

Chester-Le-Street CofE (Controlled) Primary School

Hilda Park, Chester-Le-Street, County Durham DH2 2JT

Inspection dates

7–8 December 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders and governors have not secured good teaching, learning and assessment across key stages. Pupils' progress and outcomes are too variable in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Leaders' evaluation of their use of pupil premium funding is not meticulous. Differences between disadvantaged pupils and others nationally are not reducing rapidly enough across subjects or key stages.
- Leaders' tracking and assessment of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is imprecise. This group are not, therefore, challenged or supported, reliably.
- Leaders have not secured good attendance for disadvantaged pupils. Too many disadvantaged pupils are regularly absent from school.
- Governors have not offered sufficient challenge to leaders over time. Many governors are new to role and recommendations from the recent review of governance are yet to be actioned.
- Not all middle leaders secure improvement or monitor their areas of responsibility effectively.
- Teachers do not use assessment information carefully enough to plan tasks that accurately meet pupils' needs. Middle- and lower-ability pupils, in particular, make variable progress.
- Although improving, the quality of teaching and learning in the early years is too variable. Some adults' expectations of children's capabilities in reading, writing and mathematics are too low.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders have embedded a strong Christian ethos. There is a friendly, inclusive atmosphere in this happy school which contributes well to pupils' spiritual, social and moral development.
- Leaders make good use of the funding for physical education and sport. Pupils have positive attitudes towards fitness and health.
- Pupils are delightfully proud of their school. They feel safe, well looked after and hold staff in high esteem. Pupils' conduct, behaviour and manners are unfailingly good.
- Teaching and learning in phonics is improving apace. As a result, most pupils now make good progress in this area of learning.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and governance by:
 - securing consistency in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across key stages, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics
 - evaluating the use of the pupil premium funding thoroughly, to ensure that actions are rapidly diminishing differences in outcomes between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally, in each key stage across subjects
 - sharpening procedures for tracking and assessing the progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities
 - equipping all middle leaders with the skills, knowledge and understanding needed to secure improvement in their areas of responsibility
 - reducing the proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are regularly absent
 - acting immediately upon the recommendations made in the review of governance, making sure that leaders are held fully accountable for the progress of all groups of pupils.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning across all key stages by:
 - using accurate assessment information to plan tasks and learning that match the needs of pupils precisely, particularly for middle- and lower-ability pupils
 - explaining new concepts with improved clarity and a firmer focus on the intended learning in reading, writing and/or mathematics
 - intervening promptly when misconceptions arise and learning falters or when pupils require further challenge
 - ensuring that pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are fully supported and challenged to make good progress across subjects
 - raising adults' expectations about what children in the early years can do and achieve in reading, writing and mathematics.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders' and governors' actions have not secured consistency in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across key stages. Although senior leaders monitor teaching and learning practices regularly, pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics remains too variable.
- Leaders and governors cannot confidently demonstrate the effect that pupil premium funding has on disadvantaged pupils. Several appropriate actions have been taken in an attempt to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. Leaders have not, however, meticulously evaluated the extent to which their actions have been successful. As a result, differences in outcomes between disadvantaged pupils and others nationally are not reducing consistently across subjects.
- Leaders have recently employed an attendance officer to support vulnerable pupils and families and to improve attendance. It is too soon to determine if leaders' actions are having the desired effect. Currently, too many disadvantaged pupils are regularly absent from school.
- Senior leaders assess the progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities across subjects. Systems, however, are imprecise and do not capture pupils' rates of progress accurately. This inhibits adults from planning tasks and learning that precisely meet the needs of pupils. Progress from starting points for this group of pupils is too variable.
- Middle leaders are passionate about their areas of responsibility. Not all, however, have sufficient time or the expertise needed to evaluate and improve the quality of teaching and learning. Middle leaders' plans for improvement lack specific detail and measurability. This hinders staff development and means that important information about pupils' progress, for example in science, is incomplete or lacking in accuracy.
- Leaders and governors use the physical education and sport funding for primary schools wisely. Consequently, pupils have a good understanding of the importance of fitness and healthy lifestyles. They develop skills of teamwork, perseverance and resilience. Pupils particularly enjoy taking part in the daily mile, which builds their stamina and interest in sporting endeavours.
- The headteacher has successfully embedded a positive and welcoming atmosphere across the school. She greets individual pupils and families warmly, maintaining visibility across both the infant and junior sites. The large majority of parents and carers hold positive views of the school and the approachability of leaders and staff.
- Senior leaders are keen to enrich the curriculum for pupils. Many clubs, trips and visitors colour pupils' daily experiences and instil aspiration. Projects and topics inspire pupils to find out about the world around them. The distinctively Christian ethos that prevails fosters and promotes British values effectively; pupils are visibly tolerant and respectful of others.
- The local authority and the diocese have worked well in partnership to support and challenge school leaders. Their joint review of the school's effectiveness recently was accurate in its evaluation and the correct priorities for improvement were identified.

Appropriate advice, support and challenge from both parties is ongoing.

Governance of the school

- Historically, governors' understanding of their duties and responsibilities has been patchy. Their challenge and support to school leaders has not been sufficiently rigorous to bring about sustained improvement in terms of pupils' progress and outcomes.
- The local authority recently conducted a review of governance to identify strengths and weaknesses in current practices and to suggest ways in which governors' skills, knowledge and understanding could be further developed. Recommendations arising from the review are appropriate and focused on the correct priorities. It is too soon, however, to determine the extent and success of their implementation.
- Around half of the governing body are new. Together with existing, experienced governors, they demonstrate commitment to self-improvement and are undertaking a suitable range of training. This, and increased monitoring visits and challenge meetings with school leaders, demonstrates their enthusiasm and dedication to the role of governance.
- Governors have carefully audited the skills that individuals bring to bear on their work, ensuring that they have the correct balance of knowledge and understanding needed to fulfil their duties. Recent minutes of committee meetings suggest that governors are now offering a greater degree of challenge as well as support to leaders and managers.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Governors and leaders have pupils' safety and well-being firmly at the heart of their endeavours. Checks on the suitability of staff working with pupils are thorough. Records about safeguarding and the protection of pupils are well-maintained and suitably detailed.
- Staff undertake regular training which enables them to understand their duties in keeping children safe. Training takes heed of the most recent guidance and information. This contributes effectively to minimising risks for pupils.
- The large majority of pupils and parents agree that children feel safe and are well looked after. Staff support pupils to know and understand how to keep themselves safe online. Pupils are confident that staff will listen and take appropriate action if they have any worries.
- Safe entry and exit systems are in place at both the infant and junior sites. A large staff presence at breaktimes and at the start and end of the school day, allows any minor issues to be handled promptly and effectively.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not consistently good across year groups and subjects. Pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics is too variable across key stages.
- Teachers do not use assessment information effectively to plan tasks and learning that match pupils' needs precisely. In particular, staff do not reliably challenge or support middle- and lower-ability pupils suitably. This means progress for these groups remains inconsistent.
- Some teachers explain new concepts and learning clearly and succinctly for pupils. They ensure that tasks and activities focus firmly on the intended learning. This means pupils acquire new knowledge and skills, promptly and their understanding of concepts deepens appreciably. However, this is not yet a consistent feature of practice across subjects.
- At times, adults intervene swiftly when learning wanes. They identify and address pupils' misconceptions in a timely manner and offer additional challenge promptly, when pupils pick new learning up rapidly. On these occasions, the most able pupils in particular, make good progress. Such effective practices, however, are not yet embedded.
- Not all pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities currently make consistently good progress from their individual starting points. Tasks are not reliably well-matched to pupils' needs. Some pupils have insufficient support and others are not challenged effectively in their learning. This is due to the variable quality of teaching and weaknesses in assessment.
- Teaching and learning in phonics has improved apace. Adults articulate the sounds that letters make precisely and insist that pupils do too. Consequently, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in phonics at the end of Year 1 is now above the national average. This is preparing pupils well for the reading demands of Year 2 and beyond.
- Teachers and pupils have warm, positive and respectful relationships. They work well in partnership to deal with any rare instances of poor behaviour. Pupils hold staff in high regard and are extremely keen to please, responding promptly and politely to adults' requests and instructions. These positive attitudes to school and learning contribute to the cheerful atmosphere that exists throughout the school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Adults are committed to caring for pupils and protecting them from harm. Staff work well with other experts and agencies to secure support for vulnerable families and individuals.
- Pupils are delightfully proud of their school. They told inspectors that teachers 'are fun' and there are 'thousands of things to do' here. Playtimes are busy, happy affairs and pupils feel confident that staff will help them sort out any minor disagreements.

- Pupils are friendly, respectful and unfailingly polite. They conduct themselves well indoors and outside. Older pupils are careful and attentive of their younger peers. All are particularly grateful for the range of measures that are in place to recognise and reward their good behaviour.
- Bullying, pupils feel, is not an issue in their school. They say that occasionally pupils 'get excited' but they have complete faith in adults to sort and manage any small issues that arise.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive. Even where work and tasks are not well suited to their needs, pupils remain mannerly and respectful. Pupils' understanding about how to be a successful learner, however, is undermined at times by the variable quality of teaching.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The school's distinctively Christian ethos supports pupils well in terms of their spiritual, moral and social development. This is demonstrated overtly in pupils' courteous, sensible and considerate conduct in and around the school environment.
- Work on display and in pupils' books shows that pupils explore a range of faiths, religions and cultures. Pupils display respect and tolerance for the views, opinions and beliefs of others.
- Pupils and staff are confident that 'most of the time' pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils understand and abide by school rules because they feel systems are fair and equitable.
- Pupils appreciate the wide range of classroom duties that staff afford them. They enjoy taking on the role of a buddy to support their peers and like being picked as school councillors or to manage the sound system during assemblies. In managing such duties, pupils acquire empathy for others and an understanding of their own and others' rights and responsibilities.
- At times, pupils drift off task and their interest wanes when learning is not well-matched to needs. This interrupts the pace and extent of their own learning. Rarely, however, do pupils disrupt the learning of others.
- Rates of attendance for disadvantaged pupils are too variable. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are regularly absent from school is too high. Leaders have taken action to address issues but it is too soon to tell if these actions are having the desired effect.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' progress is not consistently good across key stages and subjects. Pupils' work on display and in books, as well as the school's own assessment information, confirm

this variability.

- Due to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning across key stages, not all pupils are currently making good progress from their different starting points. Middle- and lower-ability pupils, in particular, are not making the progress of which they are capable in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In key stage 2, pupils' progress in reading has been in the bottom 20% of schools nationally for at least two years for middle-ability pupils.
- In key stage 2, disadvantaged pupils' progress in mathematics has been significantly below national averages for at least two years. This group's attainment in mathematics has been in the bottom 20% of schools nationally for at least two years.
- Disadvantaged pupils' outcomes in science have been at variance with other pupils nationally over time. In 2017, in both key stages 1 and 2, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in science, remained well below others in school and others nationally.
- In 2017, in key stage 1, pupils' progress and attainment in reading and mathematics showed improvement at both the expected and greater depth standards. Over time, however, progress has been more variable. Reading outcomes at the expected standard, in 2016, were well below the national figure for middle-ability pupils.
- The progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is inconsistent over time. Weaknesses in the school's system of assessment makes it difficult to ascertain precise rates of progress for current pupils across subjects.
- Pupils in Year 1 are making stronger progress in phonics due to improvements in the teaching and learning of this subject. In 2017, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in phonics exceeded national averages. Current Year 1 pupils show similarly good progress in phonics, meaning they are well prepared to meet the demands of the Year 2 reading curriculum.
- In 2017, in both key stages 1 and 2, the proportion of the most able pupils reaching greater depths of learning broadly matched national averages in reading and mathematics.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Leaders currently have insufficient opportunities and experience in monitoring and improving the quality of teaching and learning. Leaders' understanding of the extent to which adults are having a positive effect on children's learning is too vague.
- Teaching and learning in the early years is of variable quality. Areas of provision and learning tasks do not reliably challenge children effectively. Not all adults have sufficiently high expectations of what children can do and achieve. Children's progress from their broadly typical starting points in reading, writing and mathematics is not consistently good.
- Outcomes, in terms of the proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of their Reception Year, have risen steadily to match national averages. From their typical starting points, this demonstrates expected rather than good

progress.

- Differences between disadvantaged children and others remain too stark. Disadvantaged children do not make the good progress needed to catch up with others nationally and too few over time reach a good level of development.
- The early years environment is bright, attractive and well-organised. It is not, however, appropriately rich in literacy and numeracy. Too few common words or focus vocabulary, and too little in the way of good models of writing, are prominently displayed. There is also not enough evidence of numbers and mathematical symbols available, indoors and outside, to excite children's interest and support their learning.
- Children have fun and enjoy warm, positive relationships with caring staff. They are happy, safe and well looked after. Consequently, children feel secure and smiles abound in this cheerful environment.
- Adults are skilled in supporting children to develop personally, socially and emotionally. They listen respectfully to children supporting them to take turns, share their thoughts and explore their own and others' ideas. In this way, staff sensitively help children to manage their own feelings while recognising the feelings of others.
- Staff ensure that children access a varied curriculum. Areas of provision encourage children to explore art and experiment with a wide range of materials. As a result, children build confidence in choosing and using tools, such as scissors and glue, safely and sensibly. A good deal of excitement and pleasure is evident.
- Children behave well. They listen respectfully to requests from adults, ably follow a range of instructions and take responsibility for helping to look after the many resources that colour their daily experiences.
- Staff communicate well with parents and other adults to ensure that transitions are smooth for children. One parent's view captured the feeling of many, 'communication between home and school is first class... transition from nursery to school has been fantastic.'

School details

Unique reference number	114213
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10036533

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	331
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tina Woods
Headteacher	Jane Proud
Telephone number	01913 882 328
Website	www.chester-le-street.durham.sch.uk
Email address	office@chester-le-street.durham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the physical and sport education funding on its website.
- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is broadly similar to the national average.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. Very few pupils are from minority ethnic groups.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is higher than the national average. The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan or a statement of SEN is above national averages.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set out the minimum

expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

- The school provides a breakfast club and a number of extra-curricular clubs for pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Teaching and learning were observed across classes and key stages. During day 1 of the inspection, observations were conducted jointly by inspectors and senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior, phase and subject leaders, as well as governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative of the diocese.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read, scrutinised their work and talked informally with pupils during breaktimes. The views of pupils were also considered during more formal discussions with inspectors. No pupils responded to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.
- A wide range of the school's own information and documentation was studied, including the self-evaluation, improvement plans and records of the checks made on teaching and learning. Information about the performance management of staff and safeguarding practices was also examined, alongside policy documentation.
- The opinions of staff were taken into account via 31 responses made to Ofsted's questionnaire and through formal and informal discussions.
- Inspectors talked with several parents face-to-face during inspection. The views expressed by 58 parents in the Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View, were considered and 55 parents' comments communicated via free-text were also examined.

Inspection team

Fiona Manuel, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Andrew James	Ofsted Inspector
Deborah Ashcroft	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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