

Bedlington Station Primary School

School Road, Bedlington, Northumberland, NE22 7JQ

Inspection dates 11–12 June 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Children make a good start to their time in school as they settle well to learning in the Nursery. They make good progress across the Early Years Foundation Stage as they have consistently good teaching and support for their personal development.
- Pupils make good progress across Key Stages 1 and 2 due to consistently good teaching. Pupils' progress is thoroughly and regularly checked to ensure all pupils are making the best progress they can.
- Teaching is good across the school. Pupils respond well to teachers' questioning and make good progress in their learning. Pupils are clear about what they are learning and work well on their own with the tasks set. Teaching assistants support well in and out of lessons with small groups.
- Pupils are keen to learn and respond well to their teachers. They work and play in harmony, readily sharing ideas in lessons when working together. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe and how to manage risk in different situations. They say bullying is rare.
- The strong, determined and passionate leadership of the headteacher has successfully steered the school through a significant period of change. She is well supported by a strong team of staff who are keen to ensure all pupils achieve well. They have improved the quality of teaching and standards are rising.
- The governing body has rigorously supported the school during its period of change. They have also challenged the school to improve and this has had a positive impact on the school's performance.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet outstanding as pupils are not always able to check on their own learning and progress. Marking does not always enable them to reach a higher standard in their work. Pupils' differing needs are not always as well planned or as well catered for.
- Standards in writing at Key Stage 2 are not high enough. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to write in other subjects or use their reading skills to improve their writing. Boys do not write as well as they could as activities do not always interest them sufficiently so that they can improve their skills.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 24 lessons or parts of lessons, of which two were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors observed groups of pupils, as well as individual pupils, working with teaching assistants. They listened to Year 2 pupils read, and heard pupils in other year groups read in lessons.
- Inspectors talked to a range of pupils about their work and play in school. They also studied a range of pupils' work across the school.
- Meetings were held with three governors as well as teaching staff, including middle leaders and the headteacher. They also met with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the overall work of the school and studied a number of documents including the school's data about pupils' current progress. They also examined documents relating to safeguarding, governance, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors took account of the 20 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). They also considered the school's parent survey and staff questionnaires. Inspectors talked to some parents in the playground and had a discussion with a parent on the telephone.
- Inspectors looked at school displays, its website and a range of other evidence relating to the wider work of the school.

Inspection team

David Shearsmith, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Timothy Nelson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- A well-above average proportion of pupils are supported by the pupil premium, which is additional funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children in the care of the local authority.
- A well-above average proportion of pupils are supported through school action. An above average proportion of pupils are supported at school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The school did not meet the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is taught in a Reception and a Nursery class that share the same outdoor learning area.
- The school has a breakfast club managed by the governing body.
- The school became a primary school in 2012. Year 6 were still housed in separate accommodation some distance from the main school until September 2013, with pupils from three different feeder schools joining Year 6.
- The school has experienced significant staffing changes and building works during the transition to its primary school status.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is outstanding by:
 - ensuring pupils know how to be successful in their learning so they can check on their own learning and progress in lessons
 - improving marking by ensuring that pupils know their next steps in learning and are given opportunities to respond to teachers' comments during the next lesson
 - making full use of existing good practice in lesson planning so that pupils' differing needs are better catered for.
- Raising standards in writing at Key Stage 2 by:
 - ensuring there are more opportunities for extended writing, particularly in other subjects
 - providing 'boy-friendly' writing tasks that interest them and improve their skills
 - using pupils' existing good reading skills to find quality examples of writing from texts to improve their own writing skills and the standard of their work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The school has made a significant difference to pupils' performance since September 2013, when Year 6 was finally incorporated into the main school. Significant disruptions during building work, staffing changes and the low performance of Year 6 in 2013 have been overcome. The school has rapidly improved the performance of Year 5 and 6 pupils and previous good performance in the rest of the school has been maintained.
- Children enter the school with skills that are typically below and often well below those expected for their age. In particular, they have weaker skills in literacy and in their personal development. The school has a strong focus on developing these areas when they enter the school and, as a result, they settle quickly to learning. They make good progress across the Early Years Foundation Stage as they receive consistently good teaching and support for their learning from all staff.
- Pupils make good progress across Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics to leave with broadly average standards overall. Teaching is consistently good and pupils' progress is tracked meticulously to maintain previous good performance.
- Pupils continue to make good progress across Key Stage 2 and standards are rising rapidly. Pupils are on track to achieve standards that are just above average overall in reading and mathematics. Standards in writing are lower than other subjects as pupils have insufficient opportunities for extended writing in other subjects.
- Boys do not reach the same standards as other pupils as writing activities do not interest them as well as they could so they can reach a higher level in this area. Pupils' good reading skills are not always used effectively to improve the standard of their writing. Where reading and writing activities are linked together in lessons pupils benefit from the good examples found in texts to use in their writing.
- The school has a successful and systematic approach to teaching reading and phonics (sounds that letters make). Consequently, pupils make good progress in developing their reading skills. In the Year 1 reading check, pupils reached above expected standards overall. All pupils reached the national expectation after the re-check, giving them a good start to developing their reading skills further.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium typically make good progress across the school as the school has had a strong focus on checking on their progress. As a result, they reach standards that are above similar pupils nationally overall by one term. They remain behind their peers in school, but this gap is closing rapidly.
- Most able pupils make good progress in their work. These pupils are on track to attain at above average levels.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well. They do not always reach standards as high as similar pupils nationally, as some have quite complex needs. Teaching assistants are used effectively to ensure these pupils make good progress in their studies.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is typically good and some is outstanding as questioning in class enables pupils to work independently when required. Pupils enjoy their lessons as they have a rich and varied diet of activities. They are very industrious in lessons and always try to do their best as teachers have high expectations of what their pupils can achieve.
- Children in the Nursery get a good start to their time in school as they have a good range of opportunities to work and play together. Their speech and language skills develop well as the school gives this a strong priority. In the Reception class there is typically a strong emphasis on developing pupils' reading and writing skills. This term, the children have been enthralled by mini-beasts and have become adept at using words and pictures to identify them. Sentences

they were encouraged to write supported their good progress in both reading and writing.

- Mathematics teaching is typically strong across the school. Pupils have good calculation skills and are able to solve mathematical problems effectively. In Year 2, for example, all pupils experienced success as they rounded numbers up and down: planning ensured that all pupils' mathematical skills could be developed during the activities. As a result, pupils made good progress, as the needs of the less able were met by effective support from a teaching assistant. On occasions, pupils' progress slows as not all pupils have activities that meet their needs well enough.
- Pupils typically enjoy writing where they are given tasks that fully interest them and serve to improve the standard of their work. For example, in Year 1 pupils were challenged to find adjectives that described a setting. Typically, they worked well independently and boys were particularly successful as they were keen to find new words. They made good progress in their descriptions and were enthusiastic learners. However, activities are not always boy-friendly and tailored to challenge boys to improve the quality of writing. Consequently, progress slows and they are not encouraged to reach higher standards.
- Pupils make good progress in their learning when they are given a clear understanding of how they can be successful. In Year 6, for example, pupils were given a very clear idea of what they needed to do to write a successful report. The writing task was helpfully modelled with pupils and teacher working together to edit it. Pupils were then encouraged to write and edit their work independently. Pupils' understanding was deepened and they made good, and some outstanding, progress. Where pupils are not given clear guidance on how to improve their work, progress is slower and they do not always reach the standards they could.
- Similarly, pupils respond well to marking especially when they are given clear points for improvement and time to respond to this in the next lesson. Overall, pupils' work is marked diligently, giving praise and also points for improvement. However, it is not always effective in raising standards because pupils are not sometimes given clear guidelines on how to improve and in some classes, they are not given time to respond to comments in marking.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The school has a strong commitment to pupils' personal development. Pupils typically behave well as they move around the school. They are courteous, polite and very welcoming. They are proud of their school, work hard in all subjects and enjoy the many differing activities the school provides.
- Pupils respond well to their teachers in lessons. They have good attitudes to learning and work well together as 'talk partners' when they share ideas and make valuable contributions to discussions. They take pride in all their work and always endeavour to do their best.
- Pupils readily take on responsibility around the school. They work as 'buddies' during playtimes and lunchtimes. They support reading with younger pupils as well as performing a range of other duties to support the school's work. Consequently, behaviour at lunchtimes and playtimes is good and pupils play in harmony.
- The school has good systems in place to manage pupils' behaviour. Teachers are very adept at managing pupils who may have social and emotional difficulties. The school has a very effective 'Rainbow Station' which is used to support the personal, social and emotional development of all pupils, including those who may have difficulties with behaviour. This is used well to ensure the school maintains its calm and purposeful working environment.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance has risen due to rigorous systems that the school has put in place to support it. Attendance is now above average and continuing to rise. This is having a positive impact on pupils' achievement as they spend more time on their learning and make better progress. The school has a well-attended breakfast club that gives pupils a good start to their day.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.

- The school ensures that through its curriculum pupils receive opportunities to manage risk in different situations. They know about keeping safe when using the internet as well the importance of fire and water safety.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare but that when it does happen teachers support them in sorting out the problem. Pupils are aware of different types of bullying. They understand how to cope when harsh words are spoken. The effective 'lock box' informs staff when this has taken place and the incident is resolved swiftly.
- Procedures for protecting pupils from harm are very thorough and parents, pupils and staff confirmed that pupils are, and feel, safe and secure.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher's skilful leadership and management skills have been used effectively to improve the school since it became a primary establishment and the quality of teaching and of pupils' progress is now much better. She is well supported by a capable senior leadership team and a committed team of teachers who are keen to ensure all pupils achieve well.
- Middle leaders at all levels make a good contribution to improving teaching in their subjects and other areas. They rigorously track pupils' progress and observe teaching and scrutinise work in books to enable them to improve pupils' progress. As a result, the teaching of mathematics is strong across the school. Work by the literacy subject leader has already been productive with pupils' reading and writing improving across the school.
- Performance management has been used effectively to improve teaching and to focus on school priorities. Consequently, teaching continues to improve and standards are rising. Where teaching has been weaker the school has taken swift action to provide support. Teachers, whose pupils have made progress which has exceeded expectations, have been appropriately rewarded. Regular meetings between staff and pupils concerning progress have also improved pupils' achievement.
- The school knows itself well and uses regular checks on its progress to improve its performance. These have already been effective in improving attendance, maintaining good performance at Key Stage 1 and strengthening the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics. There are clear plans in place to develop the school further, including identified aspects of writing that need additional improvement.
- The subjects taught across the school foster a love of learning as they provide rich and varied activities that enables pupils to achieve well. It also widens pupils' understanding of the world around and beyond them and raises their aspirations. Sporting activities, which are wide and varied, are enthusiastically enjoyed by pupils. Indeed, the primary school sport funding is used wisely. It has increased pupils' participation in sport as well as increasing teachers' skills in delivering lessons through the use of effective sports coaches.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is underpinned by a commitment to pupils' personal development. Musical and artistic experiences contribute to pupils' spiritual development. During the inspection, the Year 6 steel band's music pervaded the school, bringing joy to all who heard it. The school also has a strong focus on cultural development ensuring pupils have a good understanding of their own and of other cultures.
- The school engages well with parents. 'Parents R Us' workshops are instrumental in developing good relationships with parents to support pupils' learning and progress. The school also has a wide range of other strategies to communicate with parents and keep them well informed.
- A variety of partnerships has been developed to support pupils' learning and teachers' professional development, including ensuring the accuracy of the school's assessments of pupils' performance. The local inclusion support team also provides very good support for attendance and support for pupils with specific needs.
- Child protection and safeguarding arrangements meet current requirements.
- The local authority provides good support to the school through a number of services that the school buys into, including the schools attached adviser.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The highly committed Chair of Governors provides strong leadership to the governing body. He is well supported by a good range of well-trained governors whose skills are used effectively to challenge and support the school.
- They have been instrumental in supporting the school through its period of transition to a primary school. They support the school well in overcoming barriers to learning and have a good understanding of the school's data, as they receive helpful information from the school regarding pupils' progress.
- Governors also ensure that performance management arrangements are used effectively to improve teaching and raise standards. Governors reward teachers appropriately for their work both in and out of the classroom and as middle leaders.
- Governors have a clear idea about the school's strengths and where it needs to improve further. They have systems in place to ensure they check on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. They monitor the impact of the spending of pupil premium funding effectively and, this year, they have managed to accelerate the progress of these pupils and raise their attainment in Year 6.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	122177
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	439776

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	235
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Ellison
Headteacher	Pauline Mulholland
Date of previous school inspection	16 September 2010
Telephone number	01670 822326
Fax number	01670 826810
Email address	admin@station.northumberland.sch.uk

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