

Hamsterley Primary School

Hamsterley, Bishop Auckland, County Durham DL13 3QF

Inspection dates

5–6 February 2019

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	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- This school is well led. Senior leaders are committed to providing the highest quality service to the pupils and to the community.
- Leaders monitor the quality of teaching, learning and assessment carefully. They use the information they gather to improve further the service the school offers. The accuracy of leaders' monitoring is checked by partner schools and the local authority.
- Governors are skilled and knowledgeable about the school. They hold leaders effectively to account. They know the community well.
- Reading is a strength. Leaders have put in place imaginative approaches to reading and its assessment across the school.
- The school's curriculum is rich and varied. The formal curriculum is underpinned by a wide range of extra-curricular activities open to all.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make good and often exceptional progress from their starting points.
- Teaching is good. However, staff do not consistently insist on the highest standards in presentation and handwriting.
- Safeguarding is effective. Staff receive appropriate, up-to-date training. This ensures that they have the skills to keep pupils safe.
- Pupils are well behaved. The behaviour of pupils in class and around the school is thoughtful and respectful.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. They learn how to manage potential risks to their safety and well-being.
- Parents and carers are positive about the school. They say that they are very pleased with the care and attention their children receive.
- Over time, outcomes in early years have been variable from year to year. However, pupils make strong progress in key stage 1.
- The school's records and inspection evidence show that pupils make good and often exceptional progress from their starting points.
- The local authority supports the school well.
- Teaching assistants are skilled. However, not enough is made of these skills in the planning and assessment of pupils' progress.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve outcomes for pupils by:
 - insisting that the presentation of pupils' work is of the highest quality so that pupils can more easily see their progress and identify areas where they need to extend or improve
 - making sure that the skills of teaching assistants are shared and extended so that they can take on more responsibility for planning and monitoring the effect of their work with pupils of all abilities.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- This school is well led. Leaders are driven by compassion and moral purpose. They know the school and the community it serves very well. They want the very best for every child. They understand the importance of the school's place in the community.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development is ensured by a range of in- and after-school activities.
- Leaders ensure that the school's curriculum is varied, interesting and rooted in a set of shared values. This helps ensure that pupils are well prepared for their next steps in learning and for life in modern Britain.
- The formal curriculum is underpinned by a wide range of extra-curricular activities that develop pupils' artistic, practical and aesthetic knowledge and skills. These activities often involve engagement with the local community. Pupils appreciate the opportunities they have, for example to perform in the annual Passion play in the village Churches Together Centre.
- The provision for pupils with SEND is well led. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), who is also the acting headteacher, is skilled and meticulous in his approach. Records are well-kept and helpful. The progress of pupils with SEND is regularly reviewed.
- Staff morale is high. All staff that the inspector spoke with talked about the effective support they receive from leaders.
- The school, working with outside support, uses its allocation of the physical education (PE) and sport funding successfully not only to give pupils opportunities to develop their sports skills and experience, but also to extend staff's expertise in the teaching of PE.
- Parents are, generally, very pleased with the service they receive from the school. They spoke with warmth about the availability of staff and of leaders and the ways in which they respond promptly to concerns about their children.
- The systems for the assessment of the quality of teaching and learning are well developed. Leaders, working with governors, ensure that there is very regular discussion of pupils' progress and the effect of teaching. Leaders work closely with the local authority and, increasingly, with other local schools to help ensure the accuracy of their assessment of teaching and learning.

Governance of the school

- Governors know the school and the community it serves very well. As a result, they are well placed to support and challenge leaders. They are, generally, well supported by the local authority.
- Governors are well led. They are keen to work closely with leaders at the school and at other local schools to support communities and learning.

- Governors receive regular information about the school from leaders. However, they do not rely on this alone to gain insights into the effectiveness of the school. They also make regular visits to the school and meet staff and pupils to talk about progress and their views of the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Procedures and systems for checking the suitability of visitors and for the recruiting of staff are strong. There are rigorous checks in place to assure staff's suitability to work with children.
- Leaders ensure that all staff and governors are well trained and skilled in safeguarding matters. There are regular training sessions to keep staff informed and up to date. Leaders are well supported by the designated safeguarding governor in this aspect of the school's work. There is a strong culture of safeguarding across the school.
- Pupils have many opportunities to learn and understand how to stay safe through the subjects they study, class time and during assemblies. There are visits from outside speakers. Pupils told the inspector that they regularly learn about how to stay safe on the roads and when online.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. This is because staff know their pupils very well, their expectations are high and they monitor their progress carefully. They use the information they gather about pupils to inform their planning. As a result, pupils make good and sometimes exceptional progress.
- Both teachers and teaching assistants display strong subject knowledge. They teach with enthusiasm and a real love of learning. Pupils share their enthusiasm, enjoy learning and make, generally, good progress.
- Staff use questioning effectively to challenge and deepen pupils' learning. They use a range of careful strategies in their questioning to ensure that pupils develop key knowledge about, for example, vocabulary and mathematical operations. As a result, pupils display growing resilience and independence in their learning as they progress through the school.
- Phonics is well taught. Staff make the sessions interesting and fun. Children respond well to this. Staff are adept at picking up misconceptions quickly so that children make good progress.
- Reading is a strength of the school. Pupils read regularly and often, both in school and at home. They enjoy reading and are able to talk fluently, and in depth, about what they have read. Increasingly, as they gain in confidence, they can also describe how the writer deploys a range of strategies in their writing to create emotion and effects on the reader. This understanding of how writers create their effects is having a positive effect on pupils' own writing.

- In the Reception and key stage 1 class, staff have developed a stimulating and safe learning environment which provides a wide range of interesting learning activities and experiences. The indoor and outdoor environment is stimulating and uncluttered. Safeguarding procedures are effective and welfare requirements are fully met, so children are safe and cared for.
- The school's curriculum is rich and varied. Pupils explore a wide range of artistic, creative and linguistic experiences. Music is an important aspect of the school's curriculum. The inspector watched class 2 pupils rehearse enthusiastically for their roles in the chorus of a forthcoming Opera North production. He also saw class 1 pupils greet each other and their teachers in French during morning registration.
- Overall, the quality of pupils' writing is good for most groups of pupils. Teachers plan many interesting and creative opportunities that encourage pupils to write. For example, the recent work on the Chinese New Year inspired pupils across the school to write their own versions of how the years got their animal names. Pupils' work shows that they become increasingly accurate in their use of spelling, punctuation and grammar over time. However, although most pupils take pride in their handwriting and the presentation of their work, too many, particularly in key stage 2, do not. Too much work is poorly presented and, sometimes, difficult to follow.
- Mathematics is well taught across the school. Staff are skilled in ensuring that pupils experience and, increasingly, master a range of mathematical activities. Staff are quick to identify and correct misconceptions. Pupils reported that they enjoyed mathematics and the ways it helps them explore numbers, shapes and untie knotty problems. Although most of the mathematics books seen were well presented and neat, too many were untidy, undated and unhelpful as sources of information for future revision.
- Teaching assistants are knowledgeable and skilled. They are, generally, well deployed. However, because they are not routinely involved in the planning and assessment of pupils' work and progress, opportunities are lost to take full advantage of their expertise and to develop their skills further.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are kind, polite and aware of the needs of others. They get on well together and with staff at the school. Pupils spoke with real pleasure about how much they enjoyed school and how well the staff care for and look after them.
- They also said that their work in supporting a wide range of national charities helped them see what it is like to be somebody else.
- Pupils, especially as they get older, are encouraged to take on roles of responsibility. Older children take care of, and are available for, younger children during breaks and lunchtime.
- Because of the school's diligent actions, pupils have a good understanding of the range

of forms that bullying can take. They say it is very rare at the school. They also say that on the very rare occasions where it does take place, it is promptly and well dealt with by adults at the school.

- The school actively promotes a healthy lifestyle. Meal choices are healthy. Pupils know what constitutes a healthy diet.
- Pupils told the inspector that they feel safe and know how to keep themselves safe in a range of situation, including when online.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils respond well to this. The behaviour of pupils in class and around the school is thoughtful and respectful. They enter eagerly into class discussion and take turns.
- Because of the efforts of staff and the attitude of pupils and parents, overall attendance is now consistently above the national average.
- Most pupils are very interested in what they do at school. They enjoy finding out. They have responded enthusiastically to the school's recent focus on reading.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- This is a small school. Because of this, the numbers of pupils in each year group are small. Numbers also fluctuate from year to year. As a result, it is difficult to identify trends. However, a detailed scrutiny of a large sample of current pupils' work across a range of subjects shows that most pupils make good and better progress from their starting points because of good teaching.
- The proportion of children achieving a good level of development in Reception fluctuates significantly from year to year. In 2018, it was well below the national average. However, inspection evidence and the school's own records show that the majority of these pupils are making good progress in Year 1.
- Provisional information for 2018 shows that all pupils achieved the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check. All of the pupils who took the check at the end of Year 2 also achieved the expected standard.
- By the end of Year 2, most pupils make good progress from their starting points. Provisional information for 2018 indicates that the proportion of pupils meeting the expected national standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 was above that found nationally. In mathematics, all pupils in last year's Year 2 achieved the expected standard. The percentage achieving in mathematics at greater depth was almost twice the national average. The proportion achieving greater depth in writing, however, was below that expected nationally.
- In the end of key stage 2 tests in 2018 outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics, both at expected and greater depth, were in line, and slightly better than the national

expectations. The cohort of pupils that took the tests was small.

- Reading is a strength across the school. This whole-school approach has resulted in reading having a high profile. The school's curriculum gives pupils many opportunities to develop their skills as readers across a range of subjects. Pupils spoke enthusiastically with the inspector about reading and books. Staff encourage not only a love of reading in pupils, but also a focus on developing young readers' skills in identifying the ways that writers use language to create effects and stimulate ideas.
- Pupils with SEND make generally good progress because of the staff's detailed knowledge of their needs and teaching which breaks down tasks into manageable steps. Teachers and teaching assistants are skilled in developing these pupils' skills. They have high expectations.
- Assessment information and work in books show that current pupils are, generally, making at least good, and sometimes exceptional, progress across the school. The proportion of pupils achieving higher standards is increasing. Teachers provide appropriate interventions and support for lower ability pupils and those who need to catch up. Teachers have, generally, high expectations, but on occasion, some pupils, particularly the most able, could achieve more.
- The scrutiny of current pupils' books and folders also showed that across the school, but particularly in key stage 2, there is variability in the presentation of pupils' work. Staff expectations of what is acceptable presentation are too variable. The inspector saw examples, particularly in mathematics, where poor presentation hampered learning.

School details

Unique reference number	114053
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10059206

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	39
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair	Canon Trevor Pitt
Headteacher	Lynn Cowans Damian Hassan (acting headteacher)
Telephone number	01388 488279
Website	www.hamsterley.durham.sch.uk
Email address	hamsterley@durhamlearning.net
Date of previous inspection	14–15 November 2012

Information about this school

- Hamsterley Primary School is much smaller than the average-sized primary school. As a result, there are very few pupils in each year group. There are two classes. A key stage 1 class comprising of Reception and Years 1 and 2 and a key stage 2 class comprising of Years 3, 4, 5 and 6.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium is well below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above average.

- There are many more boys than girls at the school.
- The school runs a breakfast club each morning and after-school activities and clubs from Monday to Thursday.
- Since November 2018 the deputy headteacher has been acting headteacher to cover the absence of the substantive headteacher.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed lessons in both classes. Most of these lessons were jointly observed with the acting headteacher. The inspector listened to and discussed reading with 11 pupils from across Years 2, 3, 4 and 6. He also talked with pupils across the school about their experience of reading, both in and out of school.
- The inspector observed a whole-school assembly.
- The inspector met with the acting headteacher, who is also the SENCo, each class teacher, four teaching assistants and two governors, including the chair of the governing body. He spoke with another governor and with an officer of Durham local authority on the telephone.
- The inspector reviewed a range of the school's documentation, including that related to safeguarding, achievement, the quality of teaching, attendance and behaviour.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour and conduct before school, at breaks and lunchtimes and at after-school clubs. He spoke informally with pupils about their experience and attitudes to school during these times. The inspector also spoke more formally with a group of pupils about school and the range of opportunities it offered them to explore and enjoy learning.
- The inspector scrutinised a wide sample of pupils' work from the current academic year from all year groups and in a range of subjects. In much of this work, he was accompanied by the acting headteacher.
- The inspector spoke with 11 parents at the start of the school day to seek their opinions of the school's work and care for their children. He reviewed the 22 responses on Parent View. He also reviewed the school's own survey of parents' views.

Inspection team

Mark Evans, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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