

Heathfield Primary School

The Broadway, Darlington, County Durham DL1 1EJ

Inspection dates

18–19 October 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Over time, there has been a notable decline in pupils' achievements in reading, writing and mathematics so that they are below those found nationally.
- While standards are now improving quickly overall, gaps remain in older pupils' knowledge and skills as a result of a legacy of historically weaker teaching.
- The rates of progress and standards attained by disadvantaged pupils still lag behind other pupils nationally.
- Teaching has not been consistently strong over time. Until recently, it has not ensured that all pupils do as well as they might and meet standards of which they are capable.
- Work set by teachers is not always well matched to pupils' needs and abilities, including those of most-able pupils.
- Changes to the teaching team have resulted in some inconsistencies in the application of agreed strategies to improve teaching.
- Rates of attendance remain below average, despite very recent improvements.

The school has the following strengths

- Under the inspirational leadership of the new headteacher, an ethos of high expectations has been created. The whole-school community is determined to raise aspiration for all. Leaders are doggedly determined to eradicate anything that is second best.
- Following a decline, the school is improving very quickly. Leaders' continuing ambition to provide the best experiences for all pupils is translated into effective action. This is transforming learning.
- The current teaching team establishes high expectations. Teachers accept no excuses for failure and work collaboratively to address any issues that arise. Morale is high.
- Pupils are happy and said that they feel safe. Standards of behaviour had declined but are now good. Pupils are polite and show respect.
- Provision in the early years is good. It stimulates children's curiosity and engagement so that they make good progress in their learning.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve outcomes for pupils by:
 - continuing the drive to accelerate the progress that all pupils make in their learning and attain the standards of which they are capable
 - addressing the gaps in the knowledge and skills of some older pupils in reading, writing and mathematics
 - continuing to diminish the difference in the rates of progress made by disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally that have similar starting points.
- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching by:
 - ensuring that work is well matched to pupils' needs and abilities and provides suitable challenge for all pupils
 - checking that the pace of learning in lessons allows pupils to maintain their concentration and engagement in tasks
 - ensuring that agreed whole-school initiatives to further improve teaching are implemented consistently in every class.
- Review and improve the strategies and systems to improve pupils' rates of attendance so that they at least match those found nationally.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since her appointment, the headteacher has been unwavering in her determination to secure an excellent standard of education for pupils in this school. She has been supported well by the new deputy headteacher, senior leaders, governors and leaders from the education trust. The whole-school team has worked tirelessly to eliminate underperformance, improve the quality of teaching and accelerate the rates of progress that pupils make in their learning. The impact of the team's work is beginning to emerge.
- The ambition and drive to improve all aspects of school life, including from dedicated and knowledgeable governors, is being maintained. Many changes in staffing have been managed astutely with an experienced hand. Recent shrewd appointments have strengthened the leadership and teaching team.
- The headteacher has quickly identified weaknesses resulting from a decline in many aspects of provision. She has taken swift and decisive action to improve the quality of teaching and, as a result, current pupils are now starting to make improved rates of progress in their learning. There has been too little time to see improved outcomes for pupils in published data from statutory assessments, or to plug gaps in some older pupils' knowledge and skills that have resulted from historic weaker teaching.
- Leaders and governors have an accurate view of what the school does well and what it needs to do in order to be even more successful. Procedures to monitor and evaluate the quality of the school's performance through checking the quality of teaching are incisive and detailed.
- Leaders' plans for further improvements reflect a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses, with which inspectors concur. The school development plan is detailed and carefully monitors the impact of planned actions on outcomes for pupils in their learning. Regular evaluation and the tracking of actions ensure that no time is wasted to drive further improvements.
- The school's curriculum is rich and balanced and reviewed regularly to ensure that it meets pupils' needs and interests. The curriculum is designed to make sure that it provides many varied opportunities for pupils to benefit from visitors to school such as an Anglo-Saxon warrior in full regalia. Pupils also make visits out of school across the region, such as to Shildon Railway Museum and the Oriental Museum in Durham. The curriculum is enhanced by a suitably wide range of after-school clubs such as art and craft, choir, mathematics games, computing and many sports' clubs.
- Leaders are now managing pupil premium spending effectively to provide targeted support for disadvantaged pupils following careful analysis and research into barriers to pupils' learning. A number of different initiatives are regularly evaluated for their impact on pupils' learning, and amended or changed as a result. The positive impact of these actions is now seen through the improving progress made by current disadvantaged pupils across the school.
- The strong leadership of the special educational needs coordinator has resulted in high-quality provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities,

including in the Resource Centre and the school's Nurture Group. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported extremely well. Their needs are identified early, and their progress, which is beginning to improve, is tracked accurately. Consequently, the special educational needs funding is used increasingly effectively by leaders.

- The physical education and sports funding for schools has been used well. Teachers benefit from working alongside a specialist physical education teacher and effective use is made of a sports' apprentice. Pupils benefit from high-quality lessons and engage regularly in competitive sports, as well as participating in a range of after-school clubs such as tennis, 'jump-start' fitness and football.
- The school receives appropriate and timely challenge and support from the Lingfield Education Trust. The work of the trust's improvement partner and deputy chief executive officer has effectively supported leaders in making the substantial improvements seen in the school since the current headteacher's appointment.

Governance of the school

- The governing body's desire to improve its own effectiveness has resulted in a recent review of governance of the school and changes in the way that it operates. Governors bring a range of appropriate professional skills and experience to the school. The governors' new Teaching, Learning and Progress Group meets regularly and gives governors the opportunity to rigorously challenge and investigate the actions of leaders, while also offering good support. This group has played a significant role in driving forward school improvements and eradicating weaknesses.
- Leaders are held to account for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, as well as for the quality of outcomes for pupils seen in statutory tests and school data. Governors have an accurate and incisive view of the school's strengths and weaknesses from first-hand experience, participating in monitoring activities alongside senior leaders. Governors are passionate to see all pupils fulfil their true potential.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school has a tangible ethos that is positive and caring and puts the welfare and well-being of each pupil at the heart of all that it does. This is clearly seen in the friendly, happy and confident manner of the pupils in Heathfield.
- Policies, procedures and records are of good quality and up to date. Summary records of incidents of concern are kept in the online system. All staff are appropriately trained and have access to well-written policies and guidance. As a result, they have a secure understanding of their individual responsibilities for safeguarding.
- The well-established culture of keeping pupils safe remains very evident. Leaders leave no stone unturned in their duty to keep pupils safe, which is appreciated by parents.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching over time has been weak. It has resulted in pupils not reaching the standards of which they are capable or fulfilling their true potential.
- Some older pupils still have gaps in their knowledge and skills as a result of historically weaker teaching, which holds them back in statutory assessments. There are still some variations in the quality of teaching across school as a result of changes in staffing. Occasionally, the pace of learning can slow, resulting in a small minority of pupils losing concentration and becoming disengaged.
- Work is now usually pitched well according to pupils' abilities, and pupils have the opportunity to self-select the level of challenge. As a result of high expectations from teachers, nearly all pupils strive to challenge themselves and refuse to undertake work which they say is 'too easy'. On a few occasions, work still does not provide suitable challenge, including for most-able and most-able disadvantaged pupils, and often at the beginning of a lesson.
- The quality of teaching is recently much improved, and is now mostly having a positive impact on learning, including in reading, writing and mathematics. This is reflected in the improving progress that pupils now make in each year group, with a much larger proportion on track to reach standards typical for their age.
- Lessons are usually lively and interesting and capture pupils' imagination. For example, some pupils in key stage 1 enthusiastically entered instructions into a programmable floor robot to consolidate their mathematical concepts of position, direction and turn.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and stick closely to the school's behaviour policy. Very occasional low-level disruption in lessons is addressed quickly and effectively. Pupils are intrinsically motivated to succeed and work hard.
- As a result of the rigorous and systematic teaching of phonics, children are now getting off to a faster start in their reading. Adults are skilled at delivering well-structured reading lessons. Pupils who read to an inspector used their phonics skills well to read unfamiliar words, and some read fluently with expression and intonation.
- Teachers now promote reading effectively, and it has a high profile across school. Each class in school is named after a children's author. Anne Fine, the second children's laureate, visited Year 4 during the inspection to meet the class named after her.
- In mathematics, basic skills of number and mental calculation are now mostly taught well and consolidated regularly. Teachers make good use of practical resources to allow pupils to grasp patterns and relationships in number. Pupils in Year 5 were challenged to extract and interpret information from a two-way table. Pupils are developing in their abilities to think mathematically, to conjecture and reason when problem solving.
- Pupils are now writing with enthusiasm and imagination. Pupils in Year 6 used amplification to produce cohesion and greater detail within paragraphs, while pupils in Year 2 combined information from a spidergram they had produced to write a paragraph of information on their class author, Oliver Jeffers. Teachers use good subject knowledge and structure learning effectively. Feedback to pupils offers support

and guidance, and allows them to understand their next steps to improve as writers.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils show respect and care for each other. They value their classmates' opinions and are used to working happily and cooperatively in lessons. Pupils' skills in speaking and listening in paired and group discussions are good.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good, and most are very keen to succeed and to always produce their very best work. They take their roles of responsibility in the school community very seriously. They are proud to be school councillors, peer mentors or play leaders.
- Pupils thrive in the well-ordered, positive and caring school environment. Displays are of good quality, bright and attractive and support learning well. The school's work to ensure that pupils' physical and emotional well-being are valued and promoted is very effective.
- Pupils reported that they feel safe at all times, including when working online. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness and development are very good. Pupils talked convincingly to an inspector about how they learned about people from other countries and cultures and their faith.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The strong relationships that are nurtured in school ensure that pupils usually conduct themselves well in lessons and around school. Pupils are polite and have good manners. Playtimes are harmonious occasions when pupils play happily together with a wide range of equipment, and no-one is left out.
- Pupils enjoy their learning and mostly work conscientiously. Incidents of low-level disruption are rare. Behaviour systems encourage positive attitudes to learning, and the few incidents of misbehaviour are swiftly and deftly addressed.
- The school has worked hard to eradicate low rates of attendance, a very large proportion of which results from unauthorised holidays taken in term time. The attendance officer has a range of strategies that follow from a first-day absence phone call from school, including holding meetings with parents. A wide range of rewards are used for good attendance, including class awards, certificates and a golden ticket to a special event. Rates of attendance for this year to date are much improved on the same time period last year, but remain below those found nationally.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In recent years, outcomes for pupils in reading, writing and mathematics have declined and have been below the national average, although in 2016 results were above the government's floor standard, which is the minimum expectation for attainment and progress in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6. Even so, as a result of weaker teaching in the past, there is a legacy of inconsistent achievement and gaps in some older pupils' skills and knowledge.
- Although many pupils in Year 1 met the expected standard in the national phonic screening check in 2017, it was just below that found nationally. Current pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics is now starting to accelerate quickly across key stage 1, and a significantly higher proportion are on track to meet age-related expectations by the end of the year. This appears to be arresting the decline seen in the provisional 2017 statutory data for key stage 1 held by the school.
- Evidence from improving work in pupils' books, matched by detailed information from the school's assessment system, shows unequivocally that key stage 2 pupils currently in the school are now beginning to make stronger progress from their starting points. This has not always been the case, as seen in published statutory data from 2016 and the provisional data from 2017. Actions taken by leaders to improve teaching and accelerate pupils' progress are now starting to take effect.
- The most able pupils are mostly now given support which challenges them to achieve the levels of which they are capable and make sustained progress. This progress, including that of the most able disadvantaged pupils currently in the school, matches the progress of their classmates and is continuing to accelerate. The school now supports the achievement of its most-able pupils well.
- As a result of the effective and strategic use of the pupil premium funding, disadvantaged pupils in each year group are starting to make stronger progress in English and mathematics, and most are achieving well. The achievement of disadvantaged pupils now matches that of their classmates in every year group, but falls behind other pupils nationally at the end of Year 6.
- The school is quick to identify any pupils who may be at risk of falling behind. Teachers make effective provision for these pupils through activities that are well matched to their individual needs and abilities. This includes pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Where needed, individual support plans are in place, with challenging targets. As a result, the progress made by these pupils matches that of their peers.

Early years provision

Good

- Children are eager to learn and explore. They enjoy opportunities provided to investigate and learn happily together. Their behaviour is consistently good. Progress in personal, social and emotional development is good, and this accounts for the strengths seen in children's behaviour and in their relationships with adults. They are encouraged to take turns and to consider others.
- The vast majority of children start in the early years with skills and knowledge below

those typical for their age. As a result of good teaching and provision, careful observation and good questioning, children make good progress and are well prepared to start Year 1.

- Adults observe children carefully and build on their interests. They carefully support children's learning through prompts, skilful questioning and working alongside them during imaginative and creative play sessions. Adults model the use of language very effectively. One nursery child told an inspector, 'I can hear the wind and a little sea' inside the shell he held to his ear.
- Basic skills in reading, writing and number are promoted very effectively. Teachers and teaching assistants are skilled in the teaching of phonics, modelling the blending of sounds very effectively. Children work well together to decode simple words. Every opportunity is taken to reinforce children's understanding of number. A boy in Nursery carefully returned wooden beads into a box, counting each as it was replaced.
- Teachers provide a stimulating and well-resourced environment where children are inquisitive and curious and mainly show excellent levels of concentration. Activities in the outside area support children's physical development very well.
- The experienced, skilled and highly effective early years leader understands the learning needs of young children. She is successfully creating an effective team of adults who share the same passion and drive to see children thrive. She has a clear understanding of the strengths in early years and has accurately identified key areas for improvement.
- Leaders are vigilant in all aspects of safety and safeguarding children's welfare. Judging by the confidence and fun with which they play and learn, children here clearly feel very safe, secure and happy.

School details

Unique reference number	138179
Local authority	Darlington
Inspection number	10032103

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	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	445
Appropriate authority	Lingfield Education Trust
Chief Executive Officer	Nick Blackburn
Headteacher	Helen Tarokh
Telephone number	01325 252144
Website	http://www.heathfieldprimary.com
Email address	admin@heathfieldprimary.com
Date of previous inspection	13– 14 February 2013

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish on their website.
- The school became a converter academy in June 2012 and is part of Lingfield Education Trust.
- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school, and the vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for support from the pupil premium and the proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the

national average.

- The school meets the current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- There have been significant changes to the leadership team and teaching staff since the start of the previous academic year.
- The headteacher, deputy headteacher and a number of teachers are new to the school since September 2016.
- The school's part-time Nursery operates in the morning and afternoon. Reception children attend on a full-time basis.
- There is a specially resourced provision for pupils who have special educational needs with specialist teaching for up to 16 pupils who have moderate learning difficulties as well as social and emotional needs. There are currently 12 pupils on roll.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in lessons, including lessons observed jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. In addition, the lead inspector listened to some pupils from Years 1 and 2 read, and inspectors reviewed a sample of pupils' work with the headteacher.
- Inspectors held meetings with governors, the headteacher and deputy headteacher, the assistant headteachers and members of the teaching staff. Inspectors also met the school business manager, the chief executive officer and deputy chief executive officer of the Lingfield Education Trust and spoke to some parents. They also held meetings with a group of pupils from the school.
- Inspectors viewed a range of documents including information relating to pupils' achievements over time, the school's data on recent and current progress of pupils, and the school's view on how well it is doing. Inspectors also reviewed the school improvement plan, documents relating to safeguarding and records of behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors took account of the parental responses to the school's own questionnaire as there were insufficient responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. There were no responses to the online questionnaire for staff or pupils. The school's website was also scrutinised.

Inspection team

Phil Scott, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Ian Dawson	Ofsted Inspector
Fiona Dixon	Ofsted Inspector
Gillian Nimer	Ofsted Inspector
Sara Roe	Ofsted Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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