school.
- Pupils feel safe in and around school. A very large majority of parents agree that their children are safe. Pupils' relationships with all staff are strong. This is because staff know the pupils well and ensure that they respond to any issues appropriately.
- The school recognises the importance of children's welfare by ensuring that all policies are reviewed and kept up to date, including those relating to child protection. All staff working with pupils are checked to ensure they are suitable to carry out their roles and have completed the required safeguarding training. They use this training to check that they know what to look for with regard to pupils' welfare.
- Parents and pupils agree that bullying is rare and, when it does occur, staff deal with it quickly and effectively. Pupils have a good understanding of bullying and the different forms it can take. They talk about how they value the support they receive from school and about issues such as online safety. Staff are vigilant in their day-to-day work, checking to make sure that any form of discrimination is spotted and dealt with immediately.
- Pupils display positive attitudes to learning. When they are challenged with work that is more accurately matched to their ability, they show their best attitudes. These contribute greatly to the good progress they make in lessons as well as to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are courteous, display good manners, and show good conduct around the school as well as in lessons. At all times of the school day, pupils say they value the supervision by staff, knowing who to go to if they want to talk.
- Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong. They make the right choices when moving around the school, which helps create an orderly environment.
- School leaders have improved behaviour further from the start of this academic year by ensuring that any serious incidents are dealt with quickly. Pupils are then supported in their choices to ensure that such incidents are not repeated. As a result the number of repeat fixed-term exclusions for individual pupils has been significantly reduced.
- Parents, staff and pupils agree that behaviour is good. Pupils understand rewards and sanctions associated with their behaviour choices. Presentation in books shows that pupils take pride in their work.
- Attendance improved last year, resulting in the overall rate being above the national average. School leaders challenge parents rigorously when absence becomes a concern. Attendance rates have continued to rise this year.

## Outcomes for pupils are good

- Most children start in Reception class with skills and understanding that are broadly typical for their age. They make good progress. Over the past two years more children than the national average joined Year 1 having reached a good level of development across all areas of learning by the end of early years.
- Pupils currently make good progress through Key Stages 1 and 2. This leads to above-average attainment at the end of every year and pupils being well prepared for the challenges in the next academic year.
- In 2015 pupils attained above the national average at the end of Year 6 in combined English and mathematics results. They left school well prepared for their secondary education.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils is good. By the time this group of pupils leaves the school, they have narrowed the gap when compared to other pupils in the school and nationally. In 2015, their attainment was broadly the same as other pupils nationally in reading and writing. In mathematics they were one term behind, and in grammar, two terms behind. When compared with the attainment of their classmates, gaps are similar, although wider for grammar, at four terms.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make consistently good progress. This is due to effective leadership and management of the provision for this group of pupils. Clear action plans are drawn up for both teaching and support staff to follow. Pupils' progress is closely monitored, with plans adapted and changes made to the work where this is needed.

- In every year group pupils make good progress in reading. Over the last three years, an increasing number of pupils have achieved the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check, with pupils this year making similar rates of progress. Pupils enjoy their reading and are well motivated in every year group.
- Progress in writing is good across the school, with all groups of pupils making similar progress. Pupils write well in a range of subjects. Specific grammar, punctuation and spelling improvement points are not regularly pointed out to pupils in their books by teachers. As a result, pupils make less rapid progress as they do not practise and embed these skills in subsequent writing.
- Pupils' attainment in mathematics is similar to that in writing. Progress is best seen when teachers set tasks which demand that pupils think hard. For example, in Year 2, when asked to find the difference between numbers, pupils were expected to use a variety of strategies to work out the calculations. Teachers were then able to ask pupils more challenging questions, responding to pupils' higher-level work.
- The most-able pupils currently make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics throughout the school. They are attaining higher levels than last year as a result of better progress.

### **Early years provision**

**is good**

- Leadership and management of the early years are good. Staff use good systems for checking what children can do when they start school. Parents are kept well informed about what their children are doing at school and how they can help to support their learning at home.
- Children's attainment is improving. As a result of good teaching, children of all abilities make good progress through the Reception Year in all areas of learning. For example, effective teaching of phonics gives children a clear grasp of letter sounds and opportunities to read and spell new words.
- Well-designed indoor and outdoor learning environments ensure that children learn a wide variety of skills in different situations. For example, children were seen developing their counting skills in a mock veterinary role-play area as well as in a cooking activity.
- Effective provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development can be seen in the early years. Strong relationships between staff and children are an important factor. Parents are very positive. They value the partnership encouraged by the school, talking about how their children are happy in school. This is mainly due to the care and attention provided by staff.
- Children behave well and the trusting relationships they have with staff help them to feel very safe. They are enthusiastic learners who pay good attention in lessons. Children play well together and show consideration for one another. Secure spaces, both indoor and outdoor, ensure children feel, as indeed they are, safe.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	124188
<b>Local authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10002485

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	350
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Roger Machin
<b>Headteacher</b>	Nichola Gibson
<b>Telephone number</b>	01782 297680
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.ellison.staffs.sch.uk">www.ellison.staffs.sch.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:office@ellison.staffs.sch.uk">office@ellison.staffs.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	2 October 2013

## Information about this school

- Ellison is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Children in the early years are taught in two full-time Reception classes. All other pupils are taught in classes with single year groups.
- A very large majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is similar to the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 16 lessons, four of which were observed with senior leaders.
- Inspectors talked to pupils about their reading and listened to them read.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and other governors, staff and a local authority adviser.
- The 33 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire were taken into account. Inspectors also spoke with parents and carers.
- The views expressed in questionnaires returned by 15 members of the school staff were considered.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school, looking at a range of documentation. This included an examination of work in pupils' books.
- The school's child protection and safeguarding procedures were scrutinised.

## Inspection team

Jeremy Bird, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Catherine Draper	Ofsted Inspector
Lesley Else	Ofsted Inspector



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