

Aycliffe Village Primary School

North Terrace, Aycliffe Village, Newton Aycliffe, County Durham DL5 6LG

Inspection dates

24–25 April 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
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher has high expectations of staff and pupils. She provides strong and dedicated leadership. Her determined approach has secured rapid improvements across the school during a turbulent period.
- Governance arrangements have strengthened. Governors are knowledgeable and committed to the school. Along with other leaders, they have a passion and aspiration to ensure the best possible outcomes for all pupils.
- Middle leaders are an asset to the school. They are helpful in supporting colleagues in developing new skills, although the teaching of phonics requires further development.
- Leaders' focused work ensures teaching caters for all pupils' abilities. Teachers' effective questioning successfully challenges pupils. Work in books and evidence in lessons show that, overall, pupils are making good progress.
- Staff morale is very positive. There is a strong team identity and staff appreciate the support given by school leaders. Staff are keen to improve their practice. As a result, teaching has strengthened and is now good.
- Staff and leaders have worked successfully together to create a happy, challenging and safe school. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are pleased with their achievements.
- Leaders provide a broad, balanced and stimulating curriculum. This helps pupils to develop skills, knowledge and understanding across a wide range of subjects in an exciting and meaningful way.
- Children in the early years usually make good progress. Sometimes, however, teaching is not sufficiently challenging. This is especially the case for the most able and when children are playing outdoors or during phonics sessions.
- Pupils are confident and cooperative individuals. They work well together. They are proud of the work they do to help others, both in the school and in the local community.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They have positive attitudes to their learning and take great care with their presentation and handwriting.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding. Pupils feel safe and appreciate the many ways in which the school helps them learn to stay safe.
- Parents are extremely positive about the work the school does for their children. They recognise and appreciate the care and commitment staff provide.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - the teaching of phonics is well structured, so that pupils' skills in early reading and writing continue to improve.
- Improve the early years provision by ensuring that:
 - the quality of children's learning outdoors matches that found in indoors
 - all children are sufficiently challenged, particularly the most able, so that they go on to exceed the early learning goals.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher conveys a clear vision for the school. She cares greatly for the pupils, their families and the local community and is totally committed to providing them with the very best. The headteacher has demonstrated resilience and determination to overcome several challenges. As a result, the school has strengthened since the previous inspection.
- Governors share the headteacher's commitment, dedication and passion towards school improvement. As a team, they have used a range of approaches to identify and address the school's priorities. Together, they have developed consistency across the school and have created a skilled staff team.
- The headteacher values her staff immensely. The good communication that exists between all staff helps to sustain a positive culture of accountability and willingness to develop professionally. She ensures that all staff receive high-quality training, so that they continuously improve and are effective in their roles. Staff respond positively to the high expectations set for them. They are appreciative of the wide range of training opportunities provided by leaders. As a result, staff morale is high.
- Leaders have introduced an effective and robust system for checking the progress and attainment of pupils in each year group. They work continually to ensure that the information gathered is accurate and reflects what pupils know and can do. They welcome an external view, such as that provided by the local authority, to validate their judgements. Leaders have quickly established a secure baseline on which to build.
- Middle leaders are ambitious and keen to support school improvements. They demonstrate a good understanding of the leaders' priorities and work cohesively with senior leaders to implement change. They are currently supporting senior leaders to increase the levels of challenge within the Reception class. Leaders' timely actions and high expectations support pupils to make good and improving progress.
- Leaders recognise where there are gaps in pupils' learning and support teachers to address these systematically. Leaders acknowledge that staffing turbulence has created gaps in the phonics subject knowledge of staff. For example, some staff do not model the sounds accurately or check pupils' work thoroughly.
- Pupils receive a broad and balanced curriculum that develops their knowledge and skills well. Teachers are beginning to use opportunities within the curriculum to embed the basic skills of English and mathematics. The curriculum design is focused on creating learners who work together cooperatively to explore and solve problems.
- All leaders place a great importance on developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils demonstrate good understanding of the school's core values of 'care, respect, resilience, responsibility and fairness' and follow these closely. As a result, pupils behave well. They show respect and care for adults and each other. The school is a happy and purposeful place, because leaders and staff successfully promote a very positive climate for learning.
- School displays and pupils' work reflect the pupils' opportunities to develop their understanding of British heritage and culture. Pupils take part in activities to raise

funds for charities and learn about the cultures and beliefs of others. The school prepares pupils well for their life in modern Britain.

- Senior leaders, including governors, are determined that disadvantaged pupils make the same strong progress as their peers. They use additional funding for disadvantaged pupils well to secure pupils' progress and to develop their emotional well-being. Consequently, these pupils make good progress from their various starting points.
- The special educational needs coordinators demonstrate strong leadership. They have a good understanding of the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders ensure that pupils receive relevant support in a timely manner. Effective partnerships with parents and carers enable them to contribute to support plans. Consequently, leaders spend additional funding effectively to ensure that all pupils with SEND make strong progress.
- The sports leader is proud of the various developments made to improve pupils' health and fitness. Additional funding for physical education (PE) is used to good effect. Pupils and staff benefit from working closely with PE experts to enhance their knowledge and skills. The leader has increased the range of sporting competitions and after-school clubs. Staff were very proud of the recent success of two pupils who were 'record setters', establishing new county records in the long jump and throwing.
- The school has received effective support from the local authority. This support has secured improvements, particularly in strengthening governance and middle leadership.
- The vast majority of parents that inspectors spoke with during the inspection, and those who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire Parent View, are extremely positive about the work the school does for their children. Parents say staff are friendly and approachable. One parent commented: 'The staff work hard to create wonderful memories for children which they will treasure forever.' Another summed up the views of many, saying: 'Staff show genuine care for the children and there is a real community feel.'

Governance of the school

- Governance has strengthened since the previous inspection. Governors are passionate about the school and take their role seriously. They invest considerable time in supporting school improvement. They have worked successfully to eliminate underperformance, improve the quality of leadership and strengthen teaching.
- Governors and senior leaders have coped extremely well with staffing turbulence since the last inspection. They have endeavoured to provide stability and consistency for pupils during a very difficult period. As a result, pupils are now clearly happy in school and making good progress.
- Governors have a good understanding of the community the school serves and a clear overview of the school's priorities. They receive a wide range of information from senior and middle leaders. Governors measure the impact of leaders' actions carefully through regular visits and challenging the information they receive.
- Governors ensure that additional funding for PE and disadvantaged pupils is effectively spent. They carefully evaluate spending of the funding and the effect it is having on the progress of pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is a culture of vigilance towards safeguarding, so that staff do not hesitate to report the smallest concerns. Staff are aware that safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone. They undertake regular training in relation to safeguarding and, as a result, understand fully their roles and responsibilities. Governors check that the school meets safeguarding requirements.
- Leaders have clear systems in place if a pupil makes a disclosure or an allegation. The headteacher maintains detailed and accurate records and takes timely action, when necessary, to support vulnerable pupils. Leaders work well with external agencies to provide the appropriate level of support and intervention required to keep pupils safe.
- Leaders with responsibility for safeguarding have undertaken relevant training, at an appropriate level, to ensure that they fulfil their roles effectively.
- Policies and procedures are robust, with rigorous checks made on staff when appointed to ensure that they are suitable to work with children. Leaders review the records of these checks regularly.
- The site is secure and well maintained. Pupils say they feel safe and that there is always an adult on hand if they need advice or help. Pupils are knowledgeable about how to stay safe, including on the internet.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Leaders place high importance on improving the quality of teaching and learning. Refinements have come about through a strong commitment to providing high-quality training for all staff. This has enthused staff and helped them to develop in their practice. As a result, teaching has strongly improved since the previous inspection. Teaching across the school is now good.
- All staff recognise that challenging pupils, particularly the most able learners, is one of the school's main priorities. Staff are working successfully to challenge all pupils in their thinking. Throughout the school, teachers and teaching assistants use open questions effectively to encourage pupils to think, deepen learning and correct misconceptions. As a result, pupils are confident learners who are keen to undertake challenging tasks.
- Leaders successfully use pupil progress meetings to hold class teachers to account. Leaders challenge teachers if pupils are not on track. When pupils appear to be making less progress than the school expects, teachers use effective support programmes to help the pupils to catch up quickly.
- Teachers know their pupils well and usually plan work at the right level to meet their varying needs. They use their knowledge of prior learning and ongoing observational assessments well, adapting lessons accordingly. In lessons, pupils are enthusiastic, and expectations for both achievement and behaviour are high.
- Teaching assistants assist pupils' learning effectively and promote pupils' social and emotional needs and behaviour. This is helping to improve pupils' progress, particularly

the progress of disadvantaged pupils.

- There is a consistent approach to the teaching of mathematics across the school. Pupils confidently recall basic numeracy facts and use these in challenging problem-solving activities. Teachers are beginning to provide more opportunities to extend and deepen pupils' learning by developing these mathematical skills across a wide range of subjects.
- Teachers carefully build pupils' knowledge and understanding of how to use grammar and punctuation to good effect in their writing. Pupils in key stage 2 show a good understanding of common spelling rules and patterns. All pupils are encouraged to edit and re-draft their work. They are proud of their achievements.
- Across the school, pupils are keen to write, and most make good progress. Teachers encourage pupils to apply their writing skills in a wide range of contexts and genres. There are a growing number of opportunities to use extended writing across the curriculum in a wide range of subjects. For example, Year 2 pupils were asked to imagine their father was in the trenches in the First World War. They wrote letters to him, and Year 5 pupils wrote back to the Year 2 pupils from the father's perspective.
- Teachers promote a love of reading. They plan lessons successfully to develop pupils' comprehension skills through careful consideration of resources and thoughtful probing questions about texts.
- The teaching of phonics is less strong, because there are inconsistencies and gaps in the subject knowledge of staff. Not all adults model the sounds accurately or check pupils' work thoroughly. Staff do not systematically teach pupils to blend and segment sounds. This slows the progress that pupils make. As a result, some pupils struggle to attempt new words using their phonics skills in early reading and writing activities.
- Teachers plan lessons that are lively and interesting, capturing pupils' imagination and engagement. For example, pupils were captivated when exploring artefacts to discover the history of Egypt. Leaders have high expectations of the pupils. As a result, pupils work hard and take pride in their work. Most of the work in pupils' books demonstrates good progress and high standards of presentation.
- Relationships between pupils and adults are extremely positive. Teachers are enthusiastic and encouraging. They have high expectations of pupils' conduct during lessons. Teachers' positive language and use of praise help pupils to develop their confidence and self-esteem. As a result, pupils are comfortable asking questions and expressing their point of view.
- Parents and carers receive regular updates about how their children are doing at the school. As well as the regular written reports, staff are readily available if parents wish to talk about a particular issue. Parents say that they welcome this improvement in communication and feel more able to support their pupils' learning at home.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Across the school, there is a welcoming and friendly atmosphere which supports effective learning. Pupils are encouraged to 'be the best they can be' through adults' positive reinforcement of the school's core values. Pupils are proud of their school and show positive attitudes to their learning.
- Pupils show respect and care for each other. They value their classmates' opinions and work happily and cooperatively in lessons. Pupils' skills in speaking and listening in paired and group discussions are successfully developed.
- Staff have a good understanding of the local community and know pupils well. Pupils have lessons and experiences that encourage them to think about issues, such as the use of social media, as well as local and wider-world issues. Some pupils explained that they had visited the local recycling centre and shared ideas of how to reduce waste.
- Teachers provide pupils with a wealth of opportunities to share their views and opinions. For example, pupils told the inspector about their roles as members of the school council and their work to create a school friendship bench.
- The school is an orderly environment. Deeply embedded routines and effective transition from one activity to another ensure that very little learning time is lost. For example, pupils quickly settle to their work after playtime and focus on their tasks.
- Leaders provide opportunities for pupils to develop resilience and confidence. For example, pupils perform and often sing to an audience, including in assemblies and at community events.
- Leaders ensure that pupils lead healthy lives. Staff encourage pupils to enjoy sports and increase their physical activity. Frequent inter-school competitions develop pupils' skills and confidence.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils enjoy school life. Levels of attendance are above national averages and the vast majority of pupils arrive punctually to the school, ready and keen to learn.
- Pupils are friendly and considerate, often displaying thoughtfulness towards each other and to adults in the school. For example, pupils hold the doors open for one another and for adults.
- The school has a friendly and open culture. Pupils' behaviour in the playground, corridors and in the hall during assembly and at lunchtimes is of a high standard. They show great respect for their peers and the school environment.
- Pupils listen well in class and support each other in their learning. They are motivated, enthusiastic learners.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- This is a smaller-than-average-sized school. Sometimes, the number of pupils with additional needs or those entitled to pupil premium funding can represent a very small cohort. Because of this, it is often difficult to identify trends in outcomes for particular pupil groups. However, a detailed scrutiny of current pupils' work across a range of subjects shows that, overall, pupils typically make good progress in key stages 1 and 2. The vast majority of pupils are working at the standards expected for their age, because teaching has strengthened and is good.
- In 2016 and 2017, the proportion of pupils reaching the required standard in the phonics screening check in Year 1 was above the national average. However, this fell to average in 2018. Leaders recognise that standards of phonics teaching are not always good and rates of pupils' progress slow. Leaders are supporting staff to teach phonics accurately and consistently across the school.
- Improved teaching has enabled pupils to attain higher standards. In 2018, an above-average proportion of Year 2 pupils reached the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics. The percentage of pupils who attained a greater depth of learning in reading was above the national average. This represents good progress from their lower starting points.
- In 2018, attainment for pupils at the end of key stage 2 demonstrated good improvement on the previous two years. The proportions of pupils reaching expected standards and the greater depth standard were above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Historically, across the school, the numbers of pupils working beyond the expected standard was low. Leaders have successfully tackled this, and work in books shows that pupils, including the most able, are now making strong progress in key stages 1 and 2 and achieving higher standards.
- Disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, make at least as much progress as other pupils, and sometimes more.
- Pupils with SEND make good progress. Skilled teaching supports and challenges these pupils, and staff adapt work effectively to meet their individual needs.

Early years provision

Good

- Learning gets off to a steady start for most children in the early years. They join the school with levels of development below those typical for their age. By the end of Reception, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development is similar to that found nationally. However, inspection evidence and the school's own records show that challenge, particularly for the more able children, is not sufficient. Consequently, some children do not make enough progress from their individual starting points. Too few children exceed the expected standard.
- The headteacher is the leader of early years. Her leadership is good. She has a thorough understanding of the early years setting and a clear vision for children's achievement. Her self-evaluation is accurate, and she is ambitious to improve the provision further. The leader has supported staff to improve the classroom environment to provide stimulating and rich learning experiences which build on

children's interests. The outdoor area does not yet provide the same level of challenge or inspiration to support children's learning. Leaders recognise this and are further developing this area.

- The indoor areas are well resourced. Children are encouraged, from an early age, to respect and take care of equipment. They demonstrate great confidence when selecting equipment and working on independent tasks. They work cooperatively to overcome problems and to complete tasks. For example, when one boy was cutting out an elephant mask and almost cut the ear off, his partner told him not to worry as they could sort it. They then proceeded to use sticky tape to hold the ear in place.
- Teachers often plan engaging activities to develop children's early mathematical skills. During the inspection, children were using a number line to count on. Other children were working out how to build an elephant using blocks, refining and checking their work to ensure that they used a repeated colour pattern. In children's workbooks, the activities that teachers plan in mathematics sometimes lack challenge. Occasionally, when activities lack challenge, children's attention wanders. This prevents children, particularly the most able, from making more rapid progress.
- Staff provide daily activities for children to develop their fine motor skills and get ready to write. During the inspection, children thoroughly enjoyed a variety of activities linked to the Elmer story, cutting, sticking and colouring elephants with great care and precision.
- Children enjoy daily phonics sessions and are keen to use their knowledge of letters and the sounds they make when they read and write. However, the teacher's assessment of the children is not always accurate and, as a result, some phonics teaching is less effective because it does not precisely meet the children's needs.
- Children are happy, confident and keen to share their ideas with others. Strong relationships are evident, and there is a real sense of nurture and pastoral care. Children are very happy to talk to visitors because they feel confident that their ideas are valued.
- Children behave very well in the early years. They flourish, because their relationships with staff are consistently warm and positive. Children feel secure, because routines are well established and expectations are clear. Staff frequently praise children's many achievements. As a result, the early years is a happy and safe place for children to learn.
- Links with parents are strong. Staff communicate closely with parents. Parents are welcomed into the classroom for visits, information evenings and workshops. Parents are fully encouraged and supported to play a part in their children's development and to share information about their children's learning at home.
- Staff in the early years keep their skills and knowledge up to date through regular training provided by leaders, including on safeguarding and first aid. Safeguarding procedures are effective and welfare requirements are fully met, so children are safe

and cared for.

School details

Unique reference number	114101
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10087527

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	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	153
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	James Walsh
Headteacher	Helen Sutherland
Telephone number	01325 300 227
Website	www.aycliffevillage.durham.sch.uk/
Email address	aycliffevillage@durhamlearning.net
Date of previous inspection	1–2 December 2016

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 disadvantaged pupils, those eligible for support through pupil premium funding, is well below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below that found nationally.
- The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is well below that found nationally.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning in a range of lessons and part-lessons in all classes. The headteacher joined the lead inspector for three of the lesson observations.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the leader for the provision for pupils with SEND, the sports leader and the leaders responsible for English and mathematics. The lead inspector met with governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- Pupils from key stage 1 read their reading books to inspectors and discussed how the school supported their reading development.
- A representative group of pupils from key stage 1 and key stage 2 discussed their opinions about the school and their learning with the inspectors.
- The inspectors scrutinised samples of pupils' work in their books across a wide range of curriculum areas. They also reviewed pupils' work in other curriculum areas, such as art, by considering the work on display around the school.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in the playground and around the school. They observed pupils around the school building, in the school grounds and as pupils ate their lunch.
- Inspectors took account of the 43 responses on Parent View and held discussions with parents at the beginning of the school day. Inspectors considered the 13 responses in staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Alison Stephenson, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Gill Wild	Ofsted 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.

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