

Wessington Primary School

Lanercost, Washington, Tyne and Wear, NE38 7PY

Inspection dates 26–27 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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 highly effective leadership of the headteacher, supported by determined leaders at other levels have secured major improvements in a relatively short period of time, including to pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching.
- Governors are highly ambitious for the school to improve further and are very effective in holding the school to account. They know the school very well and bring a wide range of skills which they use to good effect.
- Pupils' achievement is good. From their very low starting points they make good progress throughout their time in school. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is above average in mathematics and average in English.
- Children get off to a very good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and achieve well.
- The quality of teaching is good and some is outstanding. Teachers have a good understanding of what pupils need to learn and carefully plan interesting lessons.
- Behaviour is very good. Pupils enjoy their learning and are eager to do their best. They say that they feel very safe in school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Pupils are unfailingly polite and courteous at all times. They take on responsibilities willingly and carry out their duties conscientiously.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all of the teaching is as good as the best yet. In some lessons time for learning is not always used well.
- Although teachers mark pupils' work diligently, especially in English and mathematics, the marking of grammar, punctuation and spelling in other subjects is not of the same high quality.
- Pupils' achievement in grammar, punctuation and spelling is not as strong as it is in reading, writing and mathematics because sometimes teachers do not insist on the same high standards across all subjects.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons, one of which was a joint observation with the headteacher. They observed small-group and one-to-one interventions in reading. They listened to pupils read in Year 2.
- Inspectors took account of 23 questionnaires completed by the staff. There were insufficient responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View) to be published but inspectors took account of parent-consultation slips completed during the inspection.
- They held meetings with pupils in Year 6 and talked informally with pupils at lunchtimes and break times. Inspectors also talked to three members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. They also held discussions with senior leaders as well as leaders with other responsibilities, including the leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage and the special educational needs coordinator.
- Inspectors observed the school at work and looked at a range of documentation including internal and external information relating to pupils' progress, their workbooks, school-improvement planning and the school's procedures for gaining an accurate view of its own performance. They also considered reports written by the local authority, documents relating to the management of teachers' performance, minutes of the governing body meetings and safeguarding and child-protection documents.

Inspection team

Peter Eeva, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

James Hannah

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is much larger than average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is much larger than average and makes up approximately half the school. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- A number of children join or leave the school at times other than the start of the school year and some rejoin and leave on more than one occasion.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
 - making sure that pupils are able to use as much time as possible in lessons for learning and that, for example, any instructions given or packing away are undertaken more briskly
 - ensuring that the quality of the marking of grammar, punctuation and spelling is of the same high quality in all subjects.
- Raise the standard of pupils' grammar, punctuation and spelling by having consistently high expectations in all subjects, especially for spelling.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge that are very low. They make rapid progress in their knowledge, understanding and skills so that, by the end of Key Stage 2, they reach standards in mathematics that are above average, and average in English. Attainment in grammar, spelling and punctuation is below average.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage settle in very quickly and get off to an excellent start, as a result of the very caring environment, high-quality teaching and the detailed knowledge that all the adults have of individual children's needs. As a result they make very good progress from their very low starting points.
- Programmes to help develop pupils' reading skills help younger ones make a good start to learning to read. Year 2 pupils read accurately and can decode new and difficult words with some confidence. This good start is built on as they move through the school so that by the end of Year 6 pupils read well.
- Pupils write with imagination and use their developing skills in their topic work. They can adapt their writing styles to suit a range of audiences and purposes but the accuracy of their spelling in subjects other than literacy is not as high as it is in their literacy work.
- Pupils' mathematical skills and understanding are good. They develop a sound foundation of basic skills early in their school life which are then systematically built on through their time in school.
- A good number of Year 6 pupils are working at a high level in English and mathematics and some at the very high Level 6.
- The school's own data shows that pupils throughout the school are making rapid progress and the pupils currently in Years 2 and 6 are on track to reach above-average standards in English and mathematics at the end of the year.
- The progress and attainment of pupils who are eligible for free school meals and supported by the pupil premium achieve as well as others in the school. School data shows that there are no gaps in attainment in English and mathematics between eligible pupils and their peers. This is because of the good quality of the extra help provided for them such as learning in smaller groups.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is very closely checked and reviewed regularly. Carefully planned support, which closely matches individual pupils' needs, makes sure that these pupils make progress that is similar to that of others.
- The most-able pupils make similar very good progress to reach standards that are above average in English and mathematics.
- Equality of opportunity is central to the work of the school and the school is very successful in removing any barriers to learning so that there are no differences in the achievement of different groups of pupils in the school.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is good and some of it is outstanding in the impact it has on pupils' progress and attainment over time. The school's own records and other evidence examined during the inspection shows that good or better teaching is the norm.
- Teachers plan very interesting lessons which give pupils opportunities to make rapid progress. In a Year 5 lesson pupils animatedly discussed possible meanings of the word amulet and why a wolf's fang would be a good luck charm, before analysing a poem.
- Teaching assistants play a very important role in helping some pupils to learn. They have a very detailed knowledge of what support individual pupils need in order to learn. They use this information very well and intervene effectively to help pupils overcome any difficulties which

might slow their learning.

- Pupils read widely and often and make good use of the well-stocked library. They say that they enjoy reading, both in school and at home.
- Teachers have high expectations of what pupils are capable of and challenge all pupils to achieve as well as they can in English and mathematics. Pupils respond to the challenge and willingly respond by trying their hardest. These very high expectations are not always mirrored in other subjects, particularly in the accuracy of grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- The marking of pupils work and the feedback given to pupils about how to improve their work is of a high order in their English and mathematics work and pupils routinely respond to suggestions for improvement. However, the quality of marking is not as meticulous in other subjects, especially in the attention given to spelling words correctly.
- Adults and pupils have created very positive relationships and the well-established routines mean that lessons can proceed without interruption. However, in some lessons, not all the time available is used for learning, for example, when teachers give overly long instructions to all pupils or when packing away before break time and lunch time. As a result the rate of progress sometimes slows.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is very good in class and often exemplary out of class and when on visits. Pupils are always polite and courteous and welcome visitors warmly. Pupils are proud of their school and eager to talk about it.
- Pupils are enthusiastic learners and throw themselves energetically into all they do. They listen carefully to their teachers and other adults and show a real interest in what they are learning. As a result lessons proceed without any interruptions and the school is calm and orderly at all times.
- All staff have the same very high expectations of pupils' behaviour and set excellent examples for pupils to follow. Older pupils provide very good role models for younger pupils to follow.
- Pupils contribute fully to all aspects of school life. They willingly take on roles of responsibility such as being buddies at lunch and break times. They take these responsibilities very seriously and are conscientious in carrying out their duties.
- Pupils feel very safe in school. They say that bullying in any form is very rare. They know how to keep themselves safe, especially when using the internet.
- Attendance is typically above average and the school has thorough systems for checking on, and following up, any absences. Pupils are eager to come to school, even when not feeling at their best. A small number of pupils who join and then leave the school other than at the usual times do have an impact on the overall figures for attendance.
- Pupils have a wide range of after-school and lunchtime activities and clubs which they appreciate including the Knitty, Natty Nanas and the Gentoo Gents who both provide rich opportunities for pupils to learn outside the classroom.
- The school is using some of its primary school sports funding to extend extra-curricular sports activities and to make the teaching of physical education more effective. This is having a positive impact on pupils' physical well-being. Pupils enjoy their physical education lessons and participation in sports out of lessons is high.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The highly effective headteacher, supported by leaders at all levels, including middle leaders, has skilfully led the school. Senior leaders know the school extremely well and provide excellent leadership and management. They, together with the equally effective and determined governing body, and with the support of all the staff, demonstrate determination and commitment for further improvement. They have improved the achievement of pupils and the

quality of teaching since the relatively recent previous inspection and continue to strive for further improvements.

- Systems and procedures for checking on pupils' progress throughout the school are highly effective and, as a result, pupils who are at risk of falling behind are very quickly identified and given the extra help they need, in small groups or individually, to help them catch up.
- There are very thorough systems for checking on the quality of teaching and learning and these provide accurate information about teachers' performance to make sure that teaching continues to improve. The information is used extremely well to identify and share the very best practice across all areas and to advise the governing body about teachers' pay awards.
- The curriculum has been successfully developed so that it meets the needs and interests of all pupils. Boys in particular enjoy topics such as the Second World War and glass making in Sunderland.
- The development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very important to the school. As a result pupils' personal development is highly effective and pupils develop into very confident, independent and aspirational learners who are very well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- Safeguarding and child-protection policies and practice meet current requirements.
- The local authority has provided a very light touch support in the past.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is highly effective and determined to help the school to improve even further. They have an in-depth knowledge of the school and keep themselves very well-informed about all aspects of school life, in particular about the achievement of pupils and the quality of teaching. They monitor the school's performance closely and systematically and ask challenging questions to promote further development. Governors bring a range of skills which they use to excellent effect in carrying out their roles. They are highly ambitious for the achievement and welfare of the pupils. Governors are familiar with the Teachers' Standards and use them to help manage teachers' performance and award pay increases for good teaching. They oversee the spending of pupil premium funding and are well-aware of the very positive impact this is having on pupils' achievement. They are also involved in planning the spending of the primary school sport funding and how its impact on the physical well-being of pupils will be measured.

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	134532
Local authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	425857

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	220
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael Potter
Headteacher	Anne High
Date of previous school inspection	13 September 2011
Telephone number	0191 2193715
Fax number	0191 2193718
Email address	anne.high@schools.sunderland.gov.uk

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