

# Inspection of Castleside Primary School

Moorland Crescent, Castleside, Consett, County Durham DH8 9RG

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Inspection dates: 9 and 10 March 2022

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

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils say that they enjoy school because it is welcoming and fun. They make sure new pupils feel at home. Behaviour is good and bullying is rare in the extreme. Pupils' manners are impeccable. Pupils know the school rules and respond to the high expectations teachers have of them. If pupils do fall out with each other, they say that teachers expect them to resolve the issue themselves. Pupils know that there will come a time when teachers will not be there to do it. Pupils love earning house points and trying to win the weekly competition.

Pupils appreciate the 'zones of regulation' in each class. They record how they feel every morning. Pupils know that if they use the 'worry box', someone will talk to them and help. Mental health and well-being are very important in school. Pupils know how to stay safe.

Music is part of the school's DNA. Pupils speak proudly of the musical instruments they play. These include trumpet, violin, piano and keyboard. Many take part in the choir that performs to a high standard in venues across the region.

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

Leaders have worked hard to make sure that pupils kept learning and reading during the periods when schools were only open to some pupils due to COVID-19 restrictions. Recently, leaders introduced a new approach to teaching phonics. Phonics lessons take place each day. In Reception, children recap sounds they know and learn a new sound daily. They learn common words by sight that are more difficult to read, such as 'like'. Pupils take a book home each week to read on their own. Teachers choose books carefully so pupils can read every word. This builds their confidence. By the end of Year 2, pupils are reading fluently and with expression. Pupils love reading and books. They speak with enthusiasm about the 'little library' in the hall and the revamped school library. Pupils know their favourite authors and different types of book.

The curriculum structure in some subjects is of good quality. Key ideas are identified, and the essential knowledge that pupils need at the end of each unit of work is listed. Checks are made by teachers to find out what pupils have remembered. Strong and skilled leadership in music has resulted in a highly effective curriculum. Pupils learn how music is created. They build knowledge progressively. This includes learning to play tuned and untuned instruments. This develops pupils' confidence, pride and self-belief. All pupils are involved, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The design of the music curriculum has developed a 'love of music' culture in school. It helps raise pupils' aspirations.

The careful sequencing of learning in mathematics has sorted out issues caused by mixed-age classes. The cyclical design of the curriculum structure helps pupils build understanding. Units of work are carefully planned. Pupils take small steps to build knowledge progressively and reach challenging end-points in units of work. Teachers

check daily whether key knowledge has been learned. More formal assessments are made each term. In other subjects, such as geography and design technology, curriculum thinking is not well developed. Leaders know that there is work to do in identifying key threads that run through learning. They must decide the essential knowledge that pupils should know and remember. Teachers return to embed key mathematical ideas and knowledge over time. This is not the case for every subject.

Pupils have positive attitudes towards learning. They challenge themselves and do not give up. Rather than saying, 'this is too hard', they change their thinking to, 'this may take some time and effort'. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) secures the best support for pupils with SEND that she can. Teachers spot pupils' needs early. Alongside parents and carers, teachers plan extra support as 'short note targets'.

All pupils learn about health, well-being and relationships. Pupils play an important part in the life of the community. They take part in the Castleside Carnival, the lighting of the village Christmas tree, and 'A Street Near You', a project tracing casualties of the First World War. One pupil designed a plaque for each house where a soldier had lived. Leaders use local landmarks, country walks, museums and other places of interest to bring learning to life.

Staff are uniformly positive about the school, especially about pupils' behaviour and school leaders. They explain how leaders lead by example. They know that leaders provide personal support for them. Leaders make sure that staff feel valued and appreciated. Governors know the school very well. Visits to school have resumed, which gives governors the information to ask questions of leaders. The precise planning from the headteacher and deputy headteacher has been pivotal to the school's recent improvement.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Detailed safeguarding training for all staff is up to date. Everyone knows how to spot even the tiniest concern. Staff log these concerns in the online record-keeping system. Leaders can then connect different incidents or issues. Staff know pupils and their families very well. Staff know when anything seems out of the ordinary. Leaders seek the support of specialist external partners when needed. The secretary runs a tight ship, with regular checks made on staff safeguarding documents. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe in and out of school. They know the steps to take if they have an issue online.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- In some subjects, the essential knowledge that pupils need is not specified. Key ideas that thread through a subject to link intended learning are unclear. As a

result, pupils do not build a secure knowledge of these subjects. Pupils are unable to connect new knowledge with what they have already learned. A consistent approach to curriculum structure is not yet in place across all subjects. It is clear from leaders' actions that they are in the process of bringing this about. For this reason, the transitional arrangements have been applied.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	114043
<b>Local authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	10212272
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	89
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Judith Robson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Alison Spence
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.castleside.durham.sch.uk">www.castleside.durham.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	6 and 7 June 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The deputy headteacher was seconded to the school in September 2021.

## 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 had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, SENCo, teachers and the school secretary. An inspector also met four members of the local governing body and a meeting was held by telephone with the school leadership adviser from the local authority.
- Deep dives were carried out in reading, history, music and mathematics. For each deep dive, inspectors met with leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons where available, spoke to teachers and teaching assistants, spoke to some pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- An inspector listened to a range of pupils read from different year groups.
- An inspector also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about other curriculum subjects.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lesson visits and at break- and lunchtime. They spoke to pupils about their views of behaviour and a group of pupils gave an inspector a tour of the school.
- An inspector looked at the single central record of recruitment and vetting checks and spoke to leaders, teachers and pupils about safeguarding.
- The views of 33 parents who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire, Parent View, were considered. This included the 19 written comments.
- Inspectors met with staff to discuss their well-being and workload. Inspectors considered the 16 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and the 16 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

### **Inspection team**

Phil Scott, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Zoe Carr

Ofsted Inspector

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