

Inspection of Dene House Primary School

Manor Way, Peterlee, County Durham SR8 5RL

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 March 2022

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| 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?

Dene House Primary School is a happy, caring school where everyone is welcome. Leaders have a clear vision of putting children first in every decision. Leaders make pupils' physical and mental health a priority, particularly since the COVID-19 pandemic began. This focus ensures that the needs of each pupil are catered for, leading to a calm and purposeful learning environment.

Leaders and staff are ambitious for every pupil. They have high expectations for pupils' behaviour and learning. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school is good. They have excellent attitudes to learning. Relationships are a real strength of the school. There is very little bullying. If pupils are worried, they know that staff will help them. In early years, children have time to talk through their feelings.

Leaders want all pupils to 'Aspire, Achieve, Smile' and be involved in every aspect of school life. Pupils enjoy visits to the local area and opportunities to learn about the wider world. They are encouraged to take part in extra-curricular activities.

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

Senior leaders have worked with the whole school community to set a clear vision and mission. Leaders have prioritised curriculum development. They have redesigned the curriculum from early years through to Year 6. Leaders have thought carefully about how the curriculum can be taught successfully in the school's mixed-age classes.

Pupils at the early stages of reading get off to a great start. Staff are well trained to deliver the school's chosen phonics programme. The books that pupils read are well matched to the sounds they learn. They have plenty of opportunities to read these books. The disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted on the ability of some pupils to read fluently. Staff have a very clear understanding of these gaps and are supporting pupils well to catch up.

Pupils enjoy their mathematics lessons. They can recall mathematical facts and explain their reasoning. They are not afraid to make mistakes. Teachers use a range of resources well to clearly illustrate mathematical concepts. This helps pupils to quickly grasp new learning.

In English, mathematics and science, teachers make regular and precise checks to see how well pupils are learning. Teachers use this information to give additional support to pupils where needed. In some other subjects, such as geography and music, checks are not as thorough. This means that in these subjects, teachers do not know if pupils are remembering important knowledge.

Some subject leaders are new to their roles. They have not had recent experience or

training in checking how well the curriculum is helping pupils to learn. These new subject leaders are at an early stage in supporting other teachers in delivering the curriculum.

The provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is highly effective. The leader is well trained and knowledgeable about the needs of pupils with SEND. They accurately identify pupils' needs and plan a range of effective support. This includes support from external agencies. This means that pupils with SEND are fully included and achieve well.

Work to support pupils' personal development is a strength of the school. Pupils are aware of their rights and the rights of others. Pupils understand that differences should be respected and celebrated. They are very well informed about current affairs and enjoy discussions with their classmates.

Governors know the school well. They know what leaders need to do to improve the school. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, governors have been in contact with the headteacher on a regular basis. Governors use their monitoring visits to ask questions and check on progress against priorities. They fulfil their statutory duties effectively.

Staff are very positive about the support they receive from the trust and leaders in school. They appreciate the leaders' open-door policy and their response to tackling issues with workload. They value the support from the well-being champion provided by the trust.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a very strong culture of safeguarding that permeates throughout the school. Leaders always act in the best interests of the pupils. Staff know the pupils and their families well. Pupils are taught how to keep safe, including staying safe online. Pupils know who they can go to for support if they need it.

Staff receive regular safeguarding training. They know how to identify signs of abuse and how to record concerns appropriately. The school's systems for record-keeping and support for pupils are monitored closely by leaders.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, leaders and teachers do not have a precise knowledge of how well pupils know and remember the taught curriculum. This means that teachers do not know if pupils have acquired secure foundations for future learning.

Leaders should ensure that systems are in place in all subjects to enable staff to check how well pupils are remembering the intended curriculum.

- Some subject leaders who are new to their roles have had limited training and expertise in leading their subjects. They lack the expertise to check precisely how well pupils are learning the curriculum. Leaders should ensure they provide high-quality training for new subject leaders to enable them to carry out their roles effectively.

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

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| Unique reference number | 141998 |
| Local authority | Durham |
| Inspection number | 10212277 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Academy converter |
| Age range of pupils | 5 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 269 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair of trust | Ivan Whitfield |
| Chair of governors | Reverend Elaine Jones |
| Headteacher | Debbie Turnbull |
| Website | www.denehouse-pri.durham.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 20–21 June 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- The school is part of Tudhoe Learning Trust.
- There have been a significant number of staff changes since the last inspection.
- The school does not use any alternative education providers.
- The school runs a breakfast club.

Information about this inspection

- 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.
- The inspectors met with the chief executive officer, the headteacher and members of the local governing body.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, science, and art and design. 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.

- The inspectors checked the single central record and met the headteacher to discuss the school's safeguarding arrangements. The inspectors also met with a group of boys and a group of girls to explore their knowledge of how to keep themselves safe.
- Inspectors looked at the 11 responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey.

Inspection team

| | |
|----------------------------------|------------------|
| Lucie Stephenson, lead inspector | Ofsted Inspector |
| Zoe Westley | Ofsted Inspector |
| Alison Ashworth | Ofsted Inspector |

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