

# Thomas Walling Primary School

Lindfield Avenue, Blakelaw, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear NE5 3PL

## Inspection dates

19–20 March 2013

|                                |                      |              |          |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|--------------|----------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>   | Previous inspection: | Satisfactory | 3        |
|                                | This inspection:     | <b>Good</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| 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 headteacher's ambitions for every child to achieve their best in a happy, secure school are well supported by senior leaders and governors. All aspects of the school's work have improved well since the previous inspection; some features are outstanding and staff morale is high. Teaching is improving rapidly through well-planned training and because teachers are held to account for the progress of their pupils.
- Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They quickly develop confidence to find out things for themselves because they are very well cared for and feel happy and secure in school.
- Pupils of all abilities make good progress, whatever their starting points, because they are eager to learn and they work hard in lessons. Their achievement is good and especially high in mathematics. Pupils' attainment is rising year on year as more pupils reach the level expected for their age.
- Teaching is good. Teachers and teaching assistants work in very good partnership to meet the needs of every pupil. They manage the different learning needs of pupils well and quickly spot when pupils are falling behind. Additional sessions to support pupils who need extra help are well organised and comprehensive so that they are able to catch up on their learning. Management of pupils' behaviour is outstanding; this ensures a calm, positive environment for learning.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils are friendly and support each other well in class and in the playground. They are well-mannered and very welcoming to visitors. Outstanding pastoral care by all staff creates a warm, safe environment where pupils feel safe and their learning flourishes.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet outstanding. Not all teachers accurately judge how well pupils have learned. This means that they do not always set work that correctly challenges different groups of pupils to do their very best.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 24 lessons or parts of lessons, two of which were shared observations with senior staff.
- Discussions were held with senior leaders, staff, governors, pupils and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a range of evidence including the school’s self-evaluation of its work, the school’s information about pupils’ progress, and documentation relating to teachers’ performance and safeguarding procedures.
- Inspectors took account of 13 responses from parents to the online questionnaire (Parent View), as well as 36 responses from staff.

## Inspection team

Moira Fitzpatrick, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lesley Richardson

Additional Inspector

Steven Home

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is high.
- The majority of pupils are from White British heritage, with around a quarter from other ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average. The proportion of pupils who join and leave the school each year is also above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported at school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better, and raise pupils' achievement further, by:
  - improving the accuracy of teachers' judgements about pupils' learning through sharing the expertise and best practice that already exists in the school for the benefit of all pupils
  - ensuring that all teachers take account of pupils' learning needs when planning tasks so that all pupils, including children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, are well challenged and motivated to do their best in all of their learning.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children join the Nursery with skills that are well below those expected for their age. They settle quickly into routines and make good progress, especially in their language development and social skills. Learning about letters and the sounds they make helps children develop early reading and writing skills which prepare them well for Year 1 work. By the end of Reception the proportion of children reaching the expected level for their age is increasing significantly as the quality of provision has improved this year.
- Good progress continues across the school. The effect of new systems and improvements to teaching is clear in the rising attainment by the end of Year 2. Pupils are now reaching the level expected for their age by the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. Inspection evidence and school data show that pupils now in Year 6 are on course to reach the national average in English, including reading, and mathematics by the end of the year, which is a significant improvement on previous years' performance.
- There are well-planned programmes for teaching early reading and writing skills, which are helping pupils to increase their rate of learning in all subjects. Good-quality, regular support is given to pupils of all ages who need to catch up. Regular reading is a feature in all classes so that pupils are developing good fluency and understanding in their reading. The award of a book they have read each term sends a clear signal to all pupils about how much the school values their efforts to master this key skill.
- The school goes to great lengths to develop effective support programmes. Daily interventions on specific literacy and numeracy programmes, one-to-one support for reading and writing skills, and frequent in-class support make sure that pupils with special educational needs, and those who fall behind, get the help they need to achieve as well as other pupils.
- Similar interventions are very effective in helping pupils who have English as an additional language, and those who join the school at different times, to do as well as other pupils. Some pupils with English as an additional language make outstanding progress.
- Pupil premium funds are used effectively to ensure that the achievement of pupils who are eligible for free school meals matches that of all other pupils. These pupils are well supported to take part in all extra-curricular activities, such as school clubs and visits, and are provided with additional learning resources. The effectiveness of these measures is seen in the achievement and attendance of pupils for whom this funding is intended, which are the same as those of other pupils.
- Pupils make good progress in lessons. Their work in books and the school's progress information show how much they enjoy learning and how hard they work.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is good. It has improved well since the previous inspection because of good training opportunities for staff and teaching assistants.
- Teachers form excellent relationships with their pupils and manage their behaviour extremely well. This creates a very secure and positive climate for learning in the classroom and teaches pupils to respect each other's needs. Because of this, pupils willingly enter into discussion and confidently share their ideas and suggestions so that they are all helping each other, which speeds up the pace of their learning.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge which they use well to plan activities that interest and motivate pupils. A very good example was seen in a Year 1 writing lesson where the teacher's good questioning skills helped pupils to pinpoint the events in the Red Riding Hood story very well. This prepared them well to write independently. All were able to work at a good rate and were rightly delighted with their work at the end of the lesson.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and give good advice on what to do to improve. Where this

is best, pupils are given plenty of time to make corrections or improve their work, which speeds up their progress to the next level. Many good examples were seen during inspection, especially in pupils' writing books, where their good progress was very clear.

- While all teachers plan lessons conscientiously, sometimes they do not make the best use of their checks on pupils' learning to set the correct level of challenge for each group. Occasionally they do not accurately judge the level pupils are working at, so that the work set is either too difficult or does not challenge the pupils enough. In these cases the rate of progress is reduced.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, providing the correct level of challenge or resources is inconsistent between the classes. Where this is well done, as in a session about letters and sounds in one Reception class, children learned at a rapid rate as they made word suggestions and used their rapidly developing skills to write the words independently. In some activities, when uninspiring resources fail to interest or engage children enough, their learning slows.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- The school provides outstanding pastoral care and support for pupils and their families. This ensures that pupils are well known to adults, who are always alert to any changes in their behaviour or attitudes to work. Robust systems are in place to support pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable so that they and their families know exactly where to turn for help.
- Adults have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and manage this extremely well. They set an excellent example in the way they care for children so that pupils learn from them and copy their caring attitudes. Pupils rightly feel very safe and secure in school. They have been taught well how to assess risks, such as those connected with the internet, and they trust adults to help them with any problems. Pupils from all backgrounds and ethnic groups get along very well because they have been taught to respect and value each other equally.
- Pupils understand that bullying takes many forms and they have been taught how to deal with this should it occur. Older pupils say it is rare but that everyone knows to report any worries to their teachers.
- Pupils have many opportunities to support school improvement and contribute to the smooth day-to-day running of the school. The school council makes positive links with the local community by being involved in council schemes to improve the environment. Pupils take on many responsibilities for younger pupils, such as playground buddies or mini-buds to make sure no one is left out or lonely at playtimes, including those who have recently joined the school.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school because learning is fun and they are successful. Attendance is above average and continues to improve.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The headteacher is a determined and ambitious leader. She has skilfully developed a strong senior leadership team which shares her determination to rapidly improve pupils' achievement, attendance and their enjoyment of school life. Since the previous inspection pupils' achievement, teaching, the curriculum and attendance have all improved significantly, demonstrating the school's capacity for further improvement.
- Recent changes to leadership are having a strong influence on accelerating improvement across the school as phase leaders improve their skills and expertise. Good systems to check on pupils' learning underpin the improvements to their achievement. While this is not yet consistently good, there are examples of excellent practice which the school plans to share for the benefit of all pupils.
- Teachers' performance is well managed through straightforward, measurable targets which are linked to pupils' progress, other school priorities and salary progression. The provision of regular, good-quality training opportunities for all staff, together with a strong team approach to sharing good practice, are accelerating improvements to the quality of teaching and learning. Staff

questionnaire returns show a unanimous commitment to the headteacher's vision for an outstanding school.

- Provision for all pupils to have equality of opportunity to succeed is very good. Staff are vigilant about checking pupils' progress and the school plans a vast range of support throughout each day so that no one falls behind. Pupils who are supported by the pupil premium do as well as, and sometimes better than, other pupils because additional funding is used effectively to support their learning.
- The good curriculum has a strong focus on the development of literacy and numeracy skills while linking these creatively across all subjects. Extra-curricular clubs are plentiful and well supported and enjoyed by pupils. Curriculum enrichment activities such as visits out and visitors to the school make a good contribution to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school makes excellent links with parents and is seen as a centre of support for many. Opportunities to be involved in their children's learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage, through social visits and Family Learning programmes, are highly valued by parents, many of whom comment on how delighted they are with their children's attitudes and progress.
- The local authority provides regular, light-touch support for the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are well informed about the school, so they are able to hold it to account for pupils' progress and teachers' performance. They give very good support to the school, through regular visits and by taking part in school initiatives such as anti-bullying. Governors ensure that all safeguarding requirements are met and that pupils and staff are safe on site. Finances are well managed and governors hold the school to account for the way in which extra funding (pupil premium) is used.

## 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

|                                |                     |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b> | 108480              |
| <b>Local authority</b>         | Newcastle Upon Tyne |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 400985              |

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

|  |                                |
|--|--------------------------------|
| <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> | 404                            |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body             |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Eileen Bolton                  |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Julie Scott                    |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 2 December 2009                |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 0191 2860333                   |
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