

# North Park Primary School

Bessemer Green, Spennymoor, County Durham DL16 6PP

## Inspection dates

12–13 March 2019

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- In recent years, the proportion of pupils reaching expected standards at the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics combined has declined and in 2018 was well below average. This did not represent good progress for pupils from their starting points.
- While the progress of current pupils is improving, it is not yet good, because the quality of teaching across school is variable. Staffing instability has affected leaders' actions to bring about good teaching.
- Teachers do not use information about what pupils know and can do to plan and provide work that meets pupils' needs and abilities. For some pupils, work is too easy, but, for others, it is too hard.
- The teaching of reading and mathematics requires improvement. Some pupils read books that are ill matched to their abilities and phonic knowledge. Gaps evident in pupils' basic mathematical skills are not closing quickly.
- Learning does not get off to a good start in the early years, particularly in Nursery. Adults do not extend children's learning and thinking effectively during independent play. Some children are not suitably ready for learning in Year 1.
- Pupils' attendance, while improving, is still below average. A small minority of pupils continue to be regularly absent.
- Leaders' improvement plans lack clarity as to how they intend to measure their success in improving teaching and pupils' outcomes.

### The school has the following strengths

- Through better training and more thorough checks on the quality of teaching, leaders are beginning to secure improvements in teaching and pupils' progress.
- Senior leaders are well supported by middle leaders and by the governing body. Governors know the school well. As a result of their regular checks, they hold the school to account effectively.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They listen well to instructions and are polite and courteous.
- Support for pupils and their families is strong, especially for those who are vulnerable. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of the work that leaders and teachers do.
- Effective leadership ensures that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive the support needed to make good progress.

## Full report

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better to improve pupils' outcomes by the end of all key stages, by ensuring that:
  - teachers consistently use their knowledge of what pupils already know and can do to plan and provide work that enables them to make good progress in all subjects
  - teachers enable pupils, particularly younger lower-attaining pupils, to read books that are well matched to their abilities to develop their fluency and confidence
  - gaps in pupils' basic mathematical knowledge and skills are addressed.
- Improve the quality of provision in the early years, especially in the Nursery, by ensuring that:
  - staff ask questions that probe children's thinking and deepen their learning
  - during independent play activities, staff intervene in a timely manner to extend children's learning
  - children's continuous play opportunities are well matched to their needs and abilities.
- Further improve pupils' attendance and reduce the number of pupils who are regularly absent from school.
- Ensure that plans for improvement include more precise measures of success, so that leaders and governors can both measure and be held to account for the pace of school improvement.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders are responding positively and promptly to areas for improvement. In a relatively short period of time, leaders' actions are bringing about improvements to the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' outcomes. Despite these efforts, inconsistencies in the quality of teaching of reading remain and pupils do not make consistently good progress.
- The headteacher knows the school exceptionally well and has not shied away from making difficult decisions to turn the school around. She has coped well with staffing turbulence in recent years and continues to manage this effectively.
- Leaders' evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for further improvement are accurate. Leaders' action plans identify the most important improvement priorities. However, these plans do not indicate clearly enough how leaders will know when and how their priorities have been achieved.
- Middle leaders are enthusiastic and are determined to improve the learning experiences of all pupils. They receive high-quality professional development from senior leaders, external partners and local authority officers. This well-considered training is helping them to become more effective in their roles.
- Effective leadership in science is improving staff expertise through high-quality coaching and training, alongside more regular checks on the quality of science teaching. The positive effects of science leadership can clearly be seen in the improving quality of science teaching across all year groups.
- Leaders are improving the teaching of mathematics by developing staff awareness of the curriculum and introducing consistent approaches to teaching. This is leading to improvements in the quality of teaching, although gaps in pupils' basic mathematical skills remain.
- The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has a clear understanding of the needs of pupils and shares this effectively with staff. Good links with families and external specialists provide rounded support for pupils with SEND. Pupils' progress and support are regularly reviewed to ensure that pupils are meeting their individual targets successfully. As a result, in most classes pupils with SEND make strong progress.
- Leaders ensure that newly qualified staff receive effective support. Opportunities to learn from good teaching practice as well as to attend high-quality training are plentiful.
- Leaders use pupil premium funding purposefully. They know the barriers that pupils face and use funding to overcome these. Focused programmes of support are in place to support pupils academically, personally and physically. Despite this, progress is not yet consistently strong for disadvantaged pupils, and wide gaps remain between their attainment and that of other pupils nationally.
- The curriculum is well planned so that it is broad and balanced. There are a wide range of opportunities for pupils to gain knowledge and skills in a range of subjects. Pupils who talked to inspectors could recall knowledge that they had gained in geography and

religious education with great enthusiasm and insight.

- The vast majority of parents value the work of staff at the school. Those who shared their views reported that the communication between home and school is excellent and that any concerns they have are dealt with promptly. They describe staff as 'approachable' and that 'teachers try their best every day'. They describe the school as a place where their children are happy, safe and excited to attend.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors are passionate about the school and have a detailed and accurate view of the strengths and areas for further development.
- They visit the school regularly and see at first-hand the positive effect of leaders' actions. They challenge leaders through questions at committee meetings and during their visits to the school. They ensure that agreed actions are completed and that such actions are leading to improvements in the quality of teaching and learning.
- Governors are aware of how leaders use the additional funding the school receives. They ask questions to check that the funding is improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND.
- Governors are clear about their role in relation to safeguarding and attend training regularly to ensure they are up to date with current practice. They make regular checks to make sure that safeguarding practice in the school is effective.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. This is because there are strong systems and procedures in place.
- All staff are well trained in the most up-to-date safeguarding practice. They have a secure understanding of the government's 'Prevent' duty and how that relates to keeping pupils safe in school.
- Those with designated responsibility for safeguarding show tenacity in securing the most effective support for vulnerable pupils and their families. Expert use is made of the electronic system used to record all safeguarding concerns.
- Leaders frequently engage with a wide number of external agencies to support pupils' welfare. This means pupils and their families receive expert support for their specific needs.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

### **Requires improvement**

- The quality of teaching across year groups and subjects is inconsistent. Leaders are working hard to improve the quality of teaching. In some year groups, such as in Years 5 and 6, strong teaching and learning are evident. However, these improvements are not sufficiently widespread. Instabilities in staffing continue to hamper leaders' efforts to achieve consistency in the quality of teaching.
- Teachers do not use information about what pupils already know and can do to ensure

that pupils make good progress over time. In some year groups, pupils complete tasks that are too easy or too hard and, as a result, their progress slows.

- Leaders have taken decisive action to improve the quality of teaching in reading. This is paying off, and, as a result, pupils are making better progress. Pupils are developing a greater enthusiasm for reading and are reading more widely. Pupils particularly enjoy the challenge of reading as many words as they can and completing quizzes on the books they read. Some pupils are encouraged to study the meaning of words and sentences, although this practice is not yet consistently evident.
- Phonics teaching is largely effective. Pupils' outcomes in the Year 1 screening check have been on a rising trend and in 2018 were in line with the national average. However, lower-attaining pupils' reading books in Year 1 are not precisely matched to their phonics knowledge and this has a negative effect on their reading fluency and confidence.
- Leaders have introduced a new approach to the teaching of writing, which is being consistently applied across all year groups. Teachers now focus upon broadening pupils' vocabulary, which is enabling pupils' writing to become more sophisticated. As a result, more pupils are making better progress.
- As new approaches to teaching mathematics are being implemented across the school, the teaching of mathematics is improving. Teachers plan lessons with more opportunities for pupils to solve problems, explain and deepen their understanding. In Year 6 in 2018, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher standard in mathematics rose considerably, although it remained below average. Gaps in pupils' basic mathematical skills prevent some pupils from making good progress.
- Pupils with SEND receive effective support. Teachers and teaching assistants ensure that they have a range of appropriate resources to support pupils' learning. As a result, pupils with SEND make good progress from their varying starting points.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Leaders' actions to promote pupils' personal development and welfare are a strength of the school. Pupils are taught how to respect the views, opinions and differences of others. They are reflective about, and take responsibility for, their own actions.
- The school council makes a strong, positive contribution to the life of the school. Pupils' ideas and suggestions are valued and welcomed by the headteacher.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of the different forms of bullying. They say that bullying of any kind is rare. Where it does occasionally happen, they are very confident that staff will listen to them and 'put a stop to it' quickly.
- Regular reminders and a well-planned curriculum ensure that pupils have a very good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, including when they use the internet and a range of electronic devices.

- The school provides a good support for families at the beginning of the school day through the breakfast club.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are clear about what is expected of them. They understand the behaviour systems in the school and the consequences of their actions. They behave well in and out of lessons. This is also the case when pupils are not under the direct supervision of adults.
- Pupils are delightful. They demonstrate good manners to each other and to adults. Pupils readily hold doors open without prompting and welcome visitors in an open and friendly manner.
- Attendance is improving and in 2018 was closer to, but still below, the national average. Leaders do all they can to support families to bring their children to school regularly. However, there remains a small minority of pupils whose absence is unacceptably high.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- In recent years, outcomes for pupils at the end of key stage 2 have declined. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined has been on a declining trend and, in 2018, was well below that seen nationally. Pupils have not made good progress in these subjects over time.
- Leaders are taking action to improve the quality of teaching across the school. As a result, current pupils are making better progress. In Years 5 and 6, for example, pupils' progress is good. However, the quality of current teaching across other year groups remains too variable and, as a result, pupils do not make consistently good progress.
- When pupils enter Year 1, a higher-than-average proportion are not ready for the demands of the key stage 1 curriculum. At the end of Year 2 in 2018, pupils' attainment in reading and mathematics was below average. Pupils' progress was not good enough through key stage 1 to enable them to catch up to attain as well as other pupils nationally.
- Leaders' actions to improve pupils' achievement in key stage 1 are beginning to show some effect. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has been on a rising trend in recent years and in 2018 was in line with the national average. However, through key stage 1, current pupils' progress continues to be variable and in some cases is affected by instabilities in staffing.
- The achievement of different groups of pupils, such as disadvantaged pupils and the most able pupils, is also variable between year groups.
- By the end of key stages 1 and 2, too few pupils reach the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Work for most-able pupils lacks the challenge they need to reach their full potential.
- Disadvantaged pupils start Year 1 with attainment that lags some way behind that of other pupils nationally. While the pupil premium funding is used well to provide these

pupils with specific programmes of support, their progress is still weaker because the quality of teaching they receive day to day is not consistently good. In 2018, the difference between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and that of other pupils nationally by the end of Year 6 remained wide.

- Pupils with SEND are making good progress towards their individual targets across all year groups. Their physical, personal and emotional support helps these pupils to have a positive attitude towards their academic learning. Effective leadership ensures that work for these pupils is very well planned and that pupils make good progress.

## Early years provision

## Requires improvement

- Children enter the early years with skills, knowledge and understanding below those typically expected for their age. Historically, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development has been below the national average. Too many children have not made enough progress to be ready for learning in Year 1. This has been particularly the case for disadvantaged children, whose achievement has been variable over time. Current progress information indicates that children's achievement is improving. However, early years outcomes are still not good.
- Staff in both Nursery and Reception do not use questions effectively to extend children's learning and to probe their thinking. This means that opportunities to promote children's speaking skills or to deepen their learning are lost.
- Staff do not structure pupils' independent learning and play in a manner that supports their learning and development effectively. In Nursery, children are too often not purposefully occupied on tasks that sustain their interest, while in Reception some children flit from activity to activity. This limits children's progress. When staff join in with the children, such learning and play is more fruitful, but this interaction is inconsistent.
- Staff-led activities, particularly in Reception, are much more effective in helping children to learn and to acquire the important early knowledge and skills for reading, writing and mathematics. Children learn to form letters correctly and use capital letters and full stops. They also use their early phonic knowledge to spell and read simple words accurately. This is an improvement on previous years, when too few children made good progress in their writing.
- Children in Reception learn to cooperate with each other. They follow routines and instructions. For example, they tidy up when asked and line up smartly before they leave the classroom. The children show awareness of each other's needs and enjoy each other's company. They play and explore safely. The management of behaviour in Nursery is less effective.
- Assessment procedures are consistent and accurately reflect children's early development and acquisition of knowledge and skills. Staff observe children as they play, investigate and explore. They make a note about how well children are developing across all areas of learning. This is used to help staff to plan activities that help children to make the next steps in their learning.
- Leaders have increased parental involvement in the school. Many more parents now stay in the school to share books with their children. All children take home 'story

sacks' to share with family members. Parents appreciate the online assessment system that lets them see how well their children are developing. However, leaders have not been successful in getting many parents to contribute information about what children learn at home.

- The strong safeguarding and child protection procedures that protect children in key stage 1 and 2 protect children equally well in the early years. Leaders have put in place safeguarding arrangements that are specific to the youngest children, such as intimate care and toileting procedures. All the early years welfare requirements are met.
- Senior leaders understand where the strengths and weaknesses are in the early years. They keep a watchful eye on children's learning and progress.

## School details

Unique reference number	132172
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10067145

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	208
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Neil Foster
Headteacher	Patricia Monk
Telephone number	01388 815 943
Website	<a href="http://www.northpark.durham.sch.uk/">www.northpark.durham.sch.uk/</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:northpark@durhamlearning.net">northpark@durhamlearning.net</a>
Date of previous inspection	26 June 2018

## Information about this school

- North Park is a slightly-smaller-than-average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above average.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The school received a monitoring inspection in June 2018.
- The school offers breakfast club provision each day.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all year groups, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at their work in books. A number of inspection activities were undertaken alongside the headteacher and the deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with pupils, both senior and middle leaders, seven members of the governing body, including the chair and vice-chair, and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors considered 43 responses recorded on Parent View, including 22 free-text responses. Inspectors spoke to parents informally at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors examined documents relating to governance, school improvement planning, self-evaluation, pupils' progress and attainment, attendance, behaviour, and the curriculum.

## Inspection team

Melanie Maitland, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Phil Riozzi

Her Majesty's 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](http://www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings).

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