

# Witton Gilbert Primary School

Sacriston Lane, Witton Gilbert, Durham DH7 6TF

## Inspection dates

6–7 July 2017

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The headteacher and senior leaders actively promote tolerance and respect for others. Together they have created a positive ethos in this happy, inclusive school.
- Leaders ensure that pupils experience the full range of national curriculum subjects. Staff weave subject-specific work through topics and/or plan discrete tasks and activities. This means that pupils develop an appropriately wide range of interests, skills and knowledge.
- Senior leaders monitor teaching, learning and assessment, carefully. This allows them to identify strengths and tackle any weaknesses in practice and performance, swiftly.
- Subject leaders check the quality of work and learning in their areas of responsibility. Several subject leaders rigorously track pupils' progress and outcomes. This is not yet fully consistent across every subject.
- Senior leaders have taken robust action to improve pupils' attendance. A minority, however, are still too regularly absent.
- Governors are skilled and committed to self-improvement. They visit regularly and provide leaders with a good deal of support. Governors hold leaders accountable, in an increasingly effective manner. Their understanding of leaders' use of additional funding is developing.
- The leadership and management of the provision for special educational needs is a strength of the school. Pupils in this group make good progress from their different starting points in each key stage.
- Teachers use their good subject knowledge and questioning skills effectively. Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and the most able, make good progress across key stages and subjects.
- Although pupils' progress in mathematics is good, it is not as rapid as their progress in English. In key stage 2 particularly, teachers do not challenge pupils to test out their skills of mathematical reasoning and logic consistently.
- Teaching staff have heightened their skills in the teaching of phonics and early reading. Standards have risen over time and pupils' outcomes now exceed those seen nationally.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils are polite, friendly and considerate of each other. The vast majority need little guidance from adults to abide by the school's rules. Occasionally, some pupils in the early years or key stage 1 engage in overly boisterous play.
- Children in the Reception class make good progress from their different starting points. Improvements in teaching have sparked a love of learning among children.

## Full report

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

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - ensuring that pupils' progress and attainment in all subjects and for each key group are captured precisely
  - increasing the proportion of pupils reaching a greater depth of understanding in mathematics, particularly in key stage 2
  - supporting governors to fully understand the extent to which additional funding is improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
  - eradicating weaknesses in pupils' attendance and making sure that no pupil's progress is hindered by frequent absence
  - eliminating instances of overly boisterous play in key stage 1 and the early years.
- Continue to develop the quality of teaching and learning, particularly in mathematics, by:
  - making sure that all pupils, including those in the early years, have regular opportunities to apply their logic and hone their skills of reasoning to solve increasingly complex problems.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher work well in partnership to set the tone in school. Their dogged determination to provide a safe, stimulating and happy environment for pupils creates a positive atmosphere. Staff and pupils are inspired to live up to leaders' high standards.
- Senior leaders are committed to developing teachers' expertise and skills. They monitor the quality of teaching, learning and assessment frequently. Teachers and teaching assistants receive clear feedback about their strengths as well as guidance on how and where their performance needs to improve. In this way, an improving culture is developed.
- Leaders and governors aspire to give pupils an enriching experience that prepares them well for later life. The recent careers afternoon, den day and science, technology, art, engineering and mathematics event, go some way to exemplifying leaders' intentions. Exciting before- and after-school clubs, educational trips, interesting visitors and stimulating topics also contribute well to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural experiences. This broad range of extra-curricular opportunities and enhanced provision help leaders' vision for pupils' development and future success to be realised.
- Senior leaders ensure that pupils experience the full range of their curriculum entitlement. All statutory subjects from science and religious education to geography and computing are given due attention in teachers' planning and pupils' work. High-quality displays in corridors, classrooms and public spaces capture and celebrate pupils' efforts across each area. Pupils' journeys to develop artistic skills and understanding are evident in the art books they use year on year to showcase their work.
- Leaders use the primary school physical education and sport funding to good effect. Staff and pupils learn and benefit from working with skilled visiting coaches. Pupils' confidence and abilities in health and physical fitness grow and build expertly. They have enormous fun while developing a competitive edge and acquiring values such as fairness and respect.
- The special educational needs coordinator directs additional funding with care, providing extra resources and training for staff where needed. Assessment is accurate. Leaders follow individual pupils' progress closely to make sure that pupils get the support and/or challenge that they need. The coordinator's well-trained eye means that pupils make good progress across subjects no matter where their journey begins. Leaders are working to improve the way that they communicate their use of funding, and what this means for pupils, to governors.
- Subject leaders are enthusiastic about their areas of responsibility, producing action plans to drive improvement. They have regular access to professional development and training opportunities to enhance their skills. Several meet with leaders from other schools to share good practice. Some subject leaders capture the progress and attainment of key groups of pupils accurately. They know precisely whether boys or girls are doing better and in which year group. They can confidently explain how they have supported lower-ability pupils to catch up with their peers or how successfully they have challenged the most able pupils to reach greater depths of learning in their

subject. This is not yet a consistent feature of practice. Not all leaders can pinpoint the extent to which pupils are reaching or exceeding national standards in their subject.

- Most disadvantaged pupils make good progress from their starting points in each key stage. Leaders target pupil premium funding in a considered and deliberate manner. Pupils therefore benefit from work with adults that supports their emotional well-being and improves their confidence. Where appropriate, pupils also engage in additional activities and tasks that improve their basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders' ability to present clear, uncomplicated information about the effectiveness of their use of the pupil premium funding to governors is improving.
- Leaders tackle weaknesses in pupils' attendance assiduously. They meet with parents and carers and pupils to discuss the importance of good attendance. Leaders help and challenge families to understand the effect that absence may have on pupils' personal, social and emotional resilience as well as their academic progress. This said, a small proportion of pupils are still too regularly absent from school. Although pupils' attendance over time has remained broadly in line with national averages, leaders recognise the need to prioritise some aspects of their work in this area for improvement moving forward.
- Leaders and governors are committed to allowing pupils to take carefully managed risks through outdoor play and learning. Occasionally, play can become boisterous. A very small number of parents expressed concerns about behaviour. Leaders understand that they need to involve all parents and pupils more fully in developing their vision.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governors take their statutory roles and responsibilities, seriously. They are fully committed to improving their own skills and understanding. To this end, governors attend training events provided by the local authority and take part in those held in school, together with staff. Training in child protection and safeguarding has, for example, effectively fostered governors' understanding and expertise in this crucial area. The quality of governance is improving rapidly.
- Governors bring a wide range of skills to bear on their work from the fields of health, finance, business, care and education. They review their collective skills regularly, making sure that they have sufficient expertise as a governing body to fulfil their duties successfully. Governors are therefore able to hold leaders to account for the school's performance and pupils' progress and outcomes.
- Governors have a good understanding of the day-to-day work of the school. They visit school regularly to find out for themselves what pupils experience on a daily basis. Governors look at pupils' work and talk with them to gain an accurate impression of pupils' learning and feelings. Governors are sharpening their procedures to capture the outcomes of these monitoring visits more consistently.
- Governors can explain how leaders target additional government funding appropriately towards disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Their understanding of the extent to which leaders' actions are making a difference for these groups is developing.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders' checks on the suitability of adults working with pupils meet requirements. They review procedures and update policies regularly, to make sure that these reflect best practice.
- There are two trained designated safeguarding leaders in school. Both have attended training to make sure that they are fully aware of their duties and responsibilities. They work closely with other agencies to share information and to secure additional expertise and guidance where needed.
- Leaders communicate the most recent guidance and information about child protection clearly to staff. Staff therefore understand the procedures for keeping children safe in education. They are vigilant and alert to signs of vulnerability in individuals and understand how and to whom they should report any concerns.
- The governing body has assigned an individual governor to pay particular attention to safeguarding and child protection. This governor meets with pupils, talks with staff and checks the school's arrangements assiduously. In this way, governors tirelessly support and challenge leaders to protect and care for pupils tirelessly.
- The large majority of parents who made their views known to Ofsted feel that their children are safe and well looked after. Several parents expressed particularly positive remarks about staff going 'above and beyond' to meet the needs of their children. A very small number of parents expressed some concerns about pupils' behaviour outside and their use of equipment outdoors. Leaders are taking action to ensure that all parents and pupils understand the principles behind their approach to calculated risks, outdoor play and safe practices.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good across the key stages. Teaching staff use questions skilfully, to explore pupils' understanding and to encourage pupils to think deeply about their learning. As a result, most pupils, including the most able, learn and progress, effectively.
- Teachers' subject knowledge in English is particularly well developed. Teachers use subject-specific and grammatical terminology expertly. They encourage pupils to do likewise. This means that pupils develop an ever-increasing bank of vocabulary, which successfully supports their growing knowledge and understanding across subjects successfully.
- Teachers and teaching assistants have worked hard to develop their skills in delivering high-quality phonics sessions. Staff articulate sounds clearly and insist that pupils do too. Pupils are therefore successfully able to use and apply their knowledge and understanding to reading and writing tasks. Teaching and learning in phonics are quickly becoming a strength of the school.
- Leaders assess pupils' progress and achievement carefully, at least termly. They hold regular meetings with teachers to talk about how well individuals and groups are doing, pinpointing precisely where strengths and weaknesses lie. Consequently, staff are able to tweak practices to address issues and purposefully build on strengths. This results in

teachers planning tasks and activities that successfully meet pupils' needs and interests.

- Pupils behave sensibly in lessons, listening respectfully to adults and each other. They display good attitudes to learning and are keen to please. Staff usually manage any rare instances of low-level disruption effectively and in a positive manner.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Teachers plan carefully for this group and present learning tasks in a manner that suits individuals. Pupils therefore thrive and a large majority rise to meet challenging targets.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils have high aspirations for themselves, aiming to be scientists, mathematicians, electricians and sporting champions. Teachers actively promote pupils' self-belief and develop pupils' self-confidence well, using story, technology, media and topic work to explore professions, themes and possibilities.
- Pupils are proud of their work to support local and British charities. They display considerate views about the needs of others in Britain today and discuss some sensitive issues with care and compassion. Pupils feel that their 'brilliant ideas' for raising money or supporting others are welcomed and made possible by staff.
- Pupils take on an interesting assortment of roles in school. School councillors, buddies, anti-bullying champions, sports leaders and web wizards are some of the groups that take their responsibilities seriously. Pupils' voices are heard. Staff heed pupils' opinions. Pupils develop life skills of tolerance, respect and perseverance by playing such key parts in the life of the school.
- Leaders and staff take their responsibilities for the care and welfare of pupils seriously. Several pupils told inspectors that dinner nannies help if they get hurt and teachers listen if they have concerns or want to talk.
- Pupils talk with animated, excited expressions when they discuss the resources and opportunities outside at lunchtime. Firm favourites are the reading/writing area, dressing-up shed, the enormous sandpit and the firefighter's pole. Many areas deliberately encourage social interaction, while others allow quiet reflection and personal space. The large majority of pupils are happy and engaged by the provision. Occasionally, however, staff do not identify and manage boisterous play promptly. This poses a potential risk of injury to pupils.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. A pupil said that staff 'give you clues and help you to persevere' if pupils find things tough. They understand that they have the right to work without distraction and are also responsible for making sure that they do not distract others. Staff and pupils work well together to make sure that leaning behaviours are

consistently positive.

- Pupils understand and can talk about the different forms that bullying might take. Teachers develop pupils' knowledge and understanding through assemblies, literature and using online resources. Pupils can explain how to use technology and computers safely.
- Pupils treat each other and adults with respect. They move about the school sensibly, and lunchtimes are happy, sociable affairs. Staff use positive behaviour techniques successfully. They manage any instances of poorer behaviour among pupils swiftly yet sensitively.
- Leaders are committed to equipping pupils with the skills needed to manage and control risks safely. Staff encourage pupils to distinguish between right and wrong, allowing them some freedom in deciding how and when it is safe to have a go and when it is best to stop and think. These principles underpin the outdoor play and learning that is supervised each lunchtime. Adults direct or intervene in play where needed.
- Some younger pupils in key stage 1 and the early years engage in play that is overly boisterous, particularly during outdoor play and learning. Not all parents agree with, or understand, leaders' views on managed risk. Leaders understand that they have work to do to reduce instances of boisterous play and reassure or involve parents better in the school's practices and approach to risk taking.
- Leaders have taken some decisive action to tackle issues of attendance. They can clearly demonstrate some of the successes they have had in raising the attendance of some individual pupils. However, some issues remain; the learning and progress of a number of pupils continue to be hampered by regular absence.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Good

- Current pupils are making good progress from their different starting points across a range of subjects. Work in pupils' books and wall displays, learning in lessons and the school's own assessment information show that the vast majority of pupils make good progress over time.
- Better teaching and improved provision in the early years mean that outcomes for children have improved over time. The proportion of children currently reaching a good level of development now matches national averages.
- In Year 1, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the national phonics screening check has risen significantly and is now well above the national average. Currently, pupils use and apply these early reading skills well, tackling new and unfamiliar vocabulary with expertise. Pupils who read with inspectors demonstrated confidence, enjoyment and fluency.
- Leaders make good use of the pupil premium funding. Adults intervene to support and challenge pupils in their learning where needs are identified. In 2016, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils who reached expected standards and greater depths of learning in all subjects in key stage 1 exceeded national averages. In key stage 2 in 2016, disadvantaged pupils made similar progress from their various starting points to other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. Very small cohorts of

disadvantaged pupils in some year groups make further comparisons less reliable.

- Pupils' outcomes in science exceeded national averages in 2016 in both key stages 1 and 2. Pupils' good progress in art is clear to see in their art books and in displays of their work around school.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. Leaders and staff have consistently high expectations of pupils and seek solutions, rather than seeing barriers to learning. Identification of pupils' needs is timely, and staff take swift action where pupils start to fall behind. Leaders are more able to define accurately the extent to which their actions are securing good rates of progress for pupils, due to sharper assessment procedures.
- The proportion of pupils in key stage 1 in 2016 reaching expected standards and greater depths of learning in reading, writing and mathematics was close to or above national figures. In 2016, in key stage 2, the proportion of pupils reaching expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics was above national averages.
- In 2016, key stage 2 pupils' outcomes in English grammar, spelling and punctuation fell below national averages. Leaders identified this weakness and tackled issues avidly, training teachers and improving challenge and support for pupils. Consequently, current pupils are now using and applying their skills in this area more effectively. Assessment information and the work in pupils' books corroborate this.
- The most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, are making good progress in most subjects. However, staff do not reliably challenge some pupils, including some of the most able, to apply their skills of logic and reasoning to solve increasingly complex problems in mathematics, particularly in key stage 2.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- The headteacher leads the early years effectively. The headteacher ensures that teachers and staff in the early years are supported and challenged to make sure that children are well looked after and achieve their potential.
- The proportion of children in the early years reaching a good level of development has risen steadily over time; in 2016, it was above the national figure. All groups make good progress from their different starting points.
- Children's welfare needs are of prime importance to adults. Adults have warm, caring relationships with children and families. The large majority of parents feel that their children are well looked after and adults in school respond promptly if they have any concerns or questions. The view of one parent encapsulated the views of others: 'The teachers genuinely care about my children's well-being.'
- Good teaching in the early years supports children to make good progress in their learning. Teachers plan work that matches children's needs and interests. Rapid rates of progress are particularly evident during adult-directed learning.
- Staff in the early years are skilled in promoting children's early reading skills. Adults take great care to enunciate sounds and letter names clearly and precisely. They encourage children to do so too and gently correct children if mispronunciations occur. This means that the large majority of children are developing a love of books and

reading. They leave the early years well prepared for the Year 1 curriculum.

- Teachers and teaching assistants support children to understand the need for good personal hygiene and cleanliness. Children wash their hands carefully, before eating and after playing outside. They learn about keeping their teeth and bodies healthy, reading stories with adults that support and develop their understanding in this area.
- Children work with numbers and mathematical concepts on a daily basis, building their understanding of a wide range of concepts such as time, measure, shape and number. Although, most children make good progress, they do not have sufficiently challenging opportunities to apply their number knowledge and skills to solve problems.
- Children are happy and get along well together. They learn to share and take turns, making their feelings and ideas known to others. Children listen politely to adults and respond promptly to requests and instructions.
- Children enjoy the very wide range of stimulating resources that are available indoors and outside. They move confidently and handle tools, construction materials and malleable materials with control. At times, however, they become overly excited in rather confined spaces and a little too boisterous in their play.

## School details

Unique reference number	114122
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10032105

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	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	191
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michelle Harrison
Headteacher	Paula Nelson
Telephone number	01913 710424
Website	<a href="http://www.wittongilbert.durham.sch.uk">www.wittongilbert.durham.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:wittongilbert@durhamlearning.net">wittongilbert@durhamlearning.net</a>
Date of previous inspection	30– 31 January 2013

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- This is a smaller than the average-sized primary school. Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is lower than national averages.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than national averages. The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan, however, is above national averages.
- In 2016, the school met the government's floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics at

the end of key stage 2.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes across key stages. During day one of the inspection, the lead inspector and the headteacher conducted lesson observations jointly.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, the assistant headteacher, subject leaders, governors, including the chair of the governing body, and a representative from the local authority. The lead inspector also met with the headteacher in her capacity as special educational needs coordinator.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read, scrutinised their work and talked formally and informally with groups of pupils and individuals. The 16 responses made by pupils to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire were taken into account.
- A wide range of the school's own information was examined, including policy documentation, the school's self-evaluation, improvement plans and records of the checks made on teaching and learning. Information about performance management and safeguarding arrangements and practice were also studied.
- The opinions of staff were taken into account via their responses to Ofsted's questionnaire, on paper and online, and through discussion during meetings.
- The views of 59 parents, via their responses to Ofsted's questionnaire, Parent View, and 26 responses via Ofsted's free text were considered. Inspectors also spoke with parents face to face.

## Inspection team

Fiona Manuel, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Geoff Dorrity	Ofsted Inspector
Tracey Ralph	Ofsted Inspector

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