

Inspection of a good school: Deaf Hill Primary School

Station Road West, Trimdon Station, County Durham TS29 6BP

Inspection dates:

24 and 25 May 2022

Outcome

Deaf Hill Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Deaf Hill Primary School is an inclusive and happy school where pupils get the help they need to achieve their best. Pupils are well looked after. Pupils said that they enjoy school. They are keen to participate. Pupils concentrate well in lessons and develop very positive attitudes to learning. They value the strong relationships they form with staff.

Leaders have high aspirations for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils enjoy reading and they know the importance of being a good reader. They have plenty of opportunities to read to adults in school and to be read to.

Leaders are determined that pupils will enjoy a wealth of experiences at school. Pupils have many opportunities to take part in a range of clubs and after-school activities. For example, they can try out sports activities such as fencing, or other activities such as learning to knit with the 'Knitting Nanas'.

Pupils are respectful of staff and each other. They know right from wrong. Pupils say that bullying is very rare. Pupils and parents say that they can speak to any adult in the school and know they will provide them with the help they need.

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

Leaders have made reading a high priority for the school. Teachers have been trained to teach the phonics programme well. Leaders have clear expectations about the phonic knowledge pupils need to acquire. Teachers make regular checks to ensure pupils are making the best progress possible with their reading. Staff in the early years teach children rhymes and stories. Phonics is taught to children in Reception as soon as they are ready. Teachers ensure that the books pupils read are matched to the sounds that they are learning. This helps pupils to read fluently. Pupils, including those at an early stage of reading, in key stage 2, receive help from well-trained staff. This helps them to catch up quickly. Pupils read texts with increasing confidence as they move through school.

The curriculum is ambitious for all pupils. The curriculum in subjects such as science and physical education (PE) is carefully sequenced. Leaders have identified the key knowledge and skills they want pupils to learn. They have ensured that skills build progressively between each year group. For example, in a Year 1 PE lesson, pupils developed their racket and ball skills to enable them, in later year groups, to play tennis. Leaders provide regular training and support for staff to ensure that they keep their subject knowledge up to date.

Leaders monitor the impact of their curriculum plans carefully. They make regular checks to ensure that the well-sequenced plans are being used effectively in all lessons. Leaders check that pupils are able to remember the important knowledge they are taught. However, recently, COVID-19 has led to class and school closures. The checking systems leaders have in place are not always being used regularly enough.

Children in the early years settle well to school life due to the caring and supportive staff. They have positive attitudes to their learning. Staff model early language and communication skills well. Talk and vocabulary are at the heart of everything they do. As a result, children can confidently talk about their learning. In Reception, children are able to demonstrate their scientific understanding by talking confidently about 'chemical reactions' as they mix different liquids together.

The school provides a range of enrichment opportunities to support pupils' personal, social and spiritual development. Staff teach pupils to recognise and respect individual differences. Pupils learn how to manage their feelings. For example, they learn 'five finger breathing' to help them settle and calm any feelings of anxiety. Adults give pupils the help and advice they need so that they can focus on their learning.

Despite the restrictions caused by COVID-19, leaders have ensured that pupils continue to experience clubs and activities beyond the classroom. For example, pupils participated in a construction club where they had the opportunity, as regional winners, to take part in the national finals in Bristol.

Governors know the school well. They work closely with leaders and have a clear view of the school's strengths and areas for development. Staff feel well supported by leaders, who manage their workload effectively. Staff are appreciative of the support they received from leaders to manage the impact of COVID-19 at school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school has a very strong culture of safeguarding. Leaders ensure that safeguarding is a priority. Staff have a very good knowledge of families and the local community. They use this knowledge, alongside regular training, to keep pupils safe.

When a safeguarding issue occurs, leaders react quickly. They are tenacious in securing support from outside agencies. Leaders and staff ensure that the most vulnerable pupils receive the support that they need. Parents appreciate this support.

The curriculum gives pupils many opportunities to learn how to stay safe. Pupils know and trust that staff will help them resolve any worries.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The restrictions associated with COVID-19 have hindered leaders' ability to monitor the impact of their curriculum changes. Leaders have not checked the impact of the curriculum on pupils' learning often enough. As a result, they do not have precise information about how well pupils are remembering their intended knowledge in each subject. Leaders need to check that their curriculum is being implemented consistently and effectively so that pupils' knowledge is growing over time.

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 section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2017.

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	114144
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10211425
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	185
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Carol Ayre
Headteacher	Paul Newton
Website	www.deafhill.durham.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	15 February 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average primary school.
- The school runs a breakfast club.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school is federated with Kelloe Primary School. The headteacher and governing body lead both schools within the federation.

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 their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, PE and science. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector also heard a sample of pupils read to a familiar adult.

- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, the special educational needs coordinator and other members of staff.
- The inspector met with members of the school governing body, including the chair of governors. The inspector also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector met with the designated safeguarding leaders and looked at safeguarding documentation. The inspector also spoke with governors, teachers and pupils.
- The inspector spent time observing and speaking to pupils, including those who attend the breakfast club.
- The inspector evaluated the responses to the Ofsted Parent View online questionnaire. The inspector also analysed the responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.
- The inspector reviewed the school's website and a range of school documents. These included the school's self-evaluation document, its improvement plan and documents about behaviour, safeguarding and bullying.

Inspection team

Anne Vernon, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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