

Inspection of a good school: South Wellfield First School

Otterburn Avenue, South Wellfield, Whitley Bay, Tyne and Wear NE25 9QL

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 June 2021

Outcome

South Wellfield First School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders and staff know pupils well. Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy learning. Pupils appreciate the support they receive from staff to help them with their learning and how teachers make their learning memorable.

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils and offer them a broad and balanced curriculum. They select topics that really engage and interest pupils in their learning. In most lessons, pupils are challenged to think, which helps pupils to achieve well.

Leaders provide opportunities for pupils to succeed in the future. They learn about financial management and how to keep themselves safe. They have opportunities to take on roles of responsibility, for example as school councillors and sports leaders, which they take seriously. Pupils develop into confident and knowledgeable individuals by the time they leave school.

Pupils are polite and have lovely manners. Pupils told inspectors they believe behaviour in school is good and inspectors agree. They say bullying is rare. Pupils are confident adults are able to help and deal with any instances if they occur. Pupils aspire to live up to the 'Wellfield Code'. Pupils' attendance is good.

Virtually all parents who made their views known would recommend the school.

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

The headteacher, ably supported by the recently appointed assistant headteachers, has maintained the good standard of education since the previous inspection. Staff are highly ambitious for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils with SEND learn well. This is because of the targeted support teachers offer pupils. Leaders support staff well-being. Staff appreciate the efforts that leaders have taken to lighten their workload.

Pupils learn the national curriculum subjects in a well-organised way. Subjects are generally well planned to meet their needs. Pupils remember important knowledge from subjects such as science and mathematics. However, in some subjects, for example personal, social and health education, learning is not sequenced in enough detail to ensure pupils learn in a logical way. Plans need refinement to develop the subject-specific vocabulary to build upon what pupils already know and can do.

Reading is a key priority for the school. Each class has a well-stocked reading area. Staff waste no time in teaching children in the early years how to read. Children learn to retell well-known stories and enjoy songs and rhymes. They are taught how to recognise sounds and then use these to read and write words. Reading and phonics lessons take place daily. Pupils at risk of falling behind are given support to catch up. These pupils practise reading by using well-chosen books that match the sounds they know. However, some staff have not received sufficient training to help pupils to develop accuracy and fluency in their reading. This impacts upon their ability to decode words accurately. Older pupils talk enthusiastically about their reading books. They read together and by themselves every day.

There is a clear rationale and focus for the teaching of mathematics across the school. This starts in early years. Pupils say that they enjoy mathematics. They are confident in applying previous learning to help them understand new topics. They use their multiplication tables to support them in solving problems and basic numerical calculations. Pupils enjoyed sharing methods and techniques that they have learned once they are secure in their understanding of a mathematical concept, for example the use of mnemonics to support them with problem-solving.

In science, leaders ensure that pupils build upon what they have learned in previous years. Teachers are clear about what they have to teach and in what order. This enables pupils to become secure in their understanding. Work in books builds upon scientific content and skills that pupils need in order to know more and remember more. Pupils spoke with confidence about seed dispersal. They could link this to prior learning and different aspects within key concepts such as plants and animals.

Pupils' personal development has a high priority in this school. Leaders are mindful to support pupils' emotional and mental well-being. Leaders have written a bespoke plan for the teaching of personal, social, health and relationships education. Pupils learn life and social skills. However, it is unclear within this plan how new learning builds upon what pupils know and can do. There are opportunities for pupils to develop personally. Staff encourage all pupils to take part in extra-curricular activities. Educational visits and visitors to school enrich the curriculum. They give pupils new experiences, such as training to become confident and safe in riding bicycles and scooters.

Around school and in lessons, pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They live up to adults' expectations for behaviour. Adults ensure rules are fair and consistent. Pupils work well together. They support each other during lessons or when playing in the playground.

Governors know the strengths of the school. They ask the right questions of leaders to ensure that they continue to develop the school appropriately.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The safeguarding culture in the school is strong and staff know what to do to protect pupils. They know how to spot the signs of abuse and who to tell if they have concerns. Regular training keeps staff aware of the risks that pupils face. Procedures for the safe recruitment of staff are robust.

Leaders have ensured that pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. There is a well-planned programme of activities in place. These include keeping safe in the locality and how to use the internet safely.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders understand that, although the planning of the curriculum is detailed across subjects, some subjects are better organised than others when it comes to developing the key knowledge, skills, and subject-specific vocabulary from year to year. They are most developed in English, mathematics, and science. Leaders need to ensure that all subjects are planned logically to help pupils build upon what they have learned previously so that they grasp new knowledge, skills, and key vocabulary as they move through school.
- Leaders have worked hard to develop and improve standards in reading. As a result, the school has continued to sustain strong outcomes in reading. However, not all staff are consistently trained. This means that systems are not fully in place for all staff to support pupils to develop fluency and accuracy in their reading. Leaders need to ensure that plans for the teaching of reading are successfully implemented and that all staff are trained to deliver the school's chosen approach for the teaching of phonics. In addition, leaders need to check that all staff have sufficient knowledge so that they can help pupils read with fluency and accuracy.

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 outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that a good 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 19 and 20 October 2010.

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 information from Parent View 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 [here](#).

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	108588
Local authority	North Tyneside
Inspection number	10195719
Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	337
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Margaret Walker
Headteacher	Ms Julie Gordon
Website	www.southwellfieldfs.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	7 June 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- No relevant changes since the previous inspection.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school, and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the leaders and staff from the school. Inspectors discussed with them the quality of education provided by the school, the pupils' wider development, pupils' behaviour, and staff workload.
- Inspectors did deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, science, and personal, social, health and relationships education. This involved meeting with senior and curriculum leaders, scrutinising curriculum planning and visiting lessons where pupils were learning these subjects. Inspectors talked to pupils in lessons and met with them to look at their work. They also met with teachers to discuss the curriculum they were delivering.

- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school, including during breaktimes. They met with pupils to gather their views through formal and informal discussion.
- Inspectors met with the school's special educational needs coordinator. They discussed a variety of school documents and discussed school policy and procedures.
- Inspectors met with representatives of the governing body, including the chair and vice-chair. They also met with the school's improvement partner.
- In order to judge the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors read the relevant school policies, scrutinised the single central register, checked the school's procedures for the safe recruitment of staff and interviewed the designated safeguarding lead. Inspectors also met with school staff to check their understanding of safeguarding and their training. They also met with governors to check their understanding of their statutory responsibilities to keep pupils safe.
- Inspectors took note of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the 78 free-text responses. They also took account of the views of staff through discussion and via the 20 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Gill Wild, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Alison Aitchison

Her Majesty's Inspector

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