

Inspection of Bearpark Primary School

Colliery Road, Bearpark, Durham DH7 7AU

Inspection dates: 21–22 January 2020

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

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

The headteacher and staff have created a nurturing school. Pupils are happy and friendly. Pupils told us that bullying rarely happens. If they have any worries, staff will help them. Pupils enjoy the range of before- and after-school activities. Playtimes and lunchtimes are active, social times. Some pupils do not attend school regularly enough. Leaders are working hard to reduce absence levels.

Leaders, including governors, are successfully improving the school. Pupils are achieving better in phonics, reading and writing. Recent improvements to planning are helping pupils develop their mathematical knowledge. However, some of these improvements are not fully embedded. Improvements in early years mean that children make a positive start to school. More children are ready to start their learning in Year 1. Leaders' work to improve what pupils learn in subjects such as science and art is at an early stage of development.

Pupils have a range of important roles in school. They consider how they can contribute to the local community. Pupils are taught how to adopt healthy lifestyles. They have regular opportunities to develop their physical and mental health. Leaders and staff have acted to engage effectively with parents and carers. This is helping parents to become more involved with pupils' learning.

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

Since coming into post, the headteacher has focused on 'getting the basics' right. Staffing is organised to better meet the needs of pupils. Improvements to the building have improved the quality of the learning environment. Behaviour management and pupils' personal development have improved. This has established a positive culture for learning. The headteacher and governors think carefully about spending school funding. This supports pupils' academic progress and social and emotional needs, and widens their horizons. Governors regularly check that things are getting better. The headteacher, staff and governors have created a secure platform for the school's improvement.

Leaders have developed the school's approaches to teaching phonics, reading and mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have suitable plans. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) checks that these are implemented effectively. Sequenced planning for teaching of mathematics is in place. Pupils' books show that staff generally implement the mathematics planning effectively. This is having a positive effect on pupils' number work. However, at times, pupils do not have enough opportunity to use their number knowledge in problem-solving or reasoning work.

Reading has been a high priority for leaders. This is improving pupils' phonics and reading knowledge. Reading is taught regularly across the school. Attractive reading areas are found around school and in classrooms. Phonics is taught in a structured way. Younger pupils generally have books that are well matched to their phonics

knowledge. However, some less able pupils in both key stage 1 and key stage 2 do not use 'pure sounds' when tackling unknown words. This slows their ability to use their phonics to read words they have not met before. Teachers need to be more alert to this barrier for less able pupils. Older pupils talk enthusiastically about the books they are reading. Teachers share stories to enrich pupils' love of literature. The subject leader for English has received suitable leadership training. The leader for phonics is very new to the role and has not yet benefited from such training.

Leaders have recently turned their attention to teaching of other subjects. The leader for art has begun to develop her expertise through attending local art network meetings. Links with the art teacher from the local secondary school are in place. However, implementation of the art planning does not build pupils' learning effectively. Sometimes, pupils are repeating work with little difference in the technique taught. Pupils' knowledge of the work of famous artists is not secure. In science, implementation of planning does not support pupils' learning effectively. Pupils are not retaining important knowledge. They do not build their learning in a sequenced way. Activities are not well selected to develop the planned learning. The school's planning for foundation subjects is at an early stage of development.

Pupils' behaviour is good. There is an atmosphere of mutual respect across the school. Leaders and staff have raised the profile of attendance. Their determined approach is beginning to improve the attendance of pupils where their absence levels are too high. Leaders are proactive in putting in place support for pupils' social, emotional and mental health needs. Pupils have a good understanding of what bullying is. They told us that they believed it does not happen at their school. The school's records show that staff follow up any behavioural incidents promptly.

Pupils' personal development and welfare are a school strength. A range of clubs is available for pupils to support their physical and social development. Two o'clock signals 'active 10', when all pupils have a regular exercise slot. The plan to improve pupils' physical education and sport opportunities links well to pupils' needs. Pupils are taught about the diversity of people in society. When I talked to older pupils, they displayed mature, tolerant attitudes.

Leadership by the headteacher, external advice and new resources have all improved learning in early years. Children settle well into the school's routines. Staff provide nurturing guidance for children. Two-year-olds and Nursery and Reception children mix well together. Adults plan learning to meet the age and development of children effectively. There are positive links with parents. Stay and play sessions help parents know how to support their child's learning outside school. By the time children leave Reception, increasing numbers of children are well prepared to start Year 1.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Keeping pupils safe is a high priority for everyone in school. Staff know what steps to take if they have any concerns. They receive regular safeguarding training to

update their understanding. Procedures to identify pupils at risk are robust. The school seeks help for pupils and their families promptly. Leaders complete careful safeguarding checks for all staff, governors and volunteers. This ensures that they are suitable to work with children. The safeguarding leaders meet regularly to review vulnerable pupils. They have a determined approach to ensuring that pupils are well protected. Leaders respond swiftly to external advice from the local authority.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Revised approaches to the teaching of early reading and phonics are not fully embedded. The leader for phonics teaching is very new to the role and has not yet had the opportunity to develop leadership expertise. Some lower attaining pupils in both key stage 1 and key stage 2 do not use phonics effectively to decode unknown words. Leaders need to embed developments to the teaching of early reading and phonics.
- Appropriately sequenced mathematics planning is in place. However, this planning is not consistently implemented throughout the school. Sometimes, pupils do not fully develop their understanding of problem solving and reasoning. Leaders need to build on improving pupils' number knowledge. Pupils need to use this knowledge more regularly in problem-solving and reasoning activities.
- Improvements to the planning of subjects such as art and science are at an early stage of development. Pupils do not build on and retain important knowledge in these subjects effectively enough. Leaders need to ensure that there is well-sequenced planning for foundation subjects. Subject leaders who are new to their roles need further training in subject planning. They need to know how to monitor their subjects for improvement.
- Some pupils do not attend school regularly enough. This means that they are missing opportunities to build their learning in a sustained manner. Leaders need to continue to embed their strategies to improve overall attendance. They should continue to focus on reducing absence levels for pupils where these are too high.

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 the school and 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	114129
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10088924
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	105
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jeff Teasdale
Headteacher	Joanne Clements
Website	http://atschool.eduweb.co.uk/bpark.durham/
Date of previous inspection	15–16 April 2015

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, there is a different headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- The school now has provision for two-year-olds.

Information about this inspection

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

- We met with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher, who is also the leader for mathematics and is the SENCo.
- We met with the subject leaders for phonics, English, art and science.
- We considered a range of safeguarding information and documentation provided by the school and available on the school's website. We met a range of staff to consider their understanding of the school's safeguarding procedures. Pupils told us how the school helps them to stay safe. I met with the headteacher, who is one of the school's three designated safeguarding leaders.

- I had a meeting with five governors, including the chair of the governing body. I reviewed samples of minutes of meetings of the governing body.
- I met with the local authority representative.
- We considered four subjects in detail: reading, mathematics, art and science. These deep dives included discussions with the headteacher and subject leaders, lesson visits, review of pupils' books, consideration of artwork, listening to pupils read, discussions with pupils, and discussion with teachers whose lessons we had visited.

Inspection team

Michael Reeves, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Deborah Ashcroft

Ofsted Inspector

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