

Inspection of a good school: Durham Newton Hall Infants' School

Langley Road, Newton Hall, Durham DH1 5LP

Inspection dates:

5–6 November 2019

Outcome

Durham Newton Hall Infants' School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love their small, friendly school. Everyone I met said they would recommend it. Pupils say that their teachers work hard to 'make learning fun'. Parents confirmed pupils' views. One remarked, 'Teachers go above and beyond to make this school amazing.'

Pupils behave very well. They are polite, kind and helpful. They show care and respect when working and playing together. They are not concerned about bullying but say that, if it did happen, teachers would deal with it immediately. All pupils say that if they have a worry, there are adults they can talk to.

Staff want all pupils to do as well as they can. Pupils achieve exceptionally well in reading and writing. Teachers organise many opportunities for pupils to learn beyond the classroom. During my visit, pupils in Year 2 were visiting a local museum to learn about space travel.

The school offers a range of extra-curricular clubs. Pupils enjoy multi-skills, Hoopstarz, French, Spanish, choir and gardening.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders are passionate about promoting a love of reading. From when children start in Reception, there is a strong focus on the knowledge they need for early reading. Staff are well trained in teaching phonics. Pupils respond well. They use their phonics skills to sound out new words. By the end of Year 2, pupils read well and with confidence. They have a good understanding of what they have read. A much greater proportion of pupils than the national average meets or exceeds the national assessment expectations at the end of Year 2. All pupils have reading journals and are encouraged to read at home. One boy was keen to tell me that he reads at least three times a day! Pupils talk with excitement about a range of books. They can explain what their favourites are and why. Overall, books chosen by teachers are well-matched to the ability of the pupils.

Reading is used well to support writing and this is also an area of strength. In Year 1 pupils read 'Room on the Broom' with their teachers. They designed a broom and wrote about where they would travel to on it. The writing produced was well structured and neat. Pupils were keen to show me how well they could use capital letters, spaces and full stops.

The quality of education in mathematics is not as consistently strong across the school. In a few classes time is not used effectively. Sometimes, the most able and lower-ability pupils do not have work that is matched well enough to what they already know. The leader for mathematics is clear about what needs to be done to improve pupils' achievement in mathematics.

Extra money, which is given by the government for sport, is well used to support an exciting physical education (PE) curriculum. Pupils are rightly proud of their gold sports mark award. They have excellent opportunities each week to practise and improve their PE skills.

Leaders are keen that all pupils remember what they have learned in a wide range of subjects. They are looking carefully at what pupils learn and in what order. In some subjects, the curriculum is now well planned, helping pupils retain knowledge. In others, such as history and geography, it is still being developed. Leaders have identified that curriculum leaders need time and support to carry out their roles effectively.

Teachers are skilled in their support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They meet with parents regularly to discuss what pupils know and what they need to learn next. Leaders make sure pupils with SEND can participate in all aspects of school life. Pupils who are new to the English language are given the right support to gain new knowledge quickly.

The new acting headteacher leads by example. All of her work is focused on providing the best for every pupil. Staff describe a renewed 'energy' and 'enthusiasm' around the school. Staff are proud to work at the school and they are committed to its vision and values.

Governors bring a wide range of skills to the support and challenge they give to school leaders. They know the school and local community well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that safeguarding is high priority. Checks on new staff are carried out thoroughly. Regular safeguarding training is provided for all staff. Every staff meeting begins with a safeguarding update. This ensures that staff are aware of the needs of any vulnerable pupils. The headteacher works with external agencies to target support where it is most needed.

Leaders have ensured that pupils have a strong awareness of how to stay safe. Pupils were able to tell me about road safety, staying safe while using the internet and the danger of talking to strangers.

Parents are highly complimentary about the care their children receive. All of those who responded on Ofsted Parent View agree that their children feel safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some of the most able and lower-ability pupils do not consistently achieve as well as they could in mathematics. The mathematics curriculum needs to include clearer sequence and progression. Leaders should provide training to ensure that all staff know how to plan tasks that are appropriately matched to what pupils already know.
- Further development of the broader curriculum is required so that it meets the needs of the pupils in all subjects. Senior leaders need to work with curriculum leaders to ensure that learning in subjects like history and geography is coherently planned and sequenced. They should continue developing the confidence and skills of class teachers in all subjects.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged Durham Newton Hall Infants' School to be good on 29 February 2016.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	114134
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10110779
Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	164
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Ronald B R Ward
Headteacher	Lynne Frazer
Website	www.durhamnewtonhall.durham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	12–13 October 2010

Information about this school

- The acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher both took up post in September 2019.
- The school is smaller than the average-size primary school.
- The majority of pupils are of white British heritage. Other pupils are from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average.

Information about this inspection

- I examined a range of documents, including: information about pupils' attainment, school improvement plans, self-evaluation information, curriculum planning and staff training records.
- I checked the school's safeguarding policies and procedures and the school's single central record. I met with leaders, staff, pupils and governors to check how effective safeguarding is in school.
- I spoke with parents at the start of each day.

- I met with the chair of the governing body and three other governors.
- I spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils from Year 2 where we discussed behaviour/safety and the curriculum. I talked informally with pupils around school.
- I considered the 16 responses to Ofsted Parent View, including 10 free-text comments. In addition, 11 responses from Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff were considered as were 24 responses to Ofsted's online pupil questionnaire.
- I held meetings with the acting headteacher, acting deputy headteacher, and curriculum leaders for English, mathematics and PE. I discussed provision for pupils with SEND with the headteacher, who is also the SEND coordinator. I met with staff to talk about their workload and well-being.
- Subjects considered in depth as part of this inspection were reading, mathematics and PE. I undertook a detailed scrutiny of pupils' work in these subjects alongside curriculum leaders. I talked to pupils about their learning and heard pupils read. I visited all classes.

Inspection team

Richard Knowles, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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