

Herdley Bank Church of England First School

Coanwood, Haltwhistle, Northumberland, NE49 0QT

Inspection dates 18 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	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.

- Pupils' personal and academic achievements are good because the staff know and cater exceptionally well for each individual pupil's needs.
- Pupils' progress in reading and writing has recently improved from good to outstanding because of the new ways in which the staff are teaching and organising the pupils' learning.
- Teaching is good because the teaching staff provide very structured lessons, particularly in reading and writing, which cater well for the large age range and the very wide ability range in each class.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. A tiny minority have challenging behaviour which is exceptionally well managed by the teaching staff.
- The very dedicated team of staff and the governors ensure that this school meets the needs of all of its pupils and has the drive to make it even better. The staff and pupils are greatly benefiting from the school's federation with another two schools.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although pupils' progress in mathematics is good, it is not as good as progress in reading and writing.
- Leaders do not extract the data on progress relating to different groups of pupils from the school's robust analysis of individual pupils' progress. Consequently, leaders are not always crystal clear as to the specific needs relating to those groups.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed six lessons and made a number of short visits to other lessons. They heard pupils read and looked at the work in their books.
- Meetings were held with different groups of people involved in the school. These included pupils, members of the governing body, the headteacher and the teaching and administrative staff in the school.
- Inspectors could not take into account the seven responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) because the number was too low to get a print out. The inspectors, however, took into account the school's most recent parent survey.
- Inspectors looked at the work of the school and a number of documents including the school's data on pupils' current progress, documents relating to planning for improvement and procedures for checking the quality of teaching, documents relating to safeguarding and records relating to behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Barbara Hudson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Benjamin Harding

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a much smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The school is federated with Greenhead Church of England First School and Henshaw Church of England First School. The headteacher is executive headteacher for all three schools.
- The school also works in close partnership with West Tyne Church Schools.
- All pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement for special educational needs is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium is well below average. (Pupil premium is additional funding for those who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those that are looked after.)
- The school has achieved numerous awards including the International Award, the Basic Skills Quality Mark, Healthy School accreditation and Activemark.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress in mathematics even further by:
 - increasing the frequency by which pupils' work is scrutinised so as to develop a more consistent approach to teaching mathematics across the school
 - improving the marking of pupils' work so that they know and understand what they do well and what they need to do next to improve their work
 - ensuring pupils have more opportunities to apply their mathematical knowledge through problem-solving activities in mathematics lessons and in other subjects.
- Apply the robust way in which the school tracks individual pupils' progress to class groups; to groups that are all boys and those that are all girls; and to those pupils with special educational needs to see if there are any patterns that will enable successes to be celebrated and areas for improvement to be even more focused.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- This school caters exceptionally well for the wide range of differing abilities and backgrounds ensuring that all pupils make good progress from their individual starting points.
- As a result of the very small numbers in each year group and pupils' differing abilities, standards fluctuate year-on-year. Overall, when children enter the Reception Year, they have skills that are expected for their age. They make good progress across the school and when they leave the school at the end of Year 4 most pupils are attaining the expected level for their age and many are exceeding this.
- Recently, pupils' progress has improved from good to outstanding in reading and writing because of the school's new approach to teaching and organising the groups of pupils. The focus on a step by step approach to teaching pupils letters and sounds to help them read and write unfamiliar words, together with the correction of pupils' grammar when writing sentences are the contributory factors to this improvement.
- In mathematics, pupils make good rather than outstanding progress. The staff acknowledge the difference between pupils' progress in English and that in mathematics and have already highlighted mathematics as an area for improvement next academic year.
- Pupils supported by school action and school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs make good progress from their individual starting points. The teaching staff provide work and care that is exceptionally well tailored to pupils' individual needs.
- The pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium, including those eligible for free school meals make good progress. The funds allocated to the school are used well to provide additional resources. Although there are very few pupils eligible, the school's data indicate that their progress is similar to their peers.
- Parents are very appreciative of the progress their children make. They are particularly pleased with the confidence that pupils gain from 'Monday' activities. That is the time when the pupils are joined by those from the other two schools in the federation and those with the West Tyne Church Schools. Parents feel that this particularly helps the older pupils when they leave this school and move to their middle school.

The quality of teaching is good

- There are many strengths in the good teaching. In particular, the excellent relationships between the teaching staff and the pupils, the way teachers organise lessons so that every pupil has work that is well matched to their ability and the way in which teaching staff manage the challenging behaviour of a small minority of pupils so that other pupils' work is not disrupted.
- In the very best lessons, the questions that teachers ask the pupils are very searching with the objective of seeing how much has been understood. The explanations and instructions are succinct and explicit, which means that pupils can quickly get on with their work. An excellent example was observed when a group of Reception, Year 1 and 2 pupils were reading and seeking to understand simple sentences. The pupils applied their knowledge of letters and the sounds they make exceptionally well and the teacher's careful questioning ensured that pupils understood what they were reading.
- The teaching of reading and writing is very structured and this ensures that all pupils make good progress. However, in mathematics teachers do not provide the same structure and consistency of methods across the school. Also, pupils are not given sufficient time to use their knowledge and practise their skills through solving problems in mathematic lessons and in other subjects.
- Teachers' marking of pupils' work requires improvement, particularly in mathematics. It informs pupils whether their work is correct or incorrect. It does not explain what pupils do well nor does it provide them with advice as to what they need to do next.
- Pupils say they enjoy their lessons very much because they are interesting and the work that

they are given to do is usually set at just the right level, not too hard and not too easy.

- Parents are very appreciative of the good quality teaching that their children receive.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are very welcoming, friendly and happy. They say that they feel exceedingly safe in school and are very appreciative of the support they receive from the teaching staff and each other. Pupils say that if bullying occurs it is very quickly sorted by the staff. They very much appreciate the work the staff do to help them keep safe on their computers and in the local community.
- Pupils say that they enjoy school very much; however, their attendance is below average. The first reason for this is that the school is quite remote and in very poor weather pupils are unable to attend because they cannot get there. Another reason is the number of families who take holidays in school time, even though the school discourages this. The school's hard work to ensure pupils attend school regularly is having a positive impact.
- In lessons, pupils show that they are keen and motivated to learn. Their excellent cooperation skills enable them to work together in many different-sized groups. They show great respect to one another and to all adults.
- The teaching staff are very adept at ensuring pupils have high standards of behaviour. Those pupils who have challenging behaviour are managed exceptionally well by the teaching staff. They ensure that these pupils are included in all activities and that other pupils are not disrupted.
- Parents say that they know their children are happy in school, and that they feel very safe and the school makes sure that they are well behaved.

The leadership and management are good

- Dedicated leadership by the headteacher has developed a strong team of staff and governors who work well together to get the best that they can for each individual pupil in their care. The strong links with parents, the church and the local community contribute to a sense of community for the pupils and to their enjoyment of school.
- The foresight of the headteacher has ensured that pupils and staff are benefiting from working with the other two schools in the federation. Pupils benefit because they have more social interaction with other children. Staff benefit from sharing their good practice with the other schools and picking up ideas for improvements. An excellent example of the benefits of the partnership is the way in which the staff have taken part in joint training for reading and writing and this has been rewarded with pupils' progress increasing rapidly in this school. A similar approach is planned for mathematics next academic year. There are also financial benefits.
- The school places children at the centre of its work. The staff are vigilant when applying the school's safeguarding policies, which meet statutory requirements. They are very careful to ensure that each individual child, whatever their ability or background, has equal opportunity for success and no one is discriminated against.
- The rigorous checks on the quality of lessons and effective feedback help the teaching staff to improve their skills further. The checks on evaluating the work in pupils' books are less rigorous, and this has led to the lack of consistency in the approach to teaching mathematics not being identified quickly enough. The school's system of performance management contributes fully to the improvement of teaching and pupils' progress.
- The leaders' procedures for gaining an accurate view of the school's performance and the plans for future developments are good. However, they do not use the data that they have on pupils' progress rigorously enough to make the targets for future improvements even more specific and measurable. Similarly, they lack knowledge on how specific groups such as boys and girls perform in relation to one another.
- The school's curriculum has benefited from planning with their partner schools and also from

links with the local community such as the Haltwhistle Film Project. The school's involvement with a provider of working partnerships with people such as artists and musicians enhances the curriculum and pupils' enjoyment. The school also has close links with the National Parks and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. The school staff provide a number of thriving after-school clubs such as the gardening and art club.

- The school provides pupils with many excellent opportunities to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. A strength in this area is the way in which this school ensures that pupils are aware of multicultural Britain through visits to towns and cities, including London, and visitors to the school and lessons about other cultures.
- Parents are very supportive of the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and about pupil progress, the quality of teaching and arrangements for managing the performance of staff. This is because the headteacher provides governors with detailed information. They are prudent financial managers, and ensure that pupil premium funding is used to good effect. The governing body is supportive and also challenging. The way the governing body works has adapted well to the federation. It is very effective in fulfilling its duties and responsibilities.

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	128090
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	413332

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

Type of school	First
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	21
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alan Sharp
Headteacher	Judith Reay
Date of previous school inspection	15 June 2010
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