

Inspection of a good school: South Gosforth First School

Alnmouth Drive, South Gosforth, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear NE3 1YF

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 June 2022

Outcome

South Gosforth First School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a school where leaders strive to provide pupils with the very best start in life. This is captured by the school motto, 'Roots to grow, wings to fly.' Leaders have planned an ambitious curriculum that enables pupils to gain important knowledge and skills.

Parents and pupils appreciate the rich variety of cultural experiences that are offered by the school. These include visits to museums, art galleries and the theatre. Leaders provide a rich and varied programme of lunchtime and after-school clubs. These include: choir, football, gymnastics, allotment club and a reading for pleasure club.

Parents also value the care and support that the school provides for their children. This continued throughout partial school closures during the COVID-19 pandemic. Daily online lessons meant that pupils and parents still felt connected with their teachers. A typical view expressed by one parent was, 'This is a fantastic school that allows my child to thrive and achieve.'

Behaviour is a strength of the school. Pupils feel happy and safe. They can learn without distraction. Pupils talk positively about recent changes to playtimes and lunchtimes. New 'play zones' provide pupils with exciting activities, such as role-play, model making and skipping. Bullying is very rare but pupils are confident that teachers would support them, if there was a problem.

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

School leaders have prioritised reading since the last inspection. They have introduced a new phonics scheme. All staff have been trained and teach the programme well. New reading books have been purchased to ensure books match the sounds pupils are learning. Pupils read with fluency and expression in their voice. Support staff are skilled at helping pupils to re-read sentences accurately if they make errors when reading. Pupils can apply their phonic knowledge to read new words. Teachers make timely checks to

ensure pupils are making good progress. Pupils at risk of falling behind receive extra help so that they can keep up.

Pupils love to read. They helped to choose books for the new library, which they visit weekly. Leaders have selected a variety of books that all pupils will experience during their time in school. These include classic texts, contemporary fiction and books chosen to promote diversity. Once phonic knowledge is secure, a daily reading lesson develops pupils' comprehension of more challenging texts. Reading for pleasure is further enhanced through author visits, trips to Seven Stories in Newcastle and other events.

Leaders have undertaken a thorough review of the curriculum. Opportunities to promote character, culture, creativity and challenge are planned for each subject. Learning has been carefully sequenced so that pupils can build on prior learning and deepen their knowledge and understanding. However, assessment checks in some subjects, such as geography, are new. They do not always provide teachers with meaningful information to help them build on pupils' knowledge. Pupils sometimes do not link new learning with what they already know. For example, Year 4 pupils can talk confidently about their current topic on climate change. They know the impact of greenhouse gases on the environment, but they cannot remember learning about weather in key stage 1.

Children get off to a flying start in their mathematical understanding in Reception Year. Daily number practice helps them to develop a deepening understanding of number. For example, they can confidently show numbers to 10 without having to count on their fingers. Children understand odd and even numbers and can use patterns to distinguish between them. As pupils progress through school, their mathematical vocabulary and understanding continues to build.

Teachers support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) well to access the curriculum. Recent changes have sharpened the identification of pupils with SEND to ensure their needs are met. This includes one-to-one adult support, nurture time and providing a bespoke curriculum to pupils who need it.

This is a 'No Outsiders' school. Pupils have a good understanding of diversity, with a view that everyone is welcome at South Gosforth First School. They can recall a class novel, *Runaway Robot*, and discuss issues around disability. The religious education curriculum fosters strong links with places of worship. Pupils visit a local gurdwara and synagogue.

Pupils enjoy a variety of roles and special responsibilities. For example, the school council has recently fundraised to support Ukrainian refugees. Eco-Warriors promoted World Earth Day, undertaking the Big Plastic Count to highlight waste around school. Pupils know that they have a voice and can make a difference.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Senior leaders prioritise keeping all pupils safe in school. All staff receive regular safeguarding training. They are skilled in identifying signs of harm. Referrals are made in

a timely manner with next steps actioned. Appropriate recruitment checks ensure all adults are suitable to work in the school.

Online safety is taught through the computing curriculum and reinforced in assemblies. Pupils remember the acronym SMART (safe, meet, accepting, reliable, tell) to help them to stay safe online. Other aspects of safety within the curriculum include: crossing roads, being around water and metro safety.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The assessment system for checking what pupils know in some foundation subjects does not enable teachers to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and make links with prior learning. Pupils do not always remember long term the content they have been taught and make these links. Therefore, pupils can find it difficult to integrate new knowledge into larger ideas. Leaders should develop a meaningful system for checking how much knowledge pupils are understanding and remembering in the foundation subjects, so that any gaps in pupils' knowledge can be filled.

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	108439
Local authority	Newcastle upon Tyne
Inspection number	10227044
Type of school	First
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	299
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Zoe Hunt
Headteacher	Rob Adams
Website	www.sgfs.uk
Date of previous inspection	21 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Wrap-around care is provided by Playsafe Club for a charge. Breakfast club is available from 7.45am and after-school care is offered until 6pm each day.

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 his evaluation of the school.

- The inspector met with the headteacher and senior leaders, including those with responsibility for SEND. He met four governors, including the chair of governors and met with a representative from Newcastle upon Tyne local authority. Discussions were also held with some teachers and support staff.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, he 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 considered the views of parents through face-to-face discussions and via the responses to Ofsted's Parent View that had been received.
- The inspector listened to pupils reading to a familiar adult, observed their behaviour moving around school and at lunchtime, met with pupils formally to gather their opinions and held informal discussions across both days of the inspection.
- A wide variety of safeguarding information and documentation was scrutinised, including referrals and attendance records.

Inspection team

Andy Jones, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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