

# Wolsingham Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114068
<b>Local authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	378791
<b>Inspection dates</b>	28–29 November 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Frank Cain

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	242
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Kirsty Robeson
<b>Headteacher</b>	John Armitage
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 October 2006
<b>School address</b>	Upper Town Wolsingham Bishop Auckland DL13 3ET
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors visited 16 lessons taught by nine different teachers and looked at pupils' work. Discussions took place with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. Inspectors looked at documents, including policies relating to safeguarding, the school's improvement plan and self-evaluation records, minutes of governing body meetings and the school's own assessment data. The inspectors analysed questionnaires from pupils and staff as well as those from 84 parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The level of attainment in Year 6.
- How much progress pupils are making, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- To what degree teaching and learning are accelerating pupils' progress, particularly that of boys.
- How leadership and management have tackled areas of weakness and with what impact on pupils.

## Information about the school

Wolsingham is of average size for a primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and the proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities are both well below average. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well below average. The school has been awarded Healthy Schools status and Investors in Children. Pupils' mobility is higher than the national average. Several new staff have joined the school in the last four terms.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate**  
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

### Main findings

Wolsingham Primary is a good school. The school has rigorous self-evaluation procedures, which have led to an accurate analysis of its strengths and weaknesses. As a result, school actions are successfully tackling the underperformance of boys, compared to that of girls. This has been achieved partly by curricular changes, making it more practical and skills-based. In addition, the introduction of new reading and writing schemes has also provided boys with more challenge and ensured that they now make good progress. Recent appointments have strengthened the school staff and morale is high. Leadership is good, because the headteacher has empowered senior leaders and given them time and the skills to oversee their areas of responsibility. The governing body works well in monitoring the school's work and updates school policies and procedures regularly. These strengths indicate that the school has a good capacity for sustained improvement.

Attainment on entry to the Nursery is generally at age-related expectations in most, but not all, areas of learning. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress and by the time they leave Reception their skills are often above those expected for their age. The pupils feel extremely safe in school, which is also the view of an overwhelming proportion of parents and carers. The reasons for this are the actions taken by the headteacher and governing body to ensure that the site is very secure; the excellent safety advice pupils receive through the curriculum; and the pupils' good behaviour in and around the school. Pupils have an excellent understanding of what makes an unsafe situation. Attendance is above average, but the school is making further efforts to improve it even more. All other aspects of pupils' personal development are good. Pupils' attitude to their work is very positive. They have good social skills and constructively support their school community as playground buddies and sports leaders. They work extremely well in lessons with their 'talking partners'; this was observed as a considerable strength in lessons. They are polite and friendly to visitors, because all staff work as a team to create a calm, safe learning environment for pupils. In the words of one parent, who expressed the views of many, 'Children 'are happy and enthusiastic about school'. The school was able to show that it had, by careful intervention programmes, improved opportunities for pupils, including those whose circumstances make them potentially more vulnerable than most.

Teaching is good. In all lessons teachers plan imaginative tasks and use resources well to guide and inform pupils. Lessons are well-structured so that little time is

wasted. In some lessons, the work is not always carefully matched to pupils' learning needs. Pupils are given very sound advice in exercise books on what they need to do to improve a particular piece of work, but they are sometimes less clear where they are in relation to longer-term targets.

Most aspects of leadership and management are good. However, the headteacher is aware that more careful analysis of the impact of the actions taken to improve pupils' outcomes would provide clearer evidence of how successful those actions have been. The school's promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and accelerate progress by:
  - ensuring that all teaching is consistently matched to pupils' different learning needs
  - providing clear ways for pupils to contribute to their learning by ensuring that they know how well they are doing
  - sharing the features of the best teaching practice within school, so that all staff adopt the most effective approaches to teaching and learning within their classroom
  - analysing more rigorously the impact of initiatives to improve pupils' attainment and progress.
  
- Improve the effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion by:
  - providing pupils with more opportunities to understand and know about the wider world
  - analysing more closely the impact on pupils of actions taken to promote community cohesion.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2
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In lessons pupils are keen, work well and enjoy learning. Pupils show lots of enthusiasm when working in pairs, which was seen as a great strength in all lessons. Pupils work very well with each other and develop good social skills, as well as growing in confidence and perseverance when tackling their work. The school has detailed systems to track pupils' progress that allow the school to identify individuals and groups who might be underperforming. As a result, pupils' progress across the school, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, is good. This means that by the time they leave Year 6, their overall attainment is above the national average. Boys' progress, although good, still lags behind that of girls, but it is improving strongly and securely.

Pupils are friendly and helpful to each other as they move around the school. Pupils' behaviour is good. There are few recorded incidents of any poor behaviour. Pupils are closely involved with their school and wider community. There is an active school council, that organises fundraising events for local and national charities.

The school council makes a strong and purposeful contribution to the school community, encouraging the school to arrange more school trips, as well as buying toys for the playground. Most pupils have a good understanding of how to stay healthy and attendance is high at out-of-school sports events. Attendance is above average and improving. The number of persistent absentees is very low and pupils are usually punctual. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and they expressed the view in assembly that 'we care for each other' and that 'everyone works together'.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	2
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	2
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good and the progress pupils make, as they move through the school, shows this. Where teaching is best, tasks are well-structured and challenging for all groups of pupils. Where teaching is less effective, the pace of lessons is slower and occasionally, some pupils are not stretched enough by tasks appropriate to their ability, or they are set work that is too difficult for them. A formal system to assess pupils' progress is successfully informing staff on how well pupils' learning is progressing. Pupils, however, are not consistently and regularly, made aware of information on how to move to the next level in their learning. Marking in books is, however, generally thorough and provides immediate next steps advice to pupils on particular pieces of work.

The curriculum provides a good range of exciting learning opportunities and topic work is geared to individual groups' interests and includes an annual science programme, developed by partnership links with Durham University. There have been a number of more practical activities introduced to attract the interest of boys, including a mini-allotment. A number of parents and carers were impressed with the new accelerated reading scheme, which has 'really grabbed their attention' in the words of one parent/carer. A very high proportion of children participate in residential visits in Year 5 and Year 6 to Robinwood and Earl's Orchard.

<sup>1</sup>The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

The school provides good support for pupils in their personal development. Many of the parents and carers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable, as well as parents and carers of gifted and talented pupils, value the help given to their children. The strategies to help pupils who might be falling behind, including one-to-one tuition, is appreciated and is successful in helping these pupils to make good progress. Pupils are well cared for when moving from one class to another through the school; 'without fear or anxiety' was how one questionnaire response described it, when a child moved from the Nursery to the Reception class.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has galvanised the school and has made sure that leadership is good as it relies on more than one person. From the effective governing body to middle leaders, who take a key role in the monitoring of teaching and learning in their subject areas of responsibility, all have high expectations of pupils. However, leaders acknowledge that they could disseminate best practice in teaching more widely through the school. The majority of staff feel that they have an input into the self-evaluation of the school's overall effectiveness and they share the enthusiasm and drive of the headteacher. This was recognised by one parent who commented on the 'commitment and passion' of the staff.

The governing body is well-informed about the school. It closely monitors the work of the school, including performance data. The governing body communicates regularly with parents and carers, through the school newsletter and offers effective challenge to senior leaders in order to bring about further improvements.

The school is committed to equal opportunities for all its pupils. Leaders monitor the uptake of different groups of pupils in extra-curricular activities and have pursued ambitious targets for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The attainment of most groups of pupils, such as those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, exceeds that for similar pupils in other schools.

The procedures and practices for safeguarding pupils are good. Risk assessments for the school are very specific and are particularly effective with regard to the school site and its security. Safeguarding is threaded through the curriculum, so that pupils have a very good understanding of what constitutes a safe situation.

The school promotes community cohesion satisfactorily. It has an understanding of its own context as a mono-ethnic, rural school. It is a very cohesive community, but the promotion of community cohesion in the wider world and the evaluation of its impact on pupils' outcomes are less well-developed.

Generally, for the very large majority, the school's engagement with parents and carers is good. In addition to parents' and carers' evenings there are notice boards near the school entrance and a weekly newsletter, which is sent out by e-mail or by hand if there is no e-mail address. The school has an informative website and it gathers parents' and carers' views via questionnaires on anti-bullying, for example.

*These are the grades for the leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

All children settle in very quickly and happily in the Nursery and staff work to ensure that children are engaged in purposeful learning activities. Their personal welfare needs are met well and good systems to communicate with parents and carers exist to ensure that they are well-supported to help in their children's learning. The 'learning journals,' which track children's progress, are exemplary. Children make good progress and quickly grow in confidence and in their independence. Staff make a good contribution through thoughtful questioning to encourage purposeful learning. For example, in building a model the teacher prompted the children to answer the question, 'what does it do?' and 'how does it work?' In addition, children develop their understanding of the wider world by, for example, a visit to a railway station. Children are encouraged to take turns and to help each other, for example, when constructing a rocket made from crates and blocks and in organising themselves to be pilot and navigator. Good leadership and management have been central to improvements in assessment and to improving resources in the outdoor area. To ensure that progress accelerates further, new commercial reading schemes have been recently introduced into the Early Years Foundation Stage

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

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## Views of parents and carers

Around a third of parents and carers responded to the inspection questionnaire. They were generally supportive towards the school and almost all thought their children enjoyed school, were safe and that teaching was good. A very small minority, however, expressed some concern about behaviour in the school. Inspection evidence revealed very little evidence of poor or inappropriate behaviour, and any boisterous behaviour was seen to be dealt with quickly and effectively by staff. A similarly small proportion of parents and carers suggested that home-school communication about progress, meeting pupils' individual needs and support for learning needed improving. The inspection team reported concerns to the school. Inspection evidence indicates that for most parents and carers overall, communication is frequent and productive, that progress is good for all pupils and that the school addresses pupils' individual needs well overall.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Wolsingham Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 84 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 242 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	56	67	25	30	2	2	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	56	67	27	32	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	44	52	35	42	4	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	48	57	33	39	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	47	56	34	40	2	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	47	56	29	35	6	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	45	54	33	39	3	4	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	50	60	30	36	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	49	58	28	33	5	6	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	38	45	32	38	8	10	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	35	42	34	40	6	7	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	49	58	28	33	2	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	53	63	27	32	2	2	1	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



30 November 2011

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Wolsingham Primary School, Bishop Auckland, DL13 3E**

I want to thank all of you for the extremely friendly welcome that you gave us when we inspected your school. We found the time we spent talking to you, your teachers and other adults extremely enjoyable and rewarding. You go to a good school. We were impressed by your enthusiasm for learning. You make good progress and your attainment, by the time you leave Year 6, is above that of most pupils. This is because you work hard. You are also well-prepared for the future.

Your school is led and managed well. Most of you feel extremely safe and secure and think the school's curriculum gives you exciting learning experiences. You play an important part in making the school better, such as by your eco-activities and doing so many good things in the community. We found that behaviour was good in lessons and around the school and that staff dealt quickly with any cases where behaviour was a problem. In the questionnaire, some of you felt that you would like more information on how well you are doing at school and we agreed that this would be a good idea and will help to make your learning even better.

In order to help you make even better progress and to improve the school further, we have asked the school's leaders, teachers and the governing body to:

- make sure that the work you are set in lessons matches what you can do
- spend more time helping you to understand how well you are getting on with your work
- ask teachers to share their good ideas for lessons with other teachers

We have also asked the adults who run the school to follow up more closely whether the actions they have taken to help you to improve are working.

I am sure you will all want to help make your school better by working hard and playing together well.

Yours sincerely

Frank Cain  
Lead inspector

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