

Longhoughton Church of England First School

Longhoughton, Alnwick, Northumberland, NE66 3AJ

Inspection dates 18–19 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 attain standards which are above national expectations in all subjects because of the good progress they make. Effective support for pupils with special educational needs ensures they also make good progress.
- Those pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding reach standards similar to and sometimes above those of other pupils because of the good progress they make.
- Teachers know pupils very well and make learning interesting. As a result, pupils are enthusiastic about school and try hard. Behaviour is good and pupils feel safe.
- Teaching assistants support learning effectively. They give particularly sensitive guidance to pupils who find managing their own behaviour difficult.
- Pupils are very welcoming to the many new arrivals that come to the school during the course of the year.
- The headteacher and governors have created a strong team who work very closely together and are committed to providing the very best they can for each pupil.
- There are detailed systems in place for checking the work of the school and leaders know what needs to be done to improve. They take effective action to address shortcomings and this has a positive impact on teaching and achievement. Consequently, the school is improving.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Marking in books includes comments that tell pupils how to improve, but these are not always acted upon.
- Sometimes tasks are not hard enough to fully extend pupils' learning.
- In mathematics, pupils are not always clear about the next steps they need to take to improve.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed six lessons taught by five teachers. She also made several short visits to see pupils being taught reading skills in small groups.
- The inspector listened to pupils read in Years 1 and 4 and talked with groups of pupils about different aspects of school life.
- The views of 20 parents who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the school's own survey of parents were taken into account. The inspector also spoke informally to a small group of parents.
- The inspector held meetings with senior and middle leaders, five members of the governing body, and had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- The school's improvement plan, records of achievement, and documents relating to the monitoring of teaching, attendance and safeguarding were examined.
- The inspector scrutinised pupils' work in books, as part of displays around the school and photographs illustrating their learning.
- The inspector observed behaviour in and out of the classroom, including at lunchtime, and had discussions with pupils about behaviour, bullying and safety in the school.

Inspection team

Susan Waugh, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average sized first school.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage and speak English as their home language.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is above the national average. 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 who are looked after by the local authority. Almost half the school's population are children of services personnel and are eligible for the pupil premium. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average.
- The proportion of pupils who need extra help with their learning and are supported through school action is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who need extra help with their learning and are supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- Many more pupils than is the case nationally start or leave the school during their school career.
- The headteacher has a half-time teaching commitment.
- Care and education for children aged three is provided by Little Flyers, Searchers and Seekers and is located on the school site. It did not form part of the inspection and is subject to a separate inspection process.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and pupils' progress from good to outstanding, particularly in mathematics, by:
 - taking every opportunity to ensure that pupils are always given work that is hard enough to stretch their learning
 - ensuring that pupils are clear about the next steps they need to take to make progress in mathematics
 - giving pupils time to respond to written feedback in their books in all subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Most children begin school with skills and development typical for their age. They settle quickly, including those who begin school at different times, as a result of the warm and caring relationships they develop with adults. Adults know the children very well and help them to make good progress so that by the time they leave the Reception class they have reached standards which are above average.
- Good progress continues throughout Key Stage 1 and standards at the end of Year 2 are above average, although standards in mathematics are not as high as in reading and writing.
- Good progress is sustained as pupils move to the end of Year 4. Standards are above national expectations and rising as more pupils exceed the level expected for their age. Standards in reading and writing continue to be higher than those in mathematics. In mathematics, pupils are unclear about how to reach higher standards in order to accelerate their progress.
- Reading is strong in the school because pupils are encouraged to enjoy reading and discover different authors through events such as World Book Day and well-chosen topics such as 'Harry Potter'. Younger pupils learn to read quickly and confidently because they are taught their letters and sounds successfully and apply this knowledge to tackle harder words. Older pupils enthusiastically read books for pleasure as well as research.
- The most able pupils make good progress and the proportions of pupils who reach standards above the expected level are higher than average. A small number of pupils are reaching very high standards in reading normally expected in Year 6.
- Nearly all pupils eligible for pupil premium funding arrive and leave school at different times but the good systems the school has in place to help pupils settle and check their capabilities results in them making good progress overall. There are too few pupils known to be eligible for free school meals to make comparisons about the standards they reach. The success of pupils supported by the pupil premium demonstrates leaders and managers commitment to equality of opportunity and their careful use of funds to support pupils to achieve well.
- Pupils who have special educational needs are well supported to make good progress, either in class or in small groups, where they have the time and help to concentrate on learning the skills they find difficult.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is effective in ensuring pupils are eager to learn. Imaginative topics and themes capture pupils' interest and make them want to find out more. Year 2 pupils have instigated an impressive project to build a detailed and complex model of Grace Darling's rescue of shipwrecked sailors.
- Questions are used effectively to check pupils' understanding and to deepen their knowledge as they learn. For example, in mathematics in Year 3 questions drew out from pupils not only their answer but also their method of calculation. As a result, pupils learn from each other.
- When pupils are not clear or misunderstand what is being taught adaptations are made to clear up any confusion and help pupils develop their knowledge. For example in Year 1, pupils learning about number lines struggled to find the difference between two numbers so the task was adapted with further demonstration and pupils were able to complete the calculation successfully.
- Pupils make good progress because they understand what is expected of them. Demonstrations of new learning build up their knowledge gradually, such as in the Reception class when children had to think of a sentence to write and then transfer these thoughts into written form using their knowledge of letters and the sounds they make.
- Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils because they have a very good knowledge of the needs of individuals. They understand their role and successfully give pupils the

confidence to achieve and overcome any difficulties they may have.

- The most able pupils are generally given tasks that deepen their learning and make them apply their skills. As a result, the proportion of pupils reaching higher standards is increasing.
- Occasionally, pupils of all abilities could be set harder work or asked more difficult questions to fully stretch their learning. At times questions do not probe pupils' understanding deeply or the amount of writing expected of them is not enough.
- Pupils' work in books is marked regularly and, in writing, comments are made to indicate what they need to do next to make more progress. However, these comments are not always followed up. There are very few comments in mathematics books and pupils do not respond to them. As a result, pupils do not always learn from their errors.
- Pupils have a clear idea of the next step they need to take to improve their writing and use this to improve their skills. However, they are unsure of what they need to do to reach higher standards in mathematics and this hampers their progress in extending new skills.
- The teaching of reading skills and of number is effective because adults are clear about the learning they want to take place and they build pupils' knowledge rapidly through a range of well-chosen tasks.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. In the playground they play together harmoniously. Adults support the play and rarely have to intervene to resolve disputes. In lessons, pupils want to do well. They settle to work without fuss and take pride in what they have done, such as some recently completed play-scripts based on the story of the 'Gruffalo'.
- Many pupils join the school at times other than usual starting dates. These pupils settle quickly making friends easily because of the welcome they receive from other pupils and the support from 'buddies'.
- Lunchtimes are calm and sociable. Older pupils are keen to take responsibility and all admire and respect the head boy and head girl because of the extra responsibility they have and the example they set.
- Adults act as very good role models, showing respect and consideration to each pupil. The teamwork between adults and their frequent good humour and laughter adds to the relaxed and happy atmosphere.
- School records and the views expressed by parents and pupils confirm that behaviour is consistently good. Pupils understand what bullying is but cannot recall any instances of it taking place. They say that there is sometimes unkindness between pupils but this is quickly resolved by adults.
- A small number of pupils have difficulty managing their own behaviour. Exclusions are used rarely as a last resort and these pupils receive effective and sensitive support to help them overcome their difficulties. They are given firm boundaries so that the learning of others is not disrupted.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils show an appropriate understanding of how to avoid the risks associated with railways and the nearby sea. They are aware of the dangers of using the internet and know that people can pretend to be someone they are not on social networking sites.
- Pupils say they feel safe at school. They know that adults are always available to talk to because of the good relationships which exist.
- Policies and procedures to ensure pupils are safe are effective and adults know the procedures to follow in the event of any incident.
- Attendance is typically above average because pupils enjoy school. They arrive on time keen to see their teachers and friends.

The leadership and management are good

- A strong commitment to team work is very effectively fostered by school leaders. All share the same high aspirations for the school and willingly undertake additional responsibilities
- The headteacher sets high expectations and leads by example. Effective systems to check pupils' progress and the quality of teaching hold everyone to account for the quality of their work. Any difficulties are sensitively addressed and support is provided where it is needed. Teachers report that they are given good opportunities to improve their teaching.
- Middle leaders are effective. Their regular checks on teaching and achievement mean these leaders have an in depth understanding of their responsibilities. The introduction of initiatives to improve the quality of reading and mathematics are having a positive impact on raising attainment. Reading has gone from strength to strength. The initiatives to support mathematics are at an early stage of development and as a result, standards although above average are not yet as high as the other subjects.
- The curriculum is well adapted to support pupils to make good progress. They learn about the local area and further afield. The emphasis on ensuring pupils have good opportunities to develop their sporting skills means that the primary school sports funding has been used well. Years 1 and 2, for example, will have football coaching as part of the curriculum in the summer term 2014.
- Safeguarding meets requirements. Procedures and policies are followed and known by all staff.
- The school uses the partnerships it forges to good effect. For example, regular liaison with personnel on the local Royal Air Force base ensures that pupils' well-being is successfully supported. Partnerships with parents are strong. They are very supportive of the school and appreciate the individual care and attention their children receive.
- The local authority provides light touch support which school leaders have valued.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors' very good knowledge of the school and its performance means they plan effectively for the long term. This has enabled them to address efficiently the recent unexpected financial difficulties the school has experienced. Governors are aware of the quality of teaching and take action to secure the best quality teaching. They manage the performance of teachers well to ensure that pupils' achievement improves. Data on pupils' performance is analysed and questions raised if there are any concerns. Governors use their skills from different walks of life and the detailed knowledge they have about the school to offer appropriate challenge and ensure that the school helps every child succeed.

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	122277
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	431360

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	First
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	97
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Audrey Jamieson
Headteacher	Tracey Critchlow
Date of previous school inspection	23 April 2009
Telephone number	01665 577204
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