

# Stephenson Memorial Primary School

Martin Road, Wallsend, Tyne and Wear NE28 0AG

## Inspection dates

20–21 November 2018

|  |             |
|--|-------------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>                 | <b>Good</b> |
| Effectiveness of leadership and management   | <b>Good</b> |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | <b>Good</b> |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare  | <b>Good</b> |
| Outcomes for pupils                          | <b>Good</b> |
| Early years provision                        | <b>Good</b> |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Good        |

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The highly aspirational headteacher and senior leadership team hold high expectations for all. They lead by example and successfully inspire their staff to give of their best. Morale in the school is high, reflecting the positive culture that is evident across the school.
- Parents who expressed their opinion hold the school in high esteem. Their written responses reflect senior leaders' commitment to community leadership.
- The personal development and welfare of pupils are outstanding. The school gives considerable attention to ensuring that pupils are safe and develop the mental strength and resilience they need to be successful.
- Pupils make good progress in each phase of the school. From below-average starting points they reach standards of attainment in line with the national average at the end of key stage 2. Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make good progress.
- Teaching is good and supports pupils' good progress in English and mathematics. However, some pupils need more support to secure their grasp of phonics, and some teachers allow basic errors in numeracy and in spelling, punctuation and grammar to persist.
- Learning is weaker in the wider curriculum because teachers do not teach enough relevant subject-specific knowledge. As a result, pupils' grasp of subjects such as science or history is weaker.
- The strength of the curriculum lies in its capacity to capture pupils' imagination and engage them in interesting topics. Pupils come to school excited to learn, and this has a positive effect on their attendance.
- The Forest School makes a considerable contribution to pupils' learning and provides an enriching experience for all.
- Pupils feel safe and well cared for. Some bullying does happen, but is dealt with quickly and effectively.
- Children make a good start in the early years. Two-year-old provision contributes especially well to their progress. Weaknesses in children's speech and language are quickly addressed. Early years leaders acknowledge, however, that there is more to do to foster a strong partnership with parents and carers.
- The governors provide strong strategic direction and oversight. The growing collaboration with Grasmere Academy means that governor committees are providing more rigorous scrutiny. Leaders are held to account for the quality of education effectively.

## Full report

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

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, to further raise standards of achievement, by:
  - further ensuring that medium-term curriculum plans set out clearly the knowledge that will be taught in wider curriculum subjects such as the humanities, the arts and science
  - ensuring that teachers implement these plans effectively, so that pupils are well prepared for subject disciplines at secondary school
  - making sure that pupils practise basic number skills more regularly to improve their accuracy in calculation
  - checking pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar more thoroughly and challenging pupils to correct common errors more consistently
  - increasing the reading support provided for pupils who fall below the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check.
- Improve the quality of communication and foster a stronger partnership with parents who have children attending the early years provision.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders at all levels of the school show a passionate commitment to improving pupils' life chances. Leaders have a well-developed and ambitious vision for the type of school their community needs. They are strongly committed to tackling the barriers of deprivation by engendering a love of learning in all their pupils. Their well-developed curriculum model helps to engage and motivate pupils, preparing them effectively for the next stage of their education.
- Leaders hold an accurate evaluation of the school. They make regular and sharply focused checks on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and provide staff with rich professional development opportunities. The culture of research and development in school has developed a strong collaborative approach in which staff are reflective on their own practice. Newly qualified teachers are well inducted and supported to thrive at the beginning of their careers.
- Leaders place as much emphasis on the personal development of pupils as they do on the academic curriculum. They recognise that many pupils come to school with challenges in their home lives which could prevent them from being able to learn or feel safe. Consequently, they have developed excellent programmes to support pupils' social and emotional needs. For example, around 170 pupils attend the free breakfast club each day. Many others access support from the 'Thrive' coordinator, which helps to address their worries. The school employs a raft of strategies to ensure that attendance is as high as possible. Leaders work closely with families experiencing difficulties and have built a high degree of trust. Early access to schooling through the two-year-old provision is also helping many disadvantaged children make a good start to their education.
- The academic curriculum is distinctive and innovative. Teachers organise learning through enquiry-based projects that interconnect themes within and across subjects. The curriculum rationale has successfully helped to engage and motivate pupils, who come to school excited about the topics they cover. The curriculum ensures that pupils make good progress and attain standards in English and mathematics that are in line with those seen nationally. However, it is less successful in developing pupils' depth of knowledge across the wider curriculum.
- Leaders make effective use of additional funding. They plan the use of funding in detail. Plans are published on the school website and are routinely evaluated each year to gauge the impact they have. Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND make similar progress to other pupils in the school. The primary physical education (PE) and sports premium is used equally well to ensure that participation rates across a wide range of activities are high.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted strongly. The school teaches pupils the difference between right and wrong and how to conduct themselves appropriately. Relationships across school are respectful. Pupils follow instructions and understand the purpose of school rules. Pupils who struggle to manage their behaviour receive effective counselling and benefit from the individual plans created for them. As a result, the behaviour of these pupils improves over time.

## Governance of the school

- Governors know the school well. They are working strategically to strengthen the collaboration between Stephenson Memorial Primary and Grasmere Academy. New joint committee structures have begun to improve the quality of scrutiny and are ensuring that leaders are held to account for the quality of education.
- Governors understand their role and have the necessary skills to fulfil their statutory responsibilities. They are, however, somewhat stretched currently, as the governing body has several vacancies. Governors do give generously of their time. For example, they participate in staff research groups to deepen their own knowledge.
- The governing body maintains good oversight of the use of additional funding. Governors know in detail how the pupil premium is spent and check on the impact it is having. As a result, these funds are used wisely to improve the progress, attainment and personal development of disadvantaged pupils.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders ensure that all necessary vetting checks are made on adults who work in or visit the school. The school has well-developed and well-understood systems for making referrals if anyone has a concern about a pupil's welfare. Senior leaders face a challenging workload but have developed a very coherent team approach in managing child protection work. They make prompt referrals to external specialists when required and maintain good-quality records of all actions taken. Safeguarding of vulnerable pupils is a strength of the school.
- Pupils who face trauma in their home lives receive high-quality counselling from staff within the school. In addition, a wide range of external agencies are used to provide specialist support. Partnership working is very well established.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and display a strong commitment to their classes. They plan learning thoroughly and consistently employ a range of strategies to organise and structure lessons. Typically, pupils know what they are expected to learn because they are shown suitable examples and have jointly developed criteria they can use to assess the quality of their own work.
- Teachers facilitate pupils' learning effectively. They allow plenty of time for pupils to work independently and consolidate pupils' knowledge and understanding. They also intervene to help pupils to review their work and give helpful feedback that allows pupils to develop their work further.
- Digital resources are very much an integral part of learning. Pupils frequently access digital information from tablet computers during lessons and often use the devices to create pieces of finished work. As many pupils take the devices home with them, the school is successfully extending learning opportunities for pupils to work and learn in their own time. Occasionally, however, pupils become distracted by the functionality of digital media and make avoidable grammatical errors in their work.

- The teaching of mathematics is very carefully monitored by the subject leader. Teachers therefore receive good training and guidance. Key mathematical skills such as reasoning and problem-solving are deeply embedded in the curriculum. Consequently, pupils are confident to tackle challenging problems. However, some pupils continue to make basic errors in arithmetic. For example, younger children in the Reception cannot all write numbers from 1 to 10 accurately. In key stage 1, inspectors found common errors with addition and subtraction, and some pupils were not confident with multiplication tables in key stage 2.
- Expectations are high in English. Teachers encourage pupils to take care and pride in their handwriting and pupils strive to earn a 'pen licence'. The curriculum ensures that pupils learn to write for different audiences and purposes. Teachers provide ongoing feedback that helps pupils to edit and improve their work. Nevertheless, some grammatical and spelling errors are not picked up quickly enough and therefore persist in pupils' finished pieces of writing.
- Classrooms in Stephenson Memorial Primary are quite unique. Most have a range of furniture such as settees, low tables, picnic benches or beanbags. This supports pupils to work in groups and fosters independent research effectively. However, at times it leads to poorer presentation and handwriting, such as when pupils write when sitting on the floor.
- The Forest School lessons make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. The learning environment is very well managed and is highly stimulating. The Forest School leader has very well-developed routines to ensure that lessons are managed smoothly. In a Year 4 lesson, pupils set about building a Roman amphitheatre. Good teamwork and communication were evident. When one pupil noticed some fungi, the learning opportunity was quickly taken up with the use of a fungi identification chart and a microscope. Good health and safety procedures were followed throughout the session.
- Following the last inspection, teachers have begun to plan more carefully the knowledge they intend pupils to learn across the wider curriculum. The knowledge and skills within subjects such as history, geography and art are now more apparent in planning. However, scrutiny of pupils' project books shows that their learning across these subjects is still less coherent than in core subjects. Pupils get varied opportunities to develop their understanding, but these experiences are transient and are not captured well enough in books or retained well in their memory.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Leaders have developed a personal development curriculum which meets the needs of pupils. As a result, pupils thrive at the school and are able to focus on their learning. The strength of this curriculum makes a significant contribution to pupils' achievement.
- Pupils are taught to self-regulate their behaviour. A code of conduct means that they know what is expected of them, and they learn to take control of their own actions. The 'self-regulation zone' in each classroom shows that the school has well-developed strategies for promoting this approach. Thorough teaching of British values means that

pupils know how to behave towards others.

- The personal development of pupils is further enhanced by the comprehensive personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme the school delivers. Pupils learn about how to stay safe, how to stay physically and mentally healthy and about different faiths and cultures. The programme helps them to be aware of risks from extremism and radicalisation.
- There is a strong offer of sports during the school day and after school, with regular opportunities for pupils to participate in competitive sports. Many pupils participate because of the inventive variety of opportunities for pupils to be active. Staff and pupils run together to raise money for charity. Pupils compete in break-dancing. Pupils have done a daily mile run in the past, but the school is now changing this so that pupils can use scooters and bicycles. Sports leaders recognise that obesity levels are higher than normal and do much to counteract this. Healthy eating workshops are run for parents. Outside sports groups make regular visits to promote the value of regular exercise. For example, Newcastle Eagles basketball team, an Olympic athlete and the Lawn Tennis Association have worked with pupils in the recent past.
- The 'Thrive' programme of support helps pupils with social and emotional difficulties to cope at school. One parent who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, described the programme as a 'life-saver', while a second said, 'it has made a tremendous difference at a difficult time.' Inspectors noticed pupils accessing this support across the day and that it seemed to re-energise them and keep them on track.
- Pupils say that they feel safe at school. They report that relationships with staff are very good. They know who to talk to if they have any concerns and trust adults to help them sort things out. They reported a little bullying, but stressed that it is always dealt with quickly and does not persist.

## **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Across the day, pupils conduct themselves well and show positive attitudes to learning. In lessons, pupils are attentive and keen to join in discussions or to answer questions. Teachers provide a good deal of independent research time and so pupils are good at forming groups and working together. They take on different roles and share their ideas with one another readily. When they need to work silently, they are able to do so.
- Although pupils participate enthusiastically, some struggle to give extended, well-reasoned answers to questions. Occasionally, teachers are too accepting of short responses that could be developed further through further questioning and in turn extend pupils' vocabulary.
- At social times, pupils also conduct themselves well. Despite rainy and cold weather during the inspection, pupils played happily together on the playground. Routines are well established and are well managed by the staff on duty.
- The school works hard with the small minority of pupils who exhibit challenging behaviour. A few pupils have received repeated periods of exclusion for poor behaviour, but ongoing counselling and thorough planning is helping to improve these

pupils' behaviour. As a result, the number of exclusions has reduced.

- A small number of pupils attend an additionally resourced provision because of their challenging behaviour. Leaders work closely with this provision to monitor their progress. Some pupils return to the school and reintegrate successfully.
- The overall level of attendance is close to the national average. The school has good resources in place to track attendance and to contact parents on the first day of absence. The approach taken is systematic and highly responsive. Every effort is made to challenge absence, including fining of families where it is appropriate. The school regularly rewards and celebrates good attendance. Punctuality is checked every morning, and there are clear procedures in place to challenge the families of pupils who are regularly late.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Over time, pupils have made strong progress from low starting points. Strong leadership is now ensuring that more pupils reach average standards of attainment by the end of key stage 2. In 2018, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was in line with the national average.
- The proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year has risen steadily since the last full inspection and is similar to that seen nationally.
- Around three quarters of pupils attain the expected standard in the Year 1 national phonics screening check. Those who fall short of the standard make steady progress in Year 2, but do not get enough intensive support to help them catch up quickly. Inspectors found that these pupils typically only read once a week with an adult in school. By the end of Year 2, around four out of five pupils attain the expected standard when re-tested.
- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are typically in line with the national average by the end of key stage 1. The effective leadership of mathematics and English ensures that teachers receive good training and feedback on how to sharpen their practice. As a result, an increasing proportion of pupils are attaining greater depth in their understanding by the end of key stage 1.
- In recent years, pupils have made significantly more progress than seen nationally across key stage 2. However, the most recent provisional data for 2018 indicates that pupils taking national curriculum tests made broadly average progress. Figures are more positive when the adverse effect of having several pupils on roll who were educated in alternative provision is considered. In 2018, standards of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics were in line with the national average.
- The progress pupils make across the wider curriculum is more variable than that seen in reading, writing and mathematics. The work in books shows some remaining gaps in pupils' knowledge and consequently they find it more difficult to articulate their understanding. Leaders are aware of this and planning undertaken since the previous inspection shows much more intent now on teaching appropriate knowledge content across different subjects.
- Reading is promoted systematically through guided reading sessions each day.

Inspectors found that these sessions were effective for pupils who worked directly with the teacher but had little impact for pupils who worked independently.

- The small number of pupils educated at the additionally resourced provision make variable progress. Those at the provision who completed Year 6 last year made weak progress and attained well below expectations.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- Leadership of the early years is highly effective. The early years leader is relatively new to post and is being supported by the deputy headteacher. Together they demonstrate ambition and have identified appropriate actions to bring about improvement. Leaders are ensuring that the environment is continuously 'language rich' to help overcome delays in some children's speech and language development. Leaders ensure that the pupil premium is targeted effectively in the early years, and this is helping to keep any differences in attainment between different groups of children to a minimum.
- Children enter the school with skills below and often well below those typical of children of their age. Many children enter with a delay in their speech and language development. Good early years provision helps children to catch up. By the time children enter Year 1, the proportion working at the expected level is close to that seen nationally. As children develop good learning habits, they are ready for Year 1. Careful design of learning environments ensures that transition into Year 1 is gradual and more formal schooling is phased in carefully.
- Both the indoor and outdoor environments are attractive and organised to support children's independence. Routines are well established; they provide children with security and support positive behaviour within the setting. Relationships are warm and respectful. Children are motivated and interested in learning, although some children struggle to maintain concentration. Most children demonstrate high levels of self-control, cooperation and respect for others.
- In the Nursery provision, adults are responsive to children's needs. When adults intervene in children's play, they are very aware of each child's needs and encourage them to talk, collaborate and problem solve.
- In Reception, there is a clear drive towards academic attainment. Adult-led teaching is sharply focused on developing basic skills in number, reading and writing. These sessions challenge and enthuse children effectively and most children respond well. Good ongoing assessment means that follow-up small-group sessions are accurately targeted to children's abilities.
- Careful tracking of children's progress shows that children benefit significantly from starting school in the provision for two-year-olds. A higher proportion of children who experienced this provision for two-year-olds go on to attain a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year than children who join the school later.
- Staff and leaders are committed to the safeguarding of children in the setting. Policies and procedures support a safe culture. Welfare requirements are fully met.
- Leaders recognise that they need to engage more parents with their children's early education and are developing strategies to achieve this. However, these plans have not yet been introduced, and observed interactions with parents showed limited



communication.

## School details

|                         |                |
|-------------------------|----------------|
| Unique reference number | 108597         |
| Local authority         | North Tyneside |
| Inspection number       | 10053760       |

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

|                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Type of school                      | Primary  |
| School category                     | Foundation   |
| Age range of pupils                 | 2 to 11  |
| Gender of pupils                    | Mixed  |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 397  |
| Appropriate authority               | The governing body   |
| Chair                               | John Croft   |
| Headteacher                         | Kerry Lillico  |
| Telephone number                    | 0191 200 7365  |
| Website                             | <a href="http://www.stephensonmemorial.co.uk/">www.stephensonmemorial.co.uk/</a>                                     |
| Email address                       | <a href="mailto:stephensonmemorial.primary@northtyneside.gov.uk">stephensonmemorial.primary@northtyneside.gov.uk</a> |
| Date of previous inspection         | 23 January 2018  |

## Information about this school

- Stephenson Memorial Primary School is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- A smaller than average proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic groups and few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is more than twice the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above with the national average. The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is below average.
- A small number of pupils attend Silverdale additionally resourced provision.
- The school offers provision for two-year-olds.
- The headteacher is the executive headteacher across Stephenson Memorial Primary and Grasmere Academy. The two schools are working increasingly closely in

collaboration. The governing bodies of both schools have begun to align some of the work of their committees.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a range of classes across each phase of the school, including the two-year-old and early years provision. A number of these visits were undertaken jointly with senior leaders. During observations, inspectors sampled pupils’ books and talked to pupils to evaluate their level of understanding of their current topics.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteachers, assistant headteacher, curriculum leaders, the early years leader, the special educational needs coordinator and a group of teachers. Inspectors also met with a group of pupils, the chair and vice-chair of the governing body and representatives of the local authority.
- Inspectors scrutinised a sample of pupils’ books from key stage 1 and key stage 2 which covered the breadth of the curriculum. Inspectors also looked at books the school had retained from last year and at examples of pupils’ work captured on the school’s digital systems.
- Inspectors listened to some pupils read and talked to them about their books.
- Inspectors observed pupils at playtime and lunchtime and observed their behaviour and conduct around the school.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including the school’s self-evaluation and improvement plans, policies, assessment information, curriculum planning and records of checks on the quality of teaching. Inspectors also looked at records of attendance and behaviour and safeguarding information.
- Inspectors took account of the 37 responses to Ofsted’s online survey, Parent View. In addition, the inspectors took account of the 42 responses to Ofsted’s staff survey and the 26 responses to Ofsted’s pupil survey.

## Inspection team

Chris Smith, lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

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Her Majesty’s Inspector

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