

Inspection of a good school: Scremerston First School

Scremerston, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Northumberland TD15 2RB

Inspection date: 14 July 2021

Outcome

Scremerston First School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Scremerston love coming to school. They are happy and ready to learn. There are strong relationships between staff, parents and pupils. This creates a family feel within the community. Parents are happy with the education their children receive, saying, 'It is the best school, with the best teachers.'

Behaviour in school is good. Pupils can explain how they gain positive rewards and are proud when they receive them. Pupils told inspectors that bullying is rare. They know whom to talk to if bullying happens and they know that staff will deal with it.

Leaders plan the curriculum around memorable experiences for pupils. For example, all pupils visit Beamish Museum to support their learning in history. They speak with enthusiasm about what they have learned. They can describe early life in the 1900s, such as what it was like to attend school and how school has changed for the better.

Pupils enjoy the variety of sports festivals and competitions such as hula hooping, football and skipping. However, these activities are not currently taking place due to COVID-19 (coronavirus).

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

Leaders have a clear vision for the school. They constantly review the curriculum and look for new and exciting ways to deliver it. Staff training results in strong subject knowledge. In mathematics, and the wider curriculum such as geography and history, leaders have carefully planned what they want pupils to know and understand as they move through school. Staff use 'on the spot' assessments during lessons to check pupils' understanding. Teachers give pupils who struggle to learn immediate support. Pupils can talk about what they have learned in these subjects.

Staff know the pupils well. They are quick to identify children that have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) from Reception onwards. Leaders are relentless in seeking support for pupils from outside agencies to ensure pupils' needs are met. Pupils use carefully considered resources to help them access the work alongside their peers. This means that they get off to a good start and do not fall behind in their learning. One parent commented that their child with SEND, 'has gone from being very nervous and lacking in confidence to becoming very confident. Their learning is coming on leaps and bounds as he now includes himself in lessons and thrives in all subjects.'

Some aspects of the curriculum are not as developed as others. There has been a delay in leaders' plans to review subjects such as personal, social and health education (PSHE) and art due to staff absence and COVID-19. Pupils are less clear about what they have learned in these subjects. Pupils cannot explain what fundamental British values are and those spoken to by inspectors did not know about other faiths.

Special events and rewards are promoting a love of reading throughout school. Pupils are eager to gain 'reads' that record when they read at home and result in winning books and vouchers. Children enjoy listening to adults read a range of books to them.

Leaders plan the early years curriculum based on storybooks and experiences. For example, in Reception, staff introduce children to gaining knowledge about the coast and the local area by reading the story 'The Lighthouse Keeper's Lunch'. The visit to the local lighthouse in Spittal builds on this knowledge further. As a result, children are confident and eager to share their learning.

Children learn to read as soon as they start school. All staff receive training to deliver the phonics programme. This enables them to check pupils' phonic knowledge and provide additional support for those who are struggling to read. Staff match books to pupils' phonics knowledge. This has resulted in pupils reading with accuracy and confidence.

Leaders plan transition activities for pupils in Year 4. Visits to other first schools in the area help pupils build friendships and confidence, preparing them for middle school.

Governors and leaders are mindful of staff workload. A governor checks on staff well-being and reports findings to the governing body. Staff say that governors are considerate of mental well-being and, therefore, staff morale is high.

There have been significant changes to the governing body since the last inspection. Governors' minutes show that they are not holding leaders to account as well as they could. They are receiving training to ask the right questions so they can challenge leaders around all areas of school development.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The designated safeguarding lead, safeguarding deputies and staff are well trained. They are vigilant and know how to report concerns to the safeguarding team.

Leaders plan opportunities in the curriculum to help pupils learn how to stay safe. Water safety has been prioritised due to the proximity of the school to the sea and rivers.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders' plans to promote fundamental British values are limited. Pupils are not able to explain their understanding of these values, in particular those around different faiths. Leaders should ensure that curriculum plans clearly set out the knowledge that they want pupils to remember in this area.
- Long-term curriculum plans for subjects such as PSHE and art are not as developed as others. Some pupils cannot remember what they have learned in these subjects. Leaders should review and improve their curriculum plans to ensure that pupils build their knowledge in these subjects over time.
- Governors have not challenged leaders as well as they should. Many governors are new to their role. Governors should ensure that they continue to receive the appropriate training to fulfil their statutory duties and hold leaders to account.

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 in 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 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	122248
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	10195721
Type of school	First school
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	63
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair/Chair of trust/Chair of governing body	Mrs Laura Catterall
Headteacher	Mrs Sarah Smith
Website	www.scremerstonschool.org.uk/
Date of previous inspection	1 March 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, there have been significant staffing changes. A new headteacher was appointed in April 2018. Two class teachers have been appointed, who have taken leadership roles. There have been several appointments to the governing body, including a new chair of governors. The previous chair of governors is now the vice-chair.
- The school has a breakfast club operating on the site, which is managed by the school.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, staff, pupils, governors and representatives from the local authority.

- Inspectors conducted deep dives in reading, geography and mathematics. This included visiting lessons, looking at curriculum plans, looking at pupils' books and talking to pupils.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lesson visits and lunchtimes. They spoke to pupils about their views on behaviour.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding records, including the single central record. They talked to pupils and staff about their views of safeguarding.
- Inspectors examined a range of documentation provided by the school, including leaders' self-evaluation and school development plans and policies.
- Inspectors considered the 23 free-text responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. An inspector met with parents at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors spoke to staff and considered the 11 responses to Ofsted's survey for staff.

Inspection team

Jennifer Thomas, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Alison Aitchison

Her Majesty's Inspector

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