

# Harrowgate Hill Primary School

Thompson Street West, Darlington, County Durham DL3 0HZ

## Inspection dates

25 to 26 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	<b>Good</b>

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, there has been significant turbulence in leadership and staffing. This resulted in inconsistencies in teaching and a decline in standards.
- Many middle leaders are new to leadership. They have made a strong start to their roles but are at early stages in their development.
- Sometimes, teachers do not make effective use of their assessments to plan lessons which tackle gaps in pupils' knowledge or build sequentially on subject-specific skills.
- Pupils' work is not challenging enough to enable them to reach the higher standards of learning.
- In key stage 1 and 2, pupils' progress, although improving, is inconsistent across year groups and subjects.
- In mathematics, teaching does not sufficiently enable pupils to use practical resources or develop reasoning and problem-solving skills.
- Pupils' learning in key stage 1 does not build progressively on their strong foundations in early years. This is due to lower expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils' handwriting and presentation are not consistently high.

### The school has the following strengths

- Since her appointment in September 2018, the headteacher has ensured improvements to the quality of teaching and outcomes for pupils. She has strengthened leadership at all levels.
- Governors bring a wealth of experience to their roles. They are not afraid to hold senior leaders to account.
- The leadership of special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is strong.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- Children make a strong start to their education because leadership, teaching and provision in the early years are good.
- Pupils' attendance has improved this academic year because of concerted efforts by leaders. Pupils enjoy coming to school.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils are polite and respectful towards each other and adults.
- Pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils are extremely proud of their school.

## Full report

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

- Improve pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the expected and higher standards by the end of key stages 1 and 2.
- Continue to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that teachers:
  - use assessment information to plan activities to closely match pupils' learning needs
  - plan lessons which enable pupils to build sequentially on their knowledge and skills
  - enable pupils with gaps in their learning to catch-up quickly
  - develop pupils' ability to use reasoning and solve mathematical problems consistently across the school
  - provide more opportunities for pupils to use practical resources in mathematics to support their learning
  - have higher expectations of, and provide challenge for, all groups of pupils, especially for those who are most able
  - make sure that the presentation of work and handwriting is of the highest quality
  - build on the strong start that children make in the early years by having higher expectations of what pupils can achieve in key stage 1.
- Further strengthen the quality of leadership and management by continuing to develop the skills of middle leaders, including those who are new to their role.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- Since the previous inspection, the school has been through a challenging period of turbulence in staffing, including governance and senior leadership. This led to a three-year declining trend in standards. Since her appointment in September 2018, the headteacher has focused relentlessly on reversing this decline.
- Senior leaders have accurate and honest school self-evaluation. They have identified the correct priorities and have taken swift and decisive action to improve the quality of teaching and raise standards. Although teaching is not consistently good overall, senior leaders have established a culture of high expectations and reflective practice. Their work to support and develop staff has resulted in rapid improvements in the quality of teaching and accuracy of assessment. Staff all say they feel valued, trusted and supported and have a strong desire to further improve their own practice. As a result, staff morale is high.
- Most of the middle leaders are new to the school from January 2019. They are enthusiastic and have high expectations of staff and for what pupils can achieve. They have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses across the school in their subjects. Middle leaders recognise that, although rapidly improving, currently, standards are still not high enough or consistent enough across the school. Middle leaders' professional development opportunities have begun, but they have been limited due to the short period that they have been in post.
- There is a clear, whole-school approach to supporting pupils with SEND. Leaders have put strong systems in place to check on the quality of education and care provided for pupils with SEND across the school. Leaders' expectations for pupils with SEND are high and, as a result, current pupils with SEND are making stronger progress than in previous years. Parents' and pupils' views are considered regularly. Parents value the information they receive and feel fully informed about the support their children receive and the progress they are making.
- Leaders have revised the school curriculum recently to ensure that all subjects have engaging topics where pupils can learn subject-specific skills through creative content. The curriculum leader has arranged professional development to support teachers to plan work that builds sequentially on pupils' knowledge and skills.
- Leaders promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. They ensure opportunities for pupils to study the fundamental British values. Pupils learn about mutual respect, the way democracy works and different religions. This helps to prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders ensure that the pupil premium funding is used effectively to support disadvantaged pupils academically and pastorally. The support provided in classrooms, and to widen curriculum experiences for pupils, has resulted in raising their confidence in their own abilities to learn. The progress made by disadvantaged pupils currently in school has improved this year compared to previous years.
- The leader responsible for the physical education (PE) and sport premium ensures that active learning is prioritised daily. There is a dedicated active learning area for pupils,

where they improve their personal milestones. Pupils benefit from participation in a wide range of sports, including judo, gymnastics and an option for disability sports. The use of the additional funding has resulted in an increased participation this academic year in sports and physical activity for inactive pupils.

- Senior leaders have worked effectively with officers from the local authority, accessing advisory services available, for example SEND, pupil attendance and safeguarding. Leaders have accessed a range of external school improvement support, including working with headteacher colleagues to validate leadership judgements.
- The headteacher and staff have developed strong links with parents and carers. The vast majority of parents are overwhelmingly positive. Parents praise the strong communication between home and school and the approachability of staff.

### **Governance of the school**

- Since the last inspection, there has been a new chair, vice-chair and several governors appointed to the governing body. An external review of governance in July 2018 has helped governors to focus sharply on improving their effectiveness. This has included conducting a skills audit, which ensured that new governors appointed brought the relevant skills and experiences to their governor roles.
- Governors are immensely proud of the staff appointments that they have made, including the current headteacher, assistant headteachers and middle leaders. Governors have a realistic view of the school and know its strengths and areas for improvement. Governing body meeting minutes show that governors are unafraid to ask probing and challenging questions to assure themselves that leaders' actions are leading to rapid improvements. They review assessment information regularly and are aware that gaps in achievement for all groups of pupils need to close quickly.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- A strong culture of safeguarding exists across the school, with all staff providing a safe and nurturing place for pupils. Many pupils commented that they feel safe and are taught how to keep themselves safe, including when they are online. Parents who spoke to the inspectors during the inspection thought that the school's systems to keep their children safe were effective.
- The designated safeguarding lead is tenacious in her approach to keeping children safe. She ensures that staff know that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and that they understand what to do if they are concerned about a pupil or an adult in school. She works effectively with external agencies and parents to support pupils and their families. This has had a positive effect on attendance rates and the welfare of vulnerable pupils.
- The school business manager ensures that all safety checks regarding employment, volunteers and visitors are up to date and rigorously followed. The processes to record and manage these checks are meticulous. The headteacher and a designated governor carry out further spot checks on these systems to ensure they are thorough.

- Policies and procedures relating to safeguarding are all in place, up to date and understood by all staff to ensure pupils' safety. Leaders ensure that staff receive appropriate training in child protection and understand what to do if they suspect that a child may be at risk of harm, including from radicalisation and child criminal exploitation, for example 'county lines'. Leaders recognise the importance of parental and community awareness of these issues, so they ensure that presentations and information leaflets are available on the school website.

### Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

### Requires improvement

- Teaching is not consistently good across the school. Due to the turbulence in staffing over time, many pupils have gaps in their knowledge and understanding, from previous underachievement. Although leaders are rapidly improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, the work that some teachers plan often does not match pupils' learning needs with enough precision.
- Leaders' work this academic year to refine the accuracy of teacher assessment across the school has been successful. However, teachers' skill in using this assessment information, to plan the next steps for pupils, is inconsistent across the school. Some teachers ensure that they use assessment in lessons to check how well pupils understand what they are learning. Some teachers make sure they revisit previous learning if pupils do not understand and move other pupils on to more challenging work where appropriate.
- However, this practice is inconsistent across classes and subjects. Some teachers in key stages 1 and 2 are less skilled in identifying when pupils are ready to move on, or where they may have gaps in their knowledge. This means that for some pupils, the work is too difficult, and for others it lacks challenge. As a result, some pupils do not reach the expected, or higher standards of which they are capable. Pupils enter key stage 1 at a high standard. Teachers' expectations for these pupils across key stage 1 are not high enough to enable pupils to reach the standards of which they are capable.
- Teachers are developing their skills through a wide range of training to deliver the curriculum, which has been redesigned and fully implemented this academic year. As a result, the teaching of all subjects, including reading, writing and mathematics, is improving. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and use skilled questioning to encourage pupils to think hard about their learning.
- Reading has been a priority in the school improvement plan this academic year. Where reading books are selected carefully they act as a stimulus for writing. When pupils are immersed in the books that they read, they produce high-quality pieces of writing. For example, pupils in key stage 2 wrote letters of high quality linked to the novel 'The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas'.
- Presentation of work in pupils' books is variable. This is because the expectations set by staff are also variable. In some classes, pupils' books show that handwriting and presentation is of a high standard. In other classes, some untidy work or careless presentation is allowed to continue over time for some pupils without challenge.
- Teachers' subject knowledge in phonics is secure. Teachers and teaching assistants have accessed specific phonics training this academic year. As a result, pupils articulate sounds accurately because adults model this effectively. Pupils can apply their phonics

skills to spell words and they use their phonics knowledge to read unfamiliar words confidently. Teachers tackle any misconceptions or mispronunciations very quickly at the point of learning.

- Pupils are given lots of opportunities to develop their fluency and skills in mathematics. Many pupils are confident to add, subtract, multiply and divide. Where pupils are not confident, the practical resources available to support them are limited. This year, there has been a focus on providing increased opportunities for pupils to tackle mathematical problems or apply their mathematical reasoning. However, many pupils are not confident in these areas due to gaps in their previous learning and an inconsistent approach in how teachers develop pupils' skills in mathematics lessons.
- Relationships between teachers, teaching assistants and pupils are strong. Adults encourage pupils to be independent learners. They also encourage pupils to help each other if they struggle within a lesson. As a result, pupils are respectful of other pupils' ideas and abilities.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils say that they are proud to attend Harrowgate Hill Primary School and they embrace their roles and responsibilities. For example, pupils talk enthusiastically about the head boy and head girl or about being a member of the school council or the cyber squad.
- A large number of pupils attend the breakfast club, where they have an opportunity to eat a healthy breakfast and socialise with friends. Pupils demonstrate an awareness of how sensible choices of food and drink, or participating in the daily exercise session, contribute towards a healthy lifestyle.
- Pupils are taught how to stay safe, in school, outside of school and when online. Pupils recognise what constitutes bullying. They say that bullying rarely happens, but, if it did, they can recognise it, report it and trust that adults will deal with it immediately.
- Pupils say that there is always an adult to talk to if they have any worries or concerns. The pastoral welfare lead works closely with families, and other professionals, to provide effective support for vulnerable pupils.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils conduct themselves well around school, moving between lessons in a calm and orderly manner. They are respectful, holding doors open for one another and displaying good manners to their peers, staff and visitors. Pupils play well together at breaktimes.
- Pupils say that adults make sure pupils are treated fairly. They say that any consequences for less than good behaviour are consistently applied. Leaders have placed a high priority this year on teaching pupils to self-regulate their own behaviour.

Pupils say that this has helped them to develop ways to manage difficult situations. School behaviour records, checked during the inspection, support this view.

- Pupils show positive attitudes towards their peers and their learning. They work cooperatively with one another in lessons. They listen respectfully to each other's ideas and are eager to help one another with their learning.
- Pupils' attendance, including for those pupils who are persistently absent from school, has improved to be better than last year's national averages. Leaders and the pastoral welfare lead work closely with families and external agencies to support children to attend school. As a result, attendance and punctuality are improving.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Requires improvement

- Pupils' outcomes at the end of key stage 2 have declined over the past three years. Pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics has also followed a three-year downward trend. Since her appointment, the headteacher has tackled the significant issues in teaching and learning with urgency. The progress made across key stage 2 for current pupils is much stronger than in previous years.
- Senior leaders identified that one reason for the declining trend in outcomes was a curriculum that did not meet pupils' needs or prepare them for the standardised tests at the end of key stage 2. Since September, all leaders have implemented a curriculum that reflects the current national curriculum programmes of study. As a result, pupils' progress rates are improving rapidly.
- The proportion of pupils currently on track to meet the expected and higher standards in Year 2 is lower than in 2017 and 2018. Pupils' attainment and progress are variable between classes across key stages 1 and 2, and across subjects. Work in current pupils' books shows that a higher proportion of pupils are working at the expected standard for their age in reading, writing and mathematics than at the same time last year. Although there has been rapid improvement this academic year, pupils still have gaps in their knowledge and skills. This limits the proportion of pupils who are working at the expected and higher standards for their age.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has been above average over time. Current pupils who are in the earliest stages of reading and writing, and not on track to reach the standard, can use their phonics knowledge to read and write words.
- Pupils with SEND make progress in line with other pupils. Pupils are expected to make the same rates of progress as their peers and, in most classes, the school's assessment information and work in pupils' books suggest that this is realised.
- The progress made this academic year by disadvantaged pupils, in reading, writing and mathematics, has improved compared to recent years. Additional support to improve disadvantaged pupils' speaking, listening and language skills has resulted in strong progress in developing their ability to communicate effectively.

## Early years provision

Good

- Leadership in the early years is strong. The recently appointed leader, together with a capable staff team, ensures that children are provided with a high-quality learning environment both indoors and outside. Children are confident and ready to learn because they have positive relationships with each other and adults. Children know what is expected of them and they behave well because of clear and well-established daily routines.
- On entry to Nursery, children have knowledge and skills below those typical for their age. The proportion of children who leave the Reception class reaching a good level of development has been above average over time. Children currently in early years make strong progress. There are currently a higher proportion of children on track to reach the higher standards in reading, writing and number than in the last two years. Consequently, children are prepared well for Year 1.
- Staff plan activities linked to children's interests, as well as educational visits and experiences. For example, children produced high-quality writing, drawings and clay sculptures following a visit to a rainforest-type museum with real butterflies.
- Children exhibit high levels of independence, for example putting on their wellington boots and coats to play outdoors. They happily make their own dens and bridges with wooden planks and crates. They manage risks well, for example checking that the planks are safely positioned before they walk across the bridge or finding ways to reach the top of a tower of crates outside. Adults skilfully support children by asking incisive questions so that they consider the risks, but also by providing limited assistance.
- Adults have high expectations of children. Therefore, adults plan work that challenges the children. As a result, the quality of children's reading, writing and understanding of number is high. Children are taught to join their letters precisely and, as a result, formation of writing is accurate. They use their phonics knowledge well to read at an appropriate stage for their development. Children enthusiastically count, calculate and solve problems in the exciting mathematical activities planned for them.
- All staff work effectively to ensure that children are safe. All legal welfare requirements are met. Staff have received appropriate training and provide effective support for children's well-being.
- Relationships with parents are strong. Parents say that they are well-informed about their children's progress and that communication between home and school is strong. Attendance at parental workshops and events has improved. Parents who spoke to inspectors were very positive about the strong start their children receive. One parent gave the views of many by commenting: 'My child is happy, teachers are lovely, and the Reception staff are amazing. They have really pushed my child to make great progress at reading and writing.'



## School details

Unique reference number	135088
Local authority	Darlington
Inspection number	10087636

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	618
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stephen Kappel
Headteacher	Amanda Abbott
Telephone number	01325 253 300
Website	<a href="http://www.harrogatehillpri.darlington.sch.uk">www.harrogatehillpri.darlington.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin@harrogatehillpri.darlington.sch.uk">admin@harrogatehillpri.darlington.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	24 to 25 June 2015

## Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is broadly in line with the national average.
- Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is below the national average for both SEND support and those who have an education, health and care plan.
- The school has a Nursery class and provides full-time and part-time places.
- The school offers a breakfast club and a range of clubs and activities after school.
- A new headteacher was appointed in September 2018.

- A new assistant headteacher was appointed in September 2018 to lead early years.
- New middle leaders were appointed in January 2019, to lead on English, mathematics and the curriculum.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes. In many of these sessions, the headteacher or deputy headteacher accompanied them. The quality of pupils' work in a wide range of subjects and in all classes across the school was scrutinised.
- Inspectors observed behaviour in lessons, at breaktimes, in and around the school, in breakfast club, after-school clubs and in the dining hall.
- The lead inspector spoke to members of the governing body and the school improvement partner from the local authority. Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, middle leaders, pastoral welfare lead, business manager and subject leaders.
- Inspectors considered the 133 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including parents' free-text responses. Inspectors also considered responses to the staff questionnaires and responses to the pupils' survey. Inspectors met with parents at the start of the school day on both inspection days.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read in key stages 1 and 2.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils to listen to their views about the school. The views of the other pupils were gathered during lessons, breaktimes and at lunchtime.
- A range of documentation was examined, including a summary of the school's self-evaluation, the school development plan, safeguarding information, behaviour logs, attendance documentation, pupil premium documents, sports premium documents, the school's assessment information, leaders' monitoring files and governing body meeting minutes.

## Inspection team

Alison Aitchison, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Melanie Maitland	Ofsted Inspector
Deborah Ashcroft	Ofsted Inspector
Dominic Brown	Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

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).

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted).

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2019