

Inspection of a good school: Newker Primary School

Waldridge Road, Chester le Street, County Durham DH2 3AA

Inspection dates:

26–27 February 2020

Outcome

Newker Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders and staff are working together to improve the curriculum for all pupils. Staff know their pupils well. They have a clear picture of the personal qualities that they want pupils to acquire. Staff pay close attention to pupils' safety and welfare.

Pupils experience an increasingly stimulating curriculum. They learn important knowledge and skills in science and history. Pupils learn about their rights. They also learn how to respect the rights of others. Relationships between adults and pupils are positive. Pupils make decisions about the charities they support.

The vast majority of pupils feel safe in school. Staff encourage positive behaviour. Pupils focus well on their learning. They are keen to discuss what they have learned and their school experiences. Leaders and staff take any incidents of bullying seriously. They work carefully with pupils whenever behaviour needs to improve.

The vast majority of parents who made their views known feel that their children are happy and safe. They appreciate the range of subjects on offer and the achievements that their children make. They value the good communication with staff in the early years. A minority of parents would welcome better communication with leaders elsewhere in the school.

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

Leaders, including curriculum leaders, have a clear idea of what they want pupils to learn across subjects. They have talked to pupils and parents about the curriculum and the personal qualities they want pupils to develop. They are developing a curriculum where all pupils can learn important knowledge and skills.

Curriculum leaders have considered how pupils will build their knowledge over time. They have worked with advisers and other schools to map out what pupils will learn. Leaders have considered how teaching will support the planned curriculum. In subjects such as

science and history, pupils are introduced to important knowledge and skills in a carefully sequenced way. In other subjects, this depth of learning is less consistent. Leaders are aware of this and have plans in place to enhance the curriculum across all subjects.

Leaders are revitalising the teaching of reading. They have refreshed phonics training for all staff. Children receive a thorough start to phonics teaching in the early years. Pupils who need to catch up receive effective support to become better readers. Staff consider how books match the sounds and letters that pupils know. Leaders are addressing a recent dip in pupils' reading at key stage 2. Pupils are benefiting from new approaches to whole-class reading. They read high-quality fiction. Pupils are becoming more informed and enthusiastic readers.

Leaders have improved the planning and teaching of mathematics. This is taught effectively across many year groups. Staff receive thorough training and support. They have access to high-quality resources. This helps them to implement the curriculum well. Teachers build learning in small steps. This reinforces pupils' understanding. Teachers use assessment well to check what pupils know and can do. Pupils are more confident in their use of numbers. Pupils are encouraged to explain how they solve problems.

The curriculum supports pupils' personal, social and emotional development. Pupils learn about other faiths. They raise money for different charities. Pupils develop a sense of responsibility as play leaders and school council leaders. Pupils learn about different careers in an annual careers week. Some aspects of pupils' personal development, such as teaching about equalities, are not as well planned.

Staff enable pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to access the full curriculum. Teachers provide support that allows pupils to learn well in many subjects. Staff work with external specialists to provide further support for pupils with SEND.

Senior leaders have worked with teachers to raise expectations. They have worked effectively to build staff expertise. Staff are more confident in their subject leadership. Leaders and governors are aware of teachers' workload. Leaders have provided training and resources to support teachers' planning. The vast majority of staff feel well supported and enjoy working at the school.

Children receive a highly effective start to their learning in the early years. Leaders have planned a considered early years curriculum. Adults give children a thorough introduction to reading and the use of numbers. Children benefit from strong routines and well-planned learning and play. They move well between adult-led and independent activities. Children are happy and benefit from supportive relationships. They are well prepared for Year 1.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders work closely with safeguarding specialists to review safeguarding practice. They ensure that staff are kept up to date on important safeguarding issues. Staff and

governors receive regular training. Staff know what to do if they have any concerns over pupils' safety. Leaders follow-up concerns over pupils' welfare quickly. The safeguarding team works with families and other partners to support children's welfare. Leaders teach pupils about safety in assemblies and across the curriculum. Leaders check the suitability of adults working at school. Governors work with leaders to assure themselves that safeguarding arrangements are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders and teachers have worked together to plan a coherent curriculum across subjects. In some cases, these plans are developed less effectively in some subjects than others. Leaders and teachers need to implement their plans consistently to improve the quality of education for all pupils further.
- Children and pupils receive a strong start to their reading in the early years and at key stage 1. On occasions, this has not been built on sufficiently well at key stage 2. Leaders have introduced new approaches and resources to improve pupils' reading at key stage 2. They now need to embed these consistently to enhance the reading curriculum for older pupils further.
- Leaders provide a range of experiences to enhance pupils' personal development. In some cases, these experiences are not planned as coherently as the rest of the curriculum. Leaders need to further enhance pupils' personal development. They need to consider how the curriculum develops pupils' awareness of equalities and British values.
- A minority of parents and carers who expressed their views believe that communication between school and home could be better. Leaders need to consider how they can develop even stronger links with parents and carers to get the most from this crucial partnership.

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 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 27–28 September 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 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	131233
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10097592
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	441
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Kathryn Athey
Headteacher	Melanie Kirkland
Website	newkerprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	8 December 2015, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A new headteacher took up post in January 2018. A deputy headteacher was permanently appointed in April 2018. In November 2019, a new chair of the governing body took up post. In addition, a number of staff have taken up new responsibilities for subject leadership since the last inspection.

Information about this inspection

- I held several discussions with the headteacher. I also held discussions with the deputy headteacher and curriculum leaders. I also talked to the parent support adviser.
- I looked in detail into the curriculum in reading, science and mathematics. I talked to leaders and teachers about their curriculum plans. I also talked to pupils about what they knew and remembered in these subjects. I also looked at pupils' work and visited lessons.
- I talked to seven members of the governing body, including the chair, to find out how they supported and challenged school leaders. I also met the education development partner from the local authority.
- I checked safeguarding arrangements. I looked at the school's work to make staff and pupils aware of safeguarding issues. I also looked at safeguarding records to see how

concerns over pupils' safety were recorded and followed up. I also looked at the checks made on the suitability of staff working at the school.

Inspection team

Malcolm Kirtley, lead inspector

Her Majesty's 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.

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/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: 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
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2020