

Consett Junior School

Beechdale Road, Consett, County Durham DH8 6AY

Inspection dates

5–6 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
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The new headteacher wasted no time in tackling the improvements needed when he took over the school last year. He has worked successfully with staff to stem the decline in standards seen in 2016.
- Standards improved throughout the school in 2017. Current pupils make good progress from their starting points in a range of subjects. The standard of pupils' writing, in particular, has improved since the previous inspection.
- Leaders do not yet measure, report and analyse the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils clearly and precisely enough to help them demonstrate the improving progress made.
- Teachers have benefited from training opportunities that have improved the quality of teaching. They have good subject knowledge across the curriculum. They use this creatively to engage and inspire pupils' learning.
- Teachers track pupils' progress regularly and assessments are now more accurate than they were.
- Teaching assistants make a strong contribution to pupils' learning in lessons. They also provide targeted sessions to help pupils catch up if they fall behind.
- Pupils enjoy school and are proud of it. They produce neat work in their books. Pupils are polite and respectful to each other and to adults in school.
- Leaders have created a well-organised school with a positive atmosphere for learning. Staff receive regular safeguarding training and refer any of their concerns promptly so that swift action is taken to safeguard pupils.
- The governing body understands the school's strengths and where improvements are needed. They are ambitious for the school and frequently ask pertinent questions that challenge leaders.
- The curriculum provides broad opportunities for pupils to explore and develop subject-specific skills. Subject leaders make a positive contribution to improving pupils' progress.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities receive effective support and make good progress. Parents of this group of pupils are extremely pleased with the progress made by their children.
- Teachers do not use assessment information well enough to set work that challenges all pupils. This applies particularly to the most able and middle-ability pupils, including those who are disadvantaged.
- Teachers do not provide enough time for pupils to move on to work that develops their understanding in greater depth. This restricts the standards pupils can achieve.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that leaders:
 - closely check the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils so that the governing body has a better understanding of the way extra funding is used to support them
 - improve the presentation of information about the progress made by disadvantaged pupils on the school's website.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that teachers:
 - use their day-to-day assessments consistently to plan more challenging activities, including for the most able pupils, the most able disadvantaged pupils and middle-ability pupils
 - maximise the time used in lessons in which pupils can develop their understanding in greater depth.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since his appointment to the school in 2016, the headteacher has worked determinedly to improve standards. Other leaders and the governing body support the headteacher effectively. The local authority and external consultants have provided additional advice to help the school through a turbulent year of change.
- All staff and leaders now work purposefully together to raise achievement for pupils and accelerate their progress. They form a strong team. Staff morale is high and everyone involved with the school is committed to continued improvement. Leaders, governors and staff are ambitious for the school and keen to build on their recent success.
- Particularly in the past year, leaders have taken effective action to tackle underperformance in teaching. Staff appreciate the many training opportunities on offer. They are keen to fine-tune the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in all subjects. Staff are diligent and their hard work ensures that all groups of pupils now reach higher standards than those seen previously.
- Leaders and the governing body have an accurate view of what the school does well. They know what priorities they need to focus on to help raise standards further. They have clear plans in place to accelerate pupils' progress. Leaders check the school's performance and pupils' attainment and progress regularly. Subject leaders take their responsibilities seriously. They use their subject knowledge well to check pupils' books and give sensitive feedback to other staff on how to improve pupils' learning. This system has helped boost the good progress made by current pupils.
- The school's curriculum is broad and balanced. It covers a wide variety of skills and knowledge in many subjects. Classrooms are vibrant. Lessons are generally fun and engaging across all areas of learning. Staff run many after-school clubs to give pupils more opportunities for learning beyond school hours. These include multi-sports, and clubs covering coding club, art and film. They are well attended and appreciated by pupils. Many visits off the school site inspire pupils' learning. They develop pupils' interests and make positive links with the local community. For example, during the inspection, the school's brass band performed Christmas carols at the local shopping centre. They regularly perform at local care homes for senior citizens.
- Leaders promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. For example, they encourage the use of music and art to help pupils reflect on their feelings and emotions. During the inspection, older pupils wrote the lyrics to a song explaining the real meaning of Christmas. They shared these with the whole school in an assembly. Their teacher sent the lyrics to a professor of music, who set them to music for the whole school to perform. The value this gave to pupils' creativity promoted deep, spiritual reflection from pupils.
- Leaders use assemblies and the wider curriculum to help pupils develop an understanding of British values. For example, pupils learn about democracy when they vote for house captains and representatives for the school council. Pupils helped to re-write the school's behaviour policy, giving their own ideas for rewards and

consequences. This involvement helped them develop a deeper understanding of rules and law. Science and history teaching widen pupils' understanding of the achievements of civilisations beyond those of Britain. In religious education, pupils discuss similarities and differences in religion so that they gain a broad perspective of life beyond school and beyond the immediate local area.

- Leaders have used pupil premium funding effectively to improve attendance for disadvantaged pupils. The school provides a breakfast club every morning, which is subsidised to support disadvantaged pupils. This club helps to give pupils a good start to their learning each day.
- Leaders use the additional funding to support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities effectively. Staff identify these pupils early and plan their learning carefully in small steps to meet their individual needs. The special educational needs coordinator tracks their progress carefully, sets manageable targets and works closely with parents to help them support their children at home.
- Parents are very pleased with the changes made since the new headteacher took over. In particular, the parents of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities commend the help and support they receive from staff at the school. This group of parents are happy with the good progress made and praised the way their children are included in all activities. They commented positively on the way that pupils respect each other, regardless of any differences between them.
- Leaders promote healthy lifestyles effectively in many different ways. They manage and monitor the use of primary physical education (PE) and sport funding prudently. The extra funds allow pupils to take part in a variety of sporting activities. Several older pupils participate regularly in a cross-country running club at lunchtimes, keen to increase their fitness and resilience. The school also offers multi-sports, football clubs for boys and girls, dodgeball and karate lessons. Overall, pupils have wide access to competitive sports, attend sports festivals and enjoy their regular PE lessons with knowledgeable, skilled staff.
- Standards reached by disadvantaged pupils, especially those who are the most able, have been slow to improve. Recently, the governing body commissioned an external review of pupil premium spending. They have now planned sharper systems to ensure that disadvantaged pupils make faster progress. Currently, many disadvantaged pupils make good progress in their work and staff help them to catch up if they fall behind. Leaders, however, do not monitor the improvements made by disadvantaged pupils closely enough. They do not report the effectiveness of the school's use of pupil premium funding clearly and precisely to the governing body. Consequently, the school's website contains only limited information about the impact of the pupil premium.

Governance of the school

- The local authority recently supported governors to review their roles in school. Governors understand the governing body's responsibilities and attend training regularly to enhance their skills. They question leaders with more confidence now and challenge staff to raise standards. As a result of these recent changes, governance is effective.

- The governing body commissioned a review of pupil premium funding earlier in 2017. Governors used this to challenge staff to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. They now work more frequently with subject leaders to evaluate the progress made by pupils from different groups. Governors seek clarification and request evidence to check up on any improvements made.
- The governing body appointed new governors purposefully to strengthen its collective skills. Experienced members of the governing body support and encourage newer recruits, acting as mentors to share their knowledge and understanding about the school. This system helps to make the governing body more successful and sustainable.
- The governing body works closely with leaders to ensure that teachers meet the targets they are set. With support from the local authority, it holds leaders to account, ensuring that any teachers' salary increases link closely to pupils' progress. Governors and leaders work resolutely to increase parental and community involvement across the school and parents are very pleased with the changes made recently.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders with responsibility for recruitment follow the required procedures closely and make thorough checks of their suitability before appointing new staff. Records of staff qualifications and training are well organised and maintained meticulously.
- Governors understand the governing body's role in checking that the school keeps pupils as safe as possible. A named governor holds special responsibility for this area of the school's work and carries out regular audits of the school's safety procedures. Following these audits, leaders quickly tackle any areas that need attention.
- Leaders support staff to improve their understanding of safeguarding, with frequent prompts, reminders and training. Staff use the school's electronic systems conscientiously to report and record any of their concerns. They act promptly to refer matters to senior leaders where swift action is needed.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved considerably in the past year. As a result, current pupils are making good progress. More pupils are now working at the expected standards for their age.
- Leaders have successfully improved the accuracy of teachers' assessment of pupils' work. Teachers and teaching assistants have taken up many opportunities for additional training in this and other areas of practice. Consequently, teaching is now more effective and is good overall.
- Improving standards in reading is a priority for leaders. Teachers choose texts that engage pupils and match these closely to their class's reading ages. Pupils enjoy using the school's computerised reading programme. This regularly tests their understanding of texts before they move on to more challenging books. Older pupils keep detailed diaries and notes about their reading to help them to explore, report and remember

key information about each book they read. Teachers and teaching assistants read with pupils regularly and probe pupils' understanding of texts with thought-provoking questions.

- Since the previous inspection, staff have worked persistently to improve handwriting and presentation. Pupils' books are now very neat and well presented. They show the good efforts of pupils and the high expectations for presentation set by teachers.
- Teachers now provide many opportunities for pupils to write in different subjects. For example, science books show good factual writing, for example explaining procedures for experiments or giving the reasons for their conclusions. In history, pupils explore past times and civilisations by researching the lifestyles of their peoples and use the evidence gathered to bring their work to life. They write imaginatively in the role of others, for example a Roman soldier
- The teaching of mathematics is good. Teachers use a variety of creative strategies to help pupils understand and explore new concepts. For example, staff allowed pupils in Year 5 to have great fun while learning to use a protractor. Pupils enjoyed measuring the angles created when they made large pieces of art with tape across their tables. The designs produced were striking and pupils relished the challenge of measuring every angle created. They worked cooperatively, helping each other whenever they came across a tricky measurement. Pupils were highly engaged. The task was difficult for some pupils but they persevered resiliently to measure angles accurately.
- Teachers do not use assessment information to plan lessons that challenge all the pupils in their class. In particular, teachers do not challenge the most able and middle-ability pupils consistently. This means they do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Sometimes, in mathematics, pupils spend too long repeating pages of calculations that they have already mastered before moving on to more challenging tasks. This slows their progress considerably. Similarly, in English, pupils will often spend time each day completing simple grammar exercises where they practise skills that they have already learned and apply well.
- Teachers track the progress of each disadvantaged pupil carefully. If any pupil begins to fall behind in their learning, staff intervene quickly and plan targeted interventions to help them catch up. However, this level of scrutiny does not check the progress of the most able and middle-ability disadvantaged pupils in enough depth. As a result, disadvantaged pupils usually make the progress expected of them but not enough of them reach the very highest standards possible.

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 care and respect for each other throughout the day. They listen attentively to their classmates and demonstrate mature attitudes to learning during their cooperative tasks. They help and support each other, value each other's opinions and enjoy opportunities to achieve together.

- Pupils' attitudes to learning are very positive. They are keen to try their best and work hard in all subjects. They are proud of their school and demonstrate this by taking a pride in their own work. Pupils' books are neat and tidy. They show the care and effort made by each class.
- Teachers and teaching assistants know pupils well as individuals. They support each pupil's needs and interests effectively. Pupils thrive in the caring atmosphere of the school. The wider staff team supports vulnerable pupils effectively. Several parents pointed out that staff 'go the extra mile' to help any child or family in need.
- Pupils told inspectors that staff look after them and keep them safe. The vast majority of parents confirmed that the school ensures that pupils are well looked after and kept safe. Staff surveys also show that everyone in the school is committed to a strong culture of safeguarding.
- Many lessons and assemblies focus on key aspects of safety education. Pupils are knowledgeable about online safety and know how to tackle cyber bullying if it were to happen. Pupils explained how to evacuate the building in case of a fire. They fully understand the different safety features of the school's evacuation plan.
- Staff are keen to promote a wide range of sports and physical education, providing strong role models and encouraging healthy living. Many pupils attend sports clubs regularly during the day and after school. They understand that healthy eating is important to their fitness.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are polite and courteous towards staff, visitors and each other. They hold doors open for others, listen carefully and give respectful responses to adults during conversations.
- Pupils' behaviour around school and in lessons is good. Pupils focus and concentrate on tasks and their cooperative skills help move lessons along promptly. Pupils behave well during morning break and at lunchtime. Good routines for behaviour ensure that pupils enter and leave the building calmly.
- Pupils explain that bullying is rare and that teachers deal with it promptly if it is ever spotted or reported. The headteacher ensures that racist or any other derogatory name-calling is tackled swiftly. He encourages pupils to report this if it is ever heard.
- Parents, pupils and staff all agreed that good behaviour is a strength in the school. Older pupils enjoy helping out and taking on responsibilities such as 'playground buddies'. Pupils regularly share their ideas about how staff could improve school and are currently working with staff to improve behaviour in the cloakrooms.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- In previous years, pupils' attainment and progress have been mixed. Concerted efforts by new leaders helped to improve teaching, learning and assessment throughout the school and standards have improved. Current pupils are making good progress in every

year group.

- The results in national assessments at the end of key stage 2 in 2016 reflected some weaker teaching and assessment, particularly in Year 6. The new headteacher tackled these issues quickly so that standards improved considerably in 2017. A much higher proportion of pupils achieved the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics combined. This result was above the national average.
- In 2017, pupils made faster progress by the end of Year 6. For reading and writing, they made average progress. Progress was slower in mathematics but it remained broadly average. Leaders have tackled the slower progress seen in mathematics throughout the school and current pupils make good progress.
- At the time of the school's previous inspection, writing was an area for improvement. Leaders monitor this subject closely and offer opportunities for pupils to write in many different subjects. Results from 2017 show much-improved progress in this writing.
- Disadvantaged pupils are now achieving more. Results in national assessments at the end of key stage 2 show that differences between their achievement and that of other pupils nationally are diminishing. Disadvantaged pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics combined was better than in previous years and moved closer to the attainment of other pupils nationally. Disadvantaged pupils made faster progress by the end of Year 6 in 2017 than in previous years.
- The work of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities shows that they make the same good progress as other pupils with similar starting points. This is because of the targeted support they receive. In particular, in mathematics, very structured teaching and targeted interventions help these pupils to catch up rapidly.
- In 2017, few pupils in Year 6 reached the higher standards for reading, writing and mathematics at the end of the year. Teachers do not challenge the most able pupils sufficiently. As a result, this group of pupils makes slower progress than they should. This is particularly so for the most able disadvantaged pupils.

School details

Unique reference number	114051
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10037741

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	182
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Neil Moffatt
Headteacher	Paul Dixon
Telephone number	01207 504431
Website	www.consett-jun.durham.sch.uk/
Email address	consettjunior@durhamlearning.net
Date of previous inspection	18–19 April 2013

Information about this school

- Consett Junior is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Very few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below the national average. The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is also below the national average.
- The school did not meet the government's floor standards in 2016. These are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the curriculum in each year group on its website.

- The school appointed an acting headteacher in October 2016. The acting headteacher was appointed as the permanent headteacher in May 2017. A new deputy headteacher is due to be appointed in December 2017.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils learning in every classroom and year group throughout the school, including some joint observations with the headteacher. Inspectors gathered evidence about teaching, learning and assessment in a range of different subjects. They also observed reading sessions, talked with pupils about their books and listened to pupils read. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at breaktime and lunchtime. They visited an assembly and observed performances by the school's brass band and singers.
- Inspectors met with a group of governors and spoke to several subject leaders. They met with a group of pupils from the school council and spoke with pupils more informally during the day. Inspectors met with a representative of the local authority who has worked with the school over the past few years.
- Inspectors checked work in a sample of pupils' books, including work from each year group and most subjects. Inspectors took into account information from the school's own assessment data and scrutinised documentation about behaviour, safeguarding and pupils' progress. The inspection team looked at the school's improvement plans and read documents that showed information on the work of the governing body. These included minutes of meetings of the governing body, audits of governors' skills and reports of their visits to school.
- The inspectors took account of 40 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View). They spoke with parents at the beginning and end of the school day. Inspectors gathered more information from the school's own survey of parents' views carried out earlier in the year. Inspectors analysed 16 responses to a staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

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Ofsted Inspector

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Ofsted Inspector

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