

Arisaig, Ouston, Chester le Street, County Durham, DH2 1RQ

Inspection dates 14–15 July 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Requires improvement 3
Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils	Requires improvement	3
Early years provision	Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Achievement is not consistently good for pupils of all abilities. Consequently, not enough pupils exceed what is expected of them, especially in the early years and Key Stage 1.
- In the early years, from broadly typical starting points, children's progress in their early reading and writing requires improvement. As a result, not all are well enough equipped and prepared for Year 1.
- The quality of the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) requires improvement to ensure good progress. Consequently, not enough pupils make good progress in their reading by the end of Year 2.
- Pupils' attainment in writing by the end of Year 6 is not high enough. This includes the most able pupils.
- The progress that disadvantaged pupils make in their writing is not consistently fast enough to eliminate attainment gaps by the end of Year 6.
- Insufficient guidance is provided for pupils to correct and improve the quality of their work. Pupils' work in books is not always accurate enough or completed with sufficient care.
- The outdoor area in early years does not provide enough opportunities for children to explore, investigate and use their new skills of reading, writing and number.
- The important action taken, since the merger of two schools, to strengthen teaching has not had enough time to have the full impact of eradicating past shortcomings in performance.

The school has the following strengths

- The vision and drive of senior leaders and the governors are evident in the successful merger of the two schools on to a single site.
- In classrooms, pupils' positive attitudes to learning are evident in their keenness to learn and succeed.
- Behaviour is good because boundaries for pupils' conduct are well understood. Low absence rates reflect the pupils' enjoyment of school life.
- Children settle quickly and happily in the friendly Reception class atmosphere.
- Older pupils in Key Stage 2 make good progress in their reading and mathematics. The most able pupils achieve particularly well in mathematics.
- Effective promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development makes a good contribution to the pupils' polite and respectful attitudes.
- The governing body has taken full advantage of local authority governor training. Consequently, its members keep a close check on school performance and are challenging when scrutinising pupils' progress and achievement.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in lessons, and six paired observations were carried out with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Detailed work scrutiny was carried out with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. In addition, the inspectors made a number of short visits to lessons and undertook walks around the school in order to check the quality of what is provided for pupils.
- The inspectors spoke with pupils and had discussions with the headteacher, middle leaders including the special needs coordinator, staff, governors and the local authority education development partner.
- They also examined a range of documents including those related to safeguarding, the school's view of how well it is doing, the monitoring of staff performance, the school's improvement plan and records relating to pupils' progress and behaviour.
- The inspectors took account of the 93 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and of the 12 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Clive Petts, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Deborah Wylie	Additional Inspector
Sonia Humble	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average sized primary school.
- Almost all of the pupils are from White British backgrounds with a very few who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, some of which are complex, is broadly average.
- Currently, there is a lower-than-average proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for support through pupil premium funding. The pupil premium is additional funding to support those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The early years full-time provision consists of the Reception children in two classes.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Community Kidz Club is a privately run childcare facility located on the site, operating before and after-school. It is not managed by the governing body. Reports for this setting may be viewed at www.gov.uk/ofsted.
- The school was formed in January 2014 as a result of the amalgamation of Ouston Junior and Infant schools. Under the leadership of the former junior school headteacher, the school moved to a single site at the start of the current academic year.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of teaching that is inspiring and thought-provoking to make certain that there is a consistent pattern of rapid progress and high achievement in all learning, for all groups of pupils, by:
 - raising expectations of what each pupil can achieve, regardless of their starting points
 - improving the teaching of phonics in Years 1 and 2, to enable pupils to read quickly and skilfully
 - exploiting questioning more effectively to check, test and stretch pupils' knowledge and understanding
 - ensuring that the layout of pupils' work is more accurate and their presentation is completed with more care and includes more detail
 - making sure that, where marking calls for corrections, these are completed by pupils and that guidance for improvement increases the level of challenge in pupils' learning.
- Improve the quality and richness of learning in the early years by:
 - improving the quality of the teaching of phonics and encouraging children to apply their new skills in all areas of learning to ensure they make at least good progress
 - increasing the opportunities for children to investigate, explore and pursue their curiosity and practise their skills when learning outdoors.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Senior leaders, including the governors, have worked unstintingly to ensure that the recently formed school was successfully established on a single site. All staff share their high ambitions for the school. The accurate and rigorous systems that are now in place to check pupils' progress and achievement are enabling leaders and managers to pinpoint inconsistencies in the school's performance and accelerate the rate of improvement.
- Middle leaders are increasingly assured, using their skills and expertise to scrutinise pupils' performance, to spot any variations or gaps in pupils' progress, achievement and attainment, and to address areas for improvement.
- The school's very positive and welcoming ethos is bolstered by good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Fundamental British values such as respect, friendship and tolerance are well embedded in all aspects of the pupils' learning.
- Teaching is thoughtfully led and managed and this is leading to good improvement. Performance management of staff is ever more rigorous and effective. It ensures that there is no automatic pay progression.
- The curriculum offers a good range of interesting experiences. A broad range of visits, including a residential experience, and a wide range of motivating visitors enrich pupils' experiences well. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to extend their mathematical skills and know-how. Despite a positive emphasis on the nurturing of a love and enjoyment of reading in Key Stage 2. However, opportunities are missed in the early years and Key Stage 1 to ensure that there is a seamless progression in the way pupils learn to read and write. As a result, younger pupils do not develop reading fluency early enough or gain enough enjoyment from their reading.
- The school is firmly committed to ensure equality of opportunity for all pupils. It does not tolerate any form of discrimination and works assiduously to raise pupils' aspirations and self-esteem. Yet, pupils do not achieve equally across all ages, abilities and subjects.
- Primary school sport funding is used very successfully to promote healthy lifestyles and develop pupils' sporting skills. Consequently, participation rates in sport are high, including in teams and clubs. Improved staff coaching skills ensure that pupils are offered a wide range of sporting opportunities. Highly successful partnership working provides opportunities for pupils to develop more advanced skills. For example, for some in gymnastics this is leading to involvement in a scheme aimed at developing the next generation of Olympic champions.
- Pupil premium funding is used increasingly effectively to close the variable attainment gaps apparent in recent national tests. Gaps in achievement between disadvantaged pupils and the rest have now closed in reading and mathematics. A good range of enrichment activities is helping to broaden pupils' writing experiences and add to their enjoyment, for example, in the celebration of Remembrance Day.
- Positive links are maintained with parents. Despite the large measure of positive support in their responses to the online questionnaire, a few parents did raise concerns about behaviour. The checking of school records and observation of pupils in the classroom and at social times reveal that behaviour is usually sensible and responsible. However, at break and at lunchtime a small amount of play, such as when pupils were participating in a game of football, was observed as being a little robust at times.
- The local authority has an accurate view of the school's performance and has worked well with leaders, managers and governors since the opening, providing challenge and support in equal measure.
- Safeguarding and child protection arrangements meet requirements. Procedures and practice are securely established and much good practice is adopted in the day-to-day management, care and protection of pupils, especially those who are potentially vulnerable.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has displayed a great deal of commitment in the successful amalgamation of the two schools. Governor expertise has been much enhanced by local authority training. Governors check pupil performance information, the quality of teaching and learning and the impact of pupil premium funding regularly and closely. They ensure that performance management practice is robustly linked to classroom performance. As a result, they have an accurate view of the quality of teaching. They challenge senior and middle leaders and hold them to account for school performance. They are very aware of the strengths and shortcomings of the past performance of the two merged schools. Governors appreciate that the rigorous checking of pupils' performance and challenging external

monitoring are fundamental to ensuring that they make accurate judgements of school performance.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. In classrooms relationships with staff are usually of a high quality. Staff skilfully manage the few pupils with complex behavioural needs. This is the consequence of a positive school ethos and the high quality role models that are provided by staff. Consequently, classrooms are calm and busy places in which to work.
- In conversations pupils report that inappropriate behaviour in any form is infrequent. This is the result of clear-cut boundaries for pupils' conduct and well-embedded classroom routines. Pupils are willing and keen to learn. Now and then, at breaks and lunchtimes when pupils are outdoors, play can be a little over enthusiastic which can lead to occasional, needless, disputes and misunderstandings.
- Pupils are knowledgeable about bullying in its various forms. This includes the risks and dangers associated with the use of new technology. Pupils report that staff are usually on hand to share a worry or concern and are effective in quickly resolving any worries or concerns that pupils may have.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Good quality support and guidance are provided by staff to ensure that pupils learn how to identify risk and be safety conscious. Typically, pupils demonstrate sensible, thoughtful and considerate attitudes towards each other and to staff.
- The school provides good quality care and ensures that all pupils, including those who are potentially vulnerable, are kept safe and free from harm. In their responses to the online questionnaire almost all parents agreed that their children are kept safe.
- Pupils enjoy the busy and active school life and this is evident in their consistent pattern of above average attendance. The positive engagement of parents and the rigorous systems that are in place to check attendance, ensure that all absence is for genuine reasons.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Over time, teaching has not been consistently challenging or good enough to make certain that pupils with different starting points all achieve well, especially in the early years and Key Stage 1. Staff expectations of what each pupil can achieve are not always high enough. As a result, pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are not built upon fast enough. This is particularly the case in the teaching of phonics in the early years and Key Stage 1, which means pupils are not learning to read and write quickly and proficiently enough.
- In Key Stage 2, there are good examples of staff raising appreciably the level of challenge and the demands made of individual pupils. For example, in the current Year 6, four pupils have reached Level 6 in mathematics for the first time. Nevertheless, this level of challenge in pupils' learning is not a consistent feature of all teaching. Consequently, too few pupils exceed what is expected of them, especially in their reading and writing.
- Where pupils' progress is uneven and achievement not high enough:
 - opportunities are missed to add that essential spark to pupils' learning to quicken the rate of progress
 - tasks are not always demanding enough to develop knowledge and understanding at a fast rate
 - opportunities for pupils to practise speaking, listening, reading and writing are not used effectively
 - questioning does not always probe and stretch pupils' thinking and understanding enough.
- In learning where rates of progress are faster, more even and achievement higher:
 - activities are imaginatively planned to enliven and stretch pupils' thinking
 - good opportunities are provided to apply and practise their skills in all subjects, such as solving a murder mystery using fractions
 - real life problems and events that are provided encourage pupils to think critically, reason and draw conclusions. For example, in their reading and writing about the battlefields of Flanders
 - questioning constantly checks for and addresses any misunderstandings before moving pupils' learning on.
- The frequent marking of pupils' work is well embedded. Positive encouragement is provided and written

comments make clear to pupils what has been completed correctly and well. However, opportunities are missed to challenge inaccurate layout of work, correct errors and provide improvement guidance which adds to the level of challenge.

- Pupils with complex needs are provided with thoughtfully targeted support and help. This enables them to develop their essential personal skills and self-control well. Despite the encouraging climate that staff provide, the intervention and support programmes that are provided for those with special educational needs do not enable them to make consistently good progress, in areas including their reading, writing and mathematics.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Despite the positive action taken to improve the quality of teaching, achievement requires improvement, because pupils' progress remains too variable, particularly in the early years and Key Stage 1. For example, phonics skills are not developed quickly enough and attainment in reading and writing is not consistently high enough in Key Stage 1. This also has an impact on pupils' writing standards at the end of Year 6.
- In the most recent national screening check on phonics, just under a quarter of Year 1 pupils failed to reach the expected standard. Although this performance represents a big improvement on the 2014 check results, over time the teaching of essential skills to make sense of words is not systematic and effective enough in the early years and in Years 1 and 2.
- The latest test results at the end of Year 2 reveal that pupils' attainment in writing and mathematics is improving and is in line with national averages for 2014. Nevertheless, attainment in reading is not improving quickly and remains below expected level. This includes the most able pupils.
- Attainment in the current Year 6 national tests is above average in mathematics, average in reading and a little below average in writing. This is an improvement in reading and mathematics, but a slip in writing on the test results in 2014. Increasingly effective and occasionally inspiring teaching is quickening progress, especially in mathematics. Although the proportion of pupils exceeding expected progress is well above the national average in mathematics, it is not high enough in reading and writing.
- The most able pupils respond extremely well when their tasks are thought-provoking and fully engage their interest. This is evident in mathematics in Year 6, where a much higher proportion than found nationally have reached the highest level. In spite of improvements, most able pupils do not achieve the highest levels consistently enough throughout the school. For example, in Year 2 too few pupils achieve the highest level in reading, and in Year 6 too few achieve that level in writing.
- In the 2014 national tests at the end of Year 6, disadvantaged pupils were between one and two terms behind other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. Achievement gaps with their classmates were similar in writing and mathematics, but there was no gap in their reading. In the most recent Year 6 national tests, attainment gaps, both with other pupils' attainment nationally in 2014 and with their classmates, have been eliminated in reading and mathematics, but remain at over one term in writing. Consequently, the progress of the disadvantaged pupils requires improvement, particularly in their writing.
- Staff are working diligently to encourage pupils to read widely and often. Older pupils demonstrate a love and enjoyment of reading. In conversations, they reveal that they are well informed about themes and authors. However, younger pupils' fluency, accuracy and comprehension when reading is not improving quickly enough.

The early years provision

requires improvement

- Children enter the Reception with a wide variety of pre-school experiences and skills that are, overall, broadly typical for their age. Good progress is made acquiring early confidence and essential social and emotional skills in the happy, friendly atmosphere. However, in spite of year-on-year improvements in the proportion of children reaching the expected level for their age, achievement requires improvement, because not all children are well enough prepared for Year 1.
- The recent development of indoor and outdoor provision following the relocation of early years to a single site is helping to quicken children's progress and development in a range of learning. However, opportunities are missed for pupils to explore, investigate and follow their curiosity independently, especially when outdoors. Too few opportunities are provided for children, including the most able and those with special educational needs to practise their skills, such as reading, writing and number, when

outdoors.

- Teaching requires improvement. At times, adults do not check children’s thinking effectively enough or use questioning extend their learning. The development of children’s skills in blending letters and sounds together to encourage confident and accurate early reading is not systematic or effective enough. As a result, children’s progress is too modest.
- Behaviour is good. In all classroom environments there is a consistent emphasis upon fostering children’s self-control and adding to their confidence to complete tasks and follow routines. The extremely supportive and caring atmosphere, underpinned by the good relationships that staff have with children, nurtures their willingness and keenness to learn.
- Staff work tirelessly to complete regular observations and assessments of children’s learning and development. The positive engagement of parents ensures that they play a constructive and supportive role in their children’s learning and development.
- Competent leadership ensures that day-to-day organisation is effective. This makes sure that children are kept safe and well protected, whether indoors or outdoors. An increasingly sharp focus upon ensuring that assessments are accurate in all of the areas of children’s learning, is enabling staff to pinpoint shortfalls in their learning and development. This is informing activity planning more precisely, helping to create richer learning opportunities and more stimulating environments for independent learning and play.

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	114013
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	450008

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	280
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kathryn Barrass
Headteacher	Louise Lavelle
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	0191 410 2599
Fax number	0191 410 2599
Email address	oustonprimary@durhamlearning.net

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2014

