

Usworth Colliery Primary School

Manor Road, Sulgrave, Washington, NE37 3BL

Inspection dates

6–7 February 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 thrive in this happy school and get off to a flying start in Reception. Year 6 test results are above that found in other schools in English and similar to in mathematics. This represents good progress from pupils' often very low starting points when they join.
- Most teaching is good, some is outstanding. Typical of all teaching are good relationships between adults and pupils. As a result, pupils are keen to try their best and enjoy lessons.
- Teachers' careful focus on pupils entitled to the pupil premium or those with a disability or special educational need means they usually make similar progress to their friends. The previous gap between the average point score of pupils entitled to free school meals and other pupils has virtually gone in English.
- Parents, pupils and staff are very positive about the school. They all say pupils are safe and well cared for and are learning well.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils are friendly, caring of one another and work equally well in pairs, groups or on their own.
- Leaders pay good attention to ensuring pupils' safety, developing their personal qualities, promoting equality and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. As a result, the school is a safe, harmonious, inclusive community and pupils are well prepared for their next steps.
- Perceptive leaders and effective governors make sure that anything that should be better is identified quickly. No stone is left unturned until they are successful in securing the necessary improvements.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all teaching is as good as the best yet. Occasionally, teachers talk for too long a time, leaving less time for pupils to work.
- A few teachers do not plan activities to help pupils move on quickly enough from their starting points, particularly more-able pupils and occasionally those with a special educational need or disability.
- Now and again, marking and feedback to pupils is not helpful enough in letting pupils know how well they are doing or what they need to do to improve their work.
- In 2012, Year 6 pupils' progress was not as strong in mathematics as it was in English.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection framework has changed significantly since the school's last inspection in 2008.
- The school was given half-a-day's notice. Inspectors observed 20 lessons or learning activities. Two lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, senior staff, three members of the governing body and a representative from Sunderland local authority's school improvement service.
- Inspectors observed an assembly, and spoke informally to many pupils in lessons, at break and lunch times and formally to two groups of pupils at lunch time on the second day of the inspection. They also heard a number of pupils read.
- A range of documents was reviewed including information on how well pupils are doing in their lessons, school improvement plans and minutes of governing body meetings. Inspectors also checked records relating to bullying, behaviour and attendance, and actions staff and governors take to keep pupils safe.
- Inspectors talked to some parents on the school yard at the beginning of day one of the inspection and a number of parents of children in Reception class who were in the school that morning taking part in a family learning event. Nineteen responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire were also taken into account.

Inspection team

Margaret Farrow, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Derek Sleightholme

Additional Inspector

Wendy Richardson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Usworth Colliery is a much larger than average-sized primary school. There are more girls than boys.
- Just over 40% of pupils are eligible for extra government funding called the pupil premium (funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, pupils in local authority care and those whose parents are in the armed forces). This is well-above average and nearly double that found at the time of the last inspection in 2008.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well-below average and has been since the last inspection.
- The school has identified a slightly larger-than-average proportion of pupils who have a disability or special educational need and given extra support from staff through school action.
- A broadly average proportion of pupils with a disability or a special educational need has a statement of special educational needs or supported through school action plus.
- The school exceeds the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The headteacher is a National Leader of Education and has recently supported a local primary school in its removal from special measures.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of all teaching to outstanding so all pupils make the best possible progress in lessons, particularly in mathematics, by:
 - making sure all teachers use the information they have about pupils' abilities to plan different activities that help them move on quickly from their varied starting points
 - making sure marking and feedback always help pupils know what they are doing well, point out what to correct and what they need to do to improve their work
 - ensuring there is always a good balance between the time pupils spend listening to teachers in their seats or on the carpet and the time they have to get on with their work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter Reception roughly a year below the levels expected in all areas of development; particularly their knowledge of sounds and letters and number. Children's emotional development is often below that.
- An exciting range of well-planned activities indoors and out, stimulates children's interest and love of learning and contributes to the good progress they make in all areas during their time in Reception. By the time children move to Year 1, the gap between their skills and abilities and children in other schools has narrowed well but has not been eradicated.
- Pupils make good progress in English as they journey through school. Progress in mathematics is usually similar but last year it was slower. The gap between pupils entitled to free school meals and other pupils did not narrow. Once they realised this, leaders and governors took quick action to make changes to the way mathematics is taught. Current assessment data shows the progress of pupils entitled to the pupil premium is improving quickly.
- Pupils with special educational needs or a disability are well-supported in class and this normally helps them to achieve as well as their peers. Occasionally, work is too hard, so they spend a long time discussing it with the teacher or teaching assistant, who then adapts the work. Pupils do then make progress but not as fast as they would have if the work had been better matched from the beginning.
- Evidence from lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' books confirm the good progress pupils generally make in class, including the very few from ethnic minority backgrounds. When lessons are captivating, as in a Year 6 geography lesson observed, pupils enthuse about their learning, are kept on their toes and make rapid progress.
- Alongside improvements to mathematics, a sharper focus on teaching reading, including teaching phonics (the letters that sounds make) and more opportunities for pupils to read regularly, are helping pupils to become confident, expressive readers. Pupils speak highly of the good range of fiction and non-fiction books they can choose from in the well-stocked libraries.

The quality of teaching is good

- Excellent relationships between pupils and adults stand out in all lessons. Teachers know their subjects well, are enthusiastic and plan lessons with interesting tasks. As a result, pupils come to lessons with positive attitudes and behave well. This means lessons generally move along quickly and pupils make good progress in their learning.
- Regular checks on pupils' achievements in lessons are used well by most, but not all teachers, to provide varied activities matched carefully to pupils' different starting points. On the few occasions this information is not used well, more-able pupils are not always set work that stretches them fully and, as a result, their progress is steady rather than good.
- In Reception, teachers carefully note children's interests and pay close attention to what they are learning. Information gathered is used well to plan children's next steps. As a result, they stay keen and interested in the constantly changing range of activities on offer. Super learning journals celebrate children's work and keep parents informed about how well they are doing.
- Pupils say they really enjoy practical lessons like science and when they have opportunities to work things out for themselves as seen in a Year 6 lesson on fractions and percentages. In such lessons, pupils are exuberant, totally focused on their work and make rapid progress.
- Occasionally, teachers spend too much time talking to pupils on the carpet or in their seats which means there is less time for pupils to get on with their work.
- While there are many examples of good quality marking and feedback from teachers that let pupils know precisely how well they are doing and what they need to do to either correct or improve their work, the good practice seen in many books was not seen in all.

- Leaders are working with staff to tackle the few instances where teaching is not yet good effectively and working with staff to move the good to outstanding so all pupils can make outstanding progress rather than the currently good from their very low starting points.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well in lessons, in the dining hall and as they play with their friends out in the yard. They get on well together and are courteous and respectful to adults and visitors. It is not surprising that, in outstanding lessons, pupils' behaviour is excellent.
- All teachers use the school's behaviour policy well. Behaviour records show incidents of poor behaviour are rare with no exclusions for over eighteen months.
- Pupils say they like the rewards and sanctions approach like the 'good to be green' and the many celebrations of their good efforts. They say sanctions are important because it makes things fair.
- Parents, staff and pupils all report Usworth is a safe and caring school. Pupils say they are well taught about risks to their safety such as the internet, chat rooms or 'stranger danger'.
- The school takes a very proactive stance on bullying. Pupils report bullying incidents are rare and they are well taught about the different forms. This can be seen in the high-quality displays on the walls where pupils explain what bullying is and how they feel about it.
- Each year group elects a pupil to be part of an anti-bullying team. Pupils think this is a great idea because if they have any slight concern they can go to them and know the headteacher will respond quickly to any concerns reported.
- Attendance rates in the past have suffered because of a number of parents taking children out for holidays of school in term time, specific health complexities of a few children and the persistent absences of pupils from a few families. Focused actions taken are helping to reduce the number of incidents and, as a result, attendance rates are improving steadily.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher's and deputy headteacher's different high-quality leadership skills complement each other well. Staff and governors share their passion for Usworth to be outstanding in every respect and they have the full confidence of parents.
- Increasingly inclusive leadership, involving middle leaders more fully in the school's work, is helping to drive continued improvements in pupils' progress. Senior and middle leaders lead by example through their own good and outstanding teaching.
- When teaching is not good enough, rigorous lesson observations lead to actions that teachers need to take to improve. Training is provided and the good practice in the school is shared. Such actions and effective performance management arrangements are reducing the proportion requiring improvement successfully and increasing the proportion that is good or better.
- Leaders' robust evaluation of all aspects of the school's work leads to very clear action plans with specific targets that governors and senior leaders can check to see if actions are tackling weaker areas quickly and successfully. This can be seen in the decisive actions leaders and governors took when pupils' progress in mathematics was not as high as expected.
- Leaders quickly changed the way mathematics is taught and class groups in Year 6 have been made smaller. Specific support has been given to pupils entitled to the pupil premium and actions are narrowing the gap between the progress they make and other pupils successfully.
- Improvements have also been made to the way teachers check pupils' progress so interventions and additional support can be put in place more quickly. Actions taken are making a tangible difference to pupils' progress in lessons; including for pupils entitled to the pupil premium.
- The local authority appropriately provides light touch support for this school.
- The good curriculum is enriched well by interesting topics to energise both boys and girls and the

many interesting activities out of, and after, school. For example, during the inspection Year 4 pupils went to see a theatre production of 'Goodnight Mr Tom' as part of their work on World War 2. They came back energised and inspired by their experience.

- Increased opportunities for pupils to improve their basic literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology skills across other subjects have been embedded successfully.
- Leaders place a great store on preparing pupils for their future lives and promoting their spiritual, moral and social development well. Actions taken build pupils' confidence, skills and personal qualities successfully.
- Vibrant wall displays pay testament to the range of opportunities pupils have to explore spiritual moral, social and challenging ethical issues. For example, their current ethical work around water as a scarce commodity which links seamlessly to their water-aid fundraising activities.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- leaders are challenged by an increasingly knowledgeable group of governors who are holding them to account for the achievements of pupils and ensuring that the quality of teaching continues to improve effectively. Governors have secured robust safeguarding arrangements. They are fully aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school through their involvement in the school's evaluation of its work and committee meetings, including the 'standards' committee where pupils' progress and attendance are reported. Governors are also fully involved in decisions about how the pupil premium funding is spent through regular reports. They take appropriate action when concerns are raised. For example, the actions they have taken to improve mathematics and narrow the achievement gap of pupils entitled to the pupil premium and other pupils. Regular visits to classrooms have helped governors become more systematically involved in evaluating the quality of teaching. This information together with senior leaders' evaluations of teachers' performance has made certain that pay increases of staff are linked to their performance, including their achievement of challenging targets for their pupils.

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	108799
Local authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	412080

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	385
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alison Logan
Headteacher	Carole Colling
Date of previous school inspection	27 November 2008
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