

Ashington Wansbeck First School

Wansbeck Road, Ashington, Northumberland, NE63 8HZ

Inspection dates 19-20 September 2012

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.

- The majority of pupils make good progress and achieve well from their starting points and learn well in lessons. 'I like school and learn lots of different things' was a typical comment made by pupils during the inspection. Children in the Nursey and Reception classes also make good progress.
- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers plan lessons well and use a variety of strategies to engage pupils. Teachers use questioning effectively to help pupils move forward in their learning.
- The school provides well for pupils who need extra support with their reading and numeracy skills and so they catch up quickly.
- Pupils enjoy being at school and feel valued and respected. They are attentive in lessons and are courteous to each other and to adults. They behave well. Attendance has improved and is now broadly average and there is very little exclusion.
- The leaders of the school are passionate about the pupils. They are knowledgeable and effective in securing improvements. Their understanding of the school is incisive due to an excellent analysis of exactly where the pupils are in their learning. This in turn has led to improvements in teaching and achievement. The strong governing body has guided the school very well by challenging school leaders when needed.
- Transition arrangements to middle school are a strength as a result of the school being part of the Ashington Learning Partnership Trust.
- Partnerships with parents are good and continue to develop. Workshops designed to equip parents to help their children with their learning are particularly good. These support one of the aims of the Trust 'to help families to educate their children'.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some lessons do not ensure that the most able pupils are stretched in their learning.
- Pupils are not yet consistently making rapid and sustained progress because not enough teaching is outstanding.
- Progress in writing is less strong than in reading and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 25 lessons of which two were joint observations with senior leaders. In addition, the inspection team made a number of short visits to lessons.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body, middle leaders and senior leaders. Inspectors talked to children and pupils at break time and lunchtime, and spoke to parents at the beginning and end of the school day. Discussions took place with leaders in the Ashington Learning Partnership Trust and the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 27 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They also took into account feedback from the 29 staff questionnaires.
- They observed the school's work, and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own data on pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to performance management of staff, records relating to behaviour and attendance and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Michael Wardle, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Anne Humble	Additional inspector
Kathleen Mullen	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average size first school. The school is part of the Ashington Learning Partnership Trust that consists of five schools that provide for pupils aged three to 18 years. The school is part of a hard federation with one governing body supported by a school advisory group, a small group of governors who work directly with one school on behalf of the full governing body. There is an executive director for the trust and each school has a Principal. The Principal of this school was not in post at the time of the last inspection. He leads two schools within the federation trust. There is a head of centre who is responsible for the daily operation of the school. Three of the other schools in the federation trust were inspected at the same time as this inspection.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported through school action is below the national average. The proportion of those supported at school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is similar to that found nationally. This number is increasing each year.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the achievement of pupils further by:
 - increasing the proportion of outstanding teaching
 - ensuring teachers always plan activities to challenge the more able pupils in order to fully engage them as independent thinkers and learners through giving them more opportunities to grapple with complex ideas and concepts
 - sharing the very best of practice in teaching across schools in the Trust.
- Improve achievement of pupils in writing by ensuring that:
 - the developments in the teaching of writing which have started are closely monitored and refined where needed
 - that the teaching of spelling is systematic and robust
 - high standards in spelling, handwriting and punctuation are consistent
 - pupils are given more opportunities across the curriculum to write at length about a wide range of topics.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- The achievement of pupils is good and improving. Almost all parents who responded to the on-line questionnaire rightly regard their children as making good progress and lesson observations during the inspection confirms this. Pupils make good progress from their starting points, especially in reading and mathematics.
- Children enter Early Years Foundation Stage with knowledge and skills below those typically found in children of their age. Specifically, their communication and language skills, numeracy skills, and their creative development are below that which is typical.
- As a result of imaginative and creative planning, which takes the abilities of the children into account, they make gains in all areas of learning and the gap in knowledge and skills between these children and those typically found is narrowed. They make good progress so that they are well prepared for work in Year 1.
- Teacher assessment in Year 2 confirms that pupils make good progress at Key Stage 1, and they continue to make gains so that by the time they leave Year 4 attainment is broadly average in English and mathematics, although attainment in mathematics and reading is stronger than that in writing.
- In lessons pupils make good progress and enjoy their learning. Teachers generally tailor activities to the needs of the pupils, and both the learning environment and attentive behaviour of the pupils help lessons proceed well.
- The school ensures that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are well supported both in classrooms, and through small group support. They make good progress in their learning given their starting points.
- The school ensures that those pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium make good progress. The progress of the most able in the school is not as rapid and sustained as others, however, especially in writing.
- Pupils say that they enjoy reading. Teachers place a high priority on developing reading skills. Pupils employ a variety of strategies to help them read unfamiliar words, including their knowledge of the sounds letters make. New programmes are in place to develop reading skills further.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The overall quality of teaching over time is good. Most of the teaching observed during the inspection was good. Outstanding practice was seen. No lessons were inadequate. Parents overwhelmingly agreed that the quality of teaching is good.
- Teachers question pupils well, and shape lessons according to the understanding of the class. Where there are misconceptions these are dealt with well effectively. Teachers use information about the progress pupils make in lessons effectively to inform their planning. Marking and feedback is useful. As a result of good teaching, pupils make good progress.
- In the Nursery and Reception classes, teachers make good use of observation and other information about the children to shape the activities on offer. As a result, good progress is made in areas where children need further support. For example, the use of drama and role play helps develop confidence and creativity. During the inspection, a member of staff was in the role of Little Bo Peep and the children were highly animated and engaged when describing where to find her sheep. Through doing so, their communication skills were practised and imagination developed.
- The very best teaching combined academic rigour and exciting learning activities. In one lesson, pupils were developing their understanding of punctuation and ability to write at length through Kung Fu moves and a 'conscience ally' activity where pupils lined up to give their opinions in an engaging and stimulating way. Not enough teaching is yet of this high quality to enable pupils to make consistently rapid and sustained progress across the school.
- The teaching of reading and mathematics are well developed across the curriculum, through a

variety of interesting and engaging topics and themes. During the inspection, for example, 'the Romans' was a focus for the development of skills. Teachers and teaching assistants are deployed well to ensure that any pupils who are falling behind catch up with their learning. They also support disabled pupils and those with special educational needs well, both through small group work, and appropriate activities in the classroom.

- In some lessons, however, the more able pupils were not given enough opportunities to extend their thinking and their independent learning skills. The very best teaching observed had a wide variety of activities tailored to the full ability range.
- A more systematic and robust programme to develop spelling, punctuation and handwriting has been implemented. The impact of this is visible in teaching, but this has yet to impact fully on standards of writing through the school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are well behaved both around school and in lessons. They are courteous, confident and respectful.
- Pupils have good attitudes to their learning. In class, they are attentive to the teacher and work very well with each other. They behave well and show respect to other adults and to their peers. Where teaching sparks their imagination, they are engrossed in their learning and their engagement is outstanding.
- The school is calm and orderly. Many pupils are given responsibilities on the school council and in doing practical tasks around school. They play well together at breaktime and lunchtime, and if any unkind behaviour does occur, pupils say it is dealt with swiftly by adults.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the difference between right and wrong, and are often given the opportunity to reflect upon their friendships, opinions, behaviour and beliefs.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe and say they feel very safe in school. They also have a good awareness of different types of bullying, including prejudice bullying, about which they have few concerns. They know that any incidents will be dealt with quickly and effectively by the school.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school, and as a result attendance has improved and is now broadly average. Pupils are punctual to school and to lessons. Due to strong systems and processes at school, pupils respond well to guidance on how to behave properly. The house points system supports this process well. As a result, exclusions are low.
- Parents overwhelmingly agree that their children are safe at school and that behaviour is good.

The leadership and management are good

- Leadership and management are good at all levels in the school. Leaders have high expectations for all of the pupils in their care, and work hard to ensure that provision continues to improve. The head of centre has a forensic understanding of the school.
- Systems and processes to identify areas of strength and actions for further improvement are good. In particular, the use of achievement data to pinpoint exactly where pupils are in their learning and the extent to which they are making progress is excellent. The use of this information in the classroom is good, although sometimes inconsistent.
- The headteacher and other senior leaders have a good understanding of the quality of teaching in the school. Teachers are held to account for the quality of their teaching through robust performance management processes which refer to Teacher Standards as appropriate. As a result, the quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection.
- Partnerships with parents are strong and improving. The innovative programme of events in which parents are shown teaching strategies used at school, and then have a chance to practise these with their children is impressive. These 'Stepping Stones' sessions have been welcomed by parents.
- The curriculum is interesting and varied. Pupils enjoy learning about a variety of topics and themes. The development of reading, communication skills and mathematics across the

curriculum is strong. There are fewer opportunities to fully develop writing skills across the curriculum by writing at length. Teachers and school leaders ensure that opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are rich.

- The school takes any form of discrimination seriously and all pupils thrive in the school environment. Equality of opportunity has a high status at school, and the school is aware of the need to further develop challenge for the most able pupils. Safeguarding arrangements are robust and meet requirements, and the safety of the pupils has a high priority.
 - As part of the Ashington Learning Partnership Trust, the school benefits from close working relationships with other middle schools, and this has a positive impact on transition arrangements. A coordinated transition programme between all the schools in the Trust helps pupils to progress smoothly through key points in their education. It also supports the sharing of the very best practice between schools, which the school recognises as important in further improving the quality of teaching.
 - The local authority has provided specific support through the role of the school improvement partner. This, combined with actions of the Trust, has helped focus school leaders on securing improvements.
 - Due to the track record of improvement, ability of school leaders and support structures in place, the school has good capacity to improve further.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - the governing body, supported by a school advisory group, is incisive and extremely effective. It has guided the school through complex situations and provides a high level of support. Governors challenge the school leadership effectively when needed. The impact and leadership of the Chair of the Governing Body is particularly strong.
-

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	122239
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	400351

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

Type of school	First
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3-9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	373
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	C Smith
Principal	A Roberts
Date of previous school inspection	30 June - 1 July 2010
Telephone number	01670 812324
Fax number	01670 817146
Email address	admin@wansbeck.northumberland.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2012

