

Inspection of a good school: Dame Dorothy Primary School

Dock Street, Monkwearmouth, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear SR6 0EA

Inspection dates:

9 and 10 February 2022

Outcome

Dame Dorothy Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils would recommend their school to others. They say that their emotional well-being is valued and that teachers care for them. One pupil explained that the school is 'like a home where other pupils are your family'. 'Well-being warriors' from most year groups are on duty every day. Staff wear yellow lanyards, so pupils know who to talk to if they are upset. Worry boxes in every class help even the shyest pupil to ask for help.

Pupils say that behaviour is good and that bullying does not happen. They say that teachers sort out any problems if pupils fall out with each other. Pupils know the school rules and consequences, and they know when a joke has been taken too far. Pupils respond well to high expectations of both their behaviour and attitudes to learning from every adult in school. Leaders have high expectations of pupils' achievement. Pupils rise to meet these.

The 'young leaders' from Year 6 support younger pupils' play at lunchtime. Applications to be a young leader are made in writing to the headteacher and must be approved. Young leaders wear a distinctive red hoodie to show they are on duty. Lunchtime rules such as 'try everything once' and 'eat your vegetables' promote healthy eating. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, especially online.

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

Leaders know that reading unlocks learning for pupils across the curriculum. They say that enabling pupils to develop a love of reading is one of the most important things that they do. High-quality texts are chosen to engage pupils. In Nursery, children sing and learn the initial letters in words. Daily phonics lessons start in Reception. Children learn more complex sounds and blend them together to read words. Books given to pupils match their phonics knowledge. By Year 3, most pupils are reading with expression and confidence. Regular checks are made on pupils' reading. These help teachers to provide support for those at risk of falling behind.

The mathematics curriculum helps pupils remember what they have been taught. They can then apply this knowledge to new concepts. Leaders and teachers support pupils to achieve well in each mathematical topic. Children in early years have regular opportunities to learn about number. For example, during the inspection some children in the Reception Year counted how many cupcakes they had made. They estimated how many more the remaining mixture would make. Pupils recap previous learning every day so that it becomes embedded in their long-term memory. Teachers regularly check pupils' understanding in mathematics. They can then adapt the curriculum to address any misconceptions.

Music is a strength of the school. Pupils develop understanding and knowledge in listening, singing and composing. Teachers check what pupils know and remember, such as in notation, texture and dynamics. Pupils learn about musical styles such as classical and romantic. Similarly in art, the knowledge that pupils must learn is clearly identified. In drawing, pupils learn about shading, line and proportion before completing skilled observational drawing in Year 6. However, in some subjects, the curriculum is not as well developed. Pupils do not acquire the knowledge they need because the curriculum is not planned and sequenced effectively.

Pupils' behaviour is good. They have positive attitudes to learning and a desire to succeed. These are hallmarks of the pupils in Dame Dorothy Primary. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified early. Extra support is given. This can include specialist equipment or alternative ways to record work. No one misses out on learning or any part of school life. Pupils' personal development is supported well through a range of planned activities. Regular celebration days are held for different faiths and cultures. Pupils work in their community. They conduct litter picks, beach clean-ups and plant bulbs. Visits to the university raise pupils' ambition. Pupils compete successfully in a range of sports at local and national level.

Governors share leaders' passion to see pupils excel in all aspects of school life. They know the next steps that leaders are taking to improve the school. Governors hold leaders to account for the success of planned school improvement actions. Teachers, teaching assistants and office staff uniformly agree that they enjoy working in school. One teacher described it as a 'home from home'. The experienced headteacher is trusted and respected by staff and parents. Staff point to a sensitive approach from leaders in trying to reduce their workload and provide a sensible work-life balance.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have made sure that staff know the potential risks to pupils to look out for. Staff know how to record them. There are clear and effective channels of communication between leaders and staff. Consequently, the smallest worry or concern does not slip through the net. Training for every adult in school is timely and appropriate. Leaders work well with other agencies when specialist help is needed to support pupils and families.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They talk about being safe online, stranger danger, peer pressure and not being a spectator to bad behaviour.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some foundation subjects, the curriculum does not include sufficient detail about the knowledge that pupils need. As a result, pupils do not build a secure understanding of the subject. Pupils are then unable to apply knowledge to more complex concepts. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum in all subjects includes sufficient detail about what pupils are expected to know.

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 second 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in May 2012.

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	108776
Local authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	10211355
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	224
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Christine Stafford
Headteacher	Iain Williamson
Website	www.damedorothyprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	2 February 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, assistant headteachers, teachers, the office manager, the special educational needs coordinator and teaching assistants. The inspector also met four members of the local governing body and a meeting was held with a representative from the local authority.
- Deep dives were carried out in reading, mathematics and music. For each deep dive, the inspector met with 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 inspector listened to a range of pupils read from different year groups.

- The inspector also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to the headteacher about other subjects.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour during lesson visits and at breaktime and lunchtime. He spoke to pupils about their views on behaviour. A group of pupils gave the inspector a tour of the school.
- The inspector looked at the single central record of recruitment and vetting checks and spoke to leaders, teachers and pupils about safeguarding.
- The views of 38 parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, were considered. The inspector also took account of 27 free-text responses.
- The inspector met with staff to discuss their well-being and workload. The inspector considered the 17 responses from Ofsted's staff survey and the two responses from Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Phil Scott, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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