

West Denton Primary School

Hillhead Road, West Denton, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear, NE5 1DN

Inspection dates 4–5 December 2013

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		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The school's aim of being 'a stepping stone into the future' is alive in this good and improving school. Staff, pupils and parents alike have positive views of the school, the care and the education it offers.
- Pupils, including the more-able, and those with disabilities or special educational needs make good progress during their time at school.
- Teachers plan lessons well to ensure that the work set helps pupils to learn well, whatever their ability. They use a variety of teaching methods and pupils concentrate hard on their work. This helps them make good progress.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are proud of their school. Strategies, such as 'house points' and 'class of the week trophy' help the pupils focus on developing attributes like empathy, respect and commitment.
- The curriculum is exciting and relevant for pupils. Life skills and learning 'how to learn' are developed through an integrated approach. The school has high expectations of its pupils. These are further developed through a programme of famous speakers, a 'life skills challenge', and links with other schools, among other innovations.
- The leadership of the school is inspirational. Led by an energetic, resilient and committed headteacher, the deputy head, senior leaders and governing body provide outstanding leadership.
- As a result, pupils' progress in mathematics is outstanding, and progress in English is good and improving rapidly and securely. The quality of teaching and the attendance of pupils are improving quickly.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Progress in writing is not as strong as that in mathematics and reading. More-able pupils are not making as much progress in their writing as other pupils do.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 23 lessons or parts of lessons, of which two were observed jointly with the headteacher. The lead inspector observed the headteacher give feedback on the quality of teaching.
- Inspectors observed groups of pupils working with teaching assistants and listened to some pupils from different year groups reading in lessons. They talked to pupils in lessons and looked at work in their books. Inspectors talked to three specific groups of pupils about life at school, and the work they were doing.
- Meetings were held with five members of the governing body, as well as teaching staff, including middle and senior leaders. Discussions were held with a local leader of education, who works to support and challenge the school on behalf of the local authority.
- Inspectors took into account the school's staff questionnaires and recent reports into the opinions of parents, staff and pupils about the school. There were too few responses to the Ofsted on-line survey of parents (Parent View), for an overview to be published.
- Inspectors observed the overall work of the school and looked at a number of documents including the school's data about pupils' current progress. They also studied documents relating to safeguarding, governance, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors also looked at a range of other evidence including school displays, the school website, and evidence representing the school's wider achievements beyond the classroom.

Inspection team

Michael Wardle, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Carol Gater	Additional Inspector
Deborah Wylie	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- West Denton Primary School is a larger than average primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well above average. The pupil premium provides additional funding for children in local authority care, those whose parents are in the forces and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of pupils identified with special educational needs and supported through school action is high.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The number of pupils who start school at times other than the beginning of the year or the beginning of Reception is above average.
- The number of pupils who speak English as an additional language is average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- Since the time of the last inspection a new deputy headteacher has been appointed and a full restructure of the senior team and middle leadership has taken place.
- The school is supported through the work of a local leader of education from Chillingham Road Primary School, Newcastle.
- The school has the following awards, amongst others: Healthy Schools Award; Leading Parent Partnership Award.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further accelerate pupils' progress in writing, in particular for the more-able, by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to respond to advice given to them by teachers and teaching assistants
 - fully embedding the opportunities for writing at length in different subjects
 - ensuring that pupils develop a wider range of vocabulary and linguistic structures when expressing themselves.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils make good progress from their individual starting points in reading and writing. The progress pupils make in mathematics is outstanding. As a result of the progress they make, pupils' attainment was above average in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they left Year 6 in 2013.
- Most children start school with skills that are below those typically expected for their age. In particular, their communication skills and social skills are less strong than is typical. Teachers ensure that activities develop these skills across both Nursery and Reception, and this works well. As a result, they make good progress so that they start Year 1 having made good gains in these areas, particularly in their social skills.
- Pupils make good progress overall in Key Stage 1 so that many reach the standards expected of them. An increasing number reaches standards above those that are expected of them.
- Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 2, and their progress accelerates in Year 6 where teaching is outstanding. The school takes great care so that pupils who start school at other times during the year catch up and also make good progress from their starting points.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. Many make outstanding progress. This is due to lesson-planning which meets their needs and the skilful guidance they receive from support staff.
- Pupils known to be entitled to the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, make good, and often outstanding progress. By the time they leave Year 6, they are almost one term ahead of similar pupils nationally. They reach standards that are just below average in reading, writing and mathematics and the gap between others in the school is closing rapidly.
- Equality of opportunity is central to the work of the school, and the school ensures that a good level of support is given to pupils who speak English as an additional language, so that they make good progress.
- The most-able pupils make good progress overall. Actions taken by the school have led to improvements in the progress they make in writing, but not enough of these pupils are reaching the standards expected of them in this area.
- Pupils enjoy reading. Younger pupils are taught well how to link letters to sounds to help them read unfamiliar words. They develop well as readers, so that in Year 6 many pupils read fluently and with confidence.

The quality of teaching is good

- Most of the teaching observed during the inspection was good, and some outstanding practice was seen.
- Teachers plan lessons well so that they meet the needs of the pupils and spark their enthusiasm. They ask pupils searching questions to get them thinking and to see how much they have understood. They have a good level of subject knowledge and use it effectively to promote pupils' learning and progress.
- Teachers choose exciting activities and topics to inspire them to learn. As a result, pupils are typically highly engaged in lessons and are keen to learn.
- In the very best of lessons there is a real 'buzz' in the classroom and pupils are desperate to make progress. For example, in a Year 6 literacy lesson, fun actions and chants combined with high expectations and a focus on the development of skills led to outstanding progress. In a Year 2 numeracy lesson, an exciting context was used to help focus the pupils on sequences. Here, they needed to crack the code that the naughty elves had used to stop Santa Claus from delivering his presents. This, together with expert planning and teaching, led to full engagement

and excellent progress.

- Not all teaching is as good as this. When developing their writing skills, pupils, in particular the most-able, are sometimes not given enough opportunity to respond to advice given to them by teachers. The writing they produce sometimes does not have a wide enough range of vocabulary or linguistic structures. The chances they are given for writing at length in different subjects are not extensive and have not yet had a strong enough impact on standards. As a result, their progress is good, rather than outstanding.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is also good. Teachers plan well to teach letters and sounds, and how these combine to make words. They generally use space well, and provide a range of learning opportunities. This is particularly the case outside, where the high quality environment is used very well. Children are taught to develop a level of independence and they are comfortable working with other children and adults. Activities are focused so that children make gains in areas of development where they are less strong.
- Teaching assistants are deployed very well and work alongside pupils in lessons, or with small groups of pupils. They provide good, and often outstanding support for pupils, either those most-able who benefit from further stretch and challenge, or for those with special educational needs. They are well-briefed by the class teacher, and contribute strongly to the progress pupils make at school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour in and around school is excellent. Pupils say that they enjoy coming to school to work and spend time with their friends. In lessons they are eager to learn and participate well in group work and whole-class activities. In Nursery and Reception, children take turns and treat each other kindly. This is having a positive impact on how well they do at school.
- Pupils show respect and are courteous to each other and to other adults. They are proud of their school. As a result, the school rarely excludes pupils. Behaviour at playtime is excellent, and a 'buddy' system ensures that pupils who do not have anyone to spend time with are included in games.
- Pupils say that there is no bullying and that they know that staff will help sort out any problems they may have. They have a good understanding about different forms of bullying, including on the Internet.
- The school has developed a variety of programmes to help pupils focus on improving their behaviour and level of focus in class. The systematic use of strategies such as 'house points' and 'class of the week trophy' is supporting this. In addition, a focus on developing cycling skills, culminating in a lengthy bike ride and residential helps pupils to 'buy-in' to the vision of the school in developing life skills. Pupils talked animatedly about this. Primary School Sport Funding is being used to develop this, and other programmes, which is having a very positive impact on both the health of the pupils, and their commitment to life at school.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe and say they feel very safe in school.
- Pupils say that they enjoy the range of out-of-school activities that the school provides.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school, and helps pupils to appreciate other cultures and ways of life. As a result, pupils relate well to each other, whatever their background.
- The school has a range of rigorous systems to monitor attendance and strategies to support regular attendance. The Parental Support Advisor plays a central role in this aspect of the life of the school. As a result of these strategies, and pupils enjoying school, pupils' attendance is improving, and pupils arrive to school and lessons on time.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The leadership of the school is inspirational. The dynamic headteacher, together with the deputy headteacher, phase leaders and governing body provide outstanding leadership for the school. Everyone wants to do their best in the school. As a result, the quality of teaching, the progress of pupils and levels of attendance are at least good or rapidly improving.
- The school's procedures for gaining an accurate view of its performance are excellent. Plans implemented as a result are focused and effective. In particular, procedures for checking the progress of pupils are exemplary. Staff then know which pupils are in danger of falling behind, and extra help is given to these pupils.
- Senior leaders have used performance management and the appraisal process successfully to challenge areas of underperformance. As a result, teachers currently at school meet the Teachers' Standards comfortably. Training provided for teachers to help them continue developing their skills is linked directly to performance management. This is having a striking impact on the quality of teaching.
- The school is committed to working with parents, so that they are supportive of the school and the progress of their children. A wide variety of events is in place to support parents. During the inspection, parents were working with children in the Nursery on Christmas activities, such as decorating angels and icing biscuits. As a result of the work the school has been doing with parents, it has achieved the Leading Parent Partnership Award.
- The curriculum is outstanding. A wide variety of exciting approaches and themes is helping to spark a love of learning amongst the pupils. A 'life skills' program, including first aid, positive thinking, and endurance through bike riding, focuses the pupils on wider achievement and personal development. Themes in class help develop empathy and respect through a cross-curricular approach and have a positive impact on standards and other skills such as teamwork. The recent work linked to the Royal British Legion was mentioned by many pupils.
- The wider curriculum has the explicit aim of raising aspirations for all of the pupils. Visits from high profile speakers, visits to high-attaining schools at the weekend, all focus on future careers and engagement in 'big questions' and philosophy.
- The school promotes the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils well though the curriculum and this includes the teaching of Spanish.
- The capacity of the school to make further improvements is excellent, due, in part, to the track record that school leaders now have in improving provision.
- The local authority ensures that the school is given the support it needs through a light touch approach. A local leader of education gives advice and support to the leadership team and the governing body, and this has also helped the school improve.
- Procedures to ensure that pupils are safe at school are robust and meet requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are aware of the strengths and areas for improvement for the school, including the quality of teaching. They are, therefore, able to challenge the headteacher and senior team so that improvements continue at a pace. They understand the link between pay and performance and use appraisal well to ensure that performance continues to improve. Finances are managed effectively, and governors are aware of the impact of the Pupil Premium and Primary School Sport Funding. Governors are fully involved in the life of the school, and through meetings, discussions with staff and pupils and scrutiny of documentation, ensure that they have a good knowledge of the school. They appreciate the need to check their own performance too, and have strategies to evaluate and improve their effectiveness as governors.

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	108449
Local authority	Newcastle Upon Tyne
Inspection number	433164

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	318
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Joe Gallant
Headteacher	Mick MingStones
Date of previous school inspection	13 January 2011
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