

Inspection of a good school: Newsham Primary School

Warwick Street, Blyth, Northumberland NE24 4NX

Inspection dates:

3–4 December 2019

Outcome

Newsham Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Newsham Primary School is a bright, friendly and calm school which is at the heart of its community. Pupils say that the school is brilliant. They talk with excitement about their learning. Parents told us that staff take great care of their children and they couldn't think of a better school.

Staff and pupils all share the 7 Rs, which are the values of the school. This makes sure that everyone feels respected and responsible so pupils behave well in lessons and around school at all times. Pupils have no concerns about bullying in this school. If it were to happen, they know adults would deal with it.

Leaders in the school have improved learning in the basic skills of reading and mathematics over the last three years. Pupils say that they love reading and are proud of the school library. Learning to read is at the centre of the curriculum because it will help pupils get on in life and succeed.

Pupils say that they enjoy their learning because the teachers make it fun. Trips, visitors and exciting activities bring learning to life. Pupils could say what they had learned about life 100 years ago in history. They explained the knowledge they had from a trip to Beamish Museum and how the visit had helped them to remember it.

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

Newsham Primary School is an inclusive school. It provides a warm and nurturing environment for its pupils. Pupils who need extra care and attention and those with special educational needs (SEN) are very well looked after. The headteacher makes sure that pupils feel safe and secure. The leader for SEN also makes sure that pupils who need extra help receive it. This helps them to learn well. One parent told me that some speech therapy in the Reception Year had meant that there was no longer any barrier to their child's learning.

Reading is a high priority. Books are everywhere in the school. The school reading motto, 'Read with, Read to, Read by', is making a difference to how well pupils learn to read. In Nursery the youngest children enjoy story time. Teachers read a book about autumn with songs and rhyme. The children delighted in scrunching and crunching leaves as they listened. Phonics lessons help pupils know which sounds match to letters. This helps them make rapid progress in their reading.

Pupils change reading books often. The books always match the pupil's ability, giving them confidence to keep practising. Older children read from a range of challenging, high-quality books. A new system for recording what pupils read has given a boost to pupils' motivation to keep reading. One pupil proudly told me, 'I have already read thousands and thousands of words this term!'

Maths is taught well at Newsham Primary School. Leaders have improved the curriculum to concentrate on pupils' problem-solving skills. Maths results at the end of key stage 2 have improved over the last three years as a result. Pupils also learn why maths is important. For example, in Year 2, pupils learned about the first female governor of the Bank of England. However, in some lessons, pupils moved on to more complex concepts before they were ready.

Leaders know that there is more work to do on improving sequencing and progression in some subjects. They have already made a good start with history and they have plans in place to continue this work.

In history, teachers plan to use 'golden threads' such as pupils having a good knowledge of time passing so that they make connections in their learning. However, in a lesson about Ancient Egypt, pupils were not clear about how long ago in time this was. In another lesson, some older pupils were mixing up facts from the two World Wars. Leaders are planning training so that teachers better know the key subject-specific knowledge that pupils need to learn.

Across early years, staff make sure that a range of exciting learning activities are available each day. The curriculum helps children develop knowledge and skills in early mathematics and reading. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to learn outside of the classroom. Pupils in early years visited the farm, for example.

Attendance of pupils is at least as good as other similar schools. Leaders for attendance have already done lots to encourage better attendance at school. Pupils say that they cannot wait to come to school because there is always something interesting going on. However, there are still too many pupils who are regularly absent.

Staff morale is high in Newsham Primary School. Teachers enjoy coming to work. They say they don't mind working hard because they are well looked after.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The headteacher makes sure that everyone knows how to keep children safe. Staff are all well trained. They know that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Leaders take appropriate and swift action when there are concerns about children's safety. Thoughtful resources like the 'engine room', a safe space for pupils who are feeling anxious or upset, helps pupils feel safe and secure. Parents appreciate the support they have from the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have improved the quality of the curriculum for English and mathematics which was necessary to secure improved outcomes for pupils in reading, writing and maths. Leaders have now begun the process of making improvements to the wider curriculum and a successful start has been made with history. Leaders must continue with these plans so that all subjects are coherently planned and sequenced.
- Where leaders have already made improvements to the curriculum, plans set out the sequence of knowledge that pupils should learn. At times, teachers do not always follow plans closely enough. Leaders should ensure that teaching consistently matches the curriculum plans for each year group so that pupils are able to study appropriate content in greater depth and consolidate their learning before moving on.
- Although leaders have worked successfully to improve overall attendance so that it is near to the average for similar schools nationally, the numbers of pupils who are persistently absent from school is still too high. Further work is required in order to reduce the proportion so that it is closer to the national average.

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 Newsham Primary School to be good on 21–22 January 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	122261
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	10110770
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	454
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs D Lowes
Headteacher	Mrs A-M Armstrong
Website	www.newshamprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	21–22 January 2016

Information about this school

- The chair of governors is new to the post since the previous inspection

Information about this inspection

- I looked at reading, mathematics and history in detail.
- I met with the headteacher, senior leaders and governors, including the vice-chair of the governing body, a local authority representative, teachers and teaching assistants.
- I visited every year group. Lesson visits and much of the inspection activity were undertaken jointly with senior leaders.
- I looked at pupils' work in books and portfolios and during visits to classrooms. I listened to pupils reading and observed their behaviour in classes and outside. I met formally with groups of pupils to gather their views and spoke to pupils informally across the two days. No pupils responded to Ofsted's survey for pupils.
- No staff responded to the Ofsted survey for staff. I spoke to staff both formally and informally across the two days of the inspection.
- I met with parents on the school yards. I also took account of the 38 parents who responded to Parent View and free-text.

- The school's website and documentation were examined, including curriculum planning, policies, SEND files, safeguarding information and behaviour and attendance logs.

Inspection team

Colin Lofthouse, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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