

Inspection of a good school: Battle Hill Primary School

Berwick Drive, Battle Hill Estate, Wallsend, Tyne and Wear NE28 9DH

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 March 2022

Outcome

Battle Hill Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Battle Hill Primary School prides itself on being at the heart of the community. Staff value the strong relationships they have with the pupils, their families and each other.

Parents and carers praise the school for going 'above and beyond' to support them throughout partial school closures due to the pandemic. Paper learning packs and technology were made available. These enabled pupils to access remote learning from home.

This is a school with high aspirations for all pupils. Learning about the world of work, pupils are inspired to work hard to follow their dreams. Year 6 pupils aspire to be musicians, environmentalists and archaeologists when they are older.

Teachers have high expectations of behaviour. Pupils are polite and respectful towards staff and their classmates. Visitors are made to feel welcome in school. Behaviour in lessons is good. School leaders ensure that support is in place for a small number of pupils who struggle to manage their own behaviour or emotions.

Pupils say that bullying in school is very rare. However, they talk about a few incidents that have happened online. School leaders take this very seriously and work closely with families to resolve any issues.

Pupils take part in a variety of local sports competitions and dance festivals. They attend local community celebrations, such as samba dancing at the Mouth of the Tyne Festival.

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

School leaders have carefully designed their curriculum. They have considered the knowledge, skills and experiences that pupils need. There is an emphasis on developing language and vocabulary from early years. Concepts are introduced, revisited and developed as pupils progress through the school. For example, in history, pupils learn

about the cultural changes for women in society over time. In the history lessons visited during the inspection, pupils examined original household artefacts and could make sensible predictions about how these were used. The whole-school focus on vocabulary was evident when Year 1 pupils were seen talking about the past and the present, for instance when comparing dolls from different decades. However, sometimes pupils do not remember key concepts. Year 6 pupils struggled to recall previous learning about ancient civilizations, for example. Some were therefore unable to make strong connections to help them with their current Ancient Greece topic. School leaders are developing strategies to help pupils revisit learning to embed this in their long-term memory. Assessment is not yet fully in place for all subjects, such as history.

School leaders have prioritised reading since the previous inspection. A new approach to teaching phonics has been introduced from the beginning of Reception. Teachers are well trained in delivering the programme. This is already having an impact for most pupils, who are now more confident in reading. However, sometimes reading fluency is poor and pupils are over-reliant on adult help. Timely checks are made to ensure that pupils are on track. Extra support is given to help pupils who have gaps in their learning.

Pupils enjoy reading. They talk enthusiastically about their class novel, which they share during story time. Pupils experience books from a range of authors. For example, pupils can describe the plot in Shakespeare's play, 'Macbeth'. Pupils regularly complete online quizzes to sharpen their understanding of the books they have read. Teachers have developed class libraries. Here, pupils select reading books of their own choice. Work to refresh the school library is under way.

Key mathematical concepts are introduced when children join playgroup and Nursery. For example, in Reception, children learn the language of repeating patterns. Teachers then create a wealth of opportunities for children to practise these skills within the classroom and outside area. Recent changes to the curriculum are helping children to develop a deeper understanding of number. This enables them to be better prepared for their next stage of learning.

Pupils continue to make good progress in mathematics in key stage 1. This is because learning is sequenced to build on what they already know. For example, in Year 1, pupils are introduced to centimetres as a unit of measurement. They tackle this challenge confidently because they have experience of measuring with cubes. Earlier in Reception, they had learned about 'taller than' and 'shorter than'. This approach continues in key stage 2. Pupils develop their reasoning and mathematical problem-solving skills. For example, Year 6 pupils can use known multiplication facts when calculating the ratios of colours needed to mix paint. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported within the classroom using practical equipment. However, sometimes, when pupils are removed from the classroom to work in a smaller group, they make less progress. This is because the choice of activity does not help them secure the basic skills they need to learn.

Pupils behave well in lessons and are keen to learn. Strong relationships between staff and pupils are evident. Members of staff model this respect well. Teachers feel valued by leaders and appreciate the support they receive.

Equality and diversity are threaded throughout the curriculum. Pupils learn about authors, artists and famous people from different cultures, such as Alma Thomas in art and Mary Seacole in history. School leaders have fostered strong international links. As part of its international work, the school has hosted Chinese students and pupils have visited Poland.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

School leaders prioritise keeping pupils safe. They are aware of local risks, such as drug and alcohol misuse, mental health and financial hardship. Leaders are proactive in securing support for families and addressing these issues within the curriculum.

All staff receive regular training and know the procedure for reporting concerns. Safeguarding records are rigorous, and this has been strengthened by the recent introduction of an electronic reporting system.

Appropriate recruitment checks ensure that all adults are suitable to work in school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some foundation subjects, the curriculum has not had time to embed. Therefore, pupils' learning in these subjects does not build sufficiently on prior knowledge. Leaders should check carefully that plans are implemented. They should develop a system of checking how much knowledge pupils are understanding and remembering in the foundation subjects, so that any gaps in pupils' knowledge can be filled.
- Some pupils struggle to read fluently and with accuracy and are overly dependent on adult support. This is because there are gaps in their phonological knowledge and understanding. Leaders should ensure that these pupils catch up quickly and that they can read with fluency and accuracy.

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 a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in May 2013.

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	108595
Local authority	North Tyneside
Inspection number	10211335
Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	364
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Bill Appleby
Headteacher	Ruth Jobey
Website	www.battlehillps.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	1 February 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school provides a daily breakfast club and an after-school club.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

This was the first routine inspection the school had 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.

- The inspector met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and senior leaders for English, history, early years and SEND. He spoke with a representative from the local authority and four governors, including the chair of governors. Discussions were also held with some teachers and support staff.
- The quality of education was inspected by visiting lessons, meeting with a range of pupils and staff, looking at pupils' work and examining curriculum documentation. The inspector looked closely at reading, mathematics and history.

- The inspector considered the views of parents through face-to-face discussions and via the responses to Ofsted's Parent View survey that had been received.
- The inspector listened to pupils reading to a familiar adult, observed their behaviour moving around the school and at lunchtime, met with pupils formally to gather their opinions and held informal discussions across both days of the inspection.
- A wide range of safeguarding information and documentation was scrutinised, including referrals and attendance records.

Inspection team

Andy Jones, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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