

Howletch Lane Primary School

Pennine Drive, Peterlee, County Durham SR8 2NQ

Inspection dates

30–31 January 2018

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
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher conveys a clear vision for the school. Her strong commitment and drive are shared by the staff. With the support of a keen leadership team and effective governing body, the school has successfully addressed the areas for improvement since its previous inspection.
- Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths in teaching and learning and reflect on their own effectiveness as a governing body.
- Staff have worked successfully to improve the quality of teaching and learning. A comprehensive programme of professional development, supported by the local authority, has been highly effective in raising expectations and improving pupils' outcomes.
- Pupils at all stages achieve well and make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. By the end of key stage 2, pupils' achievement at the expected standard is above the national average.
- Pupils of all ages enjoy reading. Younger pupils read with confidence and can discuss their preferences. Older readers choose a range of different texts and can sustain long periods of concentrated time, reading for pleasure.
- The pupil premium funding is used effectively to provide intervention teaching for disadvantaged pupils so they achieve well. However, the most able disadvantaged pupils are still catching up to where they should be.
- The achievement of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is good. Leaders use detailed assessment to measure the progress of these pupils and plan suitable work.
- Leaders have not been rigorous in monitoring the quality of teaching in the foundation subjects. Teaching of these subjects is not consistent across year groups, and pupils are not developing the correct skills and knowledge for their age.
- Expectations of pupils' behaviour and conduct are high. Pupils behave well and show good attitudes to learning. There are some pupils with poor attendance, and this is having a negative impact on their progress.
- The school's provision for pupils' welfare is good. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are effective. As a result, pupils said that they feel safe, and nearly all parents and carers agree.
- The school places a strong emphasis on developing pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural understanding. Pupils have many and varied opportunities to participate in a wide range of community events.
- Children in the early years quickly adapt to school life. They are confident, enjoy school and make good progress. They enter Year 1 with standards higher than the national average.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to further raise pupils' attainment by:
 - accelerating the progress of the most able disadvantaged pupils
 - ensuring that teaching of the foundation subjects is developing the skills and knowledge pupils need to learn
 - planning tasks for pupils in the early years which consistently engage their interest.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - developing skills and expertise of subject leaders so they have an accurate overview of how well pupils in each age group are progressing across the school
 - ensuring that the school's curriculum is closely monitored so that skills and knowledge are consistently taught across year groups
 - improving rates of attendance and reducing the number of pupils who are persistently absent.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since the previous inspection, leaders have been relentless in their journey for continued improvement. Standards in English and mathematics have been raised at each key stage, and the areas that required improvement have been successfully addressed. The headteacher has an accurate view of the school's effectiveness.
- The headteacher has created a learning culture in which staff are willing to challenge themselves and are keen to improve their teaching. The appointment of a new leadership team has had a significant impact on driving the school forward. Some leaders are still getting to grips with key stages of the school with which they are less familiar. At every level, leaders understand and enjoy their roles and are tenacious in keeping a 'weather eye' on the quality of teaching and learning.
- The school has been well supported by the local education authority, which has challenged the school on a regular and frequent basis. It has brokered support and professional development to improve the capacity of leaders. This, in addition to partnership working with other schools, has improved the quality of teaching and learning.
- Regular monitoring and evaluation of teaching in English and mathematics have ensured that lessons are well planned and all staff are skilled in teaching these subjects. Assessment in these subjects is used effectively to track pupils' progress and ensure that they achieve well. Detailed analysis of how well different pupils are doing has been used well to provide speedy intervention, so that pupils do not slip back.
- Leaders have been less vigilant in ensuring that science, history and geography are monitored and evaluated with the same rigour. Assessment across the foundation subjects has just been introduced. However, there is yet to be an accurate match of what is being taught in lessons, what pupils need to learn and what needs to be assessed by teachers.
- The school works hard to engage parents. Questionnaires are given out regularly, and parent suggestions and concerns are responded to. For example, following parent comments about homework, the school has just revised its homework policy.
- The use of the pupil premium funding has been effective in improving the achievement of the majority of the disadvantaged pupils. A recent initiative has been set up to support the most able disadvantaged pupils, but it has yet to have any impact on raising the achievement of this group.
- The leadership of SEN is highly effective. Leaders support pupils in the enhanced provision who have physical needs, as well as those pupils throughout the school, many of whom have significant learning needs. The funding for this group of pupils is very well used and supplemented from the school's budget to ensure that these pupils are well integrated into the school and their academic progress remains a high priority.
- The school has put in place a good structure for teaching a broad range of topics. These are enhanced by visits, for example to Souter lighthouse and Seaburn beach, as well as visiting authors and artists who help 'bring the curriculum alive' for pupils.

- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. The school has a good reputation for music and drama. For example, the choir and orchestra have performed at the Sage in Gateshead and sung Haydn's 'Creation' in Durham Cathedral. The celebrating of differences is taught through specific texts introduced in lessons. Pupils travelled to London to take part in the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) Bake Off competition, which the pupils won with their rainbow cake. Pupils show respect for people from all backgrounds and faiths and have a good understanding of fundamental British values.
- The primary physical education and sports funding has been used effectively and monitored to ensure that teachers are well trained to deliver good-quality physical education lessons. Pupils of all ages can participate in sports and represent the school in competitions.

Governance of the school

- Governance is effective.
- The governing body has a sharp focus on holding the senior leaders to account and challenging the headteacher. They are well informed and request substantial detail from the school when considering pupils' achievement.
- Governors have a good understanding of the quality of teaching across the school and monitor the school's work through regular, focused visits. They have devised a plan of action, to which they hold themselves accountable, so that all governors are accurately able to judge the school's effectiveness.
- The school has a robust approach to performance management. Performance management targets are clearly linked to pupils' progress and attainment. Governors are fully prepared to challenge underperformance. Pay awards are given due consideration, bearing in mind that the progress pupils make should be the main driver when awarding pay increases.
- Governors scrutinise the use of pupil premium funding to ensure that disadvantaged pupils achieve well. They acknowledge that this has been less effective for the most able disadvantaged pupils.
- Governors have overseen the revision of the school's curriculum and the assessment system, which has just been introduced.
- Governors are fully conversant with their statutory duties of safeguarding and ensuring that the necessary checks are carried out when staff are recruited.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have created a safe culture to take care of its pupils and are vigilant in checking that procedures are implemented to protect them. Staff understand their obligations for safeguarding, and this is emphasised throughout the school's work, including in lessons.

- Leaders and staff take appropriate action when necessary. They liaise with outside agencies, and this provides pupils and families with the support they need. Procedures and policies are fit for purpose. All members of staff are checked for their suitability to work with children. Accurate and up-to-date records of these checks are maintained.
- Leaders have developed a range of risk assessments to keep pupils and staff safe, both in school and when going on trips.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations and said that they feel safe. They are confident that the school deals with incidents to follow up any bullying, but they added that this is rare.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. Teachers have a high level of expertise in teaching English and mathematics. This is reflected in the good achievement of pupils and high standards achieved. Standards are above the national average at the end of key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers have high expectations for pupils' behaviour and conduct. They establish a productive working atmosphere, and there are good relationships between staff and pupils and between pupils. This means that time in lessons is keenly focused on learning, and this is reflected in pupils' good attitudes to learning.
- Teachers use assessment well to plan lessons which are well pitched. There is a strong sense of 'industry' in lessons, with high levels of pupil engagement.
- The majority of the most able pupils are challenged well, particularly in mathematics. This accounts for achievement at the higher standard being above the national average. The most able disadvantaged pupils are some way behind their peers because their lag in achievement has not been picked up quickly enough.
- Teachers use topics, such as 'survival', to help engage pupils, particularly boys, and provide a purpose for writing. This has had a positive impact on raising their attainment. The teaching of writing in key stage 1 is carefully structured, building on pupils' skills, and has resulted in higher standards than the national average.
- The teaching of reading is effective. The teaching of phonics is successful, and young pupils quickly learn to decode words and develop the early skills of reading. Teachers present frequent opportunities in lessons for pupils to read new or unfamiliar words, so pupils become proficient readers. Teachers closely monitor pupils' choice of books so they read a range of authors. Pupils show sustained concentration in reading lessons.
- The good quality of the teaching in mathematics has ensured that pupils are well practised in using and applying the basic mathematical skills. Pupils enjoy the different levels of challenge they are presented with in lessons. They are keen to challenge themselves and to solve and explain their mathematical reasoning, either written in their books or discussed with an adult.
- Teachers' subject knowledge in English and mathematics is good. While there are some creative approaches to the teaching of science and the foundation subjects, they are not consistent across year groups. Lessons and work in books show that the learning purpose is not always clear. Consequently, in some subjects, pupils are not always

learning the skills and knowledge they need.

- Pupils who have a high level of SEN and/or disabilities are effectively supported by teaching assistants in the enhanced provision. Information technology and physical aids are used well to ensure that these pupils have full access to school life and access to the curriculum. Work in lessons is planned carefully to ensure that all pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make the necessary steps to successful achievement.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- High expectations of behaviour and adopting a healthy lifestyle run through the life of the school. Healthy eating is promoted effectively through the school kitchen, where a high standard of food is served; this is further instilled at the school's breakfast club and the 'healthy' tuck shop.
- The school's ethos promotes effective reflection on faith, culture and personal choices. Pupils are very well informed about how people might choose to lead different lifestyles. Pupils have a good understanding of British values and are accepting and welcoming of people's differences, which prepares them to be good citizens in modern Britain.
- Assembly themes to develop pupils' personal skills are pitched appropriately for the different key stages. During the inspection, younger pupils were thinking about cooperation and teamwork while the older pupils were considering 'people who inspire us'. Time for reflection and prayer is used to help pupils consider these themes.
- Pupils have a good understanding of bullying, including bullying related to race and gender. They said that there is little or no bullying in school and any misbehaviour is dealt with quickly. Pupils respect the school rules and know there are consequences to bad behaviour.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations. They talked about all the things they learn in school about safety. Pupils understand how to manage risk and understand the risks of using the internet and social media.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Nearly all pupils who responded to the inspection survey agreed that pupils' behaviour is good most or all of the time.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and are keen to do well. Teachers have high expectations for pupils to remain focused on their work. The school's provision in supporting pupils to manage their own behaviour is effective.
- Pupils take a pride in their school and the high-quality work displayed, which provides

an attractive environment in which to learn. They play cooperatively in the playground and move around the school in an orderly way.

- They are courteous, well mannered and confident in conversation. They listen well to adults and to their peers, and show respect for the views of others.
- There are a small number of pupils who do not attend school frequently enough or who turn up late for school. The school has recently appointed a member of staff to follow up attendance and punctuality. This is only just starting to have an impact.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Throughout the school, rates of pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics have improved and are now good. The school sets high expectations for pupil achievement at the end of each year. By the end of each year, pupils are working at the levels they should be, and an increasing number exceed the expectations for their age. Attainment at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 has continued to rise since the school's previous inspection and is now above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The teaching of phonics in the early years and Year 1 is good. The number of pupils achieving the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check is above the national average. Pupils quickly develop secure early reading skills so they can decode unfamiliar words.
- Pupils clearly enjoy reading. The youngest pupils read confidently, tackling words using their phonics and sharing their opinions about different authors. One young pupil insisted that the inspector recorded that she likes a particular author because his illustrations 'bring the book alive'. The achievement of older pupils in reading is equally good. Pupils can talk about a range of genres, sustain concentration when reading for a long period of time and are keen to make their recommendations to their peers.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress overall. Leaders regularly assess how well these pupils are doing and respond swiftly to address any gaps in learning with additional teaching time and extra group sessions. It has been less effective for the most able disadvantaged pupils who do not do as well as their most-able peers.
- The most able pupils do well in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1. By the time they leave key stage 2, they have made progress in line with the national average in reading and writing and good progress in mathematics.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are integrated well into the life of the school. A selection of pupils took part in the Disability Games at Chester-le-Street in the summer. The emphasis on tracking the progress of these pupils' learning, as well as providing well-pitched work, ensures that they achieve well from their starting points.
- Pupils' achievement across the full range of subjects, other than reading, writing and mathematics, is variable. Pupils enjoy the subjects they learn, but they do not always develop the skills they need to study subjects such as science, history and geography in sufficient depth.
- Pupils' achievement in music is to a high standard, and the choir and orchestra perform

out of school. Many pupils have benefited from a good investment of the sports funding and achieve well competing against other schools.

Early years provision

Good

- Children enter the early years with skills and knowledge that are often below those typical for their age. A high proportion of children enter the school with poor communication and language skills; some have had limited experience of books or opportunities for drawing and writing.
- By the end of Reception, children make good progress. The number of children who achieve a good level of development is above the national average and children are well equipped for key stage 1.
- Children enter the Nursery happy, motivated and ready to learn. They have good relationships with adults as well as with each other. Children's behaviour throughout the foundation stage is good, in both the classroom and the outside area. They show a high degree of independence and confidence and sustain interest and focus; they work happily, chatting to each other and adults about what they are doing.
- The teaching of phonics is effective. Children quickly learn the basic skills of reading and apply the sounds they have learned to their writing. Teachers provide frequent opportunities for writing. Many children proudly practise these skills, writing out recipes for a potion they have made in the water tray, or recording their findings at the 'scene of the crime' as they pretend to be the police.
- Leaders use assessment well to analyse how well children are doing and to ensure that they make good progress on their journey of learning. This information is also used to plan activities. Many activities are guided by adults and, where these involve children in active and practical application, children are fully engaged. When tasks are more static, children sometimes lose concentration, particularly when the task is too difficult or goes on for too long.
- Relationships with parents are good. Parents appreciate the information they receive about what their child has been doing in school. They are given the opportunity to contribute to their child's learning journey, recording their children's achievements observed at home.
- Transition arrangements are good. Staff visit pre-school providers or offer home visits where applicable, prior to children starting, to ensure that the children quickly adapt to school life. The school works with external agencies and specialists to support children who have specific needs so they are motivated learners and able to participate fully in school life.
- The leaders of the early years ensure that the welfare and safety of children are given high priority. All health and safety requirements are met. The school is a safe place for children.

School details

Unique reference number	114198
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10042163

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	448
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Karen Stevens
Headteacher	Helen Adair
Telephone number	01915 862765
Website	www.howletchlane.co.uk
Email address	howletch@durhamlearning.net
Date of previous inspection	12– 13 January 2016

Information about this school

- Howletch Lane Primary is a larger-than-average primary school.
- The school has an enhanced mainstream provision for pupils who have physical disabilities.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is higher than the national average.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage and there are very few pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and also have statements of special educational need or education, health and care plans is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum

expectations for attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited lessons in all classrooms and some together with the headteacher. In addition, inspectors observed small groups of pupils being taught.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work and listened to pupils read. They spoke with pupils about their enjoyment of school and their opinions of behaviour and safety. Inspectors considered the 64 responses to the pupil survey.
- Inspectors held discussions with staff and governors and took into account the 42 responses to the staff survey.
- Inspectors considered a wide range of school documents. These included the school's self-evaluation report, development plan, behaviour and attendance records, governing body documents and documents relating to safeguarding and the monitoring of teachers' performance.
- Inspectors talked to parents to seek their views about the school. They took into account the responses of those parents who submitted their views to the inspection team, as well as the 26 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.

Inspection team

Karen Heath, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Fiona Dixon	Ofsted Inspector
Donna Callaghan	Ofsted Inspector

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