

Inspection of Forest Hall Primary School

Delaval Road, Forest Hall, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear NE12 9BA

Inspection dates: 6 to 7 October 2021

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy in this warm and welcoming school community. They enjoy coming to school and attend regularly. Parents describe the school as being a positive and happy place.

Staff know pupils well. Leaders have designed a curriculum that supports pupils' academic knowledge, as well as the development of their personal skills. Staff are determined that pupils develop the skills and knowledge required for a future in modern Britain.

Leaders are ambitious and have high expectations for all pupils. Pupils know that reading is an important part of their education. They talk with enthusiasm about the carefully selected books they read.

Pupils are respectful of staff and each other. Pupils feel safe. They say that bullying is rare. When it does happen, pupils say that they get the help they need. Problems are resolved quickly. Pupils are keen to participate in lessons. They concentrate well and have very positive attitudes to learning.

Well-established systems and routines result in a calm and purposeful environment for learning. Positive relationships between staff and pupils are clear to see, and pupils behave very well.

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

Reading is a key priority for the school. There is a consistent approach to teaching phonics. Leaders have clear expectations about the phonics knowledge pupils need to acquire at key points from Reception to Year 2. Teachers make regular checks to ensure that pupils remember the sounds they are taught. Pupils get the extra support they need to catch up quickly. Pupils are given regular opportunities to share their opinions about their books with each other. For example, pupils in Year 6 have put together their own top ten of recommended books for their friends to read. Leaders have made sure that the books on offer to pupils are up to date, informative and exciting. For pupils in the early stages of reading, books are well matched to their phonics knowledge. Pupils told inspectors that they enjoy reading and feel that books can help them to understand the world around them.

The school's curriculum is ambitious, including for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Subject leaders have put in place well-sequenced curriculum plans for their subjects. Leaders have identified the knowledge and skills pupils need to learn to reach ambitious outcomes. Leaders have considered how this knowledge is sequenced, starting from Reception. It is built up steadily and securely as pupils move from one year group to the next. This supports pupils when they are working on new topics. For example, in a Year 5 mathematics lesson, pupils were using their knowledge of number lines from previous years to help their understanding of negative numbers.

Leaders and teachers teach pupils to use subject-specific vocabulary. Teachers give pupils accurate definitions, and this helps pupils to use these new words with confidence. For example, pupils in Year 3 can use a wide range of words to share their detailed knowledge about pharaohs in Ancient Egypt, including 'sarcophagus', 'civilisation', 'hereditary' and 'mummification'.

Senior leaders have put in place systems to check that the well-sequenced curriculum plans are being consistently used in all lessons and that they help pupils to continue to remember even more knowledge. However, because of COVID-19 impacting on class and school closures, these checking systems are currently not always regular or detailed enough.

Pupils achieve well in a range of subjects over time. The knowledge they gain prepares them well for the next stage of their learning. At the end of topics, teachers carefully check what pupils remember. Teachers then use this information to make sure that pupils are ready to move on in their learning.

Pupils with SEND are very well supported. Their additional learning needs are accurately identified and met. The highly knowledgeable special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) works alongside teachers to ensure pupils get the help they need.

The governing body gets the information it needs from leaders to challenge them on their work. Governors have a good understanding of the school. The challenge and support they provide helps leaders to sharpen their actions to improve the school.

In the early years, children are happy and well cared for. They learn to read, write and understand mathematics very well. Children enjoy a wide variety of books, rhymes and songs. This helps them to develop their phonics skills. Staff work with parents and their children to identify any children with particular needs. Support is quickly put in place.

Leaders have fostered a culture in which staff feel valued. Morale among staff is high. Staff spoke about the sense of teamwork and cooperation they experience.

Staff are very attentive to pupils' welfare and personal development. A caring and supportive ethos is evident throughout the school. From early years upwards, the school provides pupils with meaningful opportunities to understand how to be responsible, respectful, active citizens who contribute positively to society.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a culture of care in the school. Staff know the pupils and their families very well. Pupils are at the centre of every decision made regarding their safety and care. Regular training and updates keep everyone informed about the risks to pupils. Staff

are clear about how to spot any warning signs and are confident enough to quickly raise concerns.

Safeguarding record-keeping is accurate and up to date. Communication between staff is strong. This ensures nothing is overlooked. Pupils say that they feel safe in school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The systems leaders use to check the effectiveness of curriculum plans on increasing pupils' knowledge in all subjects are not sufficiently frequent or detailed enough. The COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on this work. As a result, leaders do not have enough precise information about how well pupils are gaining intended knowledge in each subject. Leaders need to check that curriculum plans are implemented consistently and effectively on a regular basis. They need to support subject leaders in using these checks to ensure that pupils are building their knowledge over time across subjects. They should ensure findings are precise so that any aspects that need improvement can be quickly addressed.

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	108605
Local authority	North Tyneside
Inspection number	10200647
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	169
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jackie Sparkes
Headteacher	Carmel Parker
Website	www.foresthallprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	30 November and 1 December 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this school

- There is an on-site breakfast club managed by the school.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

- 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 leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, geography and history. Inspectors met with school leaders and curriculum leaders, carried out lesson visits, spoke with teachers and pupils and looked at pupils' workbooks. They also listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors met with the SENCo to consider provision for pupils with SEND.

- Inspectors met with the designated safeguarding lead to consider how well they identify, help and manage pupils. Child protection records, policies and the single central record of checks on the suitability of staff to work with children were also looked at.
- A range of documentation was considered, including the school's self-evaluation of its effectiveness and plans for improvement.
- Inspectors observed pupils at social times and held formal and informal discussions about what it is like to be a pupil at the school. They took account of 14 responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, including 17 free-text responses.
- The lead inspector met with three representatives from the local governing body, including the chair of governors, and held a telephone conversation with the school's development partner.

Inspection team

Anne Vernon, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Catherine Beard	Ofsted Inspector

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