

# Durham Gilesgate Primary School

Kepier Crescent, Gilesgate, Durham DH1 1PH

## Inspection dates

5–6 June 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>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- In key stages 1 and 2, the quality of teaching is variable across subjects. As a result, pupils' progress is not consistently good. By the end of Year 6 in 2018, attainment was below average, especially in reading and mathematics.
- Some teachers do not use assessment information accurately to plan work that meets pupils' varying needs. Often, work lacks challenge, especially for the most able pupils.
- Disadvantaged pupils do not make good enough progress and some fall behind others. Their ability to catch up is hampered because the quality of support is not consistently good.
- Pupils' achievement in reading is held back because there are not enough opportunities to read in subjects beyond English.
- Pupils are not given enough chances to develop their mathematical problem-solving and reasoning skills; this prevents pupils from reaching higher standards.
- Although swift action is being taken to improve teaching and pupils' outcomes, it is too early to see the full effect of the improvements.
- Middle leaders' skills in evaluating how well pupils are doing are still developing. This prevents them from making a fully effective contribution to improving teaching.

### The school has the following strengths

- Strong leadership, particularly from the headteacher, is directing the changes needed to improve pupils' outcomes. High-quality staff training is improving the quality of teaching.
- Governors understand their roles well and are well informed. They support leaders diligently and are holding them to account effectively.
- Effective early years leadership has improved the early years provision. Children make strong progress and are well prepared for Year 1.
- Good teaching of phonics supports pupils well in developing their early reading skills.
- A strong caring ethos permeates the school. Pupils with hearing impairment flourish in this very supportive environment.
- Pupils behave well and show good attitudes to learning. They enjoy school and are keen to talk about their learning.
- Pupils are excited by, and develop their knowledge and skills in, a wide and varied curriculum.

## Full report

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

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in key stages 1 and 2 so that all groups of pupils make good progress and attainment improves, particularly in reading and mathematics, by making sure that:
  - teachers use assessment information accurately to plan challenging work which meets pupils' varying learning needs, especially the most able
  - teachers plan and provide support more effectively for less-confident learners and disadvantaged pupils at risk of falling behind in their learning
  - pupils with SEND are provided with dedicated opportunities to read and practise their skills
  - teachers use other subjects beyond English to develop pupils' reading skills and provide frequent opportunities to deepen their understanding of books and extracts
  - all pupils are provided with challenging opportunities to develop their mathematical problem-solving and reasoning skills
  - all teaching assistants are deployed to have maximum effect on pupils' learning.
- Developing the skills of middle leaders so that they are more effective in checking how well pupils are doing across the various curriculum subjects and using this to bring about any necessary improvements to the quality of teaching.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- Since the last inspection, the headteacher undertook a detailed review of the areas for improvement to set precise targets in all areas of the school's work. The headteacher has high expectations of all staff and ensures that they have the support and training they need to help pupils achieve well.
- While the school's overall effectiveness still requires improvement, leadership and management are good because many aspects of the school's work have improved significantly in the past two years. Leaders understand well what is expected of them to improve teaching and learning in the subjects and key stages for which they are responsible. Outcomes in the early years are improving rapidly because teaching here is consistently good or better. The teaching of writing has improved meaningfully over the past two years and pupils are now making stronger progress in writing in most classes. However, leaders need to maintain their focus on improving outcomes in reading and mathematics, particularly for disadvantaged and most-able pupils.
- The curriculum is broad and well balanced to include all subjects. Topics that link subjects together to make learning more relevant and engaging are proving effective. Recent strategies to improve the teaching of writing have already had a considerable effect on pupils' achievements. However, some middle leaders' knowledge and understanding of how well pupils are doing is still developing. This prevents them from making a fully effective contribution to making sure that the quality of teaching leads to successful outcomes for all learners.
- Leaders have encouraged very effective engagement with the school's community and partners. Its extra-curricular clubs encourage pupils to develop a range of skills as well as their personal interests, for example in music, art and sports.
- The school is a happy, friendly place where pupils say that they feel safe and well cared for. Pupils trust staff to support them both in their academic and personal development. Those pupils who may be particularly vulnerable or are facing challenges in their lives are nurtured sensitively.
- Leaders of the school have ensured that this is an inclusive school and work very effectively in partnership with the local authority hearing impairment provision based at the school. Those pupils with a hearing impairment fully access classrooms and have high-quality support for their communication needs. Teachers and support staff have excellent training and advice provided from the hearing impairment staff to ensure that pupils can be successful learners and make good progress.
- The additional funding in the school's budget to support pupils with SEND is used particularly well to provide targeted support for pupils with emotional needs. However, some pupils receiving support for their SEND are making better progress in their mathematics than in their reading.
- The funding to support disadvantaged pupils has had a variable impact depending on the quality of teaching. Where teaching is strong and support is timely, these pupils make good progress. However, over time, where support has been less than effective, gaps in learning limit pupils' progress. This is especially evident at the higher standards. Leaders are aware of this and are using progress meetings to ensure that

disadvantaged pupils make the same rates of progress as their classmates.

- Leaders use the physical education and sport funding well to enrich the curriculum and to increase pupils' participation in outdoor pursuits, including sporting competitions. The funding also provides additional activities to foster pupils' health and well-being.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered well. An ethos of high aspiration permeates across all that the school does. Pupils have a well-developed understanding of British values as they prepare for life in modern Britain. Over time, pupils develop a mature understanding of how to be good citizens.

## **Governance of the school**

- Following the previous inspection in 2017, governors undertook a review of their performance. They have since made considerable improvements to strengthen their skills and to increase leadership capacity. Governors now have the knowledge and skills needed to hold leaders to account for the school's continued improvement. They know that to raise standards further, teaching needs to be consistently good in all subjects and phases.
- Governors know the school's strengths and areas for improvement well. They routinely check that leaders' improvement actions are having the effect they should. The headteacher provides detailed reports regarding the school's performance. Governors have increased their meetings to review and challenge pupil performance information effectively. They use this information and their direct knowledge of the school to ask appropriate, and often challenging, questions of the headteacher and other leaders.
- Leaders, including governors, consider any external reports about the school's work carefully. They have worked productively with the local authority. They seek advice and support in evaluating their own school's performance and consider their options to raise pupils' outcomes further.
- Governors are involved in evaluating finances closely. They have recently supported the headteacher in addressing a budget shortfall which has meant reduction in staffing. They check the effect of additional funding, including the pupil premium and sport premium allocations. They are now working more strategically to ensure that all pupils receive the support they need to make strong progress in their academic and personal development.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Keeping pupils safe in school and beyond is a high priority in the school's ethos and culture. Safeguarding arrangements meet current statutory requirements. All staff and governors understand well their duty of care and exercise their responsibilities diligently. Pupils know that rules are there to protect them and minimise any potential risks. They learn about how to stay safe and the dangers posed by the internet and social media sites, if used without due care.
- Staff and governors are up to date with their safeguarding training and understand the procedures to follow if they have any concerns about a child. Record-keeping is thorough. Staff know pupils and their families well. There is always a sharp focus on

child protection. The school works closely with other agencies to safeguard pupils' well-being. Staff are particularly diligent in cases where vulnerable pupils and their families face challenging circumstances in their lives. Staff handle such situations well.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- Teaching is not consistently good across year groups and subjects. Where it is strong, teachers use effective questioning to check what pupils know and use this information to provide further support or challenge to move pupils' learning forward quickly.
- Teachers introduce basic literacy skills systematically from the early years, but pupils do not always have enough opportunities to practise their skills in reading to achieve well. Teachers' expectations have been variable, particularly in Years 1 to 4. They are not always high enough to ensure that all pupils make the progress they should. Often, pupils do not have sufficient practice to securely embed skills and achieve well.
- Some teachers do not check what pupils can do carefully enough and do not plan work which is matched to pupils' learning needs or which builds on their prior learning. This leads to some pupils finding the work either too hard or too easy and does not help pupils, especially the most able, to make strong progress.
- Leaders have introduced appropriate strategies to improve the teaching of reading. There is now a strong focus on teaching vocabulary and developing pupils' comprehension skills. While pupils say that reading is important, some do not read as often as they should to develop their skills further. Also, some key stage 2 pupils have not benefited from the systematic development of phonics and early reading skills. Some pupils, particularly less confident readers, often lack fluency and accuracy when reading aloud. Some hesitate in sounding out unfamiliar vocabulary and make errors. This is because pupils do not have enough opportunities to read aloud to help staff identify pupils' errors and understanding of their texts. Some read with little or no expression and so fail to appreciate the meaning of what they are reading.
- Pupils make stronger progress in writing. They practise their writing skills in different styles, such as writing letters, stories and their opinions on school assemblies. Basic writing skills are taught effectively from the early years and the opportunities for writing across the curriculum are carefully planned.
- Pupils across the school make less progress in mathematics than they do in writing. There has been some previously weak teaching over time in some year groups where tasks have not been sufficiently challenging, particularly for disadvantaged and most-able pupils. Where teaching is strong, pupils enjoy the competitive challenges that teachers introduce through reasoning and problem solving.
- Most pupils with SEND receive effective teaching and support. However, some pupils have too few opportunities to practise their reading skills. There is high-quality adult support for pupils' emotional needs because the school has a nurturing approach which supports positive relationships. This gives pupils an emotionally healthy start to their learning.
- Specialist teaching staff who work with pupils with hearing impairment are well prepared for lessons. They consider well strategies and approaches that will enable the pupils to successfully achieve. Although they work closely with pupils to ensure that

communication is effective, they allow pupils to think and work independently.

- Leaders identify if pupils are at risk of falling behind in their learning and discuss with staff how they will help them catch up. However, disadvantaged pupils, at key stage 2, do not always achieve as well as other pupils. Teaching assistants are generally knowledgeable and skilled in their roles, but a few are not deployed to have maximum effect on teaching and learning in the classroom to enable all pupils to achieve well.

## 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 has a fully inclusive ethos. Staff help pupils to settle in school and engage positively in learning. Pupils appreciate this and say that 'school is a happy place'.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes towards their learning. They are eager to learn and enthusiastically share their learning with one another and visitors. Pupils show perseverance and resilience when they find their work challenging. They said that 'Teachers push us and we work harder until we are in the challenge zone.'
- Pupils in the hearing impairment provision benefit from a school with a calm and nurturing environment. They are fully involved in the life of the school and have excellent support from specialist staff in signing and speech and language programmes. Their social and emotional welfare is exceptionally well supported. Staff ensure that pupils with SEND are fully included in the life of the school, including attending all enrichment activities.
- All staff help pupils to understand how they can keep themselves safe, teaching pupils' strategies to keep themselves safe both in and out of school. Pupils say they have discussed why they should not talk to strangers and have been shown how to stay safe with computers.
- Pupils understand what bullying is and say that if it does happen, teachers deal with it quickly. However, pupils feel that bullying is rare and confidently say that 'they get pupils in and it gets sorted'.
- The school promotes values on a monthly rota of their 22 values through assemblies and class discussions. Pupils are encouraged to write down their thoughts and they know that they should respect other people's beliefs, faiths, cultures and values.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' conduct is mostly good in lessons and around the school. They behave well because they know this is the way to be. Occasional restiveness does occur when teaching does not hold pupils' interest or understanding fully, but most try to behave well even then. They value the rewards for good behaviour.
- Pupils' attendance is just below the national average. Attendance is carefully monitored by the headteacher and where there is concern, the headteacher acts swiftly. Some absence is necessary for attending regular medical appointments.

- In the dining hall at breakfast and lunchtimes, pupils enjoy each other's company. Most behave sensibly and clear up when they have finished. Pupils show due respect to lunchtime staff at all times.
- Pupils play amicably and safely outside. They are friendly and courteous and show a mature, caring attitude towards any pupils who might feel left out or upset.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Requires improvement

- At the end of Year 6 in 2018, not all pupils made the progress they should have in reading and mathematics from their end of key stage 1 starting points. Previous weaknesses in teaching in the past two years meant that pupils did not achieve as well as expected. A lack of challenge for some pupils with typical starting points was also a factor. A few less-confident learners did not make up sufficient lost ground due to gaps in their previous learning.
- The proportion of pupils in Year 6 in 2018 who reached the expected standards was below average, particularly in reading and mathematics. Leaders' strategies to improve the curriculum in reading and mathematics had not been in place long enough to have had the intended full effect.
- The school's current assessment information and work in pupils' books, for key stage 2 pupils, shows an improving picture from that in 2018. In Years 5 and 6, where teaching is consistently strong, pupils are making strong progress. However, progress in key stage 2, overall, is still uneven because teaching and learning in Years 3 and 4 is of an inconsistent quality.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard and greater depth at the end of key stage 1 in 2018 was below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who achieved the expected standard and greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics was particularly low when compared to other pupils nationally. This did not represent good progress from their previous starting points.
- Pupils' work in their books shows that, in some year groups, pupils are not making good enough progress in reading and mathematics. This is especially so for the most able pupils, who are not challenged sufficiently. Disadvantaged pupils in these year groups are also not achieving well.
- However, in Years 2 and 6, pupils' books show they are making stronger progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This includes the most able and disadvantaged pupils. Work in pupils' books demonstrates that they learn about subjects such as geography, history and science. However, while curriculum plans are in place, the overview of how well pupils are achieving in these subjects is at an early stage.
- The teaching of phonics is now effective in the early years and key stage 1. In 2018, an average proportion of pupils reached the expected standards in the phonics screening check at the end of Years 1 and 2. Pupils generally use their knowledge of phonics to decode unknown words correctly. However, key stage 2 pupils who did not have this quality of phonics teaching previously are sometimes less confident when encountering unfamiliar vocabulary because their phonics skills are less secure. The most able pupils read fluently, with both expression and enjoyment, but less confident readers often hesitate because they cannot understand the text well enough to make



sense of new vocabulary.

- Pupils with SEND in 2018 did not make good progress from their individual starting points. The leader for pupils with SEND now has more detailed information on the progress of pupils to ensure that interventions to support pupils take place in lessons.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- The leadership of the early years is good. The leader has made considerable and effective changes to the curriculum to support children's progress. She understands her role well, has strong leadership skills and leads by example. The environment has been extensively improved and is busy, engaging and language rich, with children very secure in their surroundings. Children adopt the day-to-day routines well and respond to the high expectations placed upon them to do their best. Most children make good progress as a result.
- Staff build on previous activities extremely well. After reading a story on the green tractor earlier in the day, staff grasped the opportunity of a visiting green tractor cutting the grass in the school field to develop the language of large and small much to the excitement of the children. Teaching staff signed for the children with hearing impairment so they would think about the size and colour of the tractor.
- Staff know the children well. Home visits and links with parents and carers are very effective in helping staff understand children's individual needs. Parents know that staff will act promptly if they have any concerns regarding any child's development or well-being.
- Provision in the early years, both inside and outside the classroom, is well planned to capture children's interest. The areas encourage imaginative play, from making strawberry cakes with sand to digging in dinosaur land. Regular counting when buying items in the shop and singing rhymes make numbers fun.
- The strong emphasis on teaching phonics helps children develop their early literacy skills confidently. Fun activities help the children practise their writing. A group of children wrote clues for others to guess an animal. This was very enjoyable as the rabbit was guessed.
- Children investigate the natural world around them, for example to make sense of seasons and life cycles. As one explained, 'When the seeds grow it is summer. Seeds need water and sunshine and mud to grow and you must put them in a pot carefully.'
- All welfare arrangements are secure to keep children safe at all times. Children learn to socialise by playing sensibly and safely with others, sharing toys and equipment generously. They respond appropriately to instructions and guidance and behave well. Children become confident, independent young learners because teachers' expectations of them are high.



## School details

Unique reference number	114211
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10087528

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	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	219
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Patrick Conway
Headteacher	Mark Turner
Telephone number	01913 847284
Website	<a href="http://www.durhamgilesgate-pri.itss-durham.org.uk/">www.durhamgilesgate-pri.itss-durham.org.uk/</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:gilesgateprimary@durhamlearning.net">gilesgateprimary@durhamlearning.net</a>
Date of previous inspection	26–27 April 2017

## Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Children attend part time in Nursery and full time in Reception.
- The majority of pupils are from a White British background. About one fifth of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- There is an above average proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through the pupil premium.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is higher than the national average.
- There is an additional local authority-funded provision for 18 pupils with hearing impairment.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning across the school, with the headteacher joining them on several occasions. They looked at pupils' work in their workbooks, records of children's learning in the early years and other information about pupils' attainment and progress with senior leaders.
- In addition, inspectors listened to pupils read and held discussions with two groups of pupils. They also talked informally with pupils around the school.
- Inspectors met with the chair of the governing body. They also held discussions with various school staff, including the leader responsible for managing the support for pupils with SEND, the leader for the early years, teachers and the leader for pupils with hearing impairment and the leaders for English and mathematics. Inspectors also held a meeting with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors examined a range of documents. These included information about pupils' attainment and progress, leaders' reviews of the school's performance and records of monitoring visits by other providers. They also examined safeguarding documentation and various records of pupils' attendance and behaviour.
- Inspectors considered the 11 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and talked informally with parents at the start of the school day. They also took into consideration the eight comments submitted to Ofsted by parents and the 18 responses to Ofsted's staff survey. Fifty responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire were submitted and reviewed.

## Inspection team

Ann Muxworthy, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Kate Byrne

Ofsted Inspector

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