

Inspection of a good school: Roperly Walk Primary School

Roperly Walk, Seaham, County Durham SR7 7JZ

Inspection dates:

15–16 October 2019

Outcome

Roperly Walk Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils talk with great enthusiasm about their school. They feel safe and well looked after. Many describe the school community as one large extended family. This is a school that has high standards. Adults have high expectations of all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Parents appreciate the level of support their children receive to help them keep up with their classmates. Parents say that leaders are good at keeping in touch and sharing information. They know how well their child is doing.

Pupils behave well. They can get on in class without fuss or distraction because they want to learn. Pupils are respectful, polite and welcoming to visitors. They enjoy a number of special roles and responsibilities. For example, playground buddies, eco-warriors and the PE crew. This helps pupils to develop their talents and interests.

Pupils say that bullying rarely happens. However, they are confident that adults would listen and help them if there was a problem.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Pupils make good progress. Lessons are carefully planned to build on knowledge and skills that pupils have already learned. Subject leaders have set out clearly what exactly it is that pupils should learn as they move through school. Teachers take notice of what pupils already know and can do. They carefully identify any new knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn. Teachers regularly check on pupils' understanding. Teachers offer immediate help, so pupils do not fall behind.

From the beginning of Reception, no time is lost in helping children to learn to read. Teachers are well trained in the teaching of phonics. Children pick up new sounds and letters quickly. Staff rightly prioritise early reading. Every child has a reading book to take home. Most of the time books are well matched to the sounds children are learning.

Leaders have identified reading as an area that needs to get better in key stage 2. Not all pupils progress as well in reading as they do in writing and mathematics. Pupils now read daily in school. They enjoy completing short quizzes online to test their understanding. The English leader has introduced a whole-school approach to reading. This helps pupils to make predictions, answer questions and summarise what they have read. Teachers are helping children to develop their vocabulary. There is a short daily vocabulary lesson in key stage 2 classes. In Year 6, pupils explore words like 'ominous'. They check definitions and find other words with the same meaning.

Leaders understand that this focus on reading will take time to embed. Some pupils talk positively about story time at the end of the day. Story times do not happen regularly in every class. While some pupils have a love of reading, others were less interested. Some could not name their favourite author or book.

Pupils do well in mathematics. In the early years, children count objects and learn to write numbers accurately. Teachers follow a structured programme consistently. This meets the demands of the national curriculum and the needs of pupils. Regular opportunities are created for pupils to revisit past learning and brush up on basic number skills. A daily 'fluent in 5' lesson helps pupils to remember their arithmetic. Pupils have regular opportunities to apply their knowledge to problem solving. They can explain their mathematical thinking. Teachers who are new to the school are well supported by the mathematics leader.

Leaders help pupils become healthy, active, citizens. They are well prepared to function successfully in society. Fundamental British values are embedded throughout the curriculum; for example, the school has its own democratically elected parliament. Diversity is celebrated and promoted in displays throughout school.

The physical education (PE) curriculum makes a significant contribution. All pupils receive two hours of good-quality PE each week. Teaching is of a high standard. The knowledge and skills that pupils learn help them to feel confident when they are taking part in local competitions.

Extra help is carefully targeted for pupils with SEND. A number of pupils were observed during lesson visits working on their own individual curriculum with one-to-one or small-group support. This helps them to develop essential skills in English and mathematics. Attendance for pupils with SEND has improved considerably since the school was last inspected.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff are trained to recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse. Clear procedures are in place for reporting concerns.

Leaders know how and when to make referrals for pupils and their families. Leaders are not afraid to challenge other professionals when they feel that their families are not

getting the support they need.

The curriculum helps pupils to stay safe. Pupils can explain when it is not appropriate to share personal information online and why they must always report any worries they have.

Appropriate recruitment checks have been carried to ensure that all adults are suitable to work in school. However, some of these checks have not been recorded as well as they could be.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Safeguarding is effective. However, the school should ensure that checks which are undertaken are recorded appropriately.
- Most pupils successfully reach the expected phonics standard in Year 1. However, some pupils struggle to read fluently and with accuracy because not all reading books are matched to the sounds that they have learned. Leaders should make sure that reading books connect closely to the pupils' phonics knowledge.
- Pupils do not achieve the same high standards in reading that they reach in writing and mathematics at key stage 2. Some pupils find it difficult to talk about their favourite author or books they have enjoyed reading. Leaders should ensure that a rigorous and sequential approach to the reading curriculum develops pupils' fluency, confidence and enjoyment in reading.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged Ropery Walk Primary School to be good on 4–6 May 2016.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	113993
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10110839
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	255
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Geraldine Bleasdale
Headteacher	Angela Bell
Website	www.roperywalk.durham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	4–6 May 2016

Information about this school

- The school serves an area of higher than average deprivation. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is also above the national average.

Information about this inspection

- During this inspection I met with the headteacher and senior leaders for English, mathematics, PE and SEND. I met with the local authority advisor and two governors, including the vice-chair of the governing body. Discussions were also held with a number of teachers and support staff.
- The quality of education was inspected by visiting lessons, meeting with a range of pupils and staff, looking at pupils' work and examining curriculum documentation. I looked closely at reading, mathematics and PE.
- I considered the views of parents through face-to-face discussions and via the 27 responses to Ofsted's Parent View survey which were received.
- I listened to pupils reading, observed their behaviour moving around school, met with pupils formally to gather their opinions and held informal discussions across both days of the inspection.
- A wide range of safeguarding information and documentation was scrutinised, including

referrals and attendance records.

Inspection team

Andy Jones, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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