

Ellingham Church of England Aided Primary School

Ellingham, Chathill, Northumberland NE67 5ET

Inspection dates

12–13 December 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher sets a clear vision for the school, which is shared by all staff and governors. Leaders know the school's strengths and they identify and address any weaknesses promptly. Consequently, the school is improving well.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are extremely positive. The strong Christian ethos permeates the work of the school and contributes to pupils' strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils are proud of their achievements and are eager to try their best. Behaviour is good and there are very few incidents of poor behaviour. Pupils say that they feel safe and there is a trusted adult in whom they can confide should they need to.
- Governors provide effective support and challenge. They ensure that the school provides value for money and check leaders' effectiveness regularly.
- The school's development plan is detailed and identifies the correct priorities for improvement. However, impact measures are not linked precisely to the desired gains in pupils' outcomes.
- Children in the early years get off to a good start in their learning. An above-average proportion of children reach a good level of development by the end of Reception, with increasing proportions exceeding this.
- Pupils achieve well due to effective teaching. They make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics, with the vast majority of pupils reaching the expected standard. Almost half of all pupils achieve the higher standards in reading and mathematics. This is above that found nationally.
- New approaches to the teaching of writing are increasing the proportion of pupils who achieve highly. However, these approaches are not embedded consistently in all year groups.
- Disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities make good progress because additional funding to support them is used effectively.
- Pupils benefit from a wide range of enrichment opportunities that supplement the curriculum. Leaders prioritise enhancing pupils' enquiry skills whenever possible. Leaders acknowledge such opportunities are inconsistent, particularly in Years 5 and 6.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that impact measures within the school's development plan are directly linked to pupils' outcomes, so that actions taken can be evaluated accurately
 - developing the school's curriculum so that pupils, particularly in Years 5 and 6, receive increasing opportunities to apply and develop their skills of enquiry across different subjects consistently, and in keeping with the school's ethos.
- Improve teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - recently introduced approaches to the teaching of writing are used consistently in all year groups
 - the teaching of spelling, grammar and punctuation is focused to allow pupils to successfully apply their skills to their independent writing.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher has worked tirelessly since the last inspection to raise staff expectations of what pupils can achieve, to good effect. All staff and governors now share the same high aspirations for the future, particularly as the school embarks upon its first full year as a primary school. At the same time, the headteacher has managed the appointment of several new members of staff this school year effectively.
- Leaders' self-evaluation is accurate and is based upon the effective analysis of the school's own assessment information. As a result, leaders including governors, know precisely the school's strengths and areas for further improvement.
- The school development plan reflects the correct areas for improvement. It is a detailed document that lists the appropriate actions needed to secure further improvement. Leaders identify 'impact measures' against which to measure success but these are not linked precisely to the desired gains in pupils' outcomes. As a result, leaders, including governors, are unable to evaluate fully the impact of actions taken on pupils' learning and progress.
- Leaders, including governors, monitor the work of the school regularly. A planned programme of work scrutiny and lesson observation ensures that any required improvements are embedded into practice effectively.
- Middle leaders are equally clear about the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects. They are fully involved in monitoring the effectiveness of their work and ensure that they give colleagues feedback in a timely manner. As a result, they have a good understanding of what more needs to be done to secure further improvement.
- Performance management processes are in place and extend to all staff. Extensive training and development, with an expectation that staff will be proactive in determining their own training needs, support this.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Careful consideration is given to the experiences pupils receive to enrich their learning. These experiences are further enhanced by the many and varied visits and opportunities pupils receive to promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development successfully.
- Leaders have a very clear vision of the knowledge and skills they wish to promote, beyond English and mathematics. A strong focus upon nurturing pupils' awareness of, and respect for their environment and developing pupils' skills of enquiry, are the guiding principles of curriculum planning. While there are pockets of exceptional practice, evident within pupils' books, this is not yet consistent. Leaders acknowledge that as they move to a two-year cycle of study to accommodate pupils in Years 5 and 6, this is an area for improvement.
- Since the last inspection, the local authority and diocese have offered the school considerable support and facilitated links with outstanding regional providers. This has paid dividends and supported improvements to the quality of teaching and learning effectively. Leaders continue to use these links to access additional training and to support them in moderating their assessments of pupils' learning successfully.

- Although there are very few disadvantaged pupils in the school, the additional pupil premium funding is well targeted at providing academic and emotional support for these pupils. Additional training for staff is planned to help them to gain a greater awareness of precisely how to target the support they provide. As a result disadvantaged pupils achieve as well as their peers in school.
- Although very few pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are able to reach the expected standard, leaders make effective use of additional funding to support these pupils. Leaders seek the support of external agencies when required to create learning plans for pupils, which they regularly review and adapt. This helps to ensure that teaching is appropriate and sharply focused on helping these pupils to make good progress from their often very low starting points.
- Leaders use the primary physical education (PE) and sports premium funding successfully to employ sports coaches, whose work is building teachers' skills and knowledge to teach PE more effectively. The funding is also used to engage pupils in a raft of sporting events and to improve their participation in outdoor pursuits.

Governance of the school

- The review of governance recommended at the time of the previous inspection has strengthened the work of the governing body considerably. Governors now use their skills to complete their specific roles in monitoring the work of the school effectively. Their reports are detailed and identify those things that are working well and those areas of practice that need to improve.
- Newly appointed governors bring a range of skills and experiences that enhance the work of the governing body further. Governors continue to access training to ensure that they are knowledgeable in the ways they can challenge and support the school's improvement. Minutes of the governing body meetings reflect the increased challenge school leaders now receive and respond to.
- Governors seek external verification of the school's effectiveness from local authority and diocesan reports alongside their own reviews of the school's work. This strengthens their understanding of the impact of the school's work further.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders including governors ensure that newly appointed staff undergo stringent vetting procedures to ensure that all adults who work with children in the school are fit to do so.
- Staff receive regular and appropriate training to ensure that they are kept up to date with the government's most recent legislation. All staff are fully aware of the important role they play in keeping children safe.
- Named safeguarding governors visit the school frequently to check that staff follow the agreed systems and procedures for safeguarding and health and safety. Their findings are reported to the full governing body and any outstanding issues are dealt with in a

timely manner. They have managed the building project for the school's new hall safely and effectively.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers create an excellent climate for learning, with all pupils engaged in their work. Lessons are calm and purposeful and characterised by positive working relationships. Pupils are clear about what is expected of them and comply with requests from staff quickly.
- Teachers help pupils to understand how to improve their work. Feedback over time provides pupils with clear next steps for improvement, which enables pupils to make progress. The schools assessment policy is used consistently by teachers and has a positive impact on pupils' progress.
- The teaching of mathematics has strengthened and there is now a focus upon developing pupils' reasoning and problem-solving skills. This has improved pupils' confidence in tackling more demanding mathematics tasks. Daily mental arithmetic checks are improving pupils' recall of mathematical facts. Leaders acknowledge that pupils need to receive more variance in the way mathematical tasks are presented and more opportunities to work on extended problems over time.
- Handwriting is taught effectively. A standard script is taught across the school, which means that work in pupils' books is well presented. This is commonplace in all year groups and subjects and is demonstrative of the pride pupils take in their work.
- Leaders have introduced a new approach to the teaching of writing. Quality texts are chosen as a stimulus for pupils' writing. Teachers highlight important spelling and grammatical rules that pupils practise before effectively applying them to their own writing. Occasionally, some of the spelling and grammar activities, while age appropriate, are taught out of sequence and pupils are unable to apply them appropriately to their own writing. Leaders acknowledge that the new approach needs to be consistently applied by all teachers.
- Leaders have also introduced a systematic approach to the teaching of phonics. It makes a strong contribution to the pupils' outcomes in the Year 1 phonic screening checks. Additional support is provided for those pupils who are unable to acquire the required skills by the end of Year 1. Consequently by the end of Year 2, all pupils have achieved the standard successfully.
- Leaders instil in pupils a love of reading. Pupils are avid readers who talk enthusiastically about their favourite characters and authors they particularly enjoy. Teachers use this as a positive base on which to build wider comprehension skills. As a result pupils across the school make good progress in their reading.
- The teaching of subjects beyond English and mathematics is developing strongly. There are pockets of excellence, where teachers plan activities in great detail to provide opportunities for pupils to develop their skills of enquiry. For example, older pupils developed their geography fieldwork skills from a 'key' question posed that challenged pupils to discover the flow of the river. Pupils completed this line of enquiry

with great detail and enthusiasm. However, this is not yet commonplace in all topics studied.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils thrive in this inclusive and welcoming school. Pupils are well cared for and say that they feel safe. The vast majority of parents endorse this view. Bullying is very rare. Pupils told the inspector: 'It doesn't happen here and the teachers would sort it if it did.'
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, particularly when using the internet. A group of older pupils are 'digital leaders' whose job it is to support the younger pupils access the internet and use the computers safely.
- Pupils have a strong understanding of their role in protecting the environment and being ambassadors for the future of the planet. The school has held 'Eco School Green Flag Status' for several years; the activities involved in this support pupils' knowledge and understanding of their environment.
- The interesting curriculum and the many enrichment activities on offer ensure that staff prepare pupils increasingly well for life beyond school in today's modern Britain.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school and is supported by the strong Christian ethos that permeates all aspects of the school's work.
- Pupils are developing their skills of resilience and how to be successful learners. Younger pupils are coming through with effective learning characteristics. However, leaders acknowledge that some of the older pupils lack the confidence needed to 'have a go' and need more gentle encouragement to take risks in their learning.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils work very well together and their behaviour plays an important role in the success of lessons. Pupils are proud ambassadors for their school and have a very clear understanding of the school's expectations of their behaviour.
- Exclusions are rare. Any incidents of poor behaviour are low-level and usually the result of silliness. All incidents, no matter how trivial, are recorded and leaders' actions show that they are handled sensitively and appropriately.
- Attendance overall is broadly in line with the national average for primary schools. However, persistent absenteeism is high, particularly for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. This is due to flexible home schooling arrangements agreed by the local authority. Actions are being taken to tackle this anomaly.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' outcomes over time have improved, with more pupils, particularly the most able, attaining at the higher standard in reading, writing and mathematics than at the time of the last inspection.
- Outcomes in the Year 1 phonics screening check compare favourably to that found nationally. By the time pupils leave Year 2 all pupils have reached the required standard.
- Outcomes have been equally positive in key stage 1 and were above national averages at both the expected and higher standard in 2016, in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2017, outcomes dipped slightly, but this is directly linked to the number of pupils within the small cohort who join part way through the key stage. However, for those pupils who have always been at the school, outcomes are stronger.
- The school's own assessment information indicates that the vast majority of pupils are currently making good progress from their starting points and this is consistent in most year groups across the school. When this is occasionally not the case, it is again due to the high number of pupils who join the cohort part-way through their education.
- Increasing proportions of pupils, particularly the most able pupils, are achieving at the higher standard. In most year groups almost half of every cohort is working at the higher standard in reading and mathematics. Work seen in pupils' books would support this. However, pupils' outcomes at the higher standard in writing are less consistent.
- Very few pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities reach either the expected or higher standards. However, leaders' detailed tracking system and careful assessment of needs mean that these pupils are making good progress against their targets and when compared to the progress other pupils in the school make.
- Very few pupils qualify for the government's additional pupil premium grant. This makes any comparison to national averages unreliable. However a raft of additional intervention activities is in place to ensure that any pupils at risk of falling behind in their learning are able to catch up quickly and effectively.
- The summer term of 2018 will be the first year for pupils taking national assessment tests in Year 6. The work in pupils' books currently endorses leaders' expectations that outcomes will be above the national averages for 2017.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years leader has a strong understanding of the developmental needs of very young children. Planning is tailored accordingly and ensures that there is good coverage of the early years curriculum and a clear progression in children's learning. As a result, children flourish and make good progress from their starting points.
- Children enter school with skills typical for their age and stage of development. By the time they leave Reception class, most children achieve a good level of development, with increasing proportions of pupils exceeding that which is expected. As such, children are well prepared for learning in Year 1.

- Staff set up interesting activities for children to explore both inside and outdoors. These are well considered and are based upon adults' observations and assessments of children. As a result children are absorbed in their learning and able to sustain their interests over time.
- Children play together well and are happy and enjoy learning about their environment. Older children enable the youngest children to settle quickly into school. All children are encouraged to be respectful of one another and of the world around them and are nurtured to be responsible citizens. One boy who was in his 'bird hide' told the inspector: 'Ssh you have to be quiet in the bird house or you'll frighten the birds away!'
- Staff use questioning effectively to clarify children's misconceptions. However, they do not use their questioning to extend children's thinking consistently.
- 'Learning journals' record the many interesting and engaging experiences had by children. However, teachers' dialogue within them is descriptive rather than explaining the learning that has taken place and its impact.
- Leaders have made links with several outstanding nursery providers to help to improve their practice and secure accurate assessments at Ellingham. Leaders are keen to maintain these links to support further improvements. This bodes well for the future.

School details

Unique reference number	122289
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	10036552

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	74
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Eileen Duncan
Headteacher	Diane Lakey
Telephone number	01665 589 233
Website	www.ellinghamfirstschool.co.uk
Email address	admin@ellingham.northumberland.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	November 2015

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school. It has grown in size since the time of the last inspection and is now a primary school, catering for pupils aged three to 11 years. Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is just above that found nationally.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is smaller than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who start or leave the school at times other than the usual transition times is higher than the national average.
- More than half of the staff are new to the school since the last inspection.

- This is the first school year where the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6, will apply.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed the quality of teaching and learning across all classes, including observing some lessons jointly with the headteacher. The inspector looked at pupils' work, listened to pupils read and talked to them about their learning and their experiences at school.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and middle leaders. The inspector talked with governors, including the chair and vice-chair of the governing body, and representatives from the local authority and diocese.
- The inspector evaluated a wide range of school documents, including the school's development plan, the school's self-evaluation, information on pupils' outcomes, records of the checks made on the quality of teaching and a range of documentation relating to safeguarding and attendance.
- Account was taken of the 45 parental responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, the 15 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and the 20 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

Inspection team

Diane Buckle, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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