

Red Hall Primary School

Headingley Crescent, Darlington, County Durham, DL1 2ST

Inspection dates 6–7 March 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' safety is outstanding because it is a very high priority for the school. Pupils are taught very well how to keep themselves safe and to be healthy.
- By the time pupils leave in Year 6, most of them achieve well. They reach standards that are above the national average in reading and writing and close to it in mathematics.
- Teaching is good across the school. Learning is well planned and all pupils understand from the start of lessons what skills they are aiming to achieve by the end.
- Behaviour is good around the school. Pupils take a pride in their appearance in school and they are rightly proud of their work in class.
- The leadership of the new headteacher is very good and her management of teaching and learning has improved the quality of teaching in the school.
- Staff share the headteacher's ambition and sense of purpose to further improve pupils' already good achievement.
- The governing body has an accurate view of the school's performance and ensures that teaching is good.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Standards in reading at Key Stage 1 are not as high as in mathematics or writing.
- Comments in pupils' mathematics books do not provide sufficient guidance to pupils about how to improve their work.

Information about this inspection

- Red Hall is slightly smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is well above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and children that are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is well above average, as is the proportion at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The vast majority of pupils speak English as their first language.
- There have been significant staffing changes to the school since February 2013.
- The present headteacher took up post in September 2013.
- The school meets the government’s current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils’ attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Inspection team

Frank Cain, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

James Hannah

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Inspectors visited 19 lessons or parts of lessons taught by eight different teachers. Two were observed jointly with the headteacher and the literacy coordinator. The headteacher also joined inspectors in the scrutiny of pupils' work.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and talked to them about how much reading they do, as well as looking at their work in class.
- Discussions took place with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils; a telephone conversation was held with a representative of the local authority.
- Documents were examined, including those relating to safeguarding, the school's improvement plan and records of the school's checks on teaching and learning, as well as the school's own assessment data.
- There were too few responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) to be taken into account. The inspection took into account the views of 64 parents and 147 pupils in the school's own survey. Twenty-six members of staff completed questionnaires about their views of the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching further so that pupils do even better, by:
 - giving pupils more opportunities to develop a greater enjoyment of reading at Key Stage 1
 - ensuring that marking in mathematics informs pupils of what they need to do to improve
 - impressing upon pupils the importance of responding to the advice given and ensuring they are given the opportunity to do so.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- When children enter the school, they have skills which are well below those typically expected for their age. Although these skills are still below national averages by the time they leave the Early Years Foundation Stage, children have made good progress from their starting points.
- Children in the Nursery engage enthusiastically in a range of activities, for example, clapping their hands to develop early counting skills. Some are able to count to ten. A follow-up activity from a recent farm visit saw children quickly developing their literacy skills by identifying the sound that animal names begin with.
- Pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage learn the sounds that letters in the alphabet make (phonics) and they are able to recognise sounds, such as 'ee', in pieces of writing. Reading, although improving over several years, is still a weakness in Key Stage 1, as pupils do not do enough reading for pleasure. By the end of Key Stage 2, however, pupils read very fluently and so are well prepared to move on to secondary education.
- Standards are rising in Key Stage 1, but progress here is slower. Over the last three years, pupils in Key Stage 2 have made excellent progress: by the end of Year 6, they reach standards in reading and writing that are above the national average and close to average in mathematics.
- Pupils from minority ethnic groups, including those learning English as an additional language, make good progress.
- Pupils with a disability or special educational needs are more than two terms ahead of similar pupils nationally by the time they reach Year 6. They achieve well because their needs are quickly and precisely pinpointed, and additional support is carefully matched accordingly.
- The most able pupils make good progress and school's records and inspection evidence confirms this. In a Year 3 English lesson, the most able pupils were given a very challenging task of making a direct comparison of two characters in a story. In Year 6, the most able pupils compare Japanese haiku poetry with examples of English poetry.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium funding, including those known to be eligible for free school meals achieve well. In Year 6 in 2013, the attainment of eligible pupils overall in reading, writing and mathematics was about a term behind others pupils in the school. This gap is narrower than the gap between these groups of pupils nationally. The attainment of eligible pupils is above the attainment of similar pupils nationally. This shows the school's success in narrowing the gap in achievement and in ensuring that pupils have equal opportunities to do well.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is typically good and occasionally outstanding. The school's records show that weaknesses in teaching are tackled and good support is given to teachers to help them to improve.
- Pupils are given work that is appropriate and relevant, and has the right level of difficulty to make them think hard.
- Pupils rate their teachers highly and enjoy their lessons. When a child in Nursery was asked if she liked her schoolwork, she yelled, 'Yeah' at the top of her voice and ran off to join her friends.
- Pupils know their targets for literacy and numeracy. These are clearly visible on laminated card on their desks. Older pupils point to the back of their books where they can find out exactly what they must do to hit their national curriculum target in forthcoming tests.
- There are high expectations of pupils and their understanding is checked with skilful questioning before they move onto new work.
- Pupils always know what they are expected to achieve in lessons. They use self-assessment to

determine how well they are doing during lessons. This was seen, for example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson on angles in triangles. Challenging questions make pupils think hard and provide evidence of how well they are doing.

- Teaching assistants are a strength of the school. They work well with teachers to plan lessons and assess how well pupils are doing. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, they give out informative stickers to children to show what they have achieved in the lesson, such as 'I know where eggs come from.'
- The work in pupils' books, particularly in English, is of a high quality. Pupils receive good information on how to improve their work in English but this is not always the case in mathematics.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' attitude to work is good and they waste little time getting down to their tasks.
- Pupils are polite and friendly to visitors. They smile and politely say 'Hello'.
- Pupils are very proud of their work and their literacy books show that they care about the presentation of their stories and poems. Pupils are encouraged to produce neat work with good handwriting, by earning the right to work in pen rather than pencil. They show a sense of achievement when they gain their 'pen licences'.
- Pupils move around the school sensibly, showing consideration for others. There is very little litter around the school.
- In lessons, there is occasionally some low-level disruption but this is dealt with very effectively by staff. All pupils are aware of the consequences of unacceptable behaviour.
- Pupils say that there is no bullying in school, although there is some boisterous behaviour on the playground. A few parents and pupils express concern about behaviour but well-kept school records show that there are few incidents of serious misbehaviour. There have been no exclusions for more than two years.
- Pupils learn to behave well right from the Nursery. Well-chosen methods, such as singing and clapping along to 'Do as I do', help pupils to learn to follow instructions closely.
- The attendance of pupils has been low but has improved significantly recently. It is now broadly average, and the number of pupils absent for long periods has declined sharply to below the national average.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- All pupils said they felt safe in school because of the security procedures. They said that visitors have badges, doors have 'special locks' on them and there are lots of adults to turn to.
- Parents think that their children are very safe and inspection evidence confirms this.
- The primary school sport funding is contributing to giving pupils a particularly good understanding of how to stay healthy.
- Older pupils are very aware of how to keep themselves safe, for example when using computers, and all can explain what they have to do in case of a fire in school. Even the very youngest children in school understand how to stay safe. For example, in the Nursery, a child playing with a toy iron pointed out that at home irons get very hot. Another pretending to make toast said that at home the toaster could 'burn me and I'd have to go to hospital'.
- The school has exemplary records regarding its most vulnerable pupils, which not only indicate what staff are doing to help them but also show how successful this work is in improving attendance, behaviour and achievement.
- Staff have very good training regarding the safeguarding of children and they know precisely how to react in the event of any incident involving the safety of the pupils.

The leadership and management are good

- Staffing difficulties have temporarily reduced the number of senior and middle leaders in the school, but those who presently hold posts of responsibility work well with the headteacher to monitor teaching and learning.
- The headteacher, in a short time, has made a significant impact on the school. New procedures to encourage children to attend and be punctual have been very successful.
- The headteacher's leadership of teaching and learning is good. It is having a very positive impact on improving the quality of teaching. She teaches 'model lessons' and helps effectively with planning pupils' learning.
- The quality of school documentation concerning the management of teaching and learning is very good.
- All staff and members of the governing body support the headteacher's aims for the school.
- Links with parents are good and improving, helped by the parent support worker who holds popular sessions for parents.
- The leaders of key areas of the school monitor their subjects effectively and conduct lesson observations as well as scrutinise pupils' work. They report back to staff and give feedback on how teaching and learning might be improved.
- The new primary school sport funding has helped to encourage more pupils to take part in activities to promote a healthy lifestyle, such as considering the importance of diet on health. Staff monitor the success of new sports coaching well, to ensure they are getting value for money.
- The local authority has provided valuable support to the members of the governing body so that they are effective in challenging the school, but as yet there has been little support and challenge for a newly appointed headteacher in a new authority.
- Safeguarding meets requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Many of the members on the governing body are new and admit that they have found the experience to be 'a steep learning curve'. Nevertheless, they now have a good understanding of the information available to indicate how well pupils are doing and what the quality of teaching is like. They check the impact of support paid for by the pupil premium funding on the progress of those who are entitled to it. This allows them to challenge the headteacher effectively. The governing body has worked well to ensure safeguarding arrangements are robust and that pupils are kept safe. Governors make certain teachers' rewards and career progression is closely matched to classroom performance.

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	114183
Local authority	Darlington
Inspection number	431321

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	209
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev. S Bruce
Headteacher	Ms J Davidson
Date of previous school inspection	31 March 2009
Telephone number	01325 254770
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