

Levendale Primary School

Mount Leven Road, Yarm, North Yorkshire, TS15 9RJ

Inspection dates 12–13 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Achievement is good. All groups of pupils make good progress from their different starting points.
- Teaching is good and at times outstanding. Teachers have supportive, friendly relationships with pupils.
- Pupils behave outstandingly well. They say that the school cares for them well and that they feel safe.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very strong and pupils regard their school as a real community. They are courteous and respectful to each other and to adults.
- Leaders and governors are very ambitious for the school and the pupils.
- The headteacher, ably supported by an effective leadership team, provides strong educational direction and is determined to continue improving the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Progress in writing is not as rapid as it is in reading and in mathematics.
- There are not enough lessons that are outstanding enabling pupils to make outstanding progress.
- Time is not always provided for pupils to improve their work after it has been marked by the teacher.
- The checks made on the progress pupils' make in writing could be more thorough.
- Pupils do not always have enough opportunities to become secure in their writing skills or practise their writing in other subjects.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 13 lessons, two of which were joint observations with the headteacher. Inspectors also heard pupils read in Years 2 and 5.
- They took account of 37 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and 20 questionnaires completed by the staff.
- They held meetings with two groups of pupils, including members of the school council and talked informally with pupils at break times and lunchtimes. Inspectors also talked with parents at the start of the school day, three members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. They also had discussions with leaders, including the special educational needs coordinator, the leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage and the leader of literacy.
- Inspectors observed the school at work and looked at a range of documentation, including internal and external data relating to pupils' progress, pupils' workbooks, school improvement planning and the school's procedures for gaining an accurate view of its own performance. They also considered minutes of governing body meetings, reports written by the local authority, safeguarding and child protection documents.

Inspection team

Peter Eeva, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Anne Firth

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those who are looked after by the local authority or from service families, is well below average.
- The proportion of pupils who are from minority ethnic backgrounds is very low and there are few who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is low.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or by a statement of special educational needs is low.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further increase the proportion of outstanding teaching in writing so that pupils' attainment in writing rises and is at least the same as in reading and mathematics by:
 - ensuring that all pupils are secure in their basic writing skills, including spelling, before moving on to more complicated work
 - making sure that pupils' progress in writing is as thoroughly checked as it is in reading and mathematics
 - giving pupils opportunities to respond to suggestions given to improve their work
 - making sure that work in other subjects provides opportunities for pupils to practise and consolidate their writing skills.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start school with skills that are typical for their age. They settle quickly into school routines in the Early Years Foundation Stage and make good progress in all aspects of their learning. This is because they are very well cared for and given interesting and enjoyable activities in which to take part.
- In Years 1 to 6, progress continues to be good particularly in mathematics and reading so that by the end of Year 6, pupils' standards are above those expected of their age. However, progress is slower in writing because pupils move onto new tasks without consolidating their basic writing skills or becoming familiar with their spellings before moving on to more complicated work. While they have a range of topics to write about in literacy lessons, they do not have enough opportunities to use their developing writing skills in other subjects. Although teachers are beginning to improve the checking of pupils' progress in writing, it is not yet as strong as it is in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils' progress in reading and mathematics is checked thoroughly throughout the school. If any gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills are identified, prompt action is taken to boost pupils' learning by providing extra support in class or out of class, individually or in small groups.
- The progress of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding, including those known to be eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority, is also good and there are no gaps between their performance and the performance of other pupils in the school in either English or mathematics. This is because of the extra support provided for them such as the small group and individual and one-to-one work.
- The school also provides additional support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs so they too make the same progress as others in the school.
- Younger children are taught well how to link letters to the sounds they make. This good start is built on in Key Stage 1 and pupils are becoming better readers. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils read widely and with confidence and enjoyment. They can talk positively about why they like certain authors.

The quality of teaching is good

- The very good relationships between staff and pupils ensure a productive atmosphere for learning. Teaching is good and sometimes outstanding in its impact on pupils' learning.
- Support staff play an effective role in helping disabled pupils and those with special educational needs both in class and in small groups to make good progress.
- The teachers' understanding of the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage ensures that they also make good progress. Resources, both inside and outside, are used successfully to extend children's skills.
- In Years 1 to 6, teachers expect pupils to achieve and behave very well and, as a result, lessons run smoothly. Pupils are keen to succeed and understand why learning is important. As one pupil put it, 'I need to learn because I want to get a good job when I grow up.'
- Mathematics is taught very well across the school and pupils are given plenty of opportunities to use their developing skills to solve intriguing problems. Teachers are skilled in helping pupils develop their reading and they provide sufficient time for pupils to read. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise their writing skills during the day other than in literacy lessons.
- Where teaching is outstanding teachers work very successfully to provide activities that make learning interesting and exciting. For example, a Year 5 class successfully created podcasts about the Olympic Games and then taught other pupils how to do it.
- Teachers mark work regularly and use a school-wide system to let pupils know where they have

been successful and what to do to improve. At times, pupils do not have the opportunity to make these improvements before they move on to new learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Behaviour is typically very good and often exemplary. In lessons, pupils behave very well because they understand it will help them to learn.
- Pupils say that bullying is very rare and parents and staff agree. All say that if it happened it would be dealt with quickly and fairly.
- Pupils are unfailingly polite and courteous and are eager to talk about their school of which they are very proud. Different groups of pupils provided excellent company at lunchtime as well as lots of information about their school.
- Pupils are very confident and want to achieve well. They respond extremely well to the many opportunities provided for them to take on school responsibilities. These include being a member of the school council, an ambassador or helping out around the school. Because Year 6 were away from the school on a residential trip, Year 5 eagerly seized the opportunities to take their place and did so most effectively.
- Most parents are sure that the school provides a safe environment and that pupils enjoy school and behave very well. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep safe. They recognise dangers when using the internet and know how to avoid these problems.
- Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in the above average attendance and their punctuality at the start of the school day.
- Pupils benefit from a rich curriculum and a wide range of after-school clubs and activities. They particularly enjoy the range of sporting opportunities and the school choir.
- The school has effective systems for managing pupils' behaviour and disruption to learning is very rare. There have been no permanent exclusions in recent years.

The leadership and management are good

- The school is well led by an effective and determined headteacher supported by an equally determined leadership team.
- Thorough and detailed tracking in reading and mathematics reveal where there are gaps in pupils' achievement. Where pupils are falling behind, staff take prompt action to help them catch up. In the past, this has been less effective in writing and the school has recently introduced new measures to make tracking as effective as it is in reading and mathematics.
- Staff performance targets help to support improvements in teaching. Staff have access to a range of training and, as a result, are able to improve their skills. Pay increases are not awarded unless performance over time shows that teachers have met their targets.
- The school has an accurate view of its strengths and areas for development and this has resulted in a wide-ranging plan for improving the school. Recent actions have begun to result in improvements in writing which leaders are resolute in sustaining.
- The school attaches significant importance to the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding and these are strengths of the school. Pupils were delighted to see in an assembly, how the funds they had raised have been used to build a house in Mexico City for a disadvantaged family.
- The school values all pupils as individuals. It successfully removes any barriers to learning and tackles any form of discrimination and, as a result, all groups of pupils do equally well. All staff are committed to promoting equality of opportunity and all pupils have equal access to the curriculum and to different after-school clubs and activities.
- Safeguarding and child-protection policies and practice meet current requirements.
- The local authority provides a light-touch support which is appreciated by the school.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The school benefits from an effective governing body that knows the school very well and provides a good level of challenge and support. Through the governing body and sub-committee meetings, governors receive information which allows them to check on and compare pupils' achievements. Governors are kept informed about all aspects of school life, in particular about the quality of teaching. Governors are familiar with the Teachers' Standards and use them to help manage teachers' performance. They oversee the spending of pupil premium funding and are aware of the positive impact this is having on pupils' achievement.
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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	111566
Local authority	Stockton-on-Tees
Inspection number	412209

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	246
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Martin Morgan
Headteacher	Sandra Jones
Date of previous school inspection	9 December 2008
Telephone number	01642 783684
Fax number	01642 783684
Email address	levendale.school@stockton.gov.uk

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