

Front Street Community Primary School

Front Street, Whickham, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear, NE16 4AD

Inspection dates 21–22 November 2012

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		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The school motto 'everyone has the right to learn, to be safe, and to be treated with respect' is alive in every area of school life.
- Pupils achieve very well at school. They make good progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics. Last year, pupils exceeded the nationally expected standards in their tests, due in part to outstanding provision in Years 5 and 6.
- Children do well in the Early Years Foundation Stage because teachers plan their lessons to make sure that all children have access to exciting and stimulating activities that get the best out of them.
- The quality of teaching is good. Some is outstanding. The work teachers set helps pupils to learn well, whatever their ability. Teachers mark work in a way that helps pupils do better next time.
- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is outstanding. Pupils' attitudes to learning are exemplary, and this supports their good progress. They are courteous and polite, both with each other, and with adults. They have a keen understanding of how to stay safe.
- The new headteacher has had a profound impact on the school. Her high ambitions and clear view of how successful the school can be have resulted in rapid improvement in how quickly the pupils learn. The quality of teaching has also improved. She is an excellent role model for other senior staff to help them further develop their skills.
- Systems to check the quality of teaching and pupils' progress are excellent. The plans put in place as a result of the findings are precise and effective. As a result, the school is improving rapidly.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching gives pupils the chance to work things out for themselves.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to improve their writing skills by practising them in different subjects.
- Improvements have not gone on for long enough to ensure that pupils make outstanding progress in all year groups.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors had meetings with senior staff, groups of pupils, members of the governing body, and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors looked at a range of evidence including: the school's improvement plan; the school's own evaluation of its work; the school's data for tracking pupils' progress; the work pupils were doing in their books; and the school's documentation relating to safeguarding.
- The inspectors observed teaching in 24 lessons and listened to pupils read from different year groups. They observed assemblies, playtime, parts of lessons and small-group work.
- The headteacher conducted joint observations with the inspectors. The inspectors also observed her reporting back to teachers on the quality of learning and pupils' achievement in lessons.
- The inspectors took into account the responses to the school's own surveys. There were 46 responses from parents to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). Inspectors also took into account responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Michael Wardle, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Barbara Waugh	Additional Inspector
John Pattinson	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an above average size primary school.
- An average proportion of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of pupils identified with special educational needs through school action is slightly below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also slightly below average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is average.
- In 2012, the school exceeded 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 previous inspection the school has appointed a new headteacher.
- The school has achieved the following awards: the ACT citizenship quality standard, Investors in People, and the International Schools Award (intermediate level).

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen teaching further so that all pupils make outstanding, rather than good progress by:
 - giving pupils more opportunities to write at length and to practise their writing in different subjects
 - increasing the chances pupils have to think for themselves and to discover new ideas
 - ensure that consistency of teaching in Year 3 and Year 4 is as good as that seen in Years 5 and 6
 - helping pupils to understand different methods of calculation in order to support their problem-solving skills in mathematics.
- Strengthen the impact of the leaders of the school by:
 - providing more opportunities for leaders at all levels to take full responsibility for key areas of school life
 - ensuring that recent improvements continue, in particular the way in which the quality of teaching and pupils' progress is monitored, and that these lead to outstanding progress in all year groups.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Almost all parents rightly regard their children as making good progress and lesson observations during the inspection confirm this. Pupils' attainment was above average in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they left Year 6 in 2012.
- Teachers and teaching assistants know the individual needs of the pupils in their groups. As a result, pupils with special educational needs and those with disabilities make good progress due to teaching which meets their needs.
- 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 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.
- Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 1. Teacher assessment in Year 2 confirms that pupils reach standards that are at least broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. In the past, boys and pupils with special educational needs made slower progress than that of other groups of pupils. Teachers have focussed their planning and activities on these pupils with the result that the gap between these pupils and others has reduced, and their achievement is now good.
- Progress slows in Years 3 and 4. In Years 5 and 6 pupils' progress accelerates due to outstanding teaching, so that over the course of the time they are in school, pupils make good progress from their starting points. Current Year 6 pupils are making good progress, although their starting points are lower than those for Year 6 in 2012.
- Excellent systems are in place to track the progress of pupils, and the school ensures that where there are any gaps in knowledge, these are dealt with by way of extra work or intervention groups. The school responds quickly when improvements can be made. For example, in mathematics, pupils are not always sure about different ways of working with numbers, and this forms part of the annual improvement plan.
- The progress of pupils supported by the pupil premium is good when compared with the progress of similar pupils nationally.
- 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. Some of these readers become 'buddies' and help younger pupils with their reading too.

The quality of teaching is good

- Most of the teaching observed during the inspection was good, and some outstanding practice was seen. Inspectors agree with the overwhelming majority of parents who say that teaching is good.
- Teachers plan lessons to make sure that all pupils are given work that gets the best out of them. Pupils learn quickly due to a range of different teaching methods used in classrooms. Marking is good and helps pupils to know how well they are doing and how to improve. Teachers ask searching questions to get pupils thinking, and to see how much they have understood.
- In the very best of lessons, pupils buzz with excitement and are completely engrossed in their learning. For example, in Year 1, pupils were working in groups to work out how many different shapes can be made with ten sticks. This activity was planned in such a way that the pupils were using what they already knew and applying this to a new type of activity. As a result, they got on very well with their work because it was both challenging and interesting, and many worked the answers out for themselves.
- In a Year 6 lesson, teachers were dressed in pyjamas and acted out scenes from a diary, in

which a brother and sister were seeing the same events from very different perspectives. This introduction sparked the imagination of the pupils who went on to produce very good diary entries themselves, writing at length and to a high standard.

- Not all teaching is as good as this, however. Sometimes pupils are not given enough opportunities to work things out for themselves, and not enough time is spent writing at length in different subjects. Occasionally, the teacher spends too long explaining a task, and does not get the pupils involved in learning quickly enough.
- 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. Children are taught to develop a level of independence and they are comfortable working with other children and adults. Activities are exciting and interesting, and as a result, children enjoy learning. The racing track in Nursery was used particularly well, even in the rain.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' behaviour in and around school is exemplary. In lessons they show a high level of focus and want to do their best in their learning at all times. They co-operate well and try hard even when tasks are complicated and stretch them. In Nursery and Reception, children take turns and treat each other kindly. Parents and pupils themselves agree that behaviour is excellent.
- Pupils are polite, courteous, get on well with each other, and show respect to others. They enjoy school and 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 have an excellent understanding of how to keep safe and say they feel very safe in school. The way in which the pupils move sensibly between the three sites which make up the school shows their excellent understanding of road safety.
- Pupils have an excellent awareness of different types of bullying, including prejudice and cyber-bullying, about which they have few concerns. They know that any incidents will be dealt with quickly and effectively by the school. The way in which the pupils accept one another supports those who speak English as an additional language to feel included and to develop their linguistic skills.
- As a result of enjoying school, pupils' attendance is above the national average and improving, and pupils arrive to school and lessons on time.

The leadership and management are good

- The new headteacher is key to the improvements that have been made. She has quickly identified areas within school which needed to be tackled and set about making changes quickly. As a result, both the quality of teaching and the progress of pupils are rapidly improving. She has maintained the confidence of staff, parents and pupils during these changes.
- The school's procedures for checking the progress of pupils are now strong, as are the procedures to check the quality of teaching. Through these activities the school has an accurate view of its own performance, and plans for further improvement are focused on the right areas.
- The headteacher is a good role model for other leaders in school. They have supported her in tightening procedures and in making sure that staff are used effectively to improve achievement. More opportunities can now be given to them to take full responsibility for key areas of school life and bring about further improvement.
- 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.

- Pupils are provided with a curriculum that meets their needs and helps them develop the skills and capabilities they need for the next steps in their education. A variety of out-of-school activities is available to the pupils, and these are popular. The school places a high priority on learning about rights and responsibilities, including those for children all over the world. The school's link with the town Nomi in Japan is one example of this, and helps support the good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils.
- The school works well with parents to support pupils' learning. Parents are happy with the leadership of the school and agree that the school keeps their children safe. The school's procedures for checking that pupils are safe are in line with that which is expected and give no cause for concern.
- The local authority provides light touch support to this good school.
- The school's ability to carry on making improvements is good. The track record of the headteacher and her leadership team over the past year, in particular, the way in which the quality of teaching and pupils' progress is monitored, needs more time to lead to outstanding achievement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have played an important role in steering the school through times of difficulty, through to the appointment of the new headteacher. They are aware of the strengths and areas for improvement for the school, including the quality of teaching. They have ensured that training given to teachers is directly linked to efforts to improve the quality of provision. They have a good understanding of the progress pupils are making. They ensure that the performance of teachers is managed well, so that salaries and promotion generally reflect performance.

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	108350
Local authority	Gateshead
Inspection number	403060

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	425
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ron Smith
Headteacher	Helen Gladstone
Date of previous school inspection	3 March 2008
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