

# Eslington Primary School

Hazel Road, Gateshead NE8 2EP and Rose Street NE8 2LS

## Inspection dates

14–15 March 2017

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Outstanding</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Outstanding</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Outstanding</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Outstanding</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school

- Determined, visionary leadership has sustained the strengths noted at the time of the previous inspection and driven further improvement in all aspects of the school's work. Consequently, pupils thrive and make great progress in their learning, behaviour and in their social and emotional development.
- Highly analytical and reflective leaders leave no stone unturned in identifying and then tackling things that are not as strong as they should be. For example, strident action is taken to ensure that all teaching is as good as the best. Weaknesses in writing last year have been sorted out quickly by the improved, whole-school approach.
- Teachers and staff are highly trained in order to identify and then meet the complex needs of their pupils, many of whom are in-year admissions. Pupils settle in quickly and readily embrace the school's rules, the four R's (respect, ready to learn, responsibility and resilience).
- Thorough assessments of pupils' abilities and personal qualities on entry into school and regular assessments of pupils' work enable teachers to provide personalised plans for all pupils. Specific targets are set to tackle previous barriers or gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding and ensure that pupils succeed in their learning. This is because leaders make certain that the additional funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is very well spent.
- Disadvantaged pupils and pupils who are looked after by the local authority achieve as well as their peers. This is due to the personalised approach to meeting their needs, teachers' high expectations and the 'can-do' attitude that permeates the school.
- Pupils are safe and secure in this nurturing school. They speak movingly of the tangible improvements in their learning, behaviour, confidence and self-esteem. They say that staff at Eslington care for them and they 'are the best'. Pupils' enjoyment of school can be seen in the transformation of their attendance rates, which are above average.
- Pupils recuperate quickly from their previous unsatisfactory school experiences and move on very well in all aspects of their learning and development. They benefit from a rich curriculum that also focuses on improving their basic skills rapidly. Pupils are well prepared for the next steps in their education and to be responsible citizens in modern Britain today.
- Governors share leaders' passion to do the best for their pupils. They know the school well and challenge leaders robustly about the impact of their work. They regularly check the progress of individual pupils, disadvantaged pupils and those looked after by the local authority. Action is being taken to enable them to check the progress of different year groups more easily.

## **Full report**

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Refine existing systems so that governors can keep a check on the overall progress made by the pupils in each year group and how that rate of progress compares to that of others across the school.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Outstanding

- Leaders, staff and governors share a passion and ambition to give pupils the best possible start in life and to reinvigorate pupils' love of learning following often very unsatisfactory experiences in their previous schools. This has ensured a relentless and successful focus on tackling the one weakness identified at the previous inspection and in driving further improvement in all aspects of the school's work.
- The development of an additional site and a near doubling of the number of pupils attending Eslington in the past 18 months have not diverted leaders from their ambition. The culture of care, support and the high expectations they have of each other, staff and pupils have remained at the heart of the school's success. Parents speak highly of the difference the school has made to their children's education, well-being and behaviour. The school lives out its motto with gusto, 'we aim high, we aim together'.
- The executive headteacher has ensured high levels of accountability, balanced with a culture of team working and support. She has melded a strong team of senior leaders, middle leaders and staff, all of whom are clear about what is expected of them and who carry out their roles with enthusiasm and vigour. Staff are highly trained with additional or higher-level professional qualifications linked to the specific special educational needs and/or disabilities of the pupils. The impact of this can be seen in the very skilled strategies which staff use to manage pupils' behaviour, the high-quality teaching and the rapid progress that pupils make in their learning.
- Leaders have grappled with the wide inconsistencies in information they receive about pupils' achievements from their previous schools. This is as a result of changes nationally in primary school assessment procedures and because many pupils have been out of school for long periods before arriving at Eslington. A thorough system has been developed to assess pupils' abilities on entry and then to track their learning, behaviour and personal development regularly. Such information is used carefully by teachers to plan work that tackles gaps in pupils' learning quickly and moves them on productively to their next steps.
- Information from assessments, regular reviews of teaching and analysis of pupils' books enable leaders to keep a close eye on the quality of teaching and learning and how well pupils are achieving. Leaders take strident action should any pupil start slipping behind or if teaching is not as good as the best. Targeted, individual support makes sure any slips are temporary. The most able pupils are challenged to succeed. For example, a pupil with skills in science takes part in lessons in a local secondary school.
- Very close partnership working with agencies, including occupational, speech and language or play therapists and educational psychologists, ensures that the right professional support is secured for pupils whose physical, social or emotional needs require it. Their work complements the therapeutic work taking place from the school's psychotherapist to tackle any barriers so that pupils can access learning successfully.
- The newly developed curriculum is very strong and designed to be motivational and enticing to pupils and to broaden their horizons. It is meticulously planned to meet

pupils' specific needs and interests and to develop pupils socially and emotionally. The curriculum is enriched by many activities within and beyond the school day.

- The promotion of pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is embedded strongly across all that the school does. This is also the case for the development of the qualities which pupils need to be successful, active citizens in modern Britain today. Charity work, community-based learning, assemblies and visits out of school build pupils' confidence, resilience and thoughtfulness. Visits to local art galleries, mosques, synagogues, churches, a Hindu temple and the school's many musical activities enrich pupils' understanding and respect for cultures, religions and communities different to their own. Vibrant displays on the environment, world resources, race, democracy, equality and world religions highlight the diversity of pupils' current study.
- Leaders use the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils diligently, making sure that any barrier to pupils' learning, behaviour, social or emotional development is tackled well. An equally thorough approach has been developed for the use of the sports premium funding. Activities such as the 'daily mile', dance, gymnastics, swimming, football coaching and the use of a local sports hall are just a few examples of the range of activities that whet pupils' appetites for sport and develop their skills, teamwork and competencies fruitfully.
- Arrangements to manage staff performance are robust. Staff have challenging targets to meet that are set against the national teachers' standards. The high expectations leaders have for staff are fully embraced by them because all are determined to help pupils get the best deal possible, no matter how short their time might be in school. Staff are highly motivated and work together expertly as a team. They welcome the additional challenge from the local authority's adviser that keeps them on their toes.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governors know the school very well and visit often. They have developed their skills of scrutiny and challenge as the school has developed and grown since the last inspection. They support and hold leaders to account effectively through their committee and full governing body meetings. Governors are fully involved in developing and then reviewing the school's action plans and evaluations of the school's work. Governors have a good understanding of the use of the pupil premium, including that for pupils who are looked after by the local authority. They check the impact of the additional funding regularly through talking to the pupils, and analysing the headteacher's reports on these pupils' progress, attendance and behaviour.
- The school is small and governors receive detailed information on every pupil and check their achievements carefully. The recent assessment system has not enabled them to draw conclusions about the achievements of different year groups. Leaders are already working to tackle this weakness.
- Governors ensure that they fulfil their statutory duties and are particularly thorough in checking the school's safeguarding procedures. All are fully trained in line with the most recent government guidance and they ensure that safeguarding policies and procedures are implemented robustly. The safeguarding governor carries out his role assiduously by checking on all aspects of health and safety and ensuring that recruitment procedures are thorough.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The safety of pupils is paramount and a culture of safety and care permeates all of the school's work and actions. Very effective systems are in place to respond to any pupils who may be at risk of harm. Timely and, where necessary, persistent referrals are made to appropriate agencies and detailed records capture the actions taken. All staff are trained in the most up-to-date safeguarding requirements and are vigilant in identifying and reporting any cause for concern, for example risks from social media, sexting, child sexual exploitation, extremist behaviour and from neglect or domestic violence. The investment in two family support workers has enhanced the collaborative and supportive work with families in times of crisis. They work with a wide range of agencies to secure professional help for pupils who are at risk or in need. They also respond quickly to any pupils who do not turn up at school or when families suddenly move from the area.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Outstanding

- Consistent strengths include the superb relationships developed between staff and pupils and the expert way that staff manage the complex needs and behaviours of pupils. Staff use their skills and strategies to help pupils get ready for learning as soon as pupils enter class. Any pupil starting to have a difficult time is identified immediately, then supported quietly and discreetly to help them get back to their work quickly. Others in the class rarely notice. Consequently, lessons are calm and purposeful and pupils respond willingly to the high expectations which adults have of them. Pupils are desperate to please and achieve their carefully planned learning targets.
- Teachers go out of their way to make lessons engaging so past reluctant learners can take a full part and achieve their very precise individual targets and objectives. High-quality teaching contributes successfully to pupils' positive attitudes in class. Teachers display strong subject knowledge and use perceptive questions to probe pupils' understanding and challenge them to think for themselves and articulate their views.
- The high expectations which teachers have of pupils' application to learning are evident in pupils' English, mathematics and creative curriculum books (these cover the rest of the curriculum). Books show pupils are highly productive in lessons and no time is wasted. Teachers provide detailed feedback on how well pupils are doing and what their next target needs to be. Their careful focus on pupils' spelling and grammar across the curriculum helps to eradicate common errors or previously learned poor habits.
- The teaching of reading, reading comprehension and writing is systematic. Past weaknesses in writing have been tackled through a whole-school approach. Themes energise pupils and gain their interest in a subject that many found difficult in their previous schools. Currently, the 'magic finger' is giving pupils the confidence and interest to develop longer pieces of writing and prose. Wide ranging, interesting reading and library books are used to encourage a love of reading in pupils. Pupils who struggle with reading are well taught to build unfamiliar words and develop their

sentence-making well. Older pupils are challenged to choose complex texts. Pupils talk enthusiastically to adults and visitors about what they are reading.

- Interesting and engaging wall displays showcase the very broad curriculum that pupils are taught, and the wide range of activities that pupils take part in. They also model the high expectations the school has of pupils' written work and achievements. This can be seen in the most recent high-quality displays of pupils' poetry work at Rose Street. As in reading and writing, there is a consistent and systematic approach to the teaching of mathematics. Such strategies ensure that any gaps in pupils' learning are tackled so that they can move on to study and gain a greater depth of understanding.
- Homework is regular, embedded across the curriculum plan and is project-based. This motivates pupils, actively involves parents in their children's learning at home and maximises opportunities for pupils to consolidate their learning and develop the habits of study and application they will need as they move through school.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Outstanding

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. It lies at the heart of the school's success in reigniting pupils' application to learning, self-belief, confidence and resilience. Parents speak compellingly about how staff go out of their way to support their children and are confident that their children are very safe and well cared for. They speak movingly of how pupils are welcomed and learn to enjoy school and achieve highly after some very difficult previous experiences.
- The start of the day is enriching and inspirational. Shared breakfast, communal activities, and stirring 'school songs' set the tone for the rest of the day. Pupils thrive in this harmonious and nurturing community. They develop very trusting and respectful relationships with staff and with each other. Pupils wear their uniforms with pride, try hard to please and are super ambassadors for their school.
- Pupils report that they feel very safe. They can turn to any adult with any problem, 'even from home', and know staff will listen and respond. Discussions with pupils and parents show that they are very well taught to understand and then manage their emotions and complex behaviours. Pupils describe eloquently the support they get so that they are not a danger to themselves or others when they are experiencing real difficulties and how they can talk about and learn from their experiences.
- Pupils' understanding of risks to their safety in school and beyond is very strong because of the work that takes place across the curriculum, visits out of school to places such as 'Safety Works', and visitors to school. The recent 'speak out, stay safe' training from a national safeguarding organisation consolidated pupils' understanding of risks from social media. One spoke earnestly of how they were taught about the dangers of sexting and what to do if it happened to them.
- Pupils are well taught about bullying in all its forms. They are very clear that this is something that rarely happens and would be very quickly sorted out. It is a relief to them because of their often unhappy previous experiences.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils readily embrace the school rules of respect (of others and themselves), responsibility, readiness to learn and resilience. They are taught well to understand the consequences of their actions and to make the right choices. Behaviour in classes and in social times, including break and lunchtimes, is typically exemplary. This belies the reason pupils have come to be in Eslington Primary School.
- Pupils rise to the high expectations which teachers have of their behaviour because of the trusting relationships developed and the consistent approach to managing pupils' behaviour. Pupils 'buy-in' eagerly to the high expectations of staff and to the five-point reward system. This enables them to choose activities as a reward for their endeavours and efforts, both in class and in their behaviour.
- That is not to say that behaviour incidents do not happen; behaviour logs show that they do. However, once pupils settle in, because of the expertise of highly skilled staff, pupils learn, strive and manage to behave impeccably most of the time.
- Staff are vigilant in anticipating and then de-escalating highly charged emotional or behavioural situations. This means that when incidents do flare up, pupils are quietly and calmly supported to quickly get back to their learning or activities. As a result of the care and support for all pupils in this inclusive school, there have been no permanent exclusions and hardly any temporary exclusions since the last inspection.
- Pupils enjoy school. This can be seen in their regular attendance. Rates are above those found nationally in mainstream primary schools. Many are proud of their '100% rates', which are duly rewarded.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Outstanding

- Pupils all have special educational needs and/or disabilities. They enter school having experienced significant disruption to their learning and with starting points that are often considerably below those expected for their age. Pupils settle quickly into school routines because of the care that is taken to understand, then tackle their barriers to learning, and build their confidence and willingness to 'have a go'. Pupils then make rapid and often outstanding gains in their learning and also in their social, emotional and behavioural development.
- Progress in reading is very strong because of the careful strategies used to improve pupils' confidence and skills. Pupils read every day and for many different purposes. Texts are matched carefully to pupils' current abilities. Precise targets are shared with pupils, so they know exactly what they are aiming to master each day.
- Improvements to the teaching of writing are paying dividends. Pupils who could hardly put pen to paper when they arrived six months ago proudly showed their three nearly 'full' English books that identify the rapid progress they have made. Books across the curriculum show that little time is wasted and that pupils are productive and persistent in lessons to achieve their challenging targets.
- Meticulous, regular assessment of pupils' learning means that any pupil starting to struggle is given very timely support. The most able are provided with judiciously

planned individualised activities to challenge them further.

- Teachers' skills in planning activities that meet pupils' individual needs and interests mean that disadvantaged pupils who are entitled to the pupil premium achieve as well as their peers. One-to-one sessions and individual interventions ensure that pupils' previous barriers in developing literacy, numeracy and reading skills are tackled well.

## School details

Unique reference number	133397
Local authority	Gateshead
Inspection number	10019360

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Special
School category	Community Special
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	58
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Malcolm Brown
Executive Headteacher/Head of School	Michelle Richards/Heather Stokes
Telephone number	0191 4334131
Website	<a href="http://www.eslingtonprimaryschool.co.uk">www.eslingtonprimaryschool.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:eslingtonprimaryschool@gateshead.gov.uk">eslingtonprimaryschool@gateshead.gov.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	November 2013

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- Eslington is a small special school for primary-aged pupils. It provides education for pupils with social, emotional and mental health difficulties. The majority of pupils have additional special educational needs and/or disabilities. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The pupil population has virtually doubled since the last inspection. An additional site has been developed on Rose Street. Pupils are based in one of the schools but share facilities and attend each site regularly.
- Although the school is registered for pupils aged from four to 11 years, no pupils are below statutory school age. The youngest pupils are of the age to attend Year 1.

- Nearly three quarters of the pupils are known to be entitled to pupil premium funding. This is much higher than that found nationally.
- Most pupils join the school following a referral to the local authority. They join at times other than the usual transitions from early years or key stage 1. Over half of the current group of pupils arrived during or after Year 3 and a significant minority in Year 6. Many of the pupils have had significant disruption to their education prior to their arrival at Eslington.
- Since the last inspection, the headteacher has become an executive headteacher of this school and Furrowfield School, a secondary special school for pupils with social, emotional or mental health difficulties. The acting headteacher in post at the time of the last inspection is now the head of school.
- The school has developed an informal federation with Furrowfield. Plans are afoot to formalise the arrangements in September 2017.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in classrooms each day. The majority of lessons were observed jointly with either the executive headteacher or head of school. Inspectors talked to pupils informally in lessons, in the dining hall, at breaktimes and around the school. They spoke formally to a group of pupils on day two.
- On day two of the inspection, most Year 6 pupils were out on a 'transitions' visit to secondary school.
- Meetings were held with the executive headteacher, head of school, senior and middle leaders, various staff and two representatives of the governing body. A discussion was also held with the school's senior adviser from the local authority.
- There were too few parents who responded to Ofsted's parent questionnaire, Parent View, to take account of their views. However, inspectors took account of the written free-text comment made by one parent. They also took account of the views of three parents who spoke to an inspector as well as the outcomes from the school's regular surveys of parents' views. Inspectors also considered the views of the 21 pupils who completed the inspection questionnaire.
- A range of documents were reviewed, including documents related to safeguarding procedures, pupils' behaviour and progress, the headteacher's reports to governors, minutes of governing body meetings and the school's improvement plan.

## Inspection team

Margaret Farrow, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Judith James

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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