

Layfield Primary School

Everingham Road, Yarm, Stockton-on-Tees,

Inspection dates 21–22 January 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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' achievement is good. They make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching is good overall and occasionally outstanding in Year 6 in writing.
- Teachers plan lessons which have interesting topics and a range of activities. They use questions well to develop pupils' understanding. Work is well matched to the learning needs of different groups of pupils.
- The teaching offers pupils many exciting opportunities to see the links between subjects. Pupils enjoy physical education, geography, history, music and art.
- The school offers excellent care and support and provides very well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Procedures to ensure that pupils are safe are outstanding.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They care very well for one another and say they feel extremely safe.
- The headteacher and the governing body have a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and relative weaknesses. They have improved teaching, pupils' achievement and the leadership skills of other teachers.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In some instances, when teachers mark work, they do not give clear advice about how pupils can improve their work.
- Pupils are not clear enough about their targets for learning, the level of the work they are at and what they need to do to reach the next level in their learning.
- Some older pupils lack clear strategies to help them spell words correctly.
- The presentation of work and the handwriting of some pupils are untidy.
- Pupils are given too few chances to develop their writing skills by writing at length in English and other subjects.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors held meetings with staff, groups of pupils and the Chair of the Governing Body as well as four other governors. The inspectors also met with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a range of evidence including the school’s improvement plan; the school’s data relating to pupils’ progress; the work in pupils’ books and the school’s documentation relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 11 lessons taught by seven teachers. They listened to groups of pupils in Years 1 and 2 read. In addition, the inspectors made a number of short visits to lessons.
- The inspectors conducted one lesson observation jointly with the headteacher. The inspectors also observed the headteacher reporting back to the teacher on her findings regarding the quality of teaching, learning and pupils’ achievement in the lesson.
- The inspectors took into account the 22 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). Inspectors also spoke to parents informally and analysed the school’s own survey of parents.

Inspection team

Gordon Potter, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

John Pattinson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above average, although this varies between year groups. (The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children that are looked after by the local authority.)
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is well below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well below average.
- There are morning, lunchtime and after-school clubs which are run by school staff, external coaches and volunteers.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment in English and mathematics.
- There are seven classes for pupils in Nursery; Reception; Year 1; Years 2 and 3; Years 3 and 4; Years 4 and 5; Year 6.
- Many more pupils than is the case across the country leave or join the school at other than the usual times.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is outstanding, to further raise standards and rates of pupils' progress, by:
 - improving consistency in the quality of marking and target-setting so that pupils have a clear understanding of the level of their work and what they need to do to reach the next level in their learning
 - developing a consistent approach to the teaching and marking of spelling so that pupils understand how to tackle the spelling of new words and are helped to correct and learn words they have spelt inaccurately
 - offering pupils more opportunities to develop their writing skills by writing at length in English and other subjects.
- Improve pupils' handwriting and the presentation of their work by developing and consistently applying a whole-school approach to these matters.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Most children start school with skills that are below those typically expected for their age. Good teaching helps pupils make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. As a result, pupils are typically in line with the expectations for their age when they enter Year 1.
- The Reception Year group in 2013 was unusual because it consisted of a majority of children who were born in the summer months and the overall attainment of the year group was below expectations. Nevertheless, the children made good progress.
- Further good teaching in Key Stage 1 helps pupils to make good progress. Standards at the end of Year 2 vary because of the small size of year groups. In 2013, attainment was average in reading and writing and below average in mathematics. This year group was affected by more pupils leaving or joining the school than is the case in most schools.
- In 2013, attainment at the end of Year 6 in reading and mathematics was above average. In writing it was well above average. Pupils made good progress in reading and mathematics and outstanding progress in writing from their starting points at the end of Year 2.
- A greater proportion of pupils than is the case nationally achieved standards that were above the expectations for their age in writing. In 2013, the most able pupils achieved well because the school identified their needs early and gave good focus to meeting them.
- Pupils currently in Year 6 are on track to attain standards that are above those expected for their age. They have made good progress from average starting points at the end of Year 2. This is a result of good teaching in Key Stage 2 and occasionally outstanding teaching of writing in Year 6. The most-able pupils in Year 6 have been clearly identified and work is targeted to help them attain above and well-above average standards.
- There were very few pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding who took the national assessments at the end of Year 6 in 2013. They made the progress expected of them in reading, writing and mathematics and attained standards that were in line with the national average. However, they were one term behind other pupils in the school in mathematics and reading and one year behind in writing.
- Pupils currently in school, who are eligible, including those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, make similar good progress overall as other pupils in school in English and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress because of the good teaching and support that they receive from teachers and teaching assistants.
- The school is very clearly focused on identifying any pupils who are at risk of falling behind and concentrates on ensuring that all pupils make at least good progress. This clearly shows the school's commitment to promoting equal opportunities and tackling discrimination.
- Inspection evidence shows that progress in reading is good. There is a consistent focus on reading across the school. Pupils of all ages speak enthusiastically about the books and authors they enjoy when reading in school and at home.
- Teaching how letters are linked to sounds has improved in the past two years and is good. As a result, almost all pupils have a clear understanding of letters and the sounds they make (phonics) and understand how this helps them to read words they are not used to.
- However, some older pupils who did not benefit from this improved teaching when they were in Key Stage 1 do not have clear strategies to help them with their spelling. Their progress in spelling is also slowed by the lack of a clear and consistently applied policy for marking spelling errors. Not all teachers point out spellings mistakes and offer pupils time to correct and learn words they have spelt inaccurately.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good overall with some outstanding teaching of writing in Year 6. Teachers, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage, use pupils' enthusiasm and enjoyment of their topic work as a stimulus for writing and mathematics. They use exciting resources to stimulate pupils' interest.
- Teachers explain and question well and lead pupils through ways to do tasks. They encourage pupils to talk through ideas, solve problems and work together. Teaching assistants are used very effectively to support and teach all groups of pupils.
- Some teaching is outstanding. In a Year 6 lesson, for example, where pupils were learning about persuasive writing, teaching was highly successful. The work linked closely to their study of the environment and rainforests. The teacher made it absolutely clear what skills pupils had to develop and how they would know that they had been successful. Pupils were offered sufficient time to concentrate on their writing and the teacher checked pupils' progress frequently as the lesson progressed. As a result, pupils made outstanding progress in their writing in this lesson.
- Progress in writing across school is good rather than outstanding because teachers do not always give pupils enough opportunities to write at length in English and other subjects in order to practise their skills.
- There is good teaching of mathematics. In a mathematics lessons for pupils in Year 4 and 5, for example, the teacher questioned pupils closely and gave clear explanations so that pupils were challenged to extend their understanding of mathematical terms, such as mean, median, mode and range, with work matched well to their age and level.
- In the very small proportion of mathematics lessons seen during the inspection where teaching required improvement, some work was too hard for some pupils and teachers did not recognise this quickly enough. As a result, these pupils did not make good progress.
- Although pupils' work is regularly marked, teachers do not always make it clear to pupils how they can improve their work or give pupils time to act upon any advice that is given. Except in Year 6, targets are not sharp enough to show pupils the level at which they are working or what they must do to reach the next level. As a result, pupils' progress is good rather than outstanding.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. There are clear rules and teachers consistently apply the school's system of rewards and sanctions. Pupils say that there is very little disruption to their lessons and their behaviour in the playground and in the dinner hall is good. The school's records of behaviour confirm that behaviour has been good over the past two years. There have been no exclusions.
- Indeed, good behaviour was evident in lessons and around school during the inspection. In lessons where pupils were fully engaged in their work, their behaviour was outstanding. For example, in the Year 6 English lesson where teaching was outstanding, pupils rose to the challenge of the teacher's high expectations of them. They listened attentively, were keen to answer questions and worked purposefully with their friends and in their own individual tasks.
- Sometimes when the pace of teaching slows, pupils' interest and attitudes wane and they are not fully engaged or on-task.
- Pupils are very keen to talk about their school, they respect one another and work and play well together. They develop social skills well through involvement in the morning, lunchtime and after-school clubs.
- Pupils show maturity and enjoy taking on responsibilities well. The elected school council helps to draw up school rules and discusses them and other health and safety issues with the governing body. It offers ideas to improve the playground and is setting up a healthy tuck shop.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Parents and pupils are certain that pupils are safe and happy in school and there are exemplary procedures to ensure that this

is indeed the case with all adults offering highly effective and sensitive care to pupils. The many pupils who arrive at the school during the school year are welcomed and helped to settle quickly. Teachers even visit the school pupils have come from to find out all they can about the pupils' skills, abilities and interests.

- As a result, pupils feel extremely safe. They are very aware of different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying and racism. They say that there is no bullying. Occasionally friends fall out but pupils say they are able to solve problems between themselves or by asking school 'buddies' to help them. Pupils know they can turn to adults for help and be certain that it will be dealt with.
- Attendance is above average. This is because pupils feel very safe and enjoy their lessons and because of the many exciting topics they study. They are very proud of their school. However, some pupils do not take enough care to ensure that their work is neatly presented or to write with correctly formed handwriting.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has high expectations and aspirations for her staff and pupils. As a result, there is a purposeful, calm and safe environment in school which enables teachers and pupils to thrive and give of their best.
- Senior leaders have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and relative weaknesses. The headteacher has delegated responsibilities and enlarged the senior leadership team. She encourages all staff to accept responsibility and accountability for areas of learning and ensures that they have the training and support to develop their leadership skills. As a result, leadership across school is good, standards are above average and teaching is good and occasionally outstanding.
- The headteacher regularly checks the quality of teaching; she clearly understands what constitutes good teaching and judges it accurately. She is clear in her feedback to teachers and checks that points for improvement are followed up.
- The headteacher and other senior leaders have clear expertise in using data to measure pupils' progress. The school improvement plan has appropriate areas for development and there are clear procedures to check its impact regularly and systematically. Although there is a clear focus on pupils' attainment and progress, targets are not specific enough. As a result, while good teaching has helped pupils make good progress, progress is not yet outstanding.
- Teachers are very clear that they will only be rewarded when their pupils have done as well as, or better than, they should have done. Recent, more rigorous targets for teachers have not yet had time to ensure that pupils make outstanding rather than good progress.
- Funding to support the learning of those pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium has been used to develop their literacy and numeracy skills, to purchase appropriate resources and offer pupils cultural opportunities through visits and extra-curricular activities. As a result, they make the same good progress as other pupils in the school.
- The new primary school sports funding has been used effectively to develop competitive sports, to use coaches to develop teachers' expertise in teaching dance and gymnastics and to introduce new sports such as tennis. There is good teaching of physical education. These are contributing well to pupils' physical development and well-being.
- While the school focuses on developing pupils' basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics, it also provides many opportunities for pupils to see the links between subjects. It builds on pupils' enjoyment of history, art, music and geography and contributes strongly to their well-developed spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness.
- The school welcomes the support and advice it receives from the local authority and its school improvement adviser. They support the school well and have been engaged in helping the school to review the quality of teaching and the subjects taught and to develop teachers' leadership skills.

■ The governance of the school:

- The governing body offers strong support and challenge to the school and governors are regularly involved in school activities, including running business and technology enterprise days. The Chair is highly knowledgeable about the school and the achievement of pupils. Governors receive clear information about how the pupil-premium funding and the new primary school sports funding are allocated and are knowledgeable about their impact. The governing body has reviewed and improved its effectiveness through thoughtfully applying the professional skills of its governors to specific and appropriate roles within school. This allows the governing body to have an extremely clear overview of the budget and excellent procedures to ensure that the school fulfils its statutory responsibilities for safeguarding. All staff have been vetted and are trained appropriately to keep pupils safe and free from harm. Governors have clear systems to check the achievement of pupils, the quality of teaching and the curriculum and arrangements to improve teachers' performance, ensuring that teachers are rewarded for successfully meeting targets for pupils' progress. As a result, teaching and achievement are good.

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	111624
Local authority	Stockton-on-Tees
Inspection number	440413

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	181
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew Hogg
Headteacher	Helen Owen
Date of previous school inspection	12 October 2011
Telephone number	01642 786153
Fax number	01642 783281
Email address	layfield.school@stockton.gov.uk

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