

Durham Gilesgate Primary School

Kepier Crescent, Gilesgate, Durham DH1 1PH

Inspection dates

26–27 April 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	Good
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

- In writing, pupils, including those in the early years, do not make enough progress from their individual starting points. Standards in writing are not high enough. Teachers do not consistently provide writing activities that meet pupils' needs. As a result, too few pupils meet or exceed age-related standards in writing. Feedback is not supporting pupils to improve their work. Handwriting is often poorly formed and untidy.
- The curriculum fails to meet the needs of pupils. Some subjects are under-represented, including history, geography and science. As a result, pupils are not accessing learning regularly enough to ensure appropriate levels of knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Pupils' results in the Year 1 phonics check have been below average for a number of years.
- In the early years, leaders and teachers do not know accurately how children are doing against national standards in writing.
- In the early years, there are too few opportunities for pupils to develop their independent learning. As a result, some children who start school with low levels of development do not make the rapid progress they need to enable them to catch up.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders have a good understanding of what is needed to improve standards further.
- The improvements in the teaching of mathematics have led to improvements in attainment and progress and now enthuse pupils to learn.
- This is a school which provides a caring and supportive environment for pupils and their families.
- Pupils have a strong understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and they have positive attitudes to learning.
- The provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (including those who are hearing impaired) is good and pupils make good progress from their individual starting points.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that leaders and governors use assessment more precisely and take rigorous action to further improve the achievement of specific groups of pupils in all subjects.
- Improve standards of writing by:
 - increasing the proportion of pupils who reach and exceed age-related expectations in writing across the school
 - improve the proportion of pupils in Year 1 who meet the expected standards in phonics
 - ensuring that pupils understand precisely what is expected of them, and what they need to do to be successful writers
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length in other subjects in addition to English
 - ensuring that teachers have the necessary skills to assess pupils' outcomes accurately
 - providing pupils with frequent, clear and detailed guidance, in line with the school's feedback policy, about how to improve their work
 - increasing the level of challenge and ensuring that teachers raise their expectations of the quality of pupils' handwriting
 - raising pupils' expectations of the tidiness and presentation of their work.
- Implement a high-quality curriculum so that pupils are prepared well for the next stages in their education by:
 - making sure that there is sufficient time to teach all subjects of the curriculum
 - enabling pupils to develop and practise the skills, knowledge and understanding in the subjects they have studied in a consistent and progressive way
 - ensuring that pupils are more aware of world faiths and different cultures.
- Improve the provision in the early years by:
 - more accurately assessing children's attainment on entry to the Reception class in all areas of the early years curriculum especially writing and using this information to challenge pupils to achieve their next steps of learning
 - ensuring that leaders provide more opportunities for children to work independently both indoors and outside.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The headteacher and senior leaders now have an accurate and deep understanding of the school's strengths and the areas to improve. Over time, however, elements of weak teaching and low aspiration have resulted in a legacy of underachievement in some classes, leaving pupils with ground to make up. This is still evident in the most recent published information and in the findings of this inspection. Following some unavoidable changes in leadership roles of late, leaders are now tackling pupils' underachievement with determination and rigour. They know what is needed to drive improvement forward at a fast pace. As a result, pupils are making faster progress. The school's capacity for further improvement is strong.
- Leaders have high aspirations. They have built a highly committed and skilled staff team, some of whom are new to the school since the previous inspection. Teachers are ambitious for their pupils. They fully support leaders in their vision to improve the school rapidly. Pupils' progress and standards in mathematics are improving significantly. Although there are very clear plans to improve pupils' progress in writing, it is too soon to see the full impact of their work to improve the quality of education and pupils' outcomes.
- The quality of teaching is improving quickly. In addition, the support provided by experienced teachers within the school is helping other teachers to develop their subject knowledge and improve the quality of their teaching. Staff morale is high and the school is improving securely.
- Due to the recent absence of an experienced and effective leader and necessary changes of leaders' roles to meet pupils' immediate needs, the frequency and rigour of their monitoring of teaching and learning in writing has been compromised. Plans to precisely check the impact of teaching on pupils' learning and their learning behaviour are clear.
- The work of some leaders is of a high quality and is helping the school to improve quickly. For example, in mathematics, the subject leader has risen to the challenge to improve standards. She has swiftly implemented new approaches to the teaching of mathematics and introduced a system to extend and deepen pupils' learning. As a result, pupils are making faster progress across the school. Nonetheless, these improvements are recent. The need to improve writing is still very much in evidence but leaders have not yet succeeded in securing consistently good outcomes for pupils.
- The curriculum does not provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding in a wide range of subjects. Pupils currently produce little work in science, history, geography and religious education. The curriculum does, however, provide some rich and interesting learning experiences for pupils. For example, work in the community and educational visits spark their interest and enthusiasm to learn effectively. It also supports pupils to develop their self-confidence, broaden their horizons and aspire to succeed. However, work in topic books confirms that the quality of pupils' work is still too variable. For example, the quality of writing in history and geography is limited and not yet of a consistently high standard.

- The school offers a range of after-school clubs and enrichment opportunities to develop pupils' fitness, sports skills and awareness of healthy living.
- Pupils' appreciation of British values is not yet secure. They show respect for others and this is clearly seen by the way that all pupils work and play happily with pupils new to the school. They know that they voted for school councillors and have received visits from Members of Parliament, but they do not relate this to democracy. Their knowledge and understanding of world faiths is also lacking.
- The school's development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is not fully effective because of the pupils' lack of secure knowledge of world faiths. However, the moral and social strengths are pivotal to the school's values and welcoming atmosphere. Parents share in this aspect of the school's work. For example, many families attended the recent egg decorating occasion where families from different cultures focused on learning about the traditions of Easter.
- Leaders ensure that pupil premium funding is targeted for those who need it most. As a result, this group of pupils is making faster progress than they did in the past. However, historically, disadvantaged pupils have not achieved well enough. Leaders have tackled this weakness with urgency but the full impact of their work is yet to be seen in improving the outcomes of this group of pupils.
- The headteacher is an experienced leader who is determined to improve the achievement of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. He ensures that funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is used effectively and actions have a positive impact on improving the school's performance and pupils' achievement.
- Leadership by the head of the hearing impairment provision is effective and clearly focused on continual improvement. For example, she has led sign language classes for adults and children and has introduced assessments which enable pupils' individual needs to be met more precisely.
- The primary physical education and sport funding is used effectively to increase pupils' participation in sport. A large proportion of pupils take part in competitive sports, with the notable success of winning a recent football tournament. This is helping to improve pupils' self-esteem, confidence and personal resilience.
- Parents' confidence in the school and its leaders is extremely high and all parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, would recommend the school to another parent. Parents who spoke to inspectors were very positive about the school. They have every confidence that leaders swiftly address their concerns.

Governance of the school

- New governors have recently been recruited to the governing body. They are ambitious for the school and bring the skills and drive needed to deliver improvement quickly. Together with school leaders, they are tackling the legacy of underachievement with urgency and determination. As a result, the capacity of leaders to implement improvement is strong.
- Governors have every faith in the staff and leaders at the school to bring about rapid improvement. In addition, governors use the local authority expertise effectively to

support the school on its journey of improvement. As a result, the school is improving at a fast rate.

- As a priority, governors have tackled the legacy of weak teaching and many of the issues identified during the previous inspection. They have not shied away from tackling underperformance and have recruited new teachers and supported leaders, for example in mathematics, to drive improvement. As a result, the quality of teaching is improving quickly.
- Governors' minutes now confirm that they ask leaders challenging questions to hold them to account for the school's performance. They visit frequently to check for themselves that leaders' actions are having an impact on pupils' outcomes. They know that even greater analysis of the performance of different groups, and in different subjects, would enable them to hold leaders to account with greater rigour to drive improvement at the pace required.
- Governors recognise that they need to monitor the website more effectively and accepted that at the time of the inspection a small number of policies were out of date on the website, but paper copies had been updated.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Processes and procedures for the recruitment of staff are compliant with current legislation.
- Staff receive appropriate child protection training together with regular updates. They are alert to any potential safeguarding issues and they are well trained to identify and act on signs of risk or harm, including risks relating to extremism and radicalisation. Staff work tirelessly to provide pupils and their families with high-quality support. Parents are appreciative of this support and told inspectors how much they value the care the school provides.
- The leadership of child protection is robust. Documents and records are well kept and actions are followed through in a timely way. Leaders do not shy away from challenging other agencies if they feel pupils are not receiving the support they need.
- Pupils told the inspector that they feel safe in school. Adults teach the older pupils strategies for keeping themselves safe, especially when using the internet, through assemblies and in lessons. Pupils know who to speak to if they are concerned and are confident that an adult would listen and help them.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is improving at pace but remains variable. There is now a stable and permanent teaching team after a period of instability. Now, adults receive additional training and development to improve the learning for pupils and are starting to change and develop their practice. Pupils told the inspector, 'teachers are kind, nice and help us to improve our work'.
- Where inconsistencies remain in the quality of teaching, it is because teachers do not use the school's assessment information well enough to plan learning that meets the needs of groups of pupils. Leaders have put in place a robust system to check pupils'

progress over time. As a result, teachers' judgements of pupils' achievement are now secure. Nonetheless, on occasion, teachers do not use the information they keep to plan pupils' next steps in their learning precisely. As a result, pupils' learning and progress slow and they do not achieve as well as they could.

- Teachers are not accurate enough in identifying what pupils need to do next to improve their work. This is especially the case in pupils' writing. Older pupils in particular are not given enough opportunities to write at length or to demonstrate their abilities in subjects other than English. Pupils are not guided sufficiently well in what they need to do to improve. As a result, they do not make the progress they are capable of. They do not always move pupils on well enough and encourage them to attempt greater challenges often enough in their writing.
- Children develop their reading skills appropriately in the early years and are very keen to show their skills by reading aloud. However, historically, this has not been built on well enough in Year 1 and so in general pupils have not reached the national average in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 for a number of years now. This situation is now improving. Pupils in Year 2 who read to the inspector used their knowledge of sounds and the pictures well to work out unfamiliar words. Pupils say they enjoy reading at home and maturely and confidently gave their opinion of types of books they enjoy. The most able pupils read fluently and enjoy the challenging texts. This was seen to great effect in a Year 5 reading comprehension lesson when pupils discussed and read the Greek myth of Orpheus and Eurydice and were questioned deeply and challenged well by the teacher.
- In mathematics, all pupils are provided with challenging work. As a result, pupils are diligent and complete tasks extremely well. They use and apply and deepen their understanding in different ways.
- Teachers deploy teaching assistants consistently well in lessons and so they are effective when working with individuals or small groups. Teaching assistants who work individually with pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities ensure that these pupils are well cared for and make gains in their learning. Notably, support assistants use sign language to ensure pupils who have a hearing impairment can access the same provision as everyone else in class. Indeed, the support for these pupils during the inspection was particularly impressive.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils' attitudes to their learning are generally good. With the introduction of a project to further improve pupils' attitudes to learning, pupils typically show greater resilience and are more determined to work hard and produce work of a higher quality. Pupils usually concentrate on their tasks in class. In some lessons pupils display the self-confidence to help their partners, for example to search dictionaries to improve their understanding of new words.

- However, there are shortcomings in the presentation of pupils' work. Much is untidy and poorly presented, even by the most able pupils. A small number of pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, say they would like to try harder work. This lack of challenge slows their progress at times.
- Pupils are impressively courteous to visitors and are respectful of each other around the school. The school council contributes to school improvement because they provide ideas for improvements to school.
- Pupils welcome the opportunity to become buddies and provide a caring and responsive group for pupils who may feel lonely or out-of-sorts during breaktimes.
- Pupils report that they feel safe and secure in the school and have a clear understanding of who to turn to if they are in need of help. Pupils are unanimous that school staff would deal effectively with any incidents of bullying. Their understanding of staying safe online is good. Pupils know how to keep safe when they access the internet. They understand why you do not reveal personal details about yourself and also know to inform an adult if they are worried about the behaviour of strangers online. The school's e-safety modules are taught to all classes and learning is reinforced through assemblies, for example.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Everyone connected with the school agrees that the conduct and self-discipline of pupils is a positive feature of their school. Inspectors confirm that most pupils conduct themselves well and are typically well behaved at school. The behaviour management system has made a strong impact. Pupils and staff have a common understanding of the consistently used policy. It is used well to reward positive behaviour. Disruption in lessons is rare.
- Relationships between pupils and staff are extremely positive, and this helps to ensure that lessons start promptly and proceed calmly.
- Parents who spoke to inspectors are positive about the way that school staff deal with, and keep them informed of, any behaviour successes or concerns promptly.
- Levels of attendance have improved strongly and rates of persistent absence have diminished this year because school leaders made attendance a priority. Leaders ensure that all absences are followed up rigorously, for example with phone calls and other checks. Staff make visits to homes to check up on the safety and welfare of pupils who are frequently absent. Rewards and celebration of good attendance help to make sure that attendance is now approaching the national average.
- Punctuality is monitored scrupulously and followed up with parents and carers. Inspection evidence confirms that pupils are keen to get to school on time and to start learning. An early-morning breakfast club offers pupils and their families helpful support to ensure a positive start to the day.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- A legacy of weak teaching has resulted in pupils' underachievement in writing and, in the past, mathematics. As a result of current leaders' determined actions to tackle this underperformance, and the improvements made to the quality of teaching in mathematics, current pupils are now making fast progress and achieving higher standards in mathematics. Work in books confirms this picture.
- However, although standards have improved in mathematics, they have not improved in writing. With additional issues caused by unavoidable staff absence, some pupils, particularly in Years 3 and 6, have considerable ground to catch up. Pupils have too few opportunities to write at length in subjects other than English, and the quality of feedback is not supporting pupils to improve their work. In addition, pupils' handwriting is weak throughout the school. The vast majority of pupils are not taught to write in a fluent and joined up style and so pace is hindered. Teachers' expectations of the presentation and quality of handwriting are also not high enough.
- The progress of the most able pupils in Year 2 was not good enough last year. In 2016, no pupils reached the highest levels in Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. These pupils are now making faster progress. Scrutiny of Year 2 work shows that they receive sufficient challenge to extend their learning and deepen their understanding. Throughout school, however, pupils are not yet consistently making the progress they are capable of in writing.
- Disadvantaged pupils receive targeted and appropriate support to meet their needs and have equality of opportunity. Leaders use the pupil premium funding effectively to diminish the differences in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and others. Nonetheless, the progress of disadvantaged pupils across the school remains too variable and some continue to have significant ground to make up.
- The proportion of pupils that reach the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check varies year on year but has been below the national average for a number of years. Teachers' daily focused teaching is now helping pupils to improve the essential literacy skills that they need to equip them for the raised demands of Year 2.
- Pupils in Years 3 to 6 read with greater confidence, fluency and understanding of the texts. As a result, a higher number of these pupils are now on track to reach the higher standards at the end of this year.
- The curriculum is broad, and staff have correctly planned to cover the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding expected in the national curriculum. However, it is not balanced well. For example, too little work has been completed and pupils are not consistently reinforcing, applying or consolidating their learning. On occasion, teachers' expectations are not high enough and they accept work which is untidy or incomplete.
- Staff accurately identify and cater academically for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with hearing impairment. Pupils make good progress from their individual starting points in reading, writing and mathematics. The introduction of a new mathematics scheme with judicious use of apparatus is particularly effective in improving pupils' progress in mathematics. Many pupils who have hearing impairment are working at age-related expectations as a result of their high-quality adult support

- Despite recent improvements, school leaders and teachers recognise that some pupils still have a lot more ground to make up.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Leaders report that children enter the Reception class with fewer skills than those typical of their age. Inspection analysis of the school's on-entry baseline information shows that this evaluation is not entirely accurate for all areas of the early years curriculum.
- Leaders do not know how well children are doing in writing. Leaders' monitoring is not systematic or sufficient in assessing children's learning accurately. Consequently, it is difficult to validate whether teaching is meeting the needs of all children.
- Children benefit from structured activities; for example, daily phonics lessons. In these sessions, children quickly learn their letters and sounds and begin to read and write simple words. However, staff are not as successful in providing sufficient learning through exploration and play both in the classroom and in the outdoor learning environment.
- Children's work and evidence from the inspection show that there are fewer opportunities than might reasonably be expected for children to work independently. As a result, progress in writing is not strong because, for example, activities outdoors do not replicate those indoors, especially activities that promote mark-making and early writing. The early years team are already planning how to improve the provision. Many staff are working individually and successfully with children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Adults in the early years work effectively together and are keen to take on board an approach to provide the early years education that young children need.
- Teachers and teaching assistants use their strong subject knowledge to ask relevant and probing questions of children. This work enables teachers to extend children's thinking and understanding and children make good progress, particularly with their language and personal and social skills.
- The staff team successfully implement the school's behaviour expectations and most children are respectful and polite to adults and to each other.
- Staff consider the children's safety when planning and organising the classroom area. As a result, children are well supervised and kept safe.
- The proportion of children that achieve a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year has risen for the past three years, although it still remains well below the national average. Inspection evidence indicates that the proportion of children achieving a good level of development is likely to fall in 2017.

School details

Unique reference number	114211
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10032063

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	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	204
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Councillor Patrick Conway
Headteacher	Mark Turner
Telephone number	0191 384 7284
Website	www.durhamgilesgate-pri.itss-durham.org.uk/
Email address	gilesgateprimary@durhamlearning.net
Date of previous inspection	February 2013

Information about this school

- Durham Gilesgate is smaller than the average primary school.
- The school runs a breakfast club.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils in the school is much higher than the national average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs is well above average, and the proportion of pupils receiving special educational needs support is also above the national average. The school hosts a local authority provision for pupils with hearing impairment. There are currently 18 pupils attending this provision.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum

expectations for pupils' attainment in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website. At the time of the inspection, a small number of policies were out of date, but up-to-date policies were available in school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning and behaviour in all year groups and all classes, including that of children in the early years. The headteacher or deputy headteacher accompanied inspectors to many of these lessons. Inspectors talked to the pupils about their learning, progress and behaviour during these observations.
- Inspectors carried out an extensive scrutiny of pupils' books to inform their judgements about pupils' progress, attainment and attitudes to learning. Inspectors also listened to children read.
- Pupils' behaviour was observed around the school, including at breaktimes and lunchtime. Inspectors visited intervention groups for pupils needing extra help.
- Discussions took place with the headteacher, school leaders, teachers and four governors, including the chair of the governing body. An email from a further governor was received and taken into account.
- Inspectors took account of 11 responses received from Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and inspectors met a number of parents at the beginning of the school day. The views of parents who contacted inspectors directly were also considered.
- School documents were analysed, including the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan and various action plans, the checks made on staff's suitability to work with children, governing body meeting minutes, and information about pupils' achievement, behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Steve Bywater, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Suzette Garland-Grimes	Ofsted Inspector
Lucie Stephenson	Ofsted Inspector

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