

Horndale Infants' School

Scholars Path, Newton Aycliffe, County Durham DL5 7HB

Inspection dates

12–13 February 2019

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	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Over time, teachers have not planned learning to effectively meet the needs of pupils. As a result, lower attaining pupils sometimes struggle with the work set and higher attainers complete work that does not fully deepen their learning.
- Pupils' progress in key stage 1 is too variable, particularly in reading and mathematics. Over time, pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 has not been consistently good.
- The leadership of early years has not ensured that the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good. Adults do not have a sufficiently positive effect on children's learning, particularly when children select activities in classrooms or outdoors. This limits children's progress.
- Leaders, including governors, have held too positive a view of the school. Their plans for improvement lack the detail required to hold staff and leaders accountable.
- Governors are supportive of the school and some dedicate a great deal of time in school. However, they do not challenge leaders sufficiently in relation to the effect of leaders' plans and actions, and the impact of additional funding spending.
- Subject leaders for English and mathematics and the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) are all new to their roles. They are keen to drive improvement, but have just begun to address some of their areas of responsibility.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and governors have successfully restructured staffing arrangements. The school has a secure platform for staff and leadership developments.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and at playtimes and lunchtimes. They respond well to the school's reward systems.
- Pupils' personal development and welfare are a key strength of the school. The caring, inclusive ethos of the school ensures that pupils are safe and happy.
- Parents and carers are very positive about the school. They appreciate how staff are approachable and welcoming, and how they make school an enjoyable experience for their children.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good, by:
 - ensuring that all teachers have high expectations for pupils' writing, including the accurate use of punctuation
 - planning reading and phonics activities that are well matched to pupils' needs
 - ensuring that in mathematics, teachers' planning, including for mental mathematics sessions, meets pupils' current learning needs more consistently
 - deploying teaching assistants to support pupils' learning more effectively.
- Improve the quality of early years provision, by:
 - ensuring that staff, including those who are new to their roles, plan learning that is well matched to children's needs and interests
 - developing leaders' skills to create, deliver and check plans to drive improvement
 - supporting children's learning effectively, particularly when children are choosing activities both within the classroom and in the outdoor learning areas.
- Strengthen leadership in improving the consistency of teaching, learning and assessment and pupils' progress, by:
 - clarifying lines of accountability through sharply focused improvement plans that identify responsibilities, milestones and resources
 - developing the skills of leaders new to their roles, including the SENCo, and subject leaders for English and mathematics
 - developing the level of challenge provided to leaders by governors, particularly in relation to school improvement planning and the use of additional funding such as the pupil premium and physical education (PE) and sport grants.

It is recommended that an external review of the school's governance is completed.

It is recommended that an external review of the school's use of the pupil premium is completed.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders, including governors, have not ensured consistently good teaching. As a result, current pupils' progress in key stage 1 is variable and attainment at the end of Year 2 has fluctuated substantially over the last three years. Similarly, in early years, the quality of teaching is variable and current children do not make consistently strong progress.
- Leaders have completed detailed self-evaluation, and this is helping to identify appropriate priorities. However, some of their judgements about key aspects of the school have been too positive.
- Leaders' plans link effectively to school evaluation priorities. These are underpinned by a schedule for checking on improvement. However, plans lack detail about which staff are responsible for completing actions and agreed milestones against which success can be evaluated.
- Subject leaders for English and mathematics took on their roles in September 2018. Support from the headteacher and deputy headteacher is beginning to develop their leadership skills, and there are plans for this to continue. There is emerging evidence of the effect of their leadership in their areas of responsibility. For example, in English, new approaches to encourage reading are showing signs of motivating pupils to read. Similarly, in mathematics, the development of regular mental mathematics sessions aims to reinforce pupils' mathematical knowledge.
- The SENCo is also new to the role. She has begun to take action to improve the quality of assessments of pupils with special educational needs and to review the progress they are making. These actions are very recent and it is too early to find clear evidence of their effect.
- Leaders and governors seek external scrutiny and advice from the local authority. However, leaders have not always responded promptly or fully enough to the recommendations provided.
- Leaders review the curriculum regularly to ensure that it is well matched to pupils' needs. Recent changes aim to provide more focused topics and to adapt to the recently introduced mixed Year 1 and Year 2 class organisation. Leaders are currently reviewing these new curriculum arrangements and it is not possible to fully determine the impact at present.
- A range of extra-curricular activities enrich the curriculum. The school's breakfast club, which is sponsored by local businesses, helps pupils who attend this provision to have a positive start to the school day.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well developed by the curriculum and ethos of the school. Pupils develop a secure understanding of British values. For example, the school's rules, opportunities to develop an understanding of democracy, and enterprise activities to raise funds for charity all help pupils to develop into active young citizens. A wide range of visits and visitors support pupils' social and cultural development. Consequently, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Pupil premium funding is spent to variable effect. It has a positive impact on pupils'

personal development and attendance. However, the impact on disadvantaged pupils' progress and attainment is not consistently strong. Governors do not stringently check the effect of this spending.

- Additional funding for PE and sport for primary schools is used appropriately. Consequently, pupils have the opportunity to engage in an increasingly wide range of competitive sports and activities that support healthy lifestyles.
- The headteacher and governors have successfully re-structured the staffing and leadership team. This has established a staffing profile that is better matched to the school's needs and the available school budget.
- Engagement with the community and parents is strong. Family learning events and workshops for parents help parents understand how they can support their child's learning. Parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and who talked to the inspector, were very positive about the school.

Governance of the school

- Governors have a good understanding of the community the school serves. Some governors are regular visitors into school and are highly supportive. They have begun to audit their skills and to seek training to help them fulfil their roles. However, they have not challenged leaders sufficiently. Consequently, leaders are not held stringently enough to account on aspects such as the school development plan or the effect of additional funding for the pupil premium or PE and sport.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective and there is a positive culture of safeguarding across the school. Leaders have completed relevant safeguarding checks for all staff, governors and volunteers. Staff and some governors receive regular and appropriate training, so they know the school's procedures for keeping pupils safe. The headteacher works in a determined fashion to ensure that vulnerable pupils and their families are well supported. Links with other agencies are well managed. All parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, believe that their child feels safe in school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is variable across a range of subjects and this results in pupils making inconsistent progress, particularly in English and mathematics. While most lessons have teaching assistants to support pupils' learning, these staff are not always deployed effectively.
- Teachers deliver regular reading lessons and adults listen to pupils read frequently. The recently introduced reading approach with online quizzes motivates pupils to read in school and at home. However, reading books and sections of texts provided for lower attaining pupils sometimes are not well matched to their reading and phonics skills. Equally, higher attaining pupils are at times not challenged to complete work that will extend their comprehension skills.
- Teachers make effective use of writing planners to help pupils develop and structure

their ideas. Some teachers provide pupils with effective examples to develop their vocabulary and record their ideas. However, sometimes opportunities are missed to reinforce how to improve the quality of writing, including the accurate use of grammar, punctuation and spelling.

- Phonics is taught regularly and with a structured approach. However, sometimes staff do not fully reinforce pupils' use of the sounds being taught. There are variabilities in staff knowledge and expertise in phonics teaching.
- Pupils have frequent opportunities to develop their mathematical knowledge, including through daily mental mathematics sessions. However, this work is not always well matched to pupils' abilities and sometimes staff do not explain work clearly.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are positive in lessons. Pupils work cooperatively in groups, and generally work hard individually.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school's reward systems and feedback from staff help pupils know when they are improving their work. Family learning sessions and workshops for parents help to further develop learning beyond the school day. This supports both parents and their children to understand what it takes to be a successful learner.
- Pupils have opportunities within school and through visits to sports venues to develop their physical well-being. Staff are caring and pupils know whom to turn to if they have any anxieties.
- Pupils develop their understanding of how to stay safe, including online. They understand what bullying means, but think it rarely happens in their school. Staff carefully check and record all incidents of poor behaviour, including bullying.
- Carefully planned arrangements are in place to help pupils make a smooth transition to the local junior school, which the vast majority of pupils move to at the end of Year 2. This helps pupils successfully make the next step on their education journey.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are respectful, polite and kind to one another.
- Generally, pupils behave well in lessons. Very occasionally, where the teaching does not fully engage them or is not well matched to their learning, their interest diminishes.
- During playtimes and lunchtimes, pupils play games sensibly or socialise well with their friends. Appropriate supervision and guidance from staff ensure that pupils are safe. Adults organise games, which pupils join in with enthusiastically.
- Well-structured behaviour management approaches, with rewards and sanctions that are understood by pupils, are consistently applied by staff. Pupils value 'golden time', which they receive at the end of the week by meeting the school's expectations and principles.

- Leaders and staff ensure that good attendance has a high profile in school. Where necessary, the school provides support and guidance if pupils' absence levels are a concern. Pupils' attendance levels, including those for disadvantaged pupils, are now near to the national average.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Review of the school's assessment information shows that pupils' progress, particularly in reading and mathematics, is variable across key stage 1. This variability in progress is also reflected in pupils' books. As a result, outcomes in reading and mathematics require improvement.
- Over the last three years, pupils' attainment by the end of key stage 1 has been very variable. The attainment of disadvantaged pupils has at times been very low. In 2018, however, the school's results improved in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In the last three years, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has risen. In 2018, the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard was in line with the national average.
- Review of pupils' work in history and geography shows that they are developing their knowledge and skills in these subjects. For example, pupils have demonstrated strong historical narrative writing and can accurately use map-reading skills. However, this knowledge does not develop consistently across different topics or in different year groups.
- The school's pupil progress records show that the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) making good progress is too low, particularly in reading and writing. The SENCo, who has recently assumed the role, has begun to check that the support for these pupils is having a more positive effect. It is too early to determine the effect of this approach.
- In 2018, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected standards in reading and writing was in line with the national averages and was above the national average for mathematics. Consequently, in this year, pupils were well prepared for starting junior school.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Children start in early years with skills and abilities that are often below those typical for their age. In 2018, the overall proportion of children who achieved a good level of development by the end of early years was similar to the national average. However, the proportion of disadvantaged children who achieved a good level of development was too low. Consequently, some but not all children are well prepared for starting Year 1.
- Leaders have not established a secure view of the strengths and weaknesses in early years. Some steps have recently been put in place to strengthen the quality of teaching, but these are not yet fully embedded.
- The quality of teaching is variable across early years. Overall, most adult-led teaching has a positive effect. However, when children are choosing learning activities themselves,

this has a limited impact on their learning. This is because the activities are not well matched to children's attainment or interests, and adults do not engage with children to take their learning forward. Consequently, some children do not work with sustained interest or access tasks to improve their learning or independence.

- There are systems in place to record children's progress, but these have not been used consistently over time. Leaders have recently tried to establish a more precise overview of starting points, with local authority support to check accuracy.
- Overall, most children are settled and cooperate well with one another in early years. Generally, staff provide them with effective guidance about social skills such as turn-taking and sharing resources. However, where the teaching does not engage children in their learning, they will sometimes flit from one activity to another and at times display silly behaviour.
- Positive partnerships with parents are in place. Staff provide parents with guidance about how they can support their child's learning at home. The school's assessment recording system enables parents to take a role in identifying their child's steps in learning.
- Appropriate links with other agencies are made to secure support for children where relevant. This ensures that children receive additional support if required, for example with their speech and language.
- Children feel safe and secure. Safeguarding is effective, and all welfare requirements are met.

School details

Unique reference number	114190
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10059208

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	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	138
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Carol Hardy
Headteacher	Craig Brown
Telephone number	01325 300228
Website	www.horndale.durham.sch.uk
Email address	horndale@durhamlearning.net
Date of previous inspection	13–14 March 2007

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The vast majority of the pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium funding is well above that found nationally.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above that found nationally.
- The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is below that found nationally.
- The headteacher was appointed in September 2015.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in lessons and part-lessons across the school. The headteacher joined the lead inspector for all of his observations in lessons.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the SENCo, the subject leaders for English and mathematics, and the leader of early years.
- The inspector met with two governors, including the chair of the governing body, and reviewed documents relating to the work of the governing body.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour around school and reviewed the school's promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. He observed pupils in the playground and around school.
- Three pupils from Year 2 read their reading books to the inspector and discussed how the school supports their reading development.
- The inspector took account of the 40 responses to Ofsted's online parent survey, Parent View, and five free-text responses from parents. The inspector met with a number of parents at the beginning of the school day.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including information about pupils' achievement, the school's evaluation of its own performance and its development plans. He reviewed records of behaviour and attendance, and information relating to safeguarding. The inspector scrutinised samples of pupils' work in their books across a wide range of curriculum areas.

Inspection team

Michael Reeves, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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