

# Balliol Primary School

Chesters Avenue, Longbenton, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear NE12 8QP

## Inspection dates

3–4 July 2018

<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 is resolute in her determination to raise pupils' achievement and to implement an engaging and stimulating curriculum for all. It is this doggedness that has brought about the rapid improvements in the school successfully. She is very ably supported by the deputy headteacher.
- Pupils' outcomes are improving rapidly. Past variability is being ironed out effectively. However, leaders know that there is still more to do to ensure that increasing proportions of the most able and disadvantaged most able pupils reach the higher standard in a range of subjects.
- Leaders recognise the importance of developing and extending pupils' knowledge and understanding of subject-specific vocabulary. This is an ongoing area for further curriculum development.
- Leaders' actions plans are detailed documents and identify correct priorities for improvement. However, they lack measurable targets and milestones which would enable them to be evaluated accurately, for example clear targets to improve some pupils' attendance and punctuality still further.
- Several initiatives and the application of a clear and consistent behaviour management system have contributed to a marked reduction in incidents of poor behaviour this school year.
- The early years has been improved since the school's monitoring visit by Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI) in January 2018. Highly effective support from the local authority, purposeful leadership and dedicated staff ensure that children get off to a good start in their education.
- The quality of teaching across the school is good and improving. Teachers receive precise guidance from leaders regarding what is expected. However, leaders know that there is still more to do to ensure that the teaching of phonics moves Year 1 pupils' skills on more rapidly and that pupils' reasoning skills are further developed.
- Governors are committed to the school. They use their professional skills effectively to challenge and support school leaders. This gives them an accurate view of the school's effectiveness.
- The headteacher has reorganised the leadership team to increase capacity for rapid improvement. Middle leaders have clear lines of accountability and responsibility. Those more recently appointed are receiving the support and training required to extend their skills in monitoring and evaluation.

## Full report

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

- Continue to improve pupils' outcomes by ensuring that:
  - pupils in Year 1 are moved through the phases in the phonics teaching sequence, so they can acquire and apply appropriate reading and spelling skills more quickly than they currently do
  - the most able pupils and disadvantaged most able pupils are challenged to think hard in their learning in a range of subjects
  - all teachers focus upon developing pupils' reasoning skills in a range of subjects.
- Continue to improve leadership and management by:
  - ensuring that those recently appointed to leadership roles receive the support and training required to extend their skills in monitoring and evaluating the effect of the school's work
  - ensuring that plans for improvement, including those for attendance and punctuality, contain sharply focused targets and milestones linked to pupils' outcomes, so they can be evaluated accurately
  - consolidating curriculum plans that focus upon developing pupils' vocabulary further.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- Following her appointment at the start of the school year in September 2017, the headteacher wasted no time in reorganising the leadership structure of the school, to improve its effectiveness and to increase leadership capacity. An HMI monitoring inspection in January 2018 indicated that some aspects of the school's work needed to improve further. This provided leaders with the impetus to bring about further improvements more quickly. It is testimony to the headteacher's purposeful leadership, and her ambition for pupils to be successful, that the school has retained its good inspection judgement.
- The headteacher quickly established a highly effective partnership with the deputy headteacher and together they are a formidable senior leadership team. They are clear and consistent in their shared expectations for quality-first teaching and for pupils' good behaviour. Their pursuit of excellence is to be admired. Such is their combined determination that they have systematically dealt with the areas for improvement identified in the January inspection and are bringing about rapid improvement.
- The reorganisation of the leadership structure is increasing the capacity still further. This is contributing to the speed of improvements across the school. Subject leaders are enthusiastic in their roles and are similarly ambitious for their pupils' success. However, those most recently appointed are still to undertake a full role in the monitoring of their subjects.
- An array of initiatives is in place to support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development successfully. Pupils have regular access to outdoor education. This is enabling them to develop strong and trusting relationships with each other and providing increasing opportunities for pupils to work more collaboratively. Additional support for pupils' mental health is considered carefully. A group of older pupils expressed how helpful some of these initiatives are in enabling them to manage their anxieties over national curriculum tests and their move on to secondary school.
- Leaders' vision for the curriculum places great emphasis on developing and extending pupils' vocabulary. Improving pupils' reading outcomes and nurturing in pupils a love of reading is central to the school's curriculum aims. Leaders are ensuring that pupils gain a strong knowledge base with which they can apply their reading, mathematical and writing skills in a range of subjects. They are developing progression documents to support teaching and learning across the school. This work is in the earliest stages of development but is already having a positive effect on improving pupils' outcomes in a range of subjects.
- The additional pupil premium funding is well targeted at providing academic and emotional support for disadvantaged pupils. Additional support and interventions are used wisely to ensure that disadvantaged pupils achieve as well as their peers. However, plans need to be more sharply linked to the specific gains in pupils' outcomes, including improved attendance, desired by leaders. This will enable them to be accurately evaluated.
- Leaders use the primary physical education (PE) and sport premium funding

successfully to employ sports coaches, whose work is building teachers' skills and knowledge to teach PE more effectively. The funding is also used to engage pupils in competitive sports and to increase pupils' access to, and enjoyment of, outdoor learning activities.

- The headteacher has undertaken an extensive review of special education needs (SEN) and/or disabilities provision. She has established improved identification procedures and sought the advice of external agencies to implement learning support plans for pupils who require them. As a result, teaching is now more sharply focused on helping these pupils make improved progress from their often very low starting points.
- Most parents and carers are supportive of the school and feel that their children are happy. A small minority voiced their concerns over changes that have occurred in the school this year. These changes have, however, successfully supported the improvements in the school.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors bring a range of skills and experiences to complete their specific roles in monitoring the work of the school effectively. Their reports are detailed and identify those things that are working well and the areas of practice that need to improve.
- Governors access training to ensure that they are knowledgeable in the ways they can challenge and support school leaders. They seek verification of the school's effectiveness from local authority officers alongside reports from school leaders. A review of the governing body's minutes and records of governors' visits to the school reflect the effective challenge given to the school's leaders and governors' good level of understanding.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders, including governors, ensure that all staff employed to work with pupils are fit to do so. All staff undergo stringent checks.
- Staff receive regular training to ensure that they are kept up to date with the government's most recent legislation. All staff are aware of the important role they play in keeping children safe.
- Staff know their pupils and families well and are vigilant in noticing any changes in pupils' behaviour. A review of the school's safeguarding records shows that leaders are diligent in their record-keeping, maintaining detailed records of any concerns or issues that may arise. Strengthening links with external agencies and partner schools ensure that policies and procedures are as effective as they need to be.
- The designated safeguarding governor visits the school frequently to check that staff follow the agreed systems and procedures for safeguarding, child protection and health and safety. Their findings are reported to the full governing body and any outstanding issues are dealt with in a timely manner.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers across the school nurture strong, successful relationships with their pupils. This contributes to the excellent climate for learning observed in all year groups. Lessons are calm and purposeful, with pupils engaged in learning and clear about what is expected of them. Classroom displays effectively support pupils in their learning. This is a consistent feature in all year groups and is contributing to pupils' growing confidence.
- The monitoring inspection of January 2018 indicated that the quality of teaching showed signs of decline. Although already under way, this spurred leaders to provide ever more focused guidance to teachers on the expected approaches for teaching, specifically in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The process for the teaching of writing is consistent across the school. In all year groups, work in pupils' books provided secure evidence of regular assessment opportunities. The explicit teaching of different styles of writing that are applied in subjects beyond English is very effective. Following on from the recommendations in the monitoring inspection, there is now evidence of greater use of punctuation and grammar woven through units of work. As a result, pupils' writing skills are improving rapidly.
- Pupils' assessment information indicates that for some pupils their limited vocabulary hinders their achievement. Leaders have therefore focused upon instilling in pupils a love of reading, to broaden pupils' exposure to words and to extend their vocabulary. In all subjects, teachers focus upon the associated technical vocabulary and use books whenever possible as a stimulus for productive learning. Leaders have chosen carefully a selection of books for each year group, to be used as class stories, stimuli for writing and texts for guided reading. This is ensuring that all pupils gain exposure to a wide range of authors and writing styles and techniques. This year's teacher assessment information indicates a marked improvement in pupils' reading outcomes across the school, compared with those of 2017.
- Since the school's monitoring inspection in January, leaders have invested in significant levels of training and support to improve the quality of phonics teaching. There have undoubtedly been improvements and pupils are able to use their phonics skills to read and write unfamiliar words. However, there is a need to move more quickly through the phonics stages than is currently the case. This will enable more pupils to have secured the required skills before they leave Year 1.
- Leaders have adopted a mastery approach to the teaching of mathematics this academic school year. This is because of the disappointing results in mathematics in 2016 and 2017. There is now a heavy focus upon developing pupils' mathematical fluency, before moving on to reasoning and problem-solving activities. Work in pupils' books shows that there is much evidence of pupils practising and consolidating their skills, but less evidence of pupils applying their skills to reason and problem-solve, as was intended. Although the school's strategy has brought some improvement in pupils' outcomes at the expected standard, it has proven less successful in increasing the proportion of pupils reaching the higher standard. This is particularly the case for the most able pupils, who are often practising skills already secured, before moving on to more demanding activities.

- A review of pupils' topic books indicates that pupils complete a wide range of activities in a wide range of subjects linked to a common theme. There is evidence of a clear progression of knowledge, skills and understanding in the work seen. Pupils are receiving increasing opportunities to complete practical activities and to learn subject-specific vocabulary. There is lots of evidence of pupils applying their writing skills in subjects beyond English. However, the evidence also shows that pupils are in the earliest stages of applying their subject-specific knowledge to reason and to draw conclusions. This is particularly evident in science, where pupils are not fully developing their responses to investigative questions.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- Leaders' work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Every opportunity is used to improve pupils' resilience, and to increase their self-confidence and self-awareness. Leaders' strenuous efforts are paying dividends. Pupils observed in their lessons demonstrated highly positive attitudes to their learning. Teachers are swift to remind pupils that help is at hand should they be unsure about activities they must complete. This gives pupils the confidence to try new things and to 'have a go'.
- A detailed programme of assemblies and personal and social activities support pupils' wider awareness of the values that lie at the heart of British society and the different world religions. A range of visits out of school and visitors to school supplement the school's work in this area admirably.
- Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They talked to inspectors about the various forms of bullying and were confident that their teachers helped them to stay safe. Pupils' understanding of how to keep safe when using the internet was secure regarding giving out personal information. However, pupils were a little less secure on more detailed aspects of radicalisation and extremism.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils behave well and are respectful of each other and of adults. This is because of the strong values embedded within the school's ethos and the high expectations laid down by the headteacher.
- Procedures for managing pupils' behaviour are consistently applied by all staff. Pupils know what is expected of them and, for the most part, adhere to the school's behaviour code.
- Designated staff are trained to support some of the most vulnerable pupils effectively. Any serious breaches of the school's rules are handled proportionately and sensitively. It is a measure of the school's success that there have been no fixed-term exclusions at the school since January 2018.
- Playtimes are active and highly engaging for pupils. Pupils were observed both at playtimes and lunchtimes. During these times pupils engage happily in a range of

purposeful activities, from accessing the 'invention shed' and den-building to balancing, as well as traditional ball games. Pupils who talked to the inspectors said: 'Playtimes used to be boring, but they're not now. There's always something to do.' This is undoubtedly contributing to the marked decline in the number of incidents of poor behaviour at the school, which have reduced by two thirds since the changes were introduced. This improvement is endorsed by the lunchtime supervisors, who feel that behaviour has improved markedly. Some parents expressed their concerns over the introduction of active play. However, this is contributing to pupils' well-being and the reduction of incidents of poor behaviour.

- Pupils' conduct around the school is good. Pupils are happy to hold doors open and to say good morning to their teachers, visitors and each other. Throughout the inspection, pupils demonstrated positive attitudes to their learning and to each other. This was observed during lessons and around the school.
- Although there is some improvement in pupils' attendance rates, recorded in historical information, current information indicates that attendance has dipped below the national average for all primary schools nationally. Families taking extended holidays during term time affects this figure significantly. The appointment of a family support worker has improved the school's attendance procedures. There is evidence of several pupils who have significantly improved their attendance and punctuality because of her intervention. While this is heartening, there is room to improve procedures further.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Pupils' outcomes over time have been variable. In 2017, attainment was below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics, at both the expected and higher standard at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2. Outcomes are improving for pupils currently attending the school. The submitted national assessment information for summer 2018 indicates improvement in the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard for reading, writing and mathematics at key stage 1 and at key stage 2. This is a notable improvement on previous years.
- Increasing numbers of pupils arrive and leave the school at times other than those expected. An increasing number of pupils have recently arrived in the country, speaking little or no English, and the time they stay at the school is variable. Such pupils receive effective support from local authority advisory staff and quickly acquire English-speaking skills. They are making rapid progress from their starting points.
- A detailed review of pupils' books shows that pupils' progression of knowledge, skills and understanding is improving rapidly in a range of subjects. Focused progress meetings between leaders and staff ensure that any pupil whose learning has stalled is quickly picked up and additional support or intervention is provided. This is contributing to the rapidly improving quality of work evident in pupils' books.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils in the school is higher than the national average. Leaders track their progress carefully throughout the term. Additional homework clubs and interventions are in place for those who need additional support. A review of the school's assessment information and work in pupils' books show that they are making the same rapid progress as others in the school.



- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities have historically not made good progress. One of the headteacher's first actions was to review SEN identification and provision and to ensure that pupils' personal support plans are in place and reflective of pupils' specific needs. This is now enabling teachers to prepare accurately for the needs of pupils who have SEN, which is in turn supporting the improved progression of their knowledge and skills.
- Although the most recent assessment information shows that slightly more pupils are reaching the higher standard than was previously the case, a review of pupils' books shows that too often the most able pupils are expected to work through less challenging activities before moving on to more demanding work.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- The early years leader has a secure understanding of how young children learn and this is reflected in the wide range of well-planned activities provided for children to explore and to investigate. She has embraced the highly effective support from the local authority, which was received following the school's monitoring inspection in January 2018. She has ensured that improvements to the early years have been implemented quickly and successfully.
- Children behave well. All adults model the same high expectations for children to share and to take turns effectively.
- Children's outcomes are improving rapidly. Children enter school demonstrating skills and aptitudes below those typically expected for their age, particularly in learning associated with communication and language. Until very recently, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development by the end of Reception class was low. However, this is no longer the case. At the end of 2017, the percentage of children reaching a good level of development was broadly in line with the national average, and this has been sustained in 2018.
- Teaching in the early years is focused well. Teachers use assessment information accurately to plan activities that both engage and excite children in their learning, while ensuring that there is a clear progression of skills. This is particularly evident within the ongoing shared activities prepared for children's self-choice, where adults know precisely what is expected of children in Nursery and Reception class. There was some staffing disruption regarding Nursery staff this school year. However, recently appointed staff have quickly established positive and trusting relationships with children. They have embraced the organisation of the early years successfully, to ensure that the quality of teaching and learning remains good.
- Adult-led sessions ensure that children are taught early mathematical and writing skills systematically and effectively. Continuous play provision enables the successful consolidation of these skills. However, the evidence recorded in children's books would indicate that very few children are exceeding a good level of development.
- The teaching of phonics is strong and ensures that children gain a good grasp of early reading and spelling skills. Phonics sessions include opportunities for pupils to consolidate existing knowledge and learn new sounds for reading and spelling. This is ensuring that children are ready for Year 1.



- Since the monitoring inspection in January 2018, outdoor learning has been transformed. Activities are planned creatively to maximise opportunities for children to explore and investigate the world around them. Such is the quality of learning opportunities that children whoop with excitement when they can learn outside.
- Play is varied and interesting and provides children with opportunities to problem-solve and negotiate. For example, a group of boys were trying to create a sun canopy with material, poles and tyres. After much discussion and investigation of different combinations they finally realised that they needed pegs to keep their material fixed. This was supported skilfully by their teacher, whose timely interventions enabled the boys to reach a successful solution. Such highly effective questioning and facilitation was observed repeatedly during the inspection.
- The two-year-old provision is now firmly established within the early years provision. Leaders have ensured that all welfare arrangements are firmly in place and that children are well supported. Children benefit greatly from focused activities that support their early development while accessing shared outdoor provision with the older children. Consequently, the very youngest children are settled and reaching developmental milestones quickly.

## School details

Unique reference number	108603
Local authority	North Tyneside
Inspection number	10047873

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	190
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Pat Craighead
Headteacher	Mrs Judith Driver
Telephone number	0191 200 7471
Website	<a href="http://www.balliolprimary.co.uk">www.balliolprimary.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:balliol.primary@northtyneside.gov.uk">balliol.primary@northtyneside.gov.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	25 January 2018

## Information about this school

- The school has grown but remains smaller than the national average for primary schools.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is higher than the national average, as is the proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage, although there are increasing numbers of overseas pupils who speak English as an additional language joining the school. They often join the school at times other than those expected, which contributes to the school's increasing rates of pupil mobility.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards for primary schools, which set out the minimum requirements for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.
- The school's age range is now 2 to 11, following the introduction of two-year-old provision.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection team visited teaching sessions across a range of subjects in all year groups. The vast majority of these visits were conducted together with members of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, governors and representatives of the local authority's school improvement service. Inspectors looked at work in pupils' books and spoke to pupils formally and informally at playtime and lunchtime about their learning and heard them read.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents provided by the school, including assessment information, the school's self-evaluation report and action plans. The school's records relating to safeguarding were also checked.
- There were 28 responses to the Ofsted online survey Parent View. The inspectors took account of these, along with corresponding free-text commentaries and 10 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

## Inspection team

Diane Buckle, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Gill Wild

Ofsted Inspector

Zoe Westley

Ofsted Inspector

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