

# Inspection of a good school: High Spen Primary School

Hugar Road, High Spen, Rowlands Gill, Tyne and Wear NE39 2BQ

---

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 June 2022

## **Outcome**

High Spen Primary School continues to be a good school.

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

Leaders put pupils at the heart of all they do at High Spen Primary School. Pupils feel they are part of an extended family. Those pupils that have been awarded leadership badges, for example school council member, wear them with honour. The school motto of 'looking out for each other' is fulfilled by the positive relationships between pupils and also with the adults that care for them. Pupils feel looked after and safe.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils. Staff share these expectations. Pupils are engaged in learning and achieve well. One parent, echoing the views of many, said: 'My children are thriving in school; their needs are understood and met. All staff go the extra mile to ensure children are happy and listened to.'

Pupils are tolerant of differences. They understand that some families are different. Older pupils were keen to share their understanding of the need for everyone to be treated equally. Bullying is not tolerated. Staff deal with it quickly when it does happen.

Pupils are excited by the range of activities available to them outside lessons. For example, pupils work with a food bank to reduce food waste. Pupils learn how to cook healthy food on a limited budget. Pupils were particularly happy that drama club had started up after the COVID-19 pandemic had prevented pupils working together to prepare a performance.

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

Reading is a priority at High Spen Primary School. Leaders have ensured that all staff have the training they need to skilfully teach children to read. Children begin to learn to read as soon as they start in the Reception Year. Staff teach sounds accurately and use tools such as 'use your robot arms' to help the pupils to decode and blend sounds accurately. As a result, pupils learn to read with fluency and confidence.

Leaders work hard to give pupils the opportunity to develop a love of reading. Books are everywhere in school. Teachers regularly read books to their classes. Pupils have worked with adults to redesign the library to make it an enticing place for reading, well-being and reflection. In each classroom, there are wrapped 'books to treasure' that are about diverse topics or from new authors. Pupils are excited to unwrap and discover these new adventures into reading.

Children in early years make a strong start to their learning journey. Leaders have designed the curriculum to help children to be well prepared for the move into Year 1. Staff design activities that are tailored to individual needs. Staff regularly check to make sure that children remember what they are taught. Children who need extra help to keep up are provided with effective support which helps them to be ready for the next stage of their education.

In some subjects, leaders have put in place a rigorous programme of training that has ensured that the curriculum is delivered consistently and effectively. For example, in mathematics, teachers encourage pupils to calculate mentally and reason verbally to explain their answers. As a result, pupils are quick to complete calculations accurately.

In some subjects, such as history and religious education, leaders have created detailed curriculum plans that build pupils' knowledge over time. In most lessons, teachers design tasks that help pupils to remember the content they are being taught. In some classes, teachers do not have a strong understanding of the subject they teach. They do not create opportunities for pupils to revisit key knowledge, such as the festivals in different faiths. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are quickly identified. Support plans clearly outline the support that pupils with SEND need to access the same curriculum as their peers. Teachers skilfully use these plans to ensure that activities are purposefully adapted and appropriate. As a result, pupils with SEND achieve well.

Pupils understand the importance of the rule of law and democracy. Pupils put this into action when they vote for their school council representatives. Pupils know their opinions are heard. For example, the school council put a successful bid to the governors for a new climbing frame after taking a poll from their classmates.

Staff are proud to work at the school and feel that their well-being is a priority for leaders and governors. Leaders ensure that there is time for staff to plan together. This contributes to the staff feeling valued and cared for.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff at High Spen know their pupils and families well. Leaders ensure that staff regularly attend safeguarding training. As a result, staff notice any concerns early and report them promptly. Leaders follow up concerns quickly and effectively.

Leaders undertake the appropriate checks when recruiting staff. They ensure that all staff understand their responsibility to keep pupils safe. Leaders adjust the personal, social and health education curriculum to reflect emerging local safeguarding risks.

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

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

- In a few subjects, leaders have not ensured that the curriculum has been implemented as intended. Some pupils do not have the opportunity to regularly revisit important knowledge. As a result, some pupils do not learn the content identified in leaders' curriculum plans. Leaders should ensure that staff receive subject-specific training in order to teach all subjects well.

## **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 February 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	108340
<b>Local authority</b>	Gateshead
<b>Inspection number</b>	10211312
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	204
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Melanie Cornish
<b>Headteacher</b>	Andrew Firth
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://highspenprimary.org">highspenprimary.org</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	January 2017

## Information about this school

- Since September 2021, the school no longer provides the additional resourced provision for deaf pupils.
- The school has provision for two-year-olds.
- The school does not use 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 her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with senior leaders and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives into reading, history and mathematics. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum 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 listened to pupils read to a familiar adult and visited the Nursery Year and the Reception Year.

- The inspector reviewed curriculum plans in some other subjects.
- The inspector talked to pupils about their school.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour throughout the school day.
- The inspector met with representatives of the local governing body, including the chair of the local governing body.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documents relating to safeguarding, including records of employment checks and safeguarding incidents. The inspector met with the safeguarding leaders.
- The inspector also reviewed the responses that were received through the Ofsted online questionnaire Parent View, which included free-text comments. The inspector considered the responses that were received through Ofsted's staff questionnaire and pupil survey.

### **Inspection team**

Christine Durand, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates:  
<http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2022