

Rowlands Gill Community Primary School

Dominines Close, Rowlands Gill, Tyne and Wear NE39 2PP

Inspection dates

16–17 May 2017

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	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders have not ensured that pupils make swift enough progress in all areas of the curriculum. This is particularly the case for disadvantaged pupils.
- Some teachers do not use assessment information consistently and effectively to plan lessons. As a result, middle-attaining pupils do not make as much progress as they should.
- Teachers do not track pupils' progress accurately. Governors are not given the correct picture of standards across the school. Pupils' workbooks show that they make slower progress than the school's assessment information suggests.
- The quality of teaching varies widely across classes. Not enough teaching leads to good progress over time.
- Senior leaders do not set sharp and challenging targets when making plans for improvement. Consequently, teachers are not held to account for the progress made by groups of pupils.
- Subject leaders, specifically those in mathematics and science, have not had the opportunity to implement a cohesive curriculum. Teachers do not know which skills need to be taught in each subject and in each year group.
- Senior leaders intervene frequently to reprimand pupils who demonstrate challenging behaviour. However, leaders have not reduced or prevented recurrence of behaviour incidents. Exclusions have increased this year.
- A large number of parents are disappointed by the way senior leaders have dealt with recent staffing issues. Some parents feel that their concerns are not resolved appropriately. Leaders do not always maintain adequate records of their meetings with parents.
- The persistent absence of disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils' personal development and welfare are good. Pupils are polite, friendly and enjoy learning. They feel safe in school and work together cooperatively in their classrooms.
- Staff ensure that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Children in the early years now make swift progress because teaching is good in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- Leaders check that reading and phonics are taught effectively. Pupils achieve well in this aspect of their learning.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Rapidly increase the effectiveness of leadership and management, and accelerate the pace at which the school improves, by:
 - making sure that assessment information accurately captures the progress made by different groups of pupils over time
 - setting sharper targets for the performance of teachers that are sufficiently challenging to ensure that pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and middle attaining, make swifter progress
 - ensuring that exclusions and incidents are managed incisively and consistently so that any recurrence of poor behaviour is swiftly reduced
 - reducing the persistent absence of pupils who are disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
 - providing enough time and authority for teachers in charge of foundation subjects to implement their plans and take a lead on curriculum developments
 - establishing a cohesive curriculum for the whole school that sets out specifically which skills will be taught in each subject, across each year group.
- Improve the quality of teaching and increase pupils' progress quickly across all subjects by:
 - making certain that teaching is consistently good or better over time, so that it develops pupils' skills progressively
 - improving teachers' skills so that they assess pupils' progress accurately, especially within foundation subjects
 - helping teachers to use their assessment information efficiently so that their teaching and activities are matched more precisely to the next steps that pupils need to make.
- Work more effectively with parents by:
 - refining the school's systems for dealing with parents' concerns by acknowledging and resolving issues raised, then communicating outcomes effectively
 - reassuring parents by explaining why decisions have been made and how they will be monitored
 - keeping secure records of parents' concerns and any follow-up actions taken.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Over time, senior leaders have not ensured consistently good teaching and good progress for pupils. A new team of governors are now taking action to challenge senior leaders and are beginning to address these areas for improvement more thoroughly.
- Senior leaders have been overly positive in their judgements of the quality of teaching and learning. Leaders check pupils' books regularly to ensure that teachers are following the school's policies. However, they do not focus closely and sufficiently upon the actual progress that pupils make. This leads them to an inaccurate picture of the school's strengths.
- Senior leaders have not provided clarity to teachers on the school's approach to assessing pupils' progress. Assessment information is not consistently accurate and does not always reflect the progress shown in pupils' books over time. When teachers are absent, leaders do not take sufficient action to ensure that pupils continue to make good progress and information on the school's tracking system is not updated. Pupils' progress is therefore hindered.
- Subject leaders are keen to support their colleagues and to help pupils make better progress. However, they have not been provided with sufficient time or the authority to make the changes that are needed to the curriculum. Consequently, the curriculum offered does not ensure that pupils' skills improve incrementally across year groups, especially in mathematics, science, geography and history.
- Pupil premium funding is not used effectively to ensure that disadvantaged pupils make good progress across the curriculum. Leaders acknowledge, correctly, that there is more to be done to accelerate the progress of disadvantaged pupils. All teachers have targets to improve outcomes for this group, but leaders have not made these targets sharp or challenging enough to ensure pupils' good progress across all subjects. Governors are aware of this issue and are beginning to take action to address it, making more rigorous checks on the impact of the funding.
- Leaders ensure that funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is used to support pupils' academic progress, especially within reading and phonics. For example, teachers in the school's additionally resourced unit are well managed and help pupils to make swift progress. However, leaders are not as thorough in tackling the behavioural needs of those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Incidents of poor behaviour are not reducing well enough over time.
- The local authority has provided a range of support in a drive to increase progress. For example, they have helped teachers to introduce more problem-solving and reasoning activities in to their mathematics lessons. Due to staff absences, the impact of this support has not been fully felt or embedded.
- Many parents express concern about frequent staff absences and the way in which decisions are made by senior leaders. They confirm that communication is a key area for improvement, especially communication from senior leaders.
- The good leadership of phonics and reading has ensured that these areas are now a

strength in the school. The subject leader for English has made swift changes to tackle weaknesses. Pupils enjoy reading more frequently, develop their skills sequentially and progress is now good. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well to improve their reading and the most able pupils also make good progress in reading.

- The school's physical education (PE) and sports funding is used effectively. For example, pupils attend competitions and festivals of sport, dance and gymnastics. Year 1 pupils thoroughly enjoyed their yoga lessons during the inspection and said it helped them to stretch and relax.
- Leaders have developed a strong focus on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Teachers lead by example and pupils respond with courtesy and respect. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They have a good understanding of democracy, including the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

Governance of the school

- A new team of governors have started to challenge senior leaders more readily. They have introduced many new systems recently to check the school's progress in a variety of different ways. The work of new governors has not yet had time to secure improved outcomes for all groups of pupils.
- Governors understand the improvements that need to be made within the school, especially in relation to leadership. They know what is needed to bring about better outcomes for pupils and are determined to sharpen the clarity of information provided by senior leaders.
- Governors have attended training to improve their knowledge base and have specifically recruited new members to widen their skills. These changes have allowed the governing body to seek more detailed answers to their questions and to hold senior leaders closely to account.
- Governors are not afraid to ask searching questions and do not shy away from difficult decisions. They have aimed to set challenging targets to hold teachers accountable for improving pupils' progress, but inaccuracies in the tracking of pupils' progress has limited the impact of this work.
- While many parents are unhappy with the way senior leaders have dealt with their concerns, those who communicated directly with governors about their concerns are more positive about the outcomes reached.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Records of recruitment checks are detailed and fully meet requirements. At times, parents' concerns are not managed well enough by senior leaders, so parents are not always convinced that the correct actions have been taken. Senior leaders do not keep records sufficiently well to show that parents' concerns have been dealt with effectively.
- The site is maintained so that it is safe for pupils. Risk assessments identify potential hazards and staff manage these well. For example, staff supervise play equipment

carefully in the yard and pupils keep to the left-hand side of the staircase when moving in and out of school. This results in a generally orderly school environment.

- New appointments to the pastoral team in school are beginning to improve the attendance of some pupils who have been persistently absent. Parents praised the teachers in school and other staff who have helped to meet the needs of some of the school's more vulnerable families.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inconsistent. Although there is a core of effective teaching, there is too much variability across year groups and across subjects. Teaching has not been good enough over time to ensure that disadvantaged and middle-attaining pupils make consistently good progress across the curriculum.
- Teachers do not have the necessary skills to assess pupils' progress accurately. Records submitted to senior leaders do not, therefore, match the progress which is evident in pupils' books. Teachers do not always use assessments effectively to make sure that pupils develop their skills progressively. For example, pupils are asked to repeat work they have already covered and are set tasks which are either too easy or too hard for them to achieve.
- Teaching across the wider curriculum does not help pupils to progress swiftly. Teachers are not sure which skills to teach their pupils in each year group. While subject knowledge is often taught clearly, pupils' specific skills in each subject are not developed well enough. For example, pupils enjoyed learning about Britain during Roman times. They asked interesting questions for their research and read a range of historical information. When it came to explaining answers by applying their reasoning, pupils did not have sufficient skills to consider the impact of cause and effect in history.
- The teaching of mathematics has recently begun to improve due to support from the local authority. Some teachers challenge pupils to use problem-solving and to explain their reasoning more often now. This was noticed in Year 6, where pupils were highly inspired as they tried to develop logical strategies to help them win a mathematical game. However, activities of this kind are still infrequent and too often pupils revisit the same learning.
- Teachers offer more opportunities for pupils to use their writing across the curriculum now but a continual focus in this area has been slow to bring about improvements for all groups of pupils. Disadvantaged pupils and those who are working in middle-ability groups are not yet reaching the standards of which they are capable.
- Teachers have recently been trained to offer more scientific enquiries within their lessons. Pupils say they enjoy experimenting and reaching conclusions based on their scientific evidence. Not all teachers apply their training skilfully yet.
- The teaching of reading and phonics has been reorganised recently to better meet the needs of pupils. Good teaching in phonics and early reading helps pupils to sound out unfamiliar words correctly. In particular, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported in phonics. The most able readers in school read fluently and use their skills to understand complex texts.
- Staff who work in the school's additionally resourced unit ensure that pupils who have

special educational needs and/or disabilities are taught well and make sufficient progress over time. Across the wider school, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are generally supported effectively, especially within reading and phonics tasks.

- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. Most agree that they enjoy school and many say their favourite subjects are art and PE because the teachers make these lessons fun.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils have a good knowledge of life in modern Britain. Teachers ensure that pupils are taught effectively about democracy and citizenship. Pupils understand their rights and responsibilities within school. Older pupils enjoy opportunities to support younger pupils in the playground and at lunchtimes.
- The large majority of pupils play, learn and cooperate together well. They are generally kind to one another and show tolerance towards different views. They value each other's individual differences and any name-calling is quickly addressed. Older pupils who are recent newcomers to the school explain that their new friends are 'very supportive' and that they have been welcomed by their new class.
- Pupils are happy and safe in school. Pupils say that they can speak to teachers if they have concerns and that the headteacher deals with their concerns quickly. They know how to respond to bullying, even though they think it happens only rarely in school. The school's arrangements for meeting pupils' emotional needs are secure, especially for vulnerable pupils who need a little extra help.
- Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe in a variety of different situations. Pupils are particularly confident that they know how to stay safe online and while using computers.
- Pupils understand how to keep themselves fit and healthy. Many disadvantaged pupils attend the school's breakfast club where they have a healthy breakfast and take part in 'fruit and a book' sessions to support their health and reading simultaneously. Cycling is strongly promoted by the school as a means to keep fit. Pupils are confident in how to keep themselves safe while riding bicycles on the roads.
- Pupils are positive about the many visits and visitors who help them learn. They enjoy the wide range of sporting activities provided by the parent and teachers' association after school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.

- Most pupils move around school sensibly and calmly. They show respect for visitors and adults in school. During breaktimes and lunchtimes, pupils' behaviour is sometimes boisterous and can lead to incidents of misbehaviour.
- A small proportion of pupils find it difficult to control their behaviour when they are upset, overly excited or agitated. Staff and senior leaders have not been effective in reducing repeated incidents of misbehaviour from a small proportion of pupils. Exclusions have increased since the previous inspection and so have incidents of challenging behaviour.
- Pupils explain that bullying is infrequent and that staff tackle bullying whenever it is spotted or reported. The school's records show this to be true. Staff issue sanctions to pupils who bully or misbehave, especially when this has involved other pupils being hurt. However, these sanctions are not always effective in preventing any subsequent reoccurrence of incidents.
- Following changes to the pastoral team in school and a concerted effort by staff and leaders, attendance has just started to improve. Vulnerable pupils who receive additional family support from staff now attend more regularly. However, the persistent absence of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities remains high.
- Most pupils in school are well behaved and follow the school's expectations for their conduct. Pupils respond quickly to instructions from staff in the classrooms.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Although historical outcomes indicate that there has been some improvement in pupils' progress since the previous inspection, outcomes for current pupils in reading, writing and mathematics are inconsistent and require improvement.
- Overall, the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 are often better than those achieved nationally. However, disadvantaged pupils remain behind other pupils nationally and are not catching up quickly enough. There is a similar picture of progress across other year groups in key stage 2, especially in writing and mathematics, where progress is slower than in reading.
- In 2016, the proportion of Year 2 pupils achieving the expected level in reading, writing and mathematics was broadly in line with pupils nationally. However, middle-attaining pupils did not make as much progress as other groups of pupils. This pattern is reflected in the workbooks of current pupils in key stage 1, which show that middle-attaining pupils do not make sufficient progress over time.
- A check on pupils' books showed that pupils' progress is not consistent across year groups and varies across subjects. Disadvantaged pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable, particularly in writing and mathematics. In 2016, no pupils who received pupil premium funding reached the higher standard in any subject by the end of Year 6.
- Progress in science and the foundation subjects lags behind the progress made by pupils in reading and writing. Some teachers do not use assessment information effectively in science and the foundation subjects because they are not clear which

skills need to be taught at each stage of learning.

- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are currently making better progress than other groups of pupils from their different starting points. Their individual needs are supported by specialist staff and well-planned activities. Pupils who are taught in the additionally resourced unit (ARMS) make good progress because of the skilled teaching they receive.
- In 2016, at the end of key stage 1 and 2, a greater proportion of pupils were working at higher standards and greater depth than seen nationally. The most able pupils are often better challenged by their teachers than other groups of pupils in school. For example, in Year 5, the most able pupils were keen to take on the more difficult extension tasks set by their teacher. These are known to the pupils as 'chilli challenges' and inspire the highest achievers to take on some very complex tasks.
- Over time, the proportion of pupils who reach the expected standard in the phonics screening check in Year 1 has increased. The strong focus on phonics has resulted in marked improvements for all groups of pupils. Consequently, pupils are now better prepared for the reading curriculum in Year 2 and beyond.

Early years provision

Good

- A knowledgeable early years team leader has recently been appointed and has swiftly transformed the provision in the Nursery and Reception classes. In 2016, the proportion of children who reached a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year was just above that found nationally. However the attainment of boys and disadvantaged children was significantly lower than that of children nationally. The new leader has introduced many new systems and learning activities to address the previous weaknesses. As a result, these two groups are now making accelerated progress.
- Children are very well behaved in the early years. They are taught to work cooperatively with one another and are keen to help their friends both inside and outdoors. Adults set an excellent example by working closely alongside children and act as partners in their play. Staff model good manners and demonstrate the behaviours for learning that are expected. Children quickly follow their lead as they begin to share and take turns without even noticing.
- Writing has been a special focus for learning, especially for boys. In order to stimulate boys' interest in writing, staff use many different resources around the classroom. For example, children access clipboards and pens to draw and write about their models in the construction area and enjoy 'big writing' on very large pieces of paper and cardboard boxes. These opportunities have helped children develop the physical skills they need to manipulate writing tools effectively.
- Phonics is taught well in the early years. Staff are well trained to help children acquire the early skills needed to recognise the shape and sounds of letters. Many of the children in the Nursery Year can now read and write their own names and recognise the names of their friends. They listen attentively to other children and are keen to talk about books and stories. Some talk about their favourite stories and authors in some depth.

- Mathematics is also taught effectively. Staff know their children well and plan the next steps in their learning carefully. Additional activities are in place for children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities so that they make progress in line with their peers. Additional mathematics tasks and sessions are also used to support those children who have a slightly lower starting point in this subject.
- Staff have formed highly effective partnerships with parents so that they feel involved in their children's learning. They use homework creatively and this has supported the very good progress children make. Parents are keen to share and celebrate their children's achievements at home and so regularly add their own 'wow' statements to the class wall display.
- Safeguarding is effective because staff are vigilant and caring. Adults follow the school's policies closely and make sure that all statutory requirements for the early years are met. Children feel safe and secure and quickly gain the confidence needed to make gains in their learning.

School details

Unique reference number	131081
Local authority	Gateshead
Inspection number	10032093

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	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	342
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Graham Archer
Headteacher	Hannah Martin
Telephone number	01207 549 359
Website	www.rowlandsgillprimary.org
Email address	rowlandsgillprimary@gateshead.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	November 2012

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- This school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is low.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is lower than that found nationally.
- The school has an additionally resourced, specialist classroom to support pupils from across the local authority who have additional, complex learning needs.

- The school has met the government's floor standards for the past three years. These are the minimum expectations for pupil's attainment at the end of Year 6.
- Children attend the Nursery class for 15 hours per week. This is organised into morning and afternoon sessions of three hours each day. Children attend either mornings or afternoons in this class. Children attend full time during the Reception Year.
- A private provider currently operates a playgroup, additional care for children before and after school and an after-school club for older pupils. These arrangements are inspected separately. The most recent reports of their quality can be found on the Ofsted website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited a range of lessons, some of which were observed jointly with senior and middle leaders. Inspectors scrutinised examples of work in pupils' books alongside senior leaders and subject leaders.
- The inspectors listened to a range of readers from Years 1, 2 and 6.
- A variety of documents were considered, including information about pupils' progress, the school's development plan and the school's self-evaluation. Information relating to PE and sports funding, attendance, behaviour and safeguarding were also checked.
- An inspector met with the chair of the governing body and several other members of the governing body.
- An inspector met with a representative from the local authority and spoke by telephone to the designated officer.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils during lessons and more informally at playtimes. An inspector also met with a group of pupils to discuss their views of the school. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lunchtime and at unstructured times during the school day.
- Inspectors took account of 112 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents. Inspectors also took into account parental views at the start of the school day and information shared with Ofsted by letter and email.

Inspection team

Anne Humble, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Lucie Stephenson	Ofsted Inspector
Colin Lofthouse	Ofsted Inspector
Mark Wilson	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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