

St Peter's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

North Lane, Elwick, Hartlepool, County Durham, TS27 3EG

Inspection dates 9–10 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The resolute drive and vision of the headteacher, together with the high ambitions of an especially strong governing body, have resulted in rapid school improvement since the previous inspection.
- Good and sometimes inspiring teaching enables pupils, including those with special educational needs and the disadvantaged, to achieve well or even better. Achievement is good and sometimes even better than this in mathematics, and with reading and writing catching up quickly.
- The excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development underpins pupils' exemplary behaviour. Pupils are friendly, polite, helpful and eager to learn.
- Pupils are sensible and safety conscious. They quickly learn to identify risk and danger. As a result, they feel safe and secure.
- The interesting and rich curriculum provides a wide range of experiences that are thought-provoking and help to bring learning to life.
- Children make a rapid start in the Nursery because they settle so well in the happy and friendly atmosphere. Their good progress continues through early years, successfully preparing them for Year 1.
- Staff provide high-quality care and support, which is strengthened by the detailed staff knowledge of each pupil's abilities, interest and needs.
- The governing body, led astutely by the Chair of Governors, is well informed about the school's performance. Governors are challenging and hold staff accountable for pupils' performance, as well as being equally supportive.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Opportunities are occasionally missed to share the inspiring practice that exists in the school more widely.
- Lessons are not always thought-provoking enough and some do not include chances for pupils to work things out for themselves. Extra challenge is not always provided when teachers give guidance for improvement in their marking and feedback.
- Rapid progress and high achievement are not fully sustained throughout the school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in lessons and five paired observations were carried out with senior leaders. Detailed work scrutiny was carried out with senior leaders. In addition, the inspector made a number of short visits to lessons and undertook walks around the school in order to check the quality of what is provided for pupils.
- The inspector spoke with pupils and had discussions with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, staff, governors, and the School Improvement Partner.
- He also examined a range of documents including those related to safeguarding, the school's view of how well it is doing, the monitoring of staff performance, the school's improvement plan and records relating to pupils' progress and behaviour.
- The inspector took account of the 39 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and of the 14 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Clive Petts, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The school is federated with another primary school. The two schools share the same headteacher and the one federated governing body. Each school is subject to a separate inspection report, published and viewed on the Ofsted website.
- A very large majority of the pupils are of White British backgrounds, with a very few who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- The pupil premium is additional funding to support those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority. In the 2014 Year 6 cohort, no pupils were supported by pupil premium funding. Currently, there are very few pupils eligible for the funding in Year 6.
- Children in the Nursery attend either part time in the mornings or full time for two days plus a morning session. Typically, the children in the Nursery progress to the Reception Year, where they attend full time.
- The school provides a breakfast club each day for pupils.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which is the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school has experienced a significant turnover in staff since the previous inspection. This has included an appointment of a deputy headteacher in April 2015.
- The Chair of the Governing Body is a national leader of governance.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make certain that all teaching is inspiring and thought-provoking enough to enable pupils from all starting points to make rapid progress and achieve a high standard by:
 - sharing even more widely the innovative teaching practice that already exists in the school
 - taking full advantage of the opportunities for pupils of all ages to think critically, reason, make deductions and explain their solutions
 - making sure written guidance for improvement in pupils' books is concise and adds to the level of challenge in their learning.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- In the extremely successful drive to strongly improve the school since the previous inspection, the headteacher has taken convincing action eradicating underperformance and underachievement. Leaders and managers relentlessly build upon the school's many strengths. All staff are keen for the pupils to do well and provide excellent models for pupils of all ages.
- Rigorous checking and scrutiny of the school's information ensure that senior leaders have an accurate view of performance. It ensures that leaders and managers know precisely what action to take to strengthen performance even further.
- Staff skills, including those of classroom support staff, are fostered exceptionally well, with training programmes really well-matched to school priorities and individual staff needs. Performance management is robust and effective and makes certain that any pay progression is closely linked to pupils' outcomes.
- Middle leaders display a first-class grasp of school performance in their areas of responsibility and relish the responsibilities they are given to drive improvement. They are skilled in using challenging checks on pupils' progress and achievement to guide their drive to sustain high achievement.
- School staff are resolutely committed to ensure equality of opportunity. Any form of discrimination is not tolerated and staff work effectively to ensure that all pupils achieve as well as they can.
- The rich and interesting curriculum is closely matched to meet the abilities, experiences and needs of all pupils. It fosters pupils' highly positive attitudes to learning very well. High-quality literacy and numeracy policies and practice underpin pupils' accelerating progress and constantly rising achievement. An awareness of life in modern Britain, and of British values, such as tolerance, respect, fair play and freedom of speech, are extremely well established in pupils' learning. For example, before the general election pupils were given the opportunity to write their own manifesto, which they then presented to classmates.
- Pupil premium funding is used very effectively to ensure that the progress and attainment of the very few disadvantaged pupils matches that of their classmates. For example, funding is used successfully to provide extra support for their reading and access to extra online tuition.
- Primary school sport funding is used successfully to ensure high pupil participation rates in a broad range of sport. Training has improved the expertise of staff in coaching in various sports. There are now new opportunities for pupils to develop individual sporting skills, including in partnership with local clubs, such as in netball and athletics.
- Safeguarding and child protection meet requirements. Procedures and practice are firmly established in day-to-day routines and much effective practice is adopted in the care and protection of pupils, especially those who are potentially vulnerable.
- The officers of the local authority have been both challenging and supportive. Consequently, they have an accurate and insightful view of school performance.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The strong governing body is determined to achieve excellence in all school activities. It is extremely effectively led. It has been instrumental in the drive to strongly improve since the previous inspection. It has an extensive range of expertise, including how to interpret the school's assessment data and compare the school's performance to others. It has an accurate view of the quality of teaching and current school performance information. Governors make certain that pupil premium funding has the desired impact in closing any attainment gaps that may exist. They ensure financial stability and are highly skilled in identifying and developing capable staff to expand the school's pool of effective staff, to make certain that the performance of this small school can be sustained consistently over time.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. In classrooms and around the school behaviour is almost always impeccable. Their relationships with staff and each other are excellent, including in the happy and lively breakfast club. Pupils are keen to learn and prepared to work hard. This plays a decisive part in their good and sometimes rapid progress in lessons.
- Pupils are considerate, helpful and polite. They work together in groups or with a partner without any need for adults to supervise, constantly interested in what they are learning and keen to acquire new knowledge.

- In conversations, pupils report that there is little that concerns or worries them because bullying or inappropriate behaviour is infrequent. As a consequence, pupils feel safe, confident and happy.
- When required, the highly skilled staff ensure that the needs of those potentially vulnerable pupils or those with high levels of anxiety are fully and effectively met. Excellent partnership working with specialist agencies adds to the quality of pupil support.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. In discussions, pupils reveal how extremely well informed they are about risk and danger. They are taught to be safety conscious and how to prevent accidents, such as the risk and danger associated with playing near water or near a railway line. Older pupils particularly appreciate the experiences gained on a safety awareness day at a nearby power station. All pupils are taught the possible dangers of the internet.
- Pupils are well informed about bullying in all of its various forms. This includes cyber-bullying. Pupils observe that there is little or no mean or thoughtless behaviour. They also report that the systems to manage and reward their behaviour are fair and work extremely well.
- Attendance is high with little persistent absence. This is because of the high levels of pupils' enjoyment of school life, robust school checking of attendance and very positive support from parents.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good and at times stimulating and thought-provoking. Following the previous inspection, convincing and speedy action was taken to eliminate underperformance and boost pupils' achievement. Consequently, the quality of teaching and classroom support has improved considerably. Expectations of what each pupil can achieve, regardless of their starting points, are consistently high throughout the school.
- Classrooms are busy, interesting and stimulating places in which to work. Staff have a clear understanding of the ability and needs of each pupil. As a result, activities are carefully tailored to match individual abilities and needs. Mathematics is taught well. Increasingly, pupils are expected to think critically, reason and precisely explain their thinking, ideas and solutions. Consequently, interest is promptly captured and held successfully.
- When progress is rapid and achievement high:
 - challenging demands are consistently made of each pupil, including a relentless focus upon extending reading and writing skills in all subjects
 - pupils' thinking is closely followed by staff and tasks quickly adapted to address any misunderstandings when they arise
 - skilful questioning is used effectively to constantly test or extend pupils' knowledge and understanding
 - thought-provoking tasks motivate pupils to analyse problems and puzzles and work things out for themselves or with a partner.
- On those occasions when progress is not quite as fast:
 - tasks sometimes lack that essential trigger to capture interest and provoke debate and discussion
 - activities do not always encourage pupils to apply critical thinking and decision making skills to work things out for themselves
 - opportunities are missed to foster independent writing skills.
- In activities when achievement is highest, pupils' interest is sparked by inspirational and interesting practice. For example, pupils in a Year 6 class were observed totally engrossed identifying missing numbers in a magic square. Similarly, the use of stimulating topics, such as pirates and dinosaurs, has led to a big improvement in pupils' extended writing, especially that of boys. However, there are times when this inspirational practice is not shared widely enough.
- Teachers mark pupils' work frequently and constructively. Pupils are left in no doubt how well they have done. Requests for corrections are routinely completed. However, written guidance for improvement in pupils' books does not always add sufficient extra challenge. Classroom support staff work closely with teachers and add valuable observations of pupils' learning and development. Useful guidance for improvement is provided, although now and then opportunities are missed to boost pupils' achievement by encouraging them to respond to their feedback in greater depth.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils achieve well, because the crucial action taken to improve teaching and foster higher levels of commitment from pupils has been highly effective. Current school information, confirmed by inspection evidence, demonstrates that the trend of rapid improvement is being successfully sustained.
- In the 2014 Year 1 national screening of phonics (the sounds that letters make), almost all pupils reached the expected standard. This is the result of the effective teaching of both early reading and writing. As a result, standards in pupils' reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 are rising steadily, because of their good and sometimes rapid progress.
- At the end of Year 6 in the 2014 national tests, the standards achieved in reading and mathematics were above average and average in writing. Resolute action has been taken to address the causes of pupils' average writing skill, particularly of boys. Current school progress information, confirmed by the scrutiny of work in pupils' books, reveals that pupils in the current Year 6 are working at a high standard in all subjects. Rates of progress have continued to accelerate appreciably, especially in pupils' writing.
- The most able pupils make at least good progress as the demands made of them to extend their knowledge and deepen their understanding are much higher than at the previous inspection. A high proportion of pupils are working at Level 5 in reading, writing and mathematics with a few above that level in reading and mathematics.
- Those pupils with special educational needs make the same progress as their classmates, because their highly personalised support accurately pinpoints their precise needs. This includes individual pupils with complex needs, whose progress is at times outstanding. They gain essential self-confidence and self-assurance.
- The school uses pupil premium funding very effectively. In the current Year 6, the very few disadvantaged pupils eligible for the funding make at least good progress with their skills in reading, writing and mathematics at least in line with those of their classmates and pupils nationally.
- A strong focus on developing literacy skills is firmly established in all subjects throughout the school. Creative approaches are successfully employed to encourage pupils to read widely and write imaginatively. For example, pupils' work in art is linked with their extended writing when painting and describing the plight of residents during the bombardment of Hartlepool in December 1914. Reading skills of younger pupils are better than those typical for their age. Older pupils are keen readers and are well informed about authors and popular themes.

The early years provision is good

- Children enter the Nursery with skills typical for their age. They get off to a flying start, developing essential skills, especially acquiring self-control, confidence and independence. This continues throughout Nursery and Reception and underpins their at least good progress in all areas of learning. As a result, most achieve at least the goals expected of them, preparing them well for Year 1.
- The exciting and supportive atmosphere ensures that children work, learn and play happily, whether outdoors or indoors. All children are protected very well and all are kept extremely safe and secure. This includes those who are potentially vulnerable.
- Improved teaching is good and at times imaginative and stimulating. Well-established routines encourage children to pursue their curiosity and investigate and explore for themselves. Excellent opportunities are provided for children to practise their speech and language skills, recognise shapes and numbers and learn to measure. Provision also includes ensuring that specialist agency support is available when required.
- Staff accurately observe and assess children's skills on entry into the Nursery and the progress they make in their learning and development subsequently in the early years. All areas of learning are systematically developed in effective ways by a confident and skilled team of staff. Positive engagement of parents ensures that they are able to support their children's learning in helpful ways.
- Shrewd and perceptive leadership ensures that day-to-day management and organisation of children's learning and welfare is of a high-quality. The much firmer emphasis upon nurturing early reading, writing and number skills, since the previous inspection, is paying dividends as the progress that children make in their learning and development quickens, boosting their achievement.

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	111670
Local authority	Hartlepool
Inspection number	462257

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	101
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jackie Murray
Headteacher	Jo Heaton
Date of previous school inspection	20 June 2013
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