

New Brancepeth Primary School

Rock Terrace, New Brancepeth, Durham DH7 7EU

Inspection dates

3–4 April 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Over time, teachers have not planned learning to meet the needs of pupils effectively. While this is improving, and there is now some strong teaching, there remains some variability across the school. Consequently, pupils' progress across the curriculum, including in mathematics and writing, is not consistently good.
- Pupils' progress in reading has been too low for the last two years. Changes to the teaching of reading are starting to bring improvements. However, a review of pupils' books shows that there remains variability in pupils' progress.

The school has the following strengths

- Since her appointment, the executive headteacher has accurately identified the school's priorities and set a clear course for improvement. Staff and governors understand their roles in these developments. This is having a positive effect on current pupils' outcomes and personal development.
- The experienced and knowledgeable leader for early years provides insightful leadership. As a result, children make strong progress from starting school. However, the quality of teaching in the outdoors is not as strong as that found in the classroom.
- Governors have a clear understanding of the schools' strengths and areas for development. They hold senior and middle leaders to account effectively in most aspects. Their scrutiny of the physical education (PE) and sports funding is not as sharp.
- The subject leader for English has taken appropriate action to improve the quality of teaching of phonics and reading. While overall this has had a positive effect, some of this work is not fully embedded.
- Pupils' personal development and welfare is a key strength of the school. The caring, inclusive ethos of the school ensures that pupils are safe and happy.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and at playtimes and lunchtimes. They respond well to the school's reward systems, which they understand fully, and staff apply consistently. However, the overall attendance of pupils is below that in similar schools nationally.
- Parents are positive about the school. They appreciate how staff are approachable and deal with any concerns they may have.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - embedding developments in the teaching of reading and phonics to ensure that pupils' progress continues to improve across the school
 - ensuring that pupils have access to the practical resources needed to support their learning in mathematics and building effectively on pupils' prior knowledge
 - strengthening opportunities for pupils to apply their developing vocabulary knowledge to improve the quality of their writing and their reading comprehension
 - sharing effective practice found within school and in the other partner school where the executive headteacher is based.
- Further develop leadership by:
 - continuing to develop the role of middle leaders, including the mathematics subject leader and the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo)
 - completing the planned curriculum review and building on the developments achieved in revising the reading and mathematics curriculums.
- Ensure that the quality of learning in the outdoors is as consistently strong as that found in the learning indoors.
- Continue to improve attendance levels so that these at least match those found in schools in similar contexts nationally.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The executive headteacher has brought discernible improvements to the school since coming into post in September 2017. She has established an effective leadership team, raised staff aspirations for pupils, enhanced support for pupils' personal development and welfare and organised well-focused staff training. As a result, the quality of teaching is improving, leadership capacity has increased and pupils' outcomes are starting to improve.
- Leaders accurately identify the school's strengths and priorities for development through a range of self-evaluation approaches. Clear plans are in place to bring further school improvement and to embed the achievements made so far.
- The leader for English has a good understanding of the priorities for improvement. She has rightly focused on securing improvements in pupils' progress in phonics and reading. Approaches to the teaching and assessment of reading and the quality of available resources have all improved. This is bringing strong improvements in some year groups, but this is not evident consistently across school. Additional support is in place to embed these measures.
- At the time of the inspection, interim arrangements were in place for the leadership of mathematics. This has enabled developments in mathematics to stay on track. Consequently, the focus on developing pupils' mathematical problem-solving and reasoning generally continues to improve pupils' learning in this aspect. Plans are in place for further training to continue to strengthen leadership of mathematics.
- Well-established systems to manage the performance of staff are in place. Staff receive relevant training through a range of sources, including support from the local authority, local mathematics hub meetings and working alongside the partner school. As a result, the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of middle leadership are developing quickly.
- Leaders regularly review the curriculum to ensure that it meets pupils' needs and interests effectively. They have ensured that appropriate coverage and progression across the national curriculum to meet the needs of mixed aged classes. Revision of the reading and mathematics curriculums has generally brought improvements. Next term, leaders have planned a full review of the curriculum and have identified steps to embed the implementation of the changes introduced over the last year.
- A range of clubs and before school provision enrich the curriculum. This has a positive effect on pupils' social development and adopting active lifestyles and supports their learning after the school day. Provision before school is helping some pupils to improve their attendance and punctuality.
- The pupil premium strategy for 2018/19 is well matched to the school's priorities and the needs of disadvantaged pupils. There is evidence that this is beginning to improve the progress for these pupils, particularly in reading and mathematics. However, their progress is not as strong in writing. The additional support for social and emotional development helps these pupils be successful in school and is raising their levels of attendance.

- The SENCo, who has recently taken this role, has promptly identified the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). She is working diligently with parents, staff and other agencies to ensure that appropriate support is in place for these pupils. This work is developing and is, in the main, having a positive effect on outcomes for pupils with SEND. However, leaders, including governors, are not complacent and plans are in place for the continued improvement to this aspect of the school. The SENCo intends to complete required nationally accredited training in September 2019.
- The deputy headteacher has established an appropriate plan for PE and sport premium spending. Regular reviews and adaptations ensure that the plan focuses well on achieving best outcomes for pupils. A range of different activities and sports, such as judo, golf and dry-slope skiing, widen pupils' experiences. Pupils have an opportunity to attend sport festivals and team sports, which enable them to participate in competitive activities.
- The curriculum and ethos of the school provides effectively for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils develop a secure understanding of British values. For example, the school's rules, opportunities to develop an understanding of democracy and fund-raising activities for charity all help pupils to develop their citizenship skills.
- Support from the local authority has been appropriately targeted. Leaders have used this support effectively to assist with the improvements to the quality of teaching and strengthening leadership.

Governance of the school

- Governors have a clear understanding of the school's priorities and the community that the school serves. They provide an effective balance of challenge and support to school leaders. Their link governor roles, which involve meetings and working alongside leaders in school, help them to understand the effect of leaders' actions in practical terms. Governors now scrutinise the effectiveness of pupil premium funding thoroughly and check that leaders spend it to beneficial effect. Their review of PE and sports funding has not been as regular.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective and there is a very positive culture of safeguarding across the school. Leaders robustly complete careful safeguarding checks for all staff and governors. Staff and governors receive suitable training and regular updates, so they know and implement the school's procedures to keep pupils safe. Leaders engage promptly and effectively with parents and other agencies where necessary. All staff log incidents relating to pupils' safeguarding and welfare diligently in the school's online recording system. This demonstrates a rigorous approach by leaders and staff. Almost all parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, believe that their children are happy and feel 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. However, support and development are improving the quality of teaching quickly. This is particularly evident in reading and mathematics. Consequently, there is now some strong teaching in these subjects, but this is not secure across the school.
- Leaders and staff have introduced a revised approach to the teaching of phonics. In early years and Year 1, staff teach phonics in a structured, systematic manner. As a result, younger pupils are now developing strong phonics skills, which they use effectively when tackling unknown words when they are reading.
- Opportunities for reading in school are regular and staff encourage pupils to read frequently at home. This is developing pupils' reading skills and instilling a love of reading. However, sometimes the reading tasks in lessons are not well matched to pupils' needs and, occasionally, staff do not make the most effective use of the time available in these sessions. As a result, pupils miss the opportunity to reinforce or deepen their learning.
- Mathematics teaching provides pupils with well-sequenced learning in number, problem-solving and reasoning. However, at times, pupils do not have the practical resources, which would support their learning. Occasionally, teaching does not build effectively on pupils' prior learning or provide clear explanations. These factors can prevent pupils from developing and deepening their learning.
- There is a suitable focus on enriching pupils' vocabulary. This is generally helping pupils gain a better understanding of the books they read. However, sometimes these activities are not well matched to pupils' learning when they are working independently. While there is evidence that pupils' vocabulary is widening, opportunities to revisit and reinforce this new vocabulary and in writing tasks are not fully developed.
- Staff check improvements in the progress of pupils with SEND regularly. Improvements to assessment and record keeping are helping leaders and staff have a better understanding of these pupils' progress.
- The roles of teaching assistants are clear. They provide effective support for pupils' learning in class and when providing individuals with additional support.
- 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.
- Pupils can explain their work confidently. They generally take pride in their presentation. Pupils thoroughly understand the school's traffic light reporting system. This informs them about their progress in learning, effort and behaviour. As a result,

pupils know what it takes to be successful learners. Parents also value this information, which they receive regularly.

- Opportunities for pupils to take important roles in school, such as the student council, prefects and playground buddies, develop pupils' responsibility and citizenship skills. Leaders and staff take pupils' views seriously and their suggestions have influenced some aspects of school development. For example, pupils' views have shaped school improvements such as those to develop playground provision and outdoor learning.
- Opportunities to engage in a range of after school clubs such as multisports, and teaching about healthy eating from an early age, helps pupils understand the importance of healthy lifestyles. Personal, social and health education provides guidance in aspects of emotional welfare. Additional provision, including access to a counsellor, helps any pupils who may require extra support.
- The curriculum and assemblies help pupils to understand how to keep safe, including when they are online. Pupils have a good understanding of the different forms bullying can take. While they believe that bullying is rare in their school, they have confidence in the adults to address incidents, should they occur. Staff diligently record incidents of poor behaviour, including bullying, in an online system. This ensures that staff monitor and promptly address any incidents or patterns of poor behaviour.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are polite and respectful of staff and their peers. They behave well in lessons, cooperating with their peers during group activities and working diligently on individual tasks.
- During playtimes and lunchtimes, pupils play games sensibly or socialise with their friends. Appropriate supervision and guidance from staff ensure that pupils are safe and that they have adults to support them if they have any concerns.
- Pupils understand the well-structured behaviour management systems and staff apply these consistently. Pupils appreciate rewards such as the team treats and the 'Top 25' rewards. Regular reporting to parents, through a traffic light approach, ensures that they are well informed about their child's behaviour. There have been no exclusions for a substantial number of years.
- Attendance has a high profile in school and staff regularly celebrate pupils' good attendance. This has brought about improvements in attendance levels for disadvantaged pupils and for those pupils where their absence levels were too high. However, overall levels of attendance remain slightly below that of schools in similar contexts.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes for pupils require improvement because pupils' progress, including disadvantaged pupils, in reading has been too low for the last two years. The progress of current pupils is not consistently good across a range of subjects.

- Consideration of the school's pupil assessment information shows that, over time, pupils' progress is variable. However, there is evidence of recent improvements in pupils' progress this academic year. This is particularly evident in the areas, such as reading, where leaders and staff have rightly focused their efforts for improvement.
- A review of pupils' books shows that progress in reading, writing and mathematics is strong in some year groups. However, this is not the case across the school in all these subjects.
- Progress for current disadvantaged pupils is improving towards that of other pupils in school, particularly in mathematics and reading. However, like other pupils in school, their progress in writing is not strong.
- Over the last two years, the school's results for the Year 1 phonics check have been below the national average. Improvements in the teaching of phonics are enabling most pupils to develop secure phonics knowledge, which they can use effectively in their early reading and writing.
- In subjects such as science, history and geography, there is evidence that pupils are developing secure subject knowledge. However, sometimes pupils do not use and embed this growing knowledge to deepen their understanding. For example, use of independent historical narrative writing in history is variable. Similarly, in science, understanding of how to successfully complete practical experiments, or the use of pupils' mathematical knowledge, is not as evident in pupils' work.
- Leaders and staff track the progress of pupils with SEND carefully. These pupils are, in the main, making good progress, particularly where staff carefully plan small steps in learning to meet these pupils' needs. However, sometimes they do not have the practical resources to access their learning in lessons, and this can slow their progress.
- In 2018, the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined was below the national average. As a result, not enough pupils left the school well prepared academically for their next stage in education.

Early years provision

Good

- Generally, children start in early years with skills which are below that typical for their age. They settle quickly into Nursery, where they make strong progress across the early years. While there are some variations with each cohort, the proportion of children who achieve a good level of development is generally similar to the averages found nationally. By the end of early years, the majority of children are well prepared to start Year 1.
- The quality of teaching in early years is strong, overall. Teaching by the Reception teacher, who is the early years leader, provides an effective role model for other staff. She guides them well to ensure that planning and assessment meet children's needs successfully.
- An effective balance of adult-led teaching combined with provision where children choose activities for themselves, supports children's learning effectively. Regular review of the early years learning experiences ensure that these are well matched to children's needs and interests. Consequently, children mainly work with interest and

perseverance and understand the purpose of their activities. However, staff do not plan learning activities in the outdoor area as carefully. As a result, children are less focused and opportunities to develop their learning and independence skills are missed.

- Staff search for imaginative ways to help children learn. For example, 'Wacky Wednesdays' aim to enrich children's knowledge and understanding of the world. In one session, Nursery children carefully watched an experiment to test the dissolving of a gingerbread person in different liquids. This engrossed the children, developed their knowledge and widened their vocabulary.
- Guidance by staff encourages children to listen to the views of others, take turns and to share resources. As a result, children learn together in a caring and harmonious learning environment. They quickly understand routines and their social and personal development is well nurtured.
- The early years leader uses her 'gaps and strengths' checks to ensure that early years provision continues to improve. For example, analysis of children's outcomes in 2018 has led to actions to develop opportunities for children to develop their understanding of weighing and capacity. This improvement is clearly evident in the learning opportunities in the classroom. The whole-school focus on improving reading also has a high profile in both Nursery and Reception.
- Partnerships with parents and other agencies are positive. Staff engage and communicate effectively with parents. Links with other agencies ensure that children receive support, such as speech therapy, where required.
- Children behave well, and they feel safe and secure. Safeguarding is effective, and all welfare requirements are met.

School details

Unique reference number	114119
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10055205

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	122
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alison Moore
Executive Headteacher	Helen Louise Templeton
Telephone number	01913 730736
Website	www.newbrancepeth.durham.sch.uk
Email address	newbrancepeth@durhamlearning.net
Date of previous inspection	21 May 2018

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium funding is 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 similar to that found nationally.
- The school has provision for two-year-olds.
- The school has received support from the local authority to develop the quality of teaching and learning and leadership capacity.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in a range of lessons and part lessons in both classes. The executive headteacher joined the inspector for these visits.
- Meetings were held with a range of school leaders. This included the executive headteacher, deputy headteacher, SENCo, leaders for early years and English, and the interim leader for mathematics.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons, and at other times throughout the day, was observed by the inspector. He reviewed the school's promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The inspector held a meeting with two governors, including the chair of the governing body. He also met with a representative from the local authority.
- Four pupils in total, from Year 2 and Year 6, read their reading books to the inspector. They discussed how the school supports their reading development and other aspects of the school. At lunchtime and playtime, the inspector also considered pupils' views of the school.
- The inspector took account of the 29 responses to Ofsted's online parent survey, Parent View, and four 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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