

Inspection of a good school: Grange First School

Norham Road, Gosforth, Newcastle upon Tyne, Tyne and Wear NE3 2NP

Inspection dates:

23 and 24 November 2021

Outcome

Grange First School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Grange First School is an extremely vibrant, caring and nurturing place to learn. Pupils love coming to school. They speak highly of their teachers and consider them to be a strong influence in their life.

Pupils feel safe. They talk positively about their friendship groups and the staff who 'look out for them'. There are well-known systems and procedures across the school for pupils to report a safeguarding concern. Pupils know there is always someone they can talk to if they are worried or upset.

Pupils speak animatedly about the opportunities available to them to learn beyond the classroom. This includes forest school and many after-school activities, including golf, art, Lego and gardening clubs.

Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive. They want to do well for their teachers. Pupils regularly contribute to class discussions and enthusiastically volunteer answers when their teachers ask questions. For the most part, lessons are productive, happy places to learn. Sometimes, a minority of pupils are overly enthusiastic and speak out of turn or raise their voices. However, the latter is usually down to the frequent trains which pass by, very close to the school.

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

The new headteacher took up her post one day before the second period of COVID-19 restrictions. Her best-laid plans to improve the school were put on hold while the school community helped to ensure pupils and their families had the support they needed.

Leaders responded to emerging gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding by changing the curriculum to meet pupils' needs. Pupils learn to read more often than they used to. Staff are using the newly introduced phonics programme to good effect. The teaching of early reading across the school is a particular strength. Pupils who need help to catch up

and improve their reading make strong progress. Pupils' eyes light up when they describe story time. They say teachers are skilful at bringing stories to life by using voices that generate suspense and horror. Pupils remember with excitement their favourite books, including 'The Stitch Head' by Guy Bass and 'The Firework-Maker's Daughter' by Philip Pullman. Teachers and support staff ensure pupils learn phonics sounds in the correct order. Pupils can choose from a wide range of interesting reading materials and books. The books pupils read are closely matched to their phonics development.

Leaders' response to coronavirus was widely praised by pupils and parents. In recent months, leaders have been able to refocus their efforts on improving the foundation subject curriculum. Over time, the content pupils learn in subjects such as history and geography has not been carefully thought through. Pupils still learn new content that is jumbled and does not build on what has gone before. Pupils' understanding of important historical events and people, including The Great Fire of London or Florence Nightingale, is not as developed as it could be.

Pupils' understanding of tolerance, diversity and equality is exceptional. Pupils learn from an early age in Nursery and Reception about what it means to be a 'Grange' pupil. Pupils are encouraged to be kind, thoughtful and trustworthy. They do not disappoint. The strong personal, social, health and economic education curriculum includes numerous opportunities for pupils to develop personally. For example, pupils learn when to say 'sorry', how to save and spend money sensibly, and how they can contribute to and be an effective team member.

Leaders of special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are improving established school systems to identify, assess and meet the needs of all pupils who may have SEND. There is much to do so that all pupils with SEND are known to leaders and staff. However, leaders are enthusiastic, committed and steadfast in their determination to support the most vulnerable pupils in the school. A lot has been achieved in recent months. Most pupils with SEND do well in lessons and when they attend small group activities or one-to-one sessions with support staff.

Staff morale is very high. Every member of staff who responded to the inspection questionnaire said they enjoy working at the school. Staff believe the headteacher manages change well. They say all leaders are considerate of their workload and promote staff well-being at every opportunity. Leaders and staff take part together in activities, including bake-off competitions, staff quizzes and mindfulness coaching. Staff say leaders are approachable. They appreciate leaders' efforts to find solutions to pinch points in the year, when assessment or reporting deadlines may come too soon for them.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders, governors and staff have a developed understanding of their roles and responsibilities that relate to keeping pupils safe. Staff attend regular, relevant safeguarding training that includes sessions linked to peer-on-peer abuse and extremism.

Staff meet every fortnight to discuss pupils' well-being and share any safeguarding concerns. Staff are hands-on, curious and protective. They want every pupil to be happy and safe at school and at home. Pupils with emerging safeguarding needs are quickly spotted. Staff rally round, working closely with safeguarding leaders to ensure pupils receive the care and attention they need.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders continue to review the school's systems and processes to support pupils with SEND. The most vulnerable pupils in the school are receiving stronger support and guidance than they have done previously. Leaders should ensure that they embed new systems and procedures to identify, assess and meet the needs of all pupils with SEND.
- There have been many recent improvements in the quality of education pupils receive. Curriculum plans in reading and mathematics are, in part, contributing to pupils learning more over time. However, plans for some foundation subjects do not identify clearly what end points the curriculum is building towards. Pupils learn new content in a way that does not sufficiently consider what has gone before or what comes next. Pupils do not learn and retain knowledge as well as they could. Leaders should ensure that curriculum plans in all subjects are appropriately sequenced and clearly identify the main concepts and ideas pupils should know inside out. It is clear that leaders have already taken action to plan next year's curriculum and to train staff in how to deliver it. For this reason, the transitional arrangements have been applied.

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, 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 good in December 2016.

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	108444
Local authority	Newcastle upon Tyne
Inspection number	10200465
Type of school	First
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	341
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Iain Ross
Headteacher	Clare Clougher
Website	www.grange.newcastle.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 December 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Gosforth Schools' Trust, a foundation trust including the following primary schools: Archbishop Runcie Church of England First School, Archibald First School, Brunton First School, Broadway East First School, Dinnington First School, Gosforth Park First School, Regent Farm First School, South Gosforth First School, Gosforth Central Middle School and Gosforth East Middle School.
- A new headteacher took up post in January 2020.
- A new chair of the governing body was appointed in September 2021.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector undertook deep dives into the following subjects: reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Meetings were held with senior and curriculum leaders, teachers, governors, support staff and the special educational needs coordinator.

- The inspector held informal and formal discussions with pupils and observed interactions during social times.
- The inspector reviewed the school's records of staff recruitment.
- The inspector observed the work of the school and scrutinised a wide range of evidence, including behaviour and admissions records, safeguarding files, recruitment checks and curriculum documentation.
- The inspector took into account the 60 responses from parents who completed Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. Twenty-five members of staff and 162 pupils completed Ofsted's online staff's and pupils' surveys. All of these responses were taken into consideration.

Inspection team

Lee Elliott, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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