

# George Washington Primary School

Well Bank Road, Washington, Tyne and Wear, NE37 1NL

**Inspection dates** 3–4 March 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The inspirational leadership of the headteacher has led to rapid improvements in the school since her appointment. She has made significant improvements to the quality of teaching, enabling pupils to make more rapid progress.
- Senior and subject leaders, although new to their roles, are already having a positive impact in improving pupils' learning in the areas for which they are responsible.
- Governors are challenging school leaders more effectively and have a clear understanding of the quality of teaching and how well pupils are learning.
- Teaching is good across the school and some is outstanding. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and plan work that excites and motivates them.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They have positive attitudes to learning and cooperate well together. Pupils are proud of their school and of their achievements.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years. A range of stimulating activities engage children well in their learning, enabling them to make good progress.
- Pupils across the school make good progress from their starting points. Attainment is rising in Key Stage 1, including in the Year 1 phonics checks. Attainment is rising for all groups of pupils across the school. Consequently, pupils are well-prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Pupils feel safe and secure in school. They are particularly knowledgeable about how to keep themselves safe when using computer technology and when in the water.
- Pupils are well-prepared for life in modern Britain and show great tolerance and understanding to those from backgrounds different to their own. They are now more closely involved in activities within their own community and are developing links with those elsewhere, for example with a Doha school in Qatar.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not always ask probing enough questions to enable pupils to think more deeply about their learning.
- Occasionally, work provided is not always challenging enough, particularly for some more-able pupils in mathematics.
- Adults in the Reception classes do not always identify precise 'next steps' for children in all areas of learning.
- Very occasionally, there are missed opportunities for children in the Reception classes to be taught the exact skills they need to enable them to explore and engage in activities independently.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching in all classes, including three observations jointly with the headteacher. They conducted a number of short visits across a number of lessons to evaluate the quality of the curriculum and the provision for children with special educational needs. The inspectors also heard a number of children read aloud and discuss their favourite books and authors.
- The inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, the three assistant headteachers, leaders of English, mathematics, information and communication technology and physical education and the special educational needs coordinator. They also held meetings with two groups of pupils, members of the governing body, a school improvement officer from Gateshead local authority and a representative of Sunderland local authority.
- The inspectors evaluated a wide range of school documents including the school development plan, the school’s self-evaluation, information on pupils’ progress, monitoring files on the quality of teaching, minutes of governing body meetings and information on safeguarding (protecting children and making sure they are safe).
- The inspectors considered the views expressed in the questionnaire returns from 37 members of staff.
- The inspectors also considered the 26 responses made by parents to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and spoke to 20 parents on the school yard on the second morning of the inspection.

## Inspection team

Christine Inkster, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Suzanne Lithgow

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Frank Cain

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is broadly average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils for whom the pupil premium provides support is above the national average. Pupil premium funding is provided to support pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- Children in the Reception classes attend full time.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school extends its services by providing a breakfast club and an after school club each day.
- There have been significant staffing changes since the appointment of the headteacher in September 2013. Three new assistant headteachers, English and mathematics leaders and a special educational needs coordinator have been appointed, some of whom took up their roles in September 2014. A small number of teachers and teaching assistants have left the school and new staff have been appointed.
- The additional resourced provision for pupils with hearing impairments closed in July 2014.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching to outstanding to raise attainment further by:
  - ensuring pupils' work is always sufficiently challenging, particularly for more-able pupils in mathematics
  - ensuring teachers ask more probing questions in order to make sure pupils think more deeply about their learning
  - making sure that the outstanding practice already evident in the school is shared more widely.
- Improve the provision in the early years by:
  - ensuring adults clearly identify specific 'next steps' for children in all areas of learning
  - making sure opportunities are not missed to provide children with the specific skills they need to be able to carry out tasks independently.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides excellent leadership and is highly committed to ensuring that all pupils achieve and behave as well as they can. She has taken successful steps to improve the quality of teaching and, as a result, all groups of pupils across the school are now making good progress. She has gained the support of staff, governors, pupils and parents. They are delighted with the improvements being made and share her vision and high ambition for the school.
- The three recently appointed assistant headteachers are taking responsibility for the different phases within the school successfully. They are closely involved in checking the work of staff in their areas. This is through conducting meetings to discuss pupils' progress and checking the quality of teaching by carrying out observations and scrutinizing pupils' work to ensure all pupils are making the progress of which they are capable. Any areas of underachievement are promptly addressed.
- Senior and middle leaders, including leaders of subjects and other aspects, have a good understanding of the strengths and the areas to be improved in their subjects or areas of responsibility. The impact of their work is now evident, for example in the rapid improvements in pupils' reading, writing and mathematical skills across the school. The new special educational needs coordinator has a good understanding of these pupils' needs and ensures that teaching support is carefully targeted where needed. She is relentless in pursuing support for pupils from external agencies and in involving pupils and their parents in plans to help them achieve as well as they can.
- Staff are fully aware of the expectations of leaders and are given useful feedback on their performance. Leaders set them challenging targets and staff confirm that they are given high-quality support and training to help them improve their skills. Staff are keen to improve their teaching because they want to do the best they can for the pupils in their care. Performance management procedures are rigorous and targets are linked closely to the Teachers' Standards and pupils' performance.
- Leaders ensure that pupil premium funding is targeted to support eligible pupils so that they make similar progress to their classmates and so they are included in all that the school has to offer, for example, in music tuition or residential visits. This demonstrates the school's commitment to equality of opportunity.
- The school uses the primary school sport funding effectively. There are extensive opportunities for pupils to engage in a wide range of sports and participation rates are high. There is a swimming pool on site and staff ensure all pupils learn to swim to the required level, as well as making sure they know how to stay safe in the water. Transport is provided so pupils can participate in sports festivals and tournaments with other schools.
- The curriculum has been reviewed and is now stimulating and exciting for pupils. It is more closely based on pupils' interests and leaders have ensured that it is planned carefully to ensure progression in pupils' skills. It is broad and balanced and there is a strong focus on teaching basic skills of literacy and numeracy through a thematic approach. Pupils thoroughly enjoyed participating in a project within the local community, 'Washington 50', and this has enriched and extended their knowledge of the local area and its history. The curriculum does much to support pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as well as developing their understanding of their own and others' cultures and faiths. They have learned about traditions and life in Japan, Ghana and China through art, history and geography lessons, sponsor a child from Cambodia and celebrate a range of festivals, such as Chinese New Year.
- Pupils show great understanding of and respect for those from backgrounds, cultures and faiths different to their own. Pupils learn about faiths such as Buddhism and Islam and strong links have been developed with the local Christian church. The school council has been democratically elected and pupils demonstrate a good understanding of current issues as news items are discussed with them, including a recent political march which took place within their town. As a result, pupils are well-prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The school has received valuable challenge and guidance via support and intervention officers from Sunderland local authority. This includes support from numeracy, early years and special educational needs consultants as well as training provided for governors, for example on analysing school data. A school improvement officer from Gateshead local authority also provides challenge and support to school leaders and staff. The input from these local authority personnel has helped to improve the quality of teaching and leadership skills of staff.
- Leaders and governors ensure that all statutory safeguarding requirements are met. There are rigorous policies and procedures in place and all staff have received the required training at the appropriate level.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors provide effective support for the school and evidence in minutes of governing body meetings shows that they ask challenging questions of school leaders in all aspects of school life. They have a

good understanding of school data in relation to pupils' performance and know the strengths and areas to be improved. They are increasing their knowledge of the quality of teaching through making visits to the school to see for themselves how well pupils are learning. Individual governors are assigned to check on particular aspects of the school's work and they ask pertinent questions of leaders in meetings and when looking at pupils' work or conducting 'learning walks' with them. They produce insightful reports which are shared with the whole governing body. They ensure that performance management systems are implemented rigorously and are adamant that staff do not progress up the pay scale unless targets are met. They have supported the headteacher in eradicating weaker teaching and to ensure that good or better teaching is rewarded. Governors take their responsibilities very seriously and have been very careful to make sure that high-quality staff and leaders are appointed. The impact of this is seen in the rapid improvements in the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.

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

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils say they enjoy coming to school. They have very positive attitudes to learning and take a pride in their school. Pupils behave well in classrooms and throughout the school day. They show consideration towards one another and show respect for the school environment. Very occasionally, pupils become a little restless in lessons, but teachers employ effective strategies to manage behaviour and quickly regain pupils' interest.
- Pupils have good opportunities to take on responsibility within the school. Members of the school council have been democratically elected and they have been closely involved in the appointment of the headteacher and new leaders. Governors report that their views of candidates were very astute. Older pupils also act as buddies to younger pupils and know they should act as good role models.

### **Safety**

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils say they feel very safe in school and know they can approach adults if they have a worry or concern. Almost all parents who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View) indicated that their children are happy and feel safe and that the school looks after their children very well.
- Pupils are adamant there is no bullying in the school. Good relationships are evident between pupils and pupils are fully aware that any form of discrimination is hurtful and not tolerated. Any rare incidents, for example of racism or the use of inappropriate name-calling, are promptly dealt with and staff are undergoing specific training on homophobic bullying through a charity. Pupils are highly aware of how to keep themselves safe from harm when using computer technology, particularly when using social media.
- Pupils also have a good awareness of fire-safety and, as a consequence of regular swimming lessons, they are taught effectively how to keep themselves safe when near water.
- The vast majority of pupils attend school regularly and on time as the school checks promptly if any pupils are absent. The school works hard to ensure that pupils and parents are fully aware of the importance of good attendance. Pupils enjoy attending the breakfast club where they are well cared for and can play and talk to their friends.

## **The quality of teaching** is good

- Work in pupils' books, the school's data and information on checks carried out on teaching, indicate that the quality of teaching over time has improved and is now good, with some that is outstanding. However, there are not always enough opportunities for outstanding practice to be shared fully across the school.
- Staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and pupils' respond well, keen to achieve the best they can. There are good relationships between adults and pupils and between pupils themselves. Pupils work together cooperatively in groups and pairs and their discussions help to consolidate their understanding of concepts.
- Teachers periodically check pupils' understanding during lessons and promptly address any misconceptions so that pupils quickly move on in their learning. Teachers have good subject knowledge and give clear explanations of what pupils are to learn. Adults use subject specific vocabulary effectively; ensuring pupils know and understand this. Marking and feedback are effective in helping pupils improve their work.

- Pupils are actively engaged in learning because the work they are given is interesting and captures their imaginations. This was evident in English lessons, for example in Year 6 where pupils produced some high-quality journalistic writing about the sinking of the Titanic and in Year 2 where pupils enthusiastically wrote diary entries based on the theme of pirates. In Year 1, pupils were keen to read 'Handa's Surprise' and thoroughly enjoyed engaging in role-play activities with an African theme.
- Work for most pupils is challenging and meets their needs well. Occasionally, however, the work provided for the more-able pupils in mathematics does not challenge pupils to think as deeply as they could.
- Teaching assistants are deployed effectively to provide a wide range of support for pupils of different abilities. They have a good understanding of pupils' needs and work closely with teachers to plan activities which help pupils of all abilities to make good progress.
- While adults target questions to specific pupils to move them on in their learning, questions are not always probing enough to enable pupils to think more deeply about the concepts they are learning.

### **The achievement of pupils** is good

- There have been notable improvements in pupils' achievement over the last 18 months. The school's own data and pupils' books show that attainment is rising well and all groups of pupils across the school are now making good progress from their different starting points. Pupils' attainment at the end of the Reception Year, in the Year 1 phonics check and at the end of Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics rose markedly in summer 2014 assessments.
- Nationally published data for all pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 showed that attainment has remained broadly similar over time. The most recent cohort in 2014 included a number of pupils with very complex special educational needs, including those from the hearing impaired unit, who were also eligible for the pupil premium. Data shows that while their attainment was below average, they made good progress from their very low starting points because of the good support and targeted help they received from their teachers. Other groups of pupils reached standards that were at least in line with national averages in reading and mathematics and above average in writing.
- In Year 6 in 2014, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils was approximately four terms behind other pupils in reading and mathematics and three terms behind in writing. Compared to non-disadvantaged pupils nationally they were three terms behind in writing and four terms behind in reading and mathematics. Nevertheless, this represented good progress for these pupils from their very low starting points.
- Inspection evidence shows that gaps are closing effectively for pupils across the school.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make the same good progress as their classmates. Staff know these pupils well and they are given appropriate individual support to help them improve.
- More-able pupils are challenged effectively so that they too make good progress, particularly in reading and writing. Occasionally, however, in some mathematics teaching, teachers do not always provide work at the appropriate level to challenge these pupils to think more deeply.
- Pupils' progress in writing has accelerated, partly because there are more opportunities for pupils to write at length, including in other subjects such as topic work, and pupils are writing for different purposes and in different styles.
- Pupils are developing a love of reading and are keen to talk about the books they have read. Phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) are taught systematically on a daily basis and pupils are using their phonic skills well to tackle unfamiliar words.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics is improving and is good across the school. Previous weaknesses are being tackled, particularly in ensuring pupils learn their times tables and calculation skills. There are improvements in the way in which pupils apply these skills when conducting investigations or solving problems.

### **The early years provision** is good

- Achievement in the early years is improving rapidly. Children enter the Reception Year with skills and abilities which are below those typical for children of their age. Previously, children left the early years below expectations for their age. They now make good progress because of the good quality of teaching they receive. The proportion who reached a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year increased markedly in 2014, meeting and in some areas, exceeding the expectations for their age. As a

result, children are well-prepared for their future learning in Year 1.

- The good quality of teaching and provision in the early years stimulates and motivates children in their learning and play. Children were extremely excited to inform inspectors that a wolf had visited the school overnight and had left a 'mess' both indoors and outdoors. Children were observed taking part in a wide range of activities, such as building grandma's house in the construction area, designing and making traps to catch the wolf should he visit again and in drama and role-play activities. These activities had a positive impact on improving children's skills in speaking and listening, as well as when writing about their experiences.
- Children have very positive attitudes to learning. They persevere with tasks and concentrate well for extended periods of time. They are keen to produce the best work they are capable of. They are enthusiastic when exploring the environment, such as when digging for worms outdoors, and enjoy working independently. However, very occasionally, opportunities are missed for staff to provide children with the skills they need to engage in activities independently. For example, an activity was provided for children to use programmable toys, but children did not know how to use them correctly and did therefore not learn as well as they could.
- Children's achievements are recorded in learning journals and there are opportunities for children to share these with their parents and carers. However, precise 'next steps' are not always identified to extend pupils' learning further in all areas of learning. Nevertheless, adults do keep more detailed records with 'next steps' identified for children in reading and writing.
- There are well-established routines to ensure children are looked after very well and are kept safe. Staff conduct daily risk assessments to ensure all areas are safe for children. Children are also aware of how to keep themselves safe. For example, they conducted their own risk assessments, advising an inspector not to sit on a chair where the wolf had left a 'slippery mess' in case he fell off. They also cordoned off an area with tape which they felt was dangerous until it was cleaned up.
- Leadership of the early years is good. There are consistent systems across the early years to observe and assess how well children are doing. Adults meet regularly to share their observations and plan future activities to develop children's learning further. Additional support is put in place for any children who are underachieving.
- The transition for children into Year 1 is seamless as the early years leader has ensured a continuation in learning for children. For example, a very small minority of children did not meet expectations in some areas of learning in the Reception classes last year. This has been promptly addressed and these children are now making better progress in Year 1.
- Parents are encouraged to be involved in their children's learning, for example, through being invited to workshops and through participating in activities such as the 'Bedtime Stories' event.



## 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>	133473
<b>Local authority</b>	Sunderland
<b>Inspection number</b>	453359

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>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	416
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs E Quinn
<b>Headteacher</b>	Dr A M Taylor
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	11 May 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 2193735
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