

Inspection of an outstanding school: Dishforth Airfield Community Primary School

Short Road, Dishforth Airfield, Thirsk, North Yorkshire YO7 3DL

Inspection dates:

4 November 2021

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of outstanding as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love school. It is a safe and tranquil place for them. They say they feel safe, and they are. Pupils know the school's agreed characteristics they need to be successful. They talk about showing initiative, organisation and leadership. They live out their school values. School is a place where respect, resilience and compassion abound. Pupils have learned to live with friends and families who can leave suddenly. They regularly welcome new friends into school. A number of Dishforth pupils hail from countries around the world. They are celebrated with their photos linked to a world map. National flags adorn the hall, including the Union Jack. This school is a diverse and unique place in which pupils thrive.

Pupils' behaviour is very good. They respond well to the high expectations of staff. Pupils are polite, courteous and keen to engage in mature conversation. They say bullying is almost non-existent. It is always dealt with swiftly and fairly by adults. Pupils are attentive in class and try hard.

Pupils use and apply deeply rooted knowledge in some subjects, such as mathematics. Leaders' plans show their ambition for all areas of the curriculum to be as equally well developed. Some subjects are not yet well planned and sequenced.

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

Reading is an ongoing priority for the school. The school's transient population means that many pupils have had differing experiences of reading. Sometimes they have experienced a culture where reading is imperative. Leaders are successfully promoting a love of reading. Children in the early years enjoy book areas and book boxes. Authors and poets visit the school. The library is well stocked and has resumed lending books after lockdown.

Children in Reception make a fast start to learning different sounds and how they can be blended into words. This systematic approach to teaching synthetic phonics continues into key stage 1. Most pupils are quickly learning to read. This helps them access the wider curriculum. There are some pupils in lower key stage 2 who are not yet confident and fluent readers. Their self-confidence is dented because some have books that are too hard. Leaders must check all pupils have books they can read and enjoy.

The school's curriculum in mathematics and geography is coherently planned and sequenced. Leaders have given serious consideration to what pupils should know and remember, and what they should be able to do. New learning is underpinned by what they have learned already. Assessment is used to highlight next steps or any gaps in learning. Key vocabulary is identified and revisited. This is not the case for every subject. Key ideas and themes are yet to be explored. Pupils cannot easily remember learning in the long term. Many find it difficult to make sense of new learning and link it to what they already know. Links between what children have learned by the end of Reception and the Year 1 curriculum are vague. Curriculum planning only starts in Year 1 for many subjects. The specific knowledge children need to acquire by the end of the early years needs to be identified before they start key stage 1.

Pupils are usually fully engaged in their learning. Off task behaviour is rare. They have the chance to attend after-school clubs again as issues from the pandemic lessen. Drama, book club, construction and sport are some of the clubs on offer. Visits out of school are recommencing. Pupils have had the chance to work in the community, exploring intergenerational work with the local care home. The school can get back to work on its 'passport of experiences' for pupils. It began to offer 12 different experiences for each age phase in school before the first lockdown, for example den building or pond dipping.

There is a high ambition for all pupils in school, including those identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The SEND coordinator is tenacious in sourcing appropriate support for pupils and ambitious for their success. Activities are adapted so small steps lead to appropriate understanding and realistic progress.

All staff say they love to work in the school. They say it feels like being part of a 'big family'. Staff say leaders support them if they ever feel their workload is too great. They appreciate the consistency of approach. All feel highly valued and part of the school team.

In discussion with the headteacher, the inspectors agreed that curriculum planning and fluency in reading may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All-staff training means they can quickly raise concerns about any child. They can spot signs of abuse, including in sexualised behaviour and radicalisation. The whole school team keeps a watchful eye on the pupils they know so well. This creates a culture of vigilance. Timely action is taken over every concern. Ties to external agencies are strong.

Pupils in need of monitoring are included in the 'vulnerability pyramid'. Leaders make sure pupils know how to keep themselves safe. Ensuring pupils' all-round well-being, defines the school's character.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils in lower key stage 2 have reading books that are too difficult. They struggle to read some words by sight or cannot decode unfamiliar words. This makes it more difficult for them to access the wider curriculum. Pupils should be given books that allow them to read fluently and confidently. This will help them to enjoy their books and believe in themselves as good readers.
- In some subjects, curriculum planning begins for pupils in Year 1. The link to what children in the early years are learning is unclear. Leaders must identify what children, leaving Reception, need to know and be able to do so that they make a flying start in all subjects in key stage 1.
- In some subjects, pupils' new learning is not carefully planned and sequenced. Key themes and ideas have not been identified. This hinders pupils remembering what they have been taught in the long term. Leaders must make sure that pupils remember important knowledge and skills and can make sense of the new learning they are acquiring. Further work must be completed to ensure that the curriculum in all subjects is of an equally high standard as that in mathematics.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, 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 deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in December 2015.

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	121332
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	10199479
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	92
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing	Mr Jim Brown
Headteacher	Mrs Julie Lyon
Website	www.dishforthairfieldprimaryschool.com
Dates of previous inspection	3 and 4 December 2015, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Information about this school

- There are high levels of pupil mobility, reflecting the school's proximity to a military base.
- The number on roll has nearly trebled since the previous inspection, but is now declining.
- Since September 2021, 19 pupils have joined the school and four have left.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders from the school, four members of the local governing body and the school's development partner.

- Deep dives were carried out in these subjects: reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and teaching assistants, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspectors also listened to some pupils read.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lesson visits and at breaktime and lunchtime. They spoke to pupils about their views on behaviour, and a group of pupils gave an inspector a guided tour of the school.
- Safeguarding records, including the single central record, were reviewed. The inspectors talked to pupils and staff about their views of safeguarding.
- The views of 17 parents who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, were considered.
- The inspectors met with staff to discuss their well-being and workload. Inspectors considered the 14 responses from Ofsted's survey for staff.

Inspection team

Phil Scott, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Zoe Carr

Ofsted Inspector

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