

Bellingham First School

Redesmouth Road, Hexham, Northumberland, NE48 2EL

Inspection dates 20–21 March 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		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- A stimulating and caring classroom enables children to make a good start to their time in school. They make good progress due to creative teaching that inspires them to settle into learning well.
- They make good progress across the school to leave Year 4 with attainment that is typically above what you would expect for their age.
- Teaching assistants provide good support in and out of lessons particularly for those who are disabled or have a special educational need.
- The school's curriculum provides a range of activities that promotes pupils' learning. A wide range of activities with good links across a range of subjects motivates them to learn well.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe in a range of contexts. They love coming to school and are keen to participate in learning.
- The headteacher's determined leadership, well supported by a committed staff and governors, ensures good teaching and that pupils achieve well.
- The school checks on pupils' progress and the quality of teaching regularly and as a result, both are continuing to improve.
- Governors provide good challenge and support and are ambitious for the school and the opportunities that the new federation presents.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet outstanding as teachers do not consistently mark work sufficiently well or ensure pupils know how to be successful in lessons.
- Teachers do not always have high enough expectations of pupils' handwriting and presentation skills.
- Standards in mathematics in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 are not high enough. Teachers' subject knowledge does not help pupils' mathematical understanding or enable them to solve problems.
- In the Reception class, children's progress in mathematics is not good as they do not have enough opportunities to record calculations.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 12 lessons or parts of lessons of which three were joint observations with the headteacher. He observed groups of pupils working with teaching assistants and specifically listened to Year 1 and 2 pupils read.
- The inspector talked to a range of pupils, including some of the school council, about their work and play in the school.
- Meetings were held with three governors as well as teaching staff, including subject leaders and the headteacher and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector took account of 11 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) when planning the inspection and examined staff questionnaires. He took account of conversations with parents and letters written by parents.
- The inspector observed the overall work of the school and looked at a number of documents including the school's current data about pupils' progress. He looked at documents relating to safeguarding, governance, behaviour and attendance as well as a range of other evidence including displays, the website and work representing the school's wider achievements beyond the classroom.

Inspection team

David Shearsmith, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller in size than an average-sized primary school. Pupils leave at the end of Year 4 to attend middle school.
- A below average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium which is additional funding for those pupils eligible for free school meals, children in the care of the local authority and children of service families.
- A below average proportion of pupils are supported at school action. An above average proportion of pupils are supported at school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The school has achieved the National Healthy School and Basic Skills awards.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is taught in a Reception class.
- The school federated with the adjoining middle school in September 2012 and they now share the same governing body.
- Separate childcare provision shares the school site. This is not managed by the governing body and is subject to a separate inspection. The report may be found on the Ofsted website.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in mathematics in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 by:
 - improving teachers' subject knowledge so that they can more effectively extend pupils' mathematical thinking and vocabulary
 - giving more opportunities for investigations and problem solving to challenge pupils to reach higher levels in their work
 - ensuring children in the Reception class have more opportunities to record their work in mathematics, particularly calculations.
- Improve all teaching so that it is outstanding by:
 - ensuring pupils know how to be successful in their lesson so they independently check on their own learning and make faster progress
 - making sure teachers' marking guides pupils in how to do better and that pupils have the chance and time to put this guidance into practice
 - raising teachers' expectations of pupils' handwriting and presentation skills so pupils are more efficient in recording in mathematics and more fluent in their writing.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils achieve well because the school sets challenging targets and checks on pupils' progress regularly. Consequently, pupils make good progress across the school. Teachers know their pupils well and are able to meet their needs through well-structured activities.
- Children enter the school with skills that are typical for their age, although this can vary from year to year in this small school. Some children enter with literacy skills that are lower than would be expected and often take time to catch up. The school's specialist teaching to support those with speaking and listening difficulties has a positive impact on those children's progress.
- Children make good progress across the Early Years Foundation Stage. They have some weaknesses in their mathematical skills. There are not enough opportunities for them to record their mathematical thinking to help them have a better understanding of how to calculate on paper.
- Pupils make good progress across Key Stage 1. As a result of improvements to the quality of teaching in this key stage and stability in staffing, declining standards in Key Stage 1 have been reversed. They are improving rapidly and pupils are on track to reach standards that are just above average. Standards in mathematics are relatively lower than in reading and writing.
- Progress across Key Stage 2 has been typically good over time. At the end of Year 4, pupils' attainment is typically above that expected for their age. Good teaching and support for pupils who were falling behind are helping them make up ground lost in Key Stage 1.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, including those at school action plus and with a statement of special educational needs, attain standards similar to pupils with these needs across the country. They make good progress from their starting points due to effective support from teaching assistants.
- A very small number of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium. They are now making good progress due to better teaching and support from teaching assistants. While the standard of their work tends to be lower than that of other pupils in the school, it is getting better.
- Standards in reading and writing have rapidly improved and are now above average. The school has implemented a new systematic approach to teaching reading and writing that is having a very positive impact on pupils' progress. Pupils' skills in reading and writing are accelerating and progress is good and sometimes better.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good overall. Teachers plan lessons that engage pupils and meet their needs through well-planned activities. Pupils respond well in lessons due to teachers' skilled questioning and the praise they receive for good learning.
- Pupils are often fascinated by the activities designed by their teachers. In a lesson in the Reception class, children were taken on a dinosaur hunt. Through this, they developed a good knowledge and understanding of the world around them. The teacher also had challenges around the classroom to extend pupils' thinking. As a result, they made at least good progress.
- The teaching of mathematics is generally good in Key Stage 2. This is not the case in Key Stage 1 where there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to be involved in mathematical investigations and teachers' subject knowledge is less strong.
- The inspector saw pupils in Key Stage 2 challenged to tackle mathematical problems. In a Year 3 and 4 lesson, they were asked to investigate time. They made outstanding progress as the teacher ensured pupils knew how to be successful during the lesson. Thus, they could independently check their own learning. This effective practice is not always the case. Pupils do not always know how to be successful in all their lessons or how to check their own progress.
- Reading is taught well across the school as the school has adopted a very systematic approach

to teaching sounds that letters make (phonics). In a series of small group lessons, staff delivered effective sessions that enabled pupils to make good progress in their reading and writing.

- Some teachers have high expectations of pupils' handwriting and presentation. In a lesson in a Year 3 and 4 class, the teacher had higher expectations of pupils' writing and presentation skills. As a result, pupils were proud of their work and made better progress. In other lessons teachers' expectations of presentation are not high enough resulting in handwriting that is not fluent and mathematics work in exercise books that is not sufficiently accurate. Consequently, pupils do not achieve as well as they could.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and this does improve their understanding. However, marking does not always take pupils to the next level in their understanding because teachers' comments are not always clearly helpful and pupils are not given time to improve.
- Teaching assistants provide good support to pupils. In lessons they work with groups and individuals depending on pupils' needs. They are particularly effective at supporting pupils who are disabled or have a special educational need as work is carefully tailored to meet their needs.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well in this harmonious school. They are courteous and well mannered and get on extremely well both in and out of class.
- The school is successful in developing pupils' personal skills. It is a close-knit community where everyone works cooperatively. Some parents were complimentary at how well the school makes extra efforts to support their child's personal development.
- Pupils learn well in lessons. However, occasionally a lack of maturity and too much dependency on adults mean they are not always sufficiently independent in their learning.
- Pupils were adamant that there was no bullying in school. They were confident that staff would help them solve any problems that might occur. The school ensures pupils know about different forms of bullying through its curriculum and assemblies.
- Pupils were knowledgeable about keeping safe, including water and fire safety. Although they were aware of keeping safe on the internet at school, they were less knowledgeable about e-safety overall.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and contributes well to pupils' personal development. They are given a range of opportunities to experience other cultures which in turn enables them to respect others.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance is average. A mother commented that her child is desperate to come to school in the morning because of the rich experiences her child is offered. The whole school had a 'French Café day' which thoroughly engaged pupils in their learning and made them keen to come to school.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher's determined leadership and effective checking of pupils' progress has taken the school to the next level. She is well supported by all the staff in the school. They are determined that pupils will make good or better progress in their learning. The school has been effective in improving the Early Years Foundation Stage and the teaching of reading at Key Stage 1 which shows its good capacity to improve.
- Checks on the quality of teaching are frequent. There is a focus on supporting teachers to improve. Staff are rewarded appropriately based on their performance in the classroom and as leaders of particular subject areas. Pupils' work in books is checked regularly. The school knows itself well and acknowledges its strengths. It recognises the areas for development and these have helped formulate very clear plans to secure its further improvement.
- The school has a curriculum that enables pupils to enjoy their learning but also meets their needs. Pupils were keen to share the variety of activities they can participate in after school. The

school has developed good opportunities for pupils to write for a purpose in other subjects and this contributes to their good progress in writing.

- The school promotes pupils' spiritual social, moral and cultural development well. An assembly by a local Rector, during the inspection, provided pupils with a good understanding of the meaning of the Easter story. The lighting of a candle during the talk promoted a calm atmosphere and enabled pupils to reflect on what they had been told.
- The school engages well with parents and provides regular opportunities to meet with them. Parents are provided with information about the school through newsletters and the school's website.
- The school uses its partnerships and links with other schools, including the adjacent middle school, to support pupils' learning. This was seen to good effect during the inspection where French was being taught across the school by a middle school teacher. Partnerships with other agencies support pupils with specific needs well.
- The local authority has recently provided effective support to this improving school.
- The school has good arrangements regarding pupils' welfare and safety and safeguarding meets requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The newly established federated governing body has provided new impetus to the governance of the school. Governors challenge the school to continue to improve and are supportive in helping to achieve this. They know the school well as they understand the quality of teaching and look at pupils' work. They also have a good understanding of the school's data and are well trained regarding safeguarding. They manage the school's resources well and recognise how the pupil premium has been spent and the difference it has made to some pupils' achievement. They have ensured that teachers are appropriately rewarded according to their performance in the classroom and for how they perform their leadership role in the school.

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	122183
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	402086

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	53
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Trish Taylor
Headteacher	Wendy Goddard
Date of previous school inspection	13 October 2009
Telephone number	01434 220230
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