

Crackley Bank Primary School

Blackthorn Place, Newcastle, ST5 7BE

Inspection dates 25–26 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
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 effective headteacher and school leadership team and the determined governing body are improving the school. Consequently, the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement are good and improving.
- The latest reliable school data and the work in pupils' books show that achievement in Key Stages 1 and 2 is good. Pupils' progress is accelerating rapidly in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school has good systems for keeping pupils safe and provides a safe and secure environment. Pupils and parents agree the school is a safe place.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils show respect and are courteous to each other and adults alike. They have positive attitudes to learning.
- Well-planned teaching of stimulating activities in the early years ensures that children make good progress and are well prepared for Year 1.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through a rich and varied curriculum.
- Governors are highly committed to the school and hold the headteacher and other leaders robustly to account for its performance.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally the work set in lessons is too easy for some pupils, which means they do not learn as well as they could.
- At times, teachers do not move pupils quickly enough onto the next task when they are ready to learn more.
- Leaders' checks on the effectiveness of teaching do not always focus sufficiently closely on how well it helps different groups of pupils to make rapid progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in 17 lessons, five of which were seen jointly with the headteacher. In addition, inspectors listened to pupils reading.
- Inspectors took account of the 94 responses to the school's parental questionnaire. There were not enough responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, for inspectors to comment on.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Governing Body, a representative of the local authority and the school's leaders.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of school documents including: the school's own information on pupils' current and recent progress; planning of work in different subjects; leaders' monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning; and records relating to behaviour, attendance and the safeguarding of pupils.

Inspection team

Steve Nelson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Julie Griffiths

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average-sized primary school.
- The very large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups and of those who speak English as an additional language are below average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are supported by the pupil premium is above average. This is additional government funding to support pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority.
- Children in the early years attend part time in the Nursery and full time in Reception.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is broadly average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum standards expected nationally for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching so that pupils make consistently rapid progress by:
 - consistently setting work at the right level of difficulty to challenge all groups of pupils
 - moving pupils more swiftly onto the next task once they understand what to do
 - monitoring teaching with a closer focus on the progress made by different groups of pupils.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has very effective leadership qualities and is creating a culture in which teaching and good behaviour flourish. Staff are all committed to raising pupils' achievement and morale is high. The robust systems for tracking pupils' progress, together with the work in pupils' books, provide much evidence to show that achievement is improving at a fast rate.
- Leaders are committed to providing equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination successfully. Everyone in the school treats each other with respect and courtesy. All pupils are given equal opportunities to learn well.
- Staff are held to account for the progress of pupils in their class and only good performance is rewarded. The headteacher makes good use of information from regular checks on teaching, and cross-referencing these observations with checks on pupils' work, to develop teachers' skills and improve teaching. Leaders' monitoring of teaching sometimes does not sufficiently record the impact of teaching on the progress made by different groups of pupils. As a result, this limits feedback on teaching to further improve any particular group's progress.
- Subject leaders fulfil their roles well. They support class teachers in frequently checking pupils' achievement and planning appropriate activities to ensure continued progress. For example, the leader of mathematics has guided the staff to extend pupils' mental skills in solving mathematical problems.
- The curriculum is good. The variety of subjects taught provides a rich and varied experience for pupils. They have opportunities to work in different ways and to develop their understanding of other subjects, as well as improving their skills in reading, writing and mathematics. Termly topics such as Superheroes and All About Me bring together aspects of many different subjects and are very effective in inspiring pupils' interests and curiosity.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Through assemblies and teaching, the school successfully promotes values such as determination, responsibility, respect and tolerance. This ensures that pupils are well prepared for life in a modern democratic British society. For example, in a Year 4 lesson, pupils engaged in lively and thought provoking discussion about difference and diversity.
- Effective spending of the primary sports funding has led to a rise in the quality of teaching in physical education, and in the number of pupils taking part in a wide range of sporting activities including street dancing and netball. The school now provides a much wider range of sporting opportunities and inter-school competitions. Pupils talk confidently about the link between physical activity and healthy lifestyles.
- Leaders, including governors, ensure that pupil premium funding is well spent. The small class sizes and the carefully planned support given to disadvantaged pupils are effective in ensuring that they make the same good progress as their classmates.
- Leaders and governors make sure that national safeguarding requirements are fully met and the school's arrangements for keeping pupils safe are effective. This ensures that pupils are well cared for.
- The school has drawn on the effective support of the local authority. It has worked well with the school to improve the quality of teaching and contributed effectively to its improvement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governors play an effective role and have a clear view of how they will continue to support and develop the school. They are able to analyse information on pupils' progress compared to that of other pupils nationally, and use this process to arrive at well-informed conclusions. Governors are supportive, while challenging the school, and are committed to ensuring that achievement continues to rise.
 - There have been some changes to the make-up of the governing body with the appointment of a new Chair and Deputy. The governors bring to their roles a wide set of qualities such as professional skills

and a good knowledge of the local community.

- Frequent visits to the school and the linking of individual governors to year groups and subjects make them aware about the quality of teaching and what goes on in the school. Governors make sure teachers' annual targets, and any pay increases, are closely linked to the pupils' progress and know how any underperformance would be tackled.
- The governors carefully monitor the spending of the school's finances, including the extra pupil premium funding, and understand how it is helping pupils to achieve better.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are courteous to adults, and considerate and supportive of each other. This is exemplified well in their behaviour at playtime: while lively and happy, they are aware of the needs of others and adapt their play accordingly.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the different forms bullying can take, including those relating to race and gender. They say that it is rare but if they ever have any concerns, there is always an adult on hand to help them.
- The school keeps thorough records of any incidents of poor behaviour. These show the effectiveness of the procedures for improving behaviour. Records of individual pupils reveal a significant reduction in poor behaviour over time.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons is good. They are keen to learn and concentrate well. Pupils enjoy helping each other when working together on tasks and activities. They rise well to high levels of challenge and persevere even when they are finding it difficult. On a few occasions a small number of pupils can become distracted when the work set is not hard enough.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. All staff work hard to ensure that safe practices are understood and carried out consistently well across the school.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe in different situations, such as fire safety and using the internet safely. Pupils act safely around the school and parents agree that the school is a safe place.
- The school monitors attendance and punctuality closely. It is taking effective action to work with parents of children with low attendance to make them aware of the benefits of regular attendance. As a result, attendance has improved and is now above average.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is now consistently good in all age groups. This is because leaders have improved teaching practice across the school. As a result, increasing proportions of pupils are now making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Well-planned use of practical resources, especially in mathematics, ensures pupils grasp concepts quickly and are able to solve real-life problems. In a Year 1 numeracy lesson, pupils made very good progress in dividing numbers by making good use of sticks and objects such as animal shapes to correctly count out the shared amounts.
- Staff are strengthening the teaching of reading, particularly by encouraging pupils to apply their reading skills in a wide range of subjects. Pupils' skills in using grammar, punctuation and spelling correctly are improving. Pupils have opportunities to write for different purposes. For example, pupils in Year 6 wrote clear accounts of the sinking of the Titanic.

- Teachers mark pupils' work thoroughly, providing guidance about what they have done well and what they need to do better. Pupils get regular opportunities to check the quality of their own work and that of their classmates.
- Other adults make a positive contribution to pupils' learning in lessons, particularly for those who find learning difficult. They work well to help less-able pupils keep up, using teaching resources and asking questions effectively to develop pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and ensure that learning and the level of challenge usually enable pupils to concentrate and be fully involved in learning. This is not always the case, however, and occasionally the work set for pupils is too easy for them. This means they do not do as well as they could. At times, pupils' progress can slow down when they are ready to move on to the next activity but do not do so quickly enough.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils start Key Stage 1 with skills below and sometimes well below what is expected for their age. Since the last inspection attainment has been rising and pupils have made good progress through Key Stages 1 and 2.
- The headteacher and other leaders have taken very effective action to deal with a dip in achievement following significant staff changes. In 2014, pupils' progress at the end of Year 6 was similar to that of all pupils nationally in writing but not as strong in reading and mathematics. However, work in pupils' books and school records show that nearly all of the current Year 2 and Year 6 pupils have made good progress, and increasing numbers very good progress, in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportions of Year 6 pupils attaining the nationally expected levels for their age are above average and rising rapidly.
- A successful focus on the teaching of mathematics has accelerated pupils' progress rapidly in this subject. Pupils have a good understanding of mathematical operations and apply them well in solving practical problems. Pupils write for different purposes and in different styles effectively. They are confident speakers and are good at listening, because they regularly discuss their ideas together in lessons. The school has been successful in raising the standard of pupils' grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- The results of the most recent Year 1 phonics (linking letters with sounds) screening check show that pupils make a very good start in understanding the sounds that letters make. The school has effectively improved pupils' reading skills through daily guided reading activities. Pupils enjoy reading, both for pleasure and to find information. Older pupils are enthusiastic readers, have favourite authors and recognise the features of a good story.
- The most able pupils make good progress and more pupils are exceeding the expected standards for their age this year in reading, writing and mathematics. Occasionally the work for some pupils, especially the most able, is not difficult enough to make them think hard.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs across the school make good progress as a result of the extra help they receive. The school acts quickly to support pupils who are at risk of falling behind. Well-planned literacy and numeracy support, tailored closely to their individual needs, is very effective in speeding up their progress.
- Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language make similar progress to other pupils. This is because their learning needs are identified and addressed well, so that they settle quickly.
- The effective action taken to raise the achievement of disadvantaged pupils has ensured that they make good progress. Last year's disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 were a year and a half ahead of their classmates in reading, a term ahead in writing and at a similar level to their classmates in mathematics. They were one to two years behind other pupils nationally in all three subjects. They made more progress in reading and writing and less progress in mathematics than their classmates, and slower progress than

other pupils nationally in all three subjects. The school's work to improve achievement in mathematics has also paid off for disadvantaged pupils, and gaps in attainment and progress between different groups are closing rapidly this year.

The early years provision

is good

- The early years is led and managed well. Children's progress is good and they learn to socialise and develop personal skills effectively. Good and improving teaching is leading to higher levels of achievement for all groups of children.
- Most children join the school with knowledge and skills that are well below what is typical for their age. By the end of Reception, children make good progress across all areas of learning. A large majority reach a good level of development, so children are well prepared to move into Year 1.
- Children settle in quickly due to the school's very good routines. They feel safe and behaviour is good. All staff implement the school's policies effectively and ensure that safeguarding meets requirements.
- Teachers plan interesting activities that are closely matched to children's interests and abilities. All children are excited about learning letters and numbers. Children are given lots of opportunities to write about a variety of topics. They are taught to develop the appropriate pencil grip, which is helping them to develop good handwriting skills at an early stage. Children talk confidently and articulately about their learning.
- Teachers and support staff successfully develop children's speaking and listening skills and extend their vocabulary. The development of children's reading skills, particularly phonics, is given good attention. For example, during the inspection children were highly engaged in an activity where they had to identify the letter sounds of objects revealed on cards.
- Information contained in children's 'learning journals' show they make good progress and enjoy learning. Children benefit from a stimulating environment, which supports and extends their imagination and well-being. The outside area is being developed to extend this positive environment further.

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	124108
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	456288

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	195
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Simon Smart
Headteacher	Sara Stevenson
Date of previous school inspection	28 February 2012
Telephone number	01782 561760
Fax number	01782 562742
Email address	office@crackleybank.staffs.sch.uk

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