

# West Pelton Primary School

Twizell Lane, West Pelton, Stanley, County Durham DH9 6SQ

## Inspection dates

19–20 July 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	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Fragile relationships in the school have impeded the headteacher's efforts to promote improvement. As a result of these tensions, leaders, governors and some parents and carers feel it is time for change. New leadership arrangements and some changes to staffing are in place for September 2017.
- Outcomes at the end of key stage 2 are below those seen nationally. Although provisional results for 2017 indicate some improvement, outcomes continue to be weaker for the disadvantaged and the most able pupils.
- The quality of teaching is variable. In particular, pupils do not make the progress they should in key stage 2 and pupils who fall behind do not receive enough help to catch up.
- Teachers do not consistently check pupils' level of understanding or challenge them sufficiently. Some teachers and teaching assistants do not hold high enough expectations and allow poor spelling and grammar to persist.
- Most pupils behave well and apply themselves diligently in lessons. Occasionally, they become restless when explanations are overly repetitive or the work is too easy for them.
- Pupils' physical health is promoted adequately, although there are fewer competitive sporting activities available for girls and younger pupils.
- Pupils feel safe and well cared for. Relationships between adults and children are warm and friendly. Safeguarding arrangements have a high priority and meet statutory requirements.
- Governors are optimistic about the new leadership arrangements in place from September 2017. However, some governors lack a detailed knowledge of school performance information and, consequently, have not provided enough scrutiny or challenge of areas of underperformance.

### The school has the following strengths

- The quality of education in the early years is good. Provision has improved steadily in recent years, allowing children to make a good start. Children make good progress in developing early reading, writing and number skills.
- The wider curriculum provides pupils with some memorable artistic and cultural experiences. There are good arrangements in place to promote a sense of responsibility and commitment to the school community.

## Full report

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

- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching and learning, in order to accelerate pupils' progress, by:
  - raising the expectations of teachers and teaching assistants
  - ensuring that teachers plan suitably challenging activities for the most able pupils and support them to master new topics during lessons
  - ensuring that teachers check pupils' level of understanding regularly throughout lessons and reshape tasks when pupils are ready to move on
  - ensuring that there is more additional support of good quality that supports pupils, especially the disadvantaged, at risk of falling behind.
- Improve the promotion of good physical health by broadening the range of physical activities available for girls and younger pupils.
- Foster a more effective partnership with parents of children in the Reception class, in order to support children's development more effectively.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
  - ensuring that checks on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment provide teachers with pertinent feedback which leads to refinement of their approaches
  - ensuring that the most able pupils and disadvantaged pupils receive better support and improve their attainment
  - improving the skills and knowledge of governors so that they can evaluate accurately and act more decisively to tackle weaknesses.

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

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

- Leaders, governors and teachers all feel the time is right for change at West Pelton Primary. Since the last inspection, some relationships have become strained and staff have struggled to pull in the same direction. Despite her best efforts, the headteacher has been unable to make consistent improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. As a result, outcomes for pupils have fallen below those seen nationally.
- Morale among some members of staff has declined and some now lack sufficient drive and ambition to move the school forwards. Several members of staff, including the headteacher, have chosen to leave the school at the end of the summer term. Governors and the local authority believe the new leadership arrangements in place for September, and the new teaching appointments they have secured, will reinvigorate the school and bring a renewed sense of purpose.
- The headteacher has made frequent checks on the quality of teaching. However, not all teachers have accepted or acted upon the feedback they have received. Weaknesses in teaching, compounded by the wide age range and spread of pupils' abilities in some classes, have not been successfully addressed. A review of the quality of teaching undertaken by the local authority last spring helped to diagnose weaknesses more accurately. An informal partnership with another school has also been helpful in contributing new ideas. These recent developments have helped to focus teaching more sharply and address some gaps in pupils' knowledge.
- The impact of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils has been mixed. Some strategies have been effective. For example, efforts to engage parents as partners in support of their children's learning have worked well. Over time, however, disadvantaged pupils have attained less well than other pupils in the school. Current assessment information shows that disadvantaged pupils in some year groups have made less progress and fallen behind their peers. Despite this, leaders have not changed the way the pupil premium funding is spent.
- Leaders have been sharper in their use of special educational needs funding and the primary physical education (PE) and sport premium. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified early and receive good support and resources to meet their needs. There are good arrangements in place to draw upon external specialists and keep parents informed about their children's progress. The primary PE and sport premium is used to bring in specialist coaches and to train existing staff. Participation in sport has been broadened as a result.
- The curriculum focuses predominantly on basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics. The wider curriculum provides some memorable artistic and cultural experiences that engage pupils well. Leaders have reviewed programmes of study this year to improve the sequence of learning so that subject-specific skills will be taught more progressively in the future. Pupils' understanding of democracy and responsibility are promoted effectively through the very active student council and their role as prefects. Each week, the council members review ideas to improve the school submitted via the suggestions box. The council also leads work to raise funds for local

and national charities. These opportunities help to prepare pupils to become responsible citizens.

- Support and challenge from the local authority this year has promoted some recent improvement, particularly in the early years and some aspects of teaching and learning. This support led leaders to reflect upon their future and ongoing commitment to the school. The local authority is keen to sustain a high level of support for the new headteacher across the next academic year.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors have struggled to resolve issues that have undermined relationships in the school. Like everyone else, they feel the time is right for a change in staffing and for a new start. They have worked effectively with the local authority to secure new leadership and staffing for September 2017. Governors have a realistic evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses and show a clear commitment to tackling the areas of underperformance with the new headteacher from the start of next term.
- Governors have held members of staff to account and managed the performance of teachers and leaders robustly.
- The governing body is relatively small and currently has some vacancies which need to be filled. Some governors have not undertaken sufficient training to be able to fully understand and interpret the assessment information provided for them by leaders. The lack of education experience on the governing body also means that governors have not always asked the probing questions they should.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The headteacher gives safeguarding the highest of priorities and ensures that a culture of vigilance is sustained. All the necessary checks are made on adults who work in or visit the school. Training for staff is fully up to date with the most recent government guidance. Regular briefings ensure that staff are fully aware of any concerns about a child's safety and the actions being taken to protect them. The headteacher maintains good professional relationships with external agencies and is prepared to challenge when she feels more needs to be done. The headteacher ensures that records of a high quality are maintained.

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

### **Requires improvement**

- The quality of teaching is variable across the school and leads to inconsistent rates of progress. Over time, leaders have not acted decisively enough to address weaker teaching. As a result, some teachers and teaching assistants do not hold high enough expectations and accept pupils' work with weaknesses such as spelling and grammatical errors.
- Although teachers tailor activities for groups of pupils with different starting points, they do not always check the extent to which pupils are challenged during lessons. Consequently, in some classes, pupils spend too long on work they can already do and

not enough on more challenging content. In key stage 2 in particular, pupils find too much of the work to be too easy.

- During lessons, teachers and teaching assistants provide a disproportionate amount of their support to younger pupils. Older pupils and those who are the most able are left to work independently for long periods. Although they sustain their concentration and stay on task, not enough is done to help these pupils extend their knowledge and understanding.
- Some teaching practices are not consistently in line with school policies. For example, scrutiny of the work in pupils' books shows written work is not routinely reviewed, edited and reworked in order to improve it. Furthermore, pupils do not consistently receive feedback in line with the school's policy. As a result, corrections are not always made and inaccurate spelling and grammar is allowed to persist.
- Teachers do not do enough to check pupils' level of understanding. They do not always check pupils' grasp of new vocabulary or whether they are clear about the purpose of activities. They only occasionally punctuate lessons to question pupils in order to identify possible misconceptions or explore pupils' thinking.
- Teachers provide some additional teaching for disadvantaged pupils who fall behind. However, this is not frequent or effective enough to fully address gaps in their knowledge.
- Teachers do expect and encourage pupils to show positive attitudes. The vast majority of pupils apply themselves well and work productively. Lessons progress quietly and calmly. Teachers have well-established routines for managing behaviour and pupils respect their authority. Most pupils take care with the presentation of their work, although standards of handwriting are variable.
- Teachers do not accept derogatory language and encourage pupils to be respectful and tolerant of one another. The inspector observed good examples of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities being targeted with questions and their classmates waiting patiently for them to formulate their answers.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school is a friendly and welcoming environment. The headteacher warmly greets parents and pupils at the school gate each morning. Pupils of different ages all play together at social times. In the dining hall, pupils chat happily as they eat their lunch and tidy away well. Parents who spoke to the inspector were very happy with the quality of care their children receive.
- A good range of memorable topics promote pupils' personal development effectively. For example, this year there have been good opportunities for pupils to meet and work alongside artists. Displays of work resulting from these partnerships show very pleasing outcomes. Pupils have also visited the seaside and gained confidence through participation in a dance festival at a local theatre in Durham. Their understanding of faith has been strengthened through a visit to Durham Cathedral. Together, these

broad experiences contribute effectively to pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.

- The school provides an adequate variety of activities to promote pupils' physical development and health. The school employed a playground games leader last term and some of these games are still played by pupils at social times. At lunchtime, there is a range of play equipment which is very actively utilised. Pupils told the inspector they would like more play equipment and for it to be available at the shorter playtime each morning. The range of competitive sports available is more limited and leaders do not foster sufficient opportunities for girls and younger pupils, as most competitive sports available are for boys in key stage 2.
- The curriculum ensures that pupils are made aware of risks to their safety and the actions they can take to keep themselves safe. For example, pupils know what steps to take to protect their identity online and when using mobile phones or games consoles. Sessions run in school by a children's charity have helped pupils to know what is, and what is not, appropriate in their relationships with adults and other children.
- The school keeps detailed records of any bullying incidents and deals with bullying assertively. Records show incidents of bullying are very rare.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils conduct themselves well and abide by the school's rules. Relationships between teachers and pupils are friendly and cordial.
- In lessons, pupils follow the teacher's instructions and apply themselves diligently. Just occasionally, pupils become restless and fidgety when teachers repeat instructions and explanations for too long.
- Most pupils take pride in their work. However, a minority do not take the best of care with their handwriting and presentation. Some teachers do not challenge this enough and allow it to persist.
- Most pupils value their education and enjoy coming to school. In recent years, the level of overall attendance has been in line with the national average for primary schools. Last year, the proportion of pupils who missed school regularly was also similar to the national figure, although disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities were more prone to miss school for more than 10% of the time. An effective programme of rewards for good attendance and the regular celebration of good attendance in assemblies have improved the picture this year. This year, only a very small number of families have persistently absent children.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- The majority of children enter the Reception Year with skills that are below those typical for their age. They make secure progress in the Reception Year and across key stage 1, although few pupils make strong progress and attain the higher standard by the end of Year 2. Their progress slows across key stage 2. The proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6 was well below the national average in 2016. Provisional results for 2017 indicate some improvement, but outcomes were still inconsistent across subjects.



- The school's own assessment information and the evidence in pupils' books show that few pupils make strong and sustained progress. In particular, disadvantaged pupils in most year groups make less progress than other pupils in the school. In recent years, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils has been below that of other pupils nationally. Although leaders track the progress of different groups of pupils carefully, they do not provide enough additional support for those pupils, especially the disadvantaged, who fall behind.
- The most able pupils make no more than average progress, as teaching does not provide them with enough challenge. Very few pupils attain the higher standard in reading, writing or mathematics at the end of key stage 1 or key stage 2.
- Outcomes for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have been variable. Leaders have reviewed the quality of support they provide this year. They have provided more training for teachers and support staff and have improved the resources to help pupils access the curriculum. For example, laptops have been provided for dyslexic pupils. This improved support is ensuring that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to others in the school.
- Weaknesses in pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar are not addressed rapidly enough. The school does not have a consistent or effective strategy to improve the quality of spelling. Opportunities to introduce key spellings linked to the topics being studied are missed. In 2016, fewer than half of pupils reached the expected standard in grammar, punctuation and spelling. Provisional results for 2017 show little improvement.
- Pupils receive good support to develop early reading skills. The teaching of phonics is effective and pupils quickly develop their understanding of the sounds letters make across Year 1. Most pupils reach the expected standard in the Year 1 national phonics screening check. Although pupils become proficient readers in Year 2, some lack the resilience to keep reading for a sustained period and some fail to use punctuation correctly, which limits their comprehension of the text.

### Early years provision

**Good**

- The quality of the early years provision has improved since the last inspection. The indoor learning environment has been improved and more interesting and stimulating resources are now easily accessible for children. Outdoor areas are safe and secure, although resources are less varied and do not do enough to encourage imaginative play. Although there has been some turbulence in the staffing and leadership of the Reception and Year 1 class this year, the headteacher has provided good oversight and ensured that changes in staffing have been managed smoothly.
- Outcomes at the end of the Reception Year have improved steadily over recent years. In 2016, the proportion of children who attained the expected standard was in line with that seen nationally. Provisional assessments for 2017 show further improvement. However, although numbers are small, the gap in attainment between disadvantaged children and other children in the school has persisted. Leaders ensure that disadvantaged children receive additional teaching in basic skills of reading, writing and number, although they are yet to review whether or not the additional funding the

school receives for disadvantaged pupils in the early years is used effectively enough.

- Children quickly adopt safe routines and learn to socialise well with one another. They are happy to take turns and work together to explore the equipment and activities prepared for them. When they settle to tasks, they sustain their concentration well and respond positively to the encouragement of adults.
- Adults in the early years have improved the quality of their assessments. They make regular observations of children as they play and keep good records of the progress they make in developing a broad range of skills. Teachers use this information effectively to prepare appropriate activities to help children take their next steps.
- Teachers ensure that children's reading, writing and number skills develop well. They engage children with interesting topics that motivate them to write down their ideas and solutions to number problems. Teachers are skilled at asking questions that prompt children to think deeply about their work.
- Parents are encouraged to contribute evidence of their children's learning at home through the 'Wow Wall' display. However, the partnership with parents is underdeveloped as parents rarely contribute examples of their children's work to their books.
- There are good links with the private nursery on the school site and with other child care providers locally. Children who attend the nursery regularly visit the early years' classrooms and take part in activities with older children. This helps to ensure that the children's transition to the Reception class is smooth. Parents who spoke to the inspector were pleased with the quality of education and care their children receive in the Reception class.
- The early years area is a safe and secure environment which fully meets statutory welfare requirements.



## School details

Unique reference number	114004
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10032107

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	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	70
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Julie Smith
Headteacher	Julie McDowell
Telephone number	01913 700238
Website	<a href="http://www.westpelton.com">www.westpelton.com</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:enquiries@durhamlearning.net">enquiries@durhamlearning.net</a>
Date of previous inspection	19–20 June 2013

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- West Pelton Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The large majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average.
- Pupils are taught in three classes comprising Reception and Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3, and Years 4, 5 and 6.
- The school provides a breakfast club from 8.30am until 9.00am each morning.

- The school has a private nursery, Little Ducklings, on the same site. The nursery is subject to separate inspections by Ofsted.
- The headteacher, the assistant headteacher and one other teacher are leaving the school at the end of the summer term. The governors, in conjunction with the local authority, have appointed an executive headteacher to lead the school from September 2017.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited lessons across all year groups, including the Reception Year. A number of observations were undertaken jointly with the headteacher. During observations, the inspector sampled pupils' books and talked to pupils in order to evaluate the quality of their current work. In addition, the inspector scrutinised in detail a sample of books containing work from a broad range of subjects.
- The inspector also observed pupils' behaviour and attitudes around the school at social times.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, middle leaders and a group of pupils. Further meetings were held with a group of governors, including the chair of the governing body, and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, policies, assessment information and records of checks on the quality of teaching. The inspector looked at records of attendance and behaviour, minutes of governing body meetings and safeguarding information.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, or to Ofsted's pupil and staff surveys. The inspector spoke informally to a number of parents.

## Inspection team

Chris Smith, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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