

Burnhope Primary School

Langley Avenue, Burnhope, Durham DH7 0AG

Inspection dates

1–2 November 2016

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Instability in staffing has slowed the pace of improvement since the previous inspection. Leadership has strengthened recently, but several leaders, new to role, are still developing their skills. Leaders' planning and monitoring procedures are not sharp enough, particularly within reading and mathematics.
- Pupils' attendance has been below the national average over a number of years and although improving, remains too low.
- Teaching has not been consistently good over time. Teachers do not address misconceptions in a timely manner. The rate of pupils' progress in lessons decreases where teachers' explanations are unclear or questioning skills are weak.
- Teachers do not sufficiently challenge or support middle-ability pupils to make good progress, particularly in mathematics and reading.
- Disadvantaged pupils are not consistently making rapid progress. This means that they do not catch up quickly with other pupils nationally from similar starting points.
- Although much improved, the quality of teaching and learning in the early years is variable. Teachers use time to maximise teaching and learning in some lessons, but this is not a consistent feature of practice.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has created a positive and welcoming ethos. The learning environment is secure, attractive and well maintained.
- The headteacher has designed and implemented an enriched curriculum that is offering pupils a breadth of experiences and opportunities. This is inspiring pupils, improving their well-being and self-belief.
- Teaching staff and pupils have strong, mutually respectful relationships. As a result, pupils conduct themselves sensibly in and around the school. A pleasant camaraderie exists.
- Pupils' personal, social and emotional needs are met effectively. Parents agree that pupils are safe and well looked after. Pupils confirm that this is a strength of their school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - sharpening improvement plans to ensure that key priorities are measurable and specific, particularly with regard to mathematics and reading
 - monitoring the quality of teaching and learning with increased rigour
 - developing the skills of the wider leadership team, thus increasing capacity to rapidly improve teaching and learning.
- Secure good or better teaching, learning and assessment to improve rates of progress for all pupils, particularly in mathematics and reading, by:
 - making sure that teachers explain new concepts concisely and clearly to pupils, swiftly addressing any misconceptions in lessons
 - developing teachers' questioning skills to ensure that pupils have consistent opportunities to extend their knowledge and deepen their understanding
 - planning tasks and learning opportunities that meet the needs of all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with average prior attainment
 - using time spent in lessons effectively, particularly in the early years.
- Bring attendance in line with national averages and reduce the proportions of pupils who are regularly absent from school.

An external review of the school's use of pupil premium funding is recommended in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders have not rapidly improved the school since its previous inspection. Considerable changes in staffing have meant that several adults are relatively new to post and still developing their leadership skills. While decisive action has been taken to address issues of underperformance, some improvement actions have been slow getting off the ground and it is too early to judge the impact on pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders' strategic improvement plans are focused on the correct priorities but lack detail and measurability. Precisely what is expected, when and by whom are not spelled out clearly enough. This makes it difficult for staff to understand exactly what they are aiming for and also means that leaders cannot track the extent to which teachers are meeting targets effectively.
- The headteacher monitors the quality of teaching and learning regularly. The work that pupils produce is evaluated and meetings are held frequently with teachers to discuss the progress of pupils. The headteacher gives staff clear guidance about aspects of their practice that require further development. Not all leaders, however, are monitoring their subject with this focus and precision, meaning that teaching and learning are not improving with sufficient urgency to enable pupils to make good progress, particularly within mathematics and reading.
- Disadvantaged pupils' progress is variable across subjects and year groups. Leaders and governors are not addressing this variability with sufficient tenacity. Consequently, the use of the pupil premium requires critical review.
- Leaders have refined their processes for identifying and supporting pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This means that pupils are now identified quickly. Each pupil is treated as an individual and provision is carefully tweaked to address their particular needs. Outcomes for this group of pupils, however, appear variable over time. School information and work in books confirm this.
- The local authority has responded swiftly to weaknesses in terms of pupils' outcomes in 2016 by offering school leaders and governors increased support. Developments in the school have been examined closely and plans are in place to deliver further subject and specialist advice. It is too soon to measure the impact of this increased level of monitoring.
- The headteacher has enriched the curriculum using various initiatives to enhance pupils' experiences and to develop aspirations. Pupils' ambitions are successfully fostered and would-be scientists, artists, surgeons and police officers abound. Pupils are very proud of their knowledge and understanding of core British values, such as democracy and the rule of law. For example, a mock poll on the European Union vote recently allowed pupils to develop their understanding of how democratic practices work. Cross-curricular projects allow exploration of the impact of tourism and trading on Britain and foster a heightened sense of community and what it means to be British.
- The ethos created by the headteacher is positive and welcoming. Improved links with families and the community have been built through a series of initiatives to immerse the school fully in its wider context. As a result, parents feel that staff listen carefully to

any questions or concerns they may have and all agree that the school has a happy atmosphere. The overwhelming majority feel that the school is well led and managed.

- Leaders use the physical education and sport funding for primary schools effectively. Visiting specialists have enhanced the expertise of staff and pupils. Opportunities to engage with a broad range of sporting ventures have increased. As a result, many pupils view sport and physical activity in a very positive light. Several say that it is their favourite subject.

Governance of the school

- Governors are extremely supportive of leaders and staff. Minutes of meetings show that they ask challenging questions. Governors do not, however, take that extra step, probing pupils' outcomes and information sufficiently to glean an accurate picture of the reasons behind the weaker aspects of the school's work. To address this, action has already been taken and an audit of governors' skills is planned to take place this term to further develop expertise in challenging leaders robustly.
- Governors bring a wide range of skills to the school and visit regularly to measure its work at first hand. Governors' recent attendance at whole-school training has ensured that an up-to-date knowledge of their responsibilities regarding the prevention of radicalisation and the safeguarding of pupils is developed.
- Governors are highly aware of their responsibilities in relation to pay and performance. Decisive actions are taken when performance is weak.
- Pupils' key stage 2 results in 2016 were a disappointment to the school. In response, governors are increasing the frequency of their challenge meetings with the wider leadership team.
- Governors have very recently worked diligently to ensure that the website meets statutory requirements. Previously, key elements such as governors' attendance at meetings and the impact of pupil premium spending were incomplete. A core of governors now oversees and checks the website at regular intervals.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders' checks on the suitability of staff to work with pupils are robust. Safer recruitment principles are adhered to consistently when new appointments are made as leaders and governors are well trained in the best practices. Interview questions, for example, pertain to the protection and safeguarding of children and candidates' references are unfailingly secured.
- All staff and governors receive regular updates relating to the protection of pupils. Recent training this term has ensured that the up-to-date guidance on keeping children safe in education has been absorbed by all. There is a heightened understanding of issues such as female genital mutilation, radicalisation and child sexual exploitation and also the manner in which these sensitive topics can be tackled.
- The headteacher has created a culture whereby the needs of vulnerable pupils and their families are central to the school's work. The school draws on a wide range of external agencies, securing essential services, such as the ethnic minority and Traveller achievement services, educational psychologists and mental health services, to work

directly with pupils and families. An attendance officer has been employed directly by the school. This proactive approach in response to social, emotional and personal needs is supporting and protecting pupils as well as keeping them safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, though improving, remains variable. Not all teachers make new concepts explicit. Explanations sometimes confuse pupils because they are unclear or too elaborate. Pupils' misconceptions are not picked up and addressed quickly. Some pupils therefore struggle to grasp intended learning, while others find the work too easy. This slows the pace of progress in lessons, particularly within reading and mathematics.
- Teachers do not reliably match learning tasks to the needs of all groups of pupils, especially within reading and mathematics. Insufficient note is taken of pupils' prior knowledge and skills. This means that pupils – those with starting points close to the national average and disadvantaged pupils in particular – do not make the good progress that should be expected of them.
- Teachers' questioning skills vary. At times, pupils are challenged and enabled to think deeply and reason logically and teachers check thoroughly to see whether pupils are keeping up with the ideas being presented. However, the acquisition of new knowledge and pupils' depth of understanding become inhibited when some teachers target their questions less insightfully.
- The teaching of phonics is improving. Teachers, however, do not take sufficient account of pupils' learning needs. Consequently, some pupils are practising skills they already have, while others are unable to apply the correct strategies to read unfamiliar words or understand texts in depth. Some pupils who read with the inspector did so with ease, fluency and a good level of understanding but others struggled. Pupils' progress and achievement in reading require improvement.
- Teachers' own subject knowledge in mathematics is generally sound. Most teachers model the correct use of terminology. Some teaching staff demonstrate written, visual or practical methods effectively to support pupils to understand and complete tasks, for example, calculations, well. This good practice, however, is not a consistent feature of work in mathematics across the school. As a result, pupils' progress varies.
- Time is used well by some teachers to maximise teaching and learning opportunities. No time is wasted and lessons get off to a prompt start. This positive practice is, however, variable. Progress falters while pupils wait for direction from some adults.
- Teachers across school are using the agreed revised marking and feedback policy with improved consistency. A new system of target-setting with pupils, in English and mathematics, has begun. Pupils, therefore, are beginning to benefit from clearer guidance on the quality of their work and what they need to do to improve.
- Teaching assistants are well deployed by teachers to support learners with emotional and behavioural needs. Adults' patience and their positive attitudes lead to pupils' behaviours being well managed. Pupils whose attention wavers are supported to re-engage with tasks and learning.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Leaders and staff prioritise the safety and well-being of all pupils. Pupils said that they feel safe and happy. The school premises are secure, attractive and well maintained, contributing to pupils' sense of being well looked after. Pupils' confidence and self-worth grow as their emotional and welfare needs are met effectively.
- Pupils of all ages understand the different forms that bullying can take and find the regular anti-bullying work helpful and informative. They say that adults listen carefully to them and take seriously any concerns they may have. All pupils are encouraged to treat each other with respect and tolerance. Because of this, neither pupils nor adults accept derogatory behaviours and attitudes.
- Vulnerable pupils receive good-quality support and care from well-trained adults. Records show that leaders are tenacious in securing resources and speedy responses from external agencies when brokering support for families.
- Parents are highly positive about the work of the school. All 52 parents who responded to the school's recent survey agree that staff are approachable. The overwhelming majority feel that children are safe and behaviour is well managed.
- Pupils are proud of the additional responsibilities that they hold within school. They describe and understand the rigorous democratic process used to select members of the pupil council. Buddies, too, are held in high esteem and pupils are confident that most small incidents at playtimes are managed exceptionally well, with adults only rarely becoming involved.
- Pupils understand the risks as well as the benefits of technology. They explain precisely what to do if they have any concerns or see 'pop-ups' if they are working online. Leaders have ensured that filters and systems are firmly in place to protect pupils and staff from risk or harm.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Good attitudes and behaviours for learning diminish where teaching is not matched carefully to pupils' needs. Noise levels rise, pupils become inattentive and low-level disruption ensues. Some pupils find it difficult to concentrate at times because of these off-task behaviours.
- Attendance is improving but continues to sit below national averages. Disadvantaged pupils are more likely to be absent from school than others. Recent actions by leaders to raise the profile and importance of good attendance are beginning to make a difference. Families are more actively supported and challenged to improve their children's attendance, partially through the work of the recently employed attendance officer. Leaders are acutely aware of the need to continue to prioritise this work.
- Pupils are well mannered and polite. They enjoy school and value the positive impact that teachers have on their experiences. One pupil encapsulated the respectful views expressed by her peers, 'Teachers try their best, you're having loads of fun and you don't even know that you're learning.'

- Pupils conduct themselves well in and around the school. Movement is calm, orderly and well supervised by adults and buddies. Pupils are clear about school rules and expectations, aspiring to abide by them to earn their Friday 'golden time'.
- Playtimes are happy affairs. Young pupils engage well with their older friends and an inclusive, family feeling exists in this small school.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- The proportion of Year 6 pupils who achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined in 2016 was well below the national average. Due to variability in the quality of teaching, not all pupils made consistently rapid progress from their different starting points. Achievements in reading and mathematics were weakest.
- The progress made by pupils in key stage 2 in 2015 in all subjects from their different starting points was particularly strong. Proportions making expected and more than expected progress were better than those seen nationally. This good progress, however, is not consistent and is too variable over time.
- The school's own assessment information, along with work in pupils' books, show signs of improved rates of progress in several subjects for current pupils, particularly science and writing. Progress in reading and mathematics, though, remains too variable. Disadvantaged pupils and those with middle prior attainment are not making rapid enough progress to enable them to catch up with others nationally and achieve a greater depth of learning in either key stage.
- Pupils in key stage 1 over time have reached standards that are broadly in line with national averages in all subjects. Nonetheless, in 2016 the proportion of Year 2 pupils who reached the expected standard in reading fell below national averages. Disadvantaged pupils did not make good progress over time compared with others from similar starting points in mathematics or reading.
- Pupils' rates of progress in acquiring early reading skills are variable due to inconsistencies in teaching. As a result, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check, though improving, remained below national averages in 2015 and 2016.
- Progress for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is inconsistent. When tasks and support meet their needs precisely, pupils learn well and some make exceptionally good progress from very low starting points. Variability in the quality of teachers' planning and practice, however, means that rates of progress differ.
- The most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, made good progress in mathematics and English grammar, spelling and punctuation in Year 6 in 2016. All of the most able pupils reached the expected level in science. The proportion reaching a greater depth of learning in reading and writing, however, was lower than others from similar starting points. Challenge for the most able, therefore, varies.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Outcomes for children in the early years have improved over time and now sit broadly in line with those of children nationally. School information and children's work for the current cohort suggest that outcomes in 2017 will rise to above average and the proportions of children exceeding expectations are increasing. Disadvantaged children, however, do less well. They do not make rapid enough progress over time to allow them to catch up with others from similar starting points.
- Teaching and learning in the early years vary in quality. Excellent relationships between staff and children mean that children are keen and excited to learn. This curiosity and readiness to learn are sometimes capitalised on very effectively by adults. Teachers' planning, however, does not always take sufficient account of children's existing skills. This results in basic skills being developed too slowly or time being spent going over things that children already know and can do. On these occasions, expectations are too low to enable children to make good progress.
- Leadership of the early years is undertaken jointly by the part-time early years teacher and the headteacher. They communicate well with each other and work in partnership with staff and parents to ensure that home and school partnerships are strong. Links brokered by the local authority with other early years providers are also contributing to the effective sharing of good practice and joint working.
- Early years staff are highly aware of the safety and welfare requirements of young children. Appropriately vigilant attitudes are apparent and staff are sensitive and responsive to the requirements of individuals. Emotional and social needs are particularly well provided for, resulting in children being well prepared for Year 1 in terms of these skills.
- Children behave well. They respond promptly to signals from adults to stop, look and listen and follow adults' instructions carefully. Routines and systems are consistent and well established. This means that children's play and their interactions are positive. They understand increasingly well how to keep themselves safe and consider the safety of others.
- Early years staff have created a stimulating environment that inspires inquisitiveness. Children's excitement and engagement with the regular outdoor learning experiences provided were especially evident during the inspection. With palpable enthusiasm, children donned wellies and immersed themselves in the world around them. This enrichment is successfully enhancing children's experiences of the wider curriculum.

School details

Unique reference number	114041
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10019386

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	79
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Alan Gibson
Headteacher	Mrs Lyn Adamson
Telephone number	01207 520243
Website	www.burnhope.durham.sch.uk
Email address	p2261.admin@durhamlearning.net
Date of previous inspection	22–23 October 2013

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well above average.
- The overwhelming majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, though growing over time, is lower than national averages.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly in line with national averages. The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is below average.

Information about this inspection

- Teaching and learning were observed across classes and all key stages. During day one of the inspection, all observations were conducted jointly by the lead inspector and the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, and senior and subject leaders, as well as governors, including the chair of the governing body, and a representative of the local authority.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils read, scrutinised their work and talked informally with pupils during breaktimes. The views of pupils were also considered during more formal discussions with the inspector. Two responses made by pupils to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire were taken into account.
- A wide range of the school's own information and documentation was studied, including the school's self-evaluation, improvement plans and records of the checks made on teaching and learning. Information about the performance management of staff and safeguarding practices was also examined alongside policy documents.
- The opinions of staff were taken into account via their responses to Ofsted's questionnaire and through formal and informal discussions.
- There were too few views expressed by parents in the Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View, to be accessed. However, parents' comments communicated via free-text responses were examined. The school's own survey of 52 parents' views was also considered.

Inspection team

Fiona Manuel, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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