

Inspection of Hetton School

North Road, Hetton-le-Hole, Houghton le Spring, Tyne and Wear DH5 9JZ

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 September 2021

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

The school has improved since the previous inspection. However, pupils' learning across the curriculum is variable. They learn more in some subjects than in others. In subjects such as geography and physical education, teachers provide pupils with the foundations for learning. However, this is not the case in every subject. Senior leaders are working with teachers and external partners to ensure that the curriculum is well planned and delivered in all subjects.

Pupils take part in a range of clubs and activities that expand their horizons. They develop their independence through the Hetton honours programme. Pupils develop responsibility by raising money for local food banks. They benefit from a well-developed careers programme that helps them in their next steps.

Most pupils concentrate well in lessons. Pupils benefit from stable routines in lessons. Adults build respectful relationships with pupils. More pupils are attending school well. Increasing numbers of parents and carers are putting their faith in the school. Despite this, some parents and pupils still have concerns over behaviour.

Pastoral staff and the safeguarding team provide support for pupils. Most pupils that inspectors spoke with said that they felt safe in school. They said that staff take bullying seriously and deal with any known problems that arise. However, some pupils have recently expressed concern that teachers are not aware of the hurtful comments they receive from some of their peers. Leaders have started to improve curriculum plans and staff training, so that pupils are better supported.

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

The quality of education is inconsistent. Pupils do not learn well across the whole curriculum. Pupils gain less secure knowledge in key stage 3. In some subjects, pupils do not acquire the knowledge and vocabulary needed to complete complex tasks. This leads to gaps in their understanding.

Staff have worked with other schools to strengthen curriculum plans. They have introduced new strategies in lessons to help pupils to remember more over time. Pupils find this helpful, particularly at key stage 4. Disadvantaged pupils are learning more because of this. New plans are in place to integrate remote education into the school curriculum.

Some pupils benefit from bespoke support to address their reading and communication needs. However, broader strategies to develop pupils' reading have been underdeveloped over time. Pupils told us that they do not feel encouraged to read more widely. Although leaders have developed lists of key vocabulary, unfamiliar vocabulary is not always securely taught in class.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) get extra help. Some pupils benefit from highly specialist input. The new special educational needs

coordinator (SENCO) is working more closely with staff. There is a stronger focus on how teachers will adapt the curriculum to meet pupils' needs. However, some parents do not feel that their children get the right help.

Leaders have developed a Hetton honours programme. Through this, leaders develop pupils' character and wider sense of social responsibility. Leaders are developing an 'Acceptance for all' programme to promote equality and awareness of the protected characteristics. Careers education matches pupils' individual needs.

Leaders have secured improvements in pupils' behaviour and attendance. Pupils behave well in lessons. Incidents of exclusion for poor behaviour have declined. Leaders have taken highly effective action to improve attendance. More pupils want to attend regularly. Teachers treat pupils with respect.

Pupils are generally confident that teachers address any known incidents of bullying or harassment. However, some negative behaviour has gone unnoticed. Some parents remain concerned about aspects of behaviour. Some pupils told us that teachers are not always aware of the sexist and racist language directed at them by their peers. They are not confident in reporting this to staff. Leaders are mindful of new government guidance in this area and have updated the curriculum to improve this aspect of the school's work.

Leaders consider the well-being of staff. Staff feel well supported in their work. Teachers in the early stages of their career value the guidance they receive. Leaders are providing more intensive training to build staff expertise. Leaders have helped staff to develop their approaches to remote learning.

Governors hold leaders more stringently to account. They are committed to their roles. They improve their expertise through regular training. Governors know the school increasingly well. Governors work with improvement partners to check the school's performance. They check the impact of improvement actions.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The members of the safeguarding team take their responsibilities seriously. They train staff well and provide regular updates on safeguarding issues. Staff know what to do if they have concerns over a child's welfare. The safeguarding team works with pastoral staff to support pupils' welfare. Leaders pursue any concerns over pupils' safety with rigour and sensitivity. They have developed purposeful links with safeguarding partners. Leaders carry out thorough checks on the suitability of adults working at the school. Governors are well trained on safeguarding issues. External partners provide additional guidance and assurance on safeguarding practice.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The implementation of the curriculum is variable. This leads to pupils making weaker progress in some subjects than in others. In some cases, teachers ask pupils to complete complex tasks before they have acquired the necessary knowledge. This contributes to gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. This is more evident at key stage 3. Leaders should ensure that teachers build pupils' knowledge and understanding securely over time. They should spend the time needed to explain new vocabulary and concepts. This will enable assessment to give an accurate picture of what pupils have learned.
- Pupils do not read widely enough. Strategies to encourage pupils to read more purposefully across the curriculum are underdeveloped. While regular assessments of pupils' reading ages take place, teachers do not always have the strategies at hand to improve pupils' reading. Leaders need to accelerate plans to introduce new reading programmes. They also need to train staff to help pupils read with greater focus and purpose.
- Although behaviour is improving, some pupils are upset by the language used towards them by other pupils. They do not always report this to teachers. They are not confident that this will be addressed, because in the past, systems have not been in place to manage this well. Leaders need to continue to develop stronger systems to listen to pupils and to respond to their concerns. They need to check the impact of their plans to ensure that the curriculum clearly teaches the importance of respectful relationships between all pupils.

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 Ofsted 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.

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	108862
Local authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	10200664
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	628
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Lisa Stafford
Headteacher	Craig Knowles
Website	www.hetton.org
Date of previous inspection	16 and 17 January 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, there have been significant changes to the membership of the governing body.
- The senior leadership team has been restructured. New leaders have been recruited to add further capacity.
- The school provides alternative education provision for six pupils at the following providers: Beacon of Light School, Hopespring Sunderland and The Link School.

Information about this inspection

The inspector(s) carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors held several discussions with the headteacher and senior leaders. They also talked to a wide range of staff, including subject leaders and pastoral staff.
- Inspectors looked in detail into the curriculum in English, geography, physical education and science. They talked to leaders and teachers about their curriculum plans. They also talked to pupils about what pupils knew and remembered in these subjects. They looked at pupils' work and visited lessons.
- Inspectors talked to members of the governing body to find out how they support and challenge school leaders.
- Inspectors talked to a national leader of education (NLE), who has been supporting school improvement through the Opportunity North East (ONE) Vision initiative.
- Inspectors checked safeguarding arrangements. They looked at the school's work to make staff and pupils aware of safeguarding issues. They also looked at safeguarding records to see how concerns over pupils' safety are recorded and followed up. They looked at the checks made on the suitability of staff working at the school.
- Inspectors conducted a remote discussion with pupils and staff based at one of the alternative education providers used by the school.
- Inspectors considered 30 responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire, 33 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and 44 responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire, including 31 free-text responses.
- Inspectors talked to a wide range of pupils to gather their views on school life.

Inspection team

Malcolm Kirtley, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Eleanor Belfield

Her Majesty's Inspector

Anne Vernon

Ofsted 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 2021