

# Inspection of a good school: Milecastle Primary School

Hillhead Parkway, Chapel House, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear NE5 1LH

---

Inspection dates:

15–16 October 2019

## **Outcome**

Milecastle Primary School continues to be a good school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They feel safe because teachers sort out any problems. Instances of bullying are rare.

Milecastle Primary School values – such as resilience, kindness and honesty – are taught across all subjects. Pupils show their understanding of these values within lessons. They support and respect each other and adults. They behave well in lessons and around school at different times of the day. Staff have high expectations for all pupils.

Pupils are motivated to read. They like reading. Pupils have many opportunities to read and listen to stories throughout the school day. There are a wide range of high-quality books for all age groups. Each classroom has an attractive reading area.

Teachers plan lessons well. Pupils understand what they are learning. Learning is brought to life through trips and visits. Teachers use these experiences to make sure that learning is memorable. Leaders make links to local history. This helps history make sense to pupils.

Staff make sure that parents and carers know what they can do to support their children's learning. Communication is good. Staff are friendly and approachable.

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

The school fosters a love of reading. This is evident in every classroom and in the displays in public areas. Teachers read to pupils every day and make links through books to other areas of the curriculum. For example, pupils in Year 6 are learning about the Second World War through stories such as 'Goodnight Mister Tom'. Pupils talk about books with enthusiasm. They read regularly at home.

Leaders give time and emphasis to the teaching of early reading. For some children, the teaching of reading does not start quickly enough. Many pupils meet the expected standard in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1. All pupils who do not meet

the expected standard in Year 1 catch up quickly. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported well.

Leaders offer a wide-ranging curriculum. Pupils, including those with SEND and disadvantaged pupils, learn and remember important knowledge. Themes, linked across subjects and over time, are revisited. Leaders have a clear ambition to embed and develop the curriculum further. They are making clear the key vocabulary pupils need to learn in each subject.

Much of the history curriculum is rooted within the local area. Pupils develop their understanding through learning about historical figures who lived nearby. They make links between past lives and their own. The history curriculum is enhanced through visits that deepen pupils' understanding. In Year 2, pupils learned about hydraulics after a visit to Cragside. They looked at the working of a 'dumb waiter' and made something similar in a design and technology lesson.

Leaders and teachers have good subject knowledge. They teach pupils to discuss subjects thoughtfully, using evidence to explain their views.

Subject leaders are making improvements to the way mathematics is taught. Teachers have successfully adapted their teaching. Pupils are positive about mathematics lessons. They feel well supported by staff. Pupils said that they can often choose their own level of mathematical challenge. They use repetition to learn number facts by heart. They learn different approaches to tackling mathematical problems. Pupils are successfully knowing, remembering and understanding more about mathematics as they move through the school.

Leaders use a consistent approach to support good behaviour. Pupils generally behave well. There are few incidents of poor behaviour, and bullying is rare. Leaders are quick to address issues and, therefore, pupils feel safe. Pupils work well with others and by themselves. Relationships are strong, warm and supportive.

The headteacher effectively supports individuals who have challenging behaviour. There are few fixed-term exclusions. The headteacher has a rigorous approach to dealing with poor attendance. She knows pupils and families well. Helpful support and positive systems inspire good attendance. The attendance of all groups of pupils is improving.

The special educational needs coordinator and leaders have a good understanding of all pupils with SEND. They help teachers to assess pupils' progress and write effective plans. The views of pupils and parents are included in plans. Small steps of progress are measured regularly and plans adjusted to ensure continued progress. External agencies provide advice that informs plans for individual pupils. This supports pupils to do well.

For some children, the teaching of reading does not start quickly enough. Books are not always matched to individual ability. Leaders work with pre-school providers to help smooth children's move to Milecastle Primary School. There is a positive partnership between home and school. Parents say their children are happy and they bring home story books to share. Parents come into school regularly and support children in their

learning.

The Outer West Learning Trust and the school achievement partner have supported leaders effectively by working to improve pupils' behaviour, the school budget and the curriculum. As a result, the curriculum has been well developed and behaviour is good. The headteacher is appreciative of this.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff get regular safeguarding training. They are up to date with the most recent child protection guidance. Staff know pupils and families well. They provide support quickly and effectively. Systems for staff to report concerns are straightforward and well understood. The designated leaders for safeguarding are quick to follow up any concerns. They seek advice and support from other professionals when they need to.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- For some children, the teaching of reading does not start quickly enough when the children begin Reception. In key stage 1, assessment is not always used to ensure that pupils who are ready to move on do so quickly enough.
- Leaders are starting to embed the new curriculum. They should now ensure that subject-specific vocabulary is planned and progressive in all subjects.
- Leaders have made improvements to the way mathematics is taught. They should now ensure that all staff have the necessary training to use these new methods in their teaching.

## **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 second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 1–2 February 2011.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	108451
<b>Local authority</b>	Newcastle upon Tyne
<b>Inspection number</b>	10110792
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Foundation school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	195
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Bob Morgan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Suzanne Richardson
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.milecastle.newcastle.sch.uk">www.milecastle.newcastle.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	1 March 2016

## Information about this school

- Milecastle Primary School is part of the Outer West Learning Trust.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are supported by the pupil premium funding is above average.

## Information about this inspection

- During the inspection, I spoke with pupils, both formally and informally, about their work and school life. I spoke with members of the local governing body, the school achievement partner, the headteacher and members of staff. I reviewed a range of documentation, including documentation about attendance, behaviour and safeguarding.
- I looked closely at reading, mathematics and history. I held discussions with subject leaders, visited lessons, looked at examples of pupils' and children's work from each subject, held discussions with teachers and pupils about these subjects, and listened to children read.
- I took the 41 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, into account. I

spoke with parents at the start and end of the day.

- I examined the processes for safeguarding. I looked at policies and procedures, checked the school's central record of staff and spoke to governors and teachers about safeguarding. I also spoke to many pupils.

### **Inspection team**

Alexa O'Gara, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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 <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

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 1231  
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