

Inspection of Central Primary School

Milburn Road, Ashington, Northumberland NE63 0AX

Inspection dates: 10–11 October 2019

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Early years provision

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and enjoy school. They told us that this school has improved a lot over the past year. Pupils say teachers expect them to work hard and behave well so that they can succeed. Pupils rise to this challenge.

There is a calm atmosphere around the school. Pupils appreciate the strong support they receive within a nurturing environment. They say that they are taught how to keep themselves in a 'calm place'. This helps them to manage their feelings and behaviour. Pupils show respect to one another and adults in school.

Warm and positive relationships exist within the school. Pupils talk with pride about the school values, for example resilience, teamwork & self-motivation. Pupils say that they enjoy socialising at the breakfast club. They can also attend a range of sporting activities after school.

Pupils say that they learn how to stay safe, including on the internet. They say that bullying is not a problem. Teachers listen to concerns and take actions to resolve any behaviour issues.

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

A new head of school has joined Central Primary since the last inspection. She knows the school's strengths and weaknesses well. Alongside the executive principal, she has appointed many new teachers and experienced leaders. Leaders have tackled the identified weaknesses with a sense of urgency. They have set the school on a direct course of improvement and created a climate where pupils can thrive. Pupils respect others, behave well and want to achieve. Whilst leaders' intent is clear, it is too soon to see the impact of their work on pupils' achievement. By the end of Year 6 too many pupils do not achieve well. Many enter secondary school without the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.

Children achieve well in the early years. Children are happy and confident because relationships with adults are strong. The leader of early years joined the school at the start of last academic year. She has made significant improvements to the early years curriculum. Children develop their knowledge and skills through purposeful activities. Staff plan ways for children to revisit the curriculum areas. This helps children to remember their learning. Children enter Year 1 with the skills that they need to be successful at key stage 1.

The leader of phonics has transformed the curriculum for phonics over the past year. Staff teach phonics well. Pupils read with confidence. They read books which have letters and sounds to match those they already know. Pupils' outcomes in phonics have improved. They are above the national average now by the end of Years 1 and 2. Pupils' outcomes in reading at the end of key stage 2 have been below average over time. This year, pupils who need to catch up have appropriate

extra sessions. It is too early to see the difference this is making to pupils' reading outcomes.

Leaders of English and mathematics have improved these subjects over the past year. They have identified where pupils have had historical underachievement. Pupils are now revisiting the curriculum to catch up when they have gaps in their knowledge. Focused teaching is ensuring that pupils who have fallen behind get extra support. However, attainment at the end of key stage 2 in 2019 remained below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.

Leaders are ambitious for the curriculum beyond English and mathematics for all pupils. Recently appointed leaders have expertise in their subjects. Teachers now make sure that each session they plan fits into a whole series of lessons. However, pupils have not benefited from this approach to curriculum planning over time. As a result, pupils do not have detailed knowledge and skills across the curriculum.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive appropriate support. The leader of SEND joined the school in September 2018. He checks that teachers understand the barriers to learning for all pupils with SEND. He makes sure that pupils with SEND receive the targeted support they need. As a result, pupils with SEND can access learning within the classroom.

The attendance officer works well with other leaders and parents. Pupils' attendance has improved, including for pupils who are often absent from school. Attendance is now broadly in line with the national average. Some pupils miss too many days because they take holidays during term time. Leaders take a firm stance on tackling this matter, including issuing fines. As a result of absence, pupils find it difficult to build on what they remember from previous learning.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The designated safeguarding lead works with vulnerable pupils and their families. She liaises with external agencies to provide families with guidance and support. Staff training helps them to recognise any signs that a pupil may be at risk of harm. Staff are aware of their duty to record and report these concerns. Pupils are confident that there is always a member of staff that they can talk to if they have a concern. The curriculum includes ways for pupils to learn how to keep themselves safe. This includes when they use the internet.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders plan all curriculum subjects to build pupils' knowledge and skills. However, leaders have only recently implemented this. Most pupils have not benefited from this approach to all curriculum subjects over time. Leaders and

teachers need to build on what they have started to ensure that the pupils in key stages 1 and 2 achieve the best possible outcomes in all areas of the curriculum.

- Historical weaknesses in the school's curriculum for English and mathematics have resulted in too few pupils starting secondary school at the expected and higher standard for their age. Leaders need to continue to address this legacy and ensure that pupils who need to catch up do so quickly.
- Leaders, including governors, have worked hard to improve attendance since the last inspection, including for those pupils who are persistently absent from school. Leaders need to improve attendance further by continuing to tackle the number of holidays taken during term time. Pupils need to attend school more regularly to reduce the gaps in their knowledge over time.

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're 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	131021
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	10110580
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	810
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Louise Rule
Executive Principal	Andrew Roberts
Website	www.centralprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	6–7 July 2017

Information about this school

- The school is a larger-than-average-sized primary school. It is federated with Bothal Primary school.
- A new head of school was appointed in September 2018
- There have been 21 changes to staffing since the previous inspection. This includes the appointment of new teachers and leaders.
- The school has a Nursery provision and provides full- and part-time places. The school provides places for children who are two years old.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is below the national average. The proportion of pupils who receive support for their special educational needs is above average.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We met with the head of school, the executive principal, deputy and assistant headteachers, the special educational needs coordinator, curriculum leaders and

the attendance officer. I met with the school improvement officer, the primary commissioner for the local authority, the chair and members of the governing board.

- We closely focused on reading, mathematics, science and history in this inspection. We visited lessons and talked to some of the pupils and teachers from the lessons. We met with senior and curriculum leaders and we looked at pupils' work in books together.
- We checked documents relating to safeguarding. These included training records. We looked at safeguarding policies and procedures. We talked to staff about their role in keeping pupils safe. I met with the designated safeguarding lead.
- We checked recorded behaviour incidents, including leaders' actions to resolve any issues. Attendance and exclusion rates were also considered.
- We observed playtime and lunchtime. We talked to children about what it is like to be a pupil in this school.
- We met with staff to discuss the training they have received, the support they have from leaders and how workload is managed.
- We took account of the 43 responses to Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, including free-text comments.

Inspection team

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