

Inspection of a good school: Pittington Primary School

Hallgarth Lane, Pittington, Pittington Primary School, Durham DH6 1AF

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 July 2022

Outcome

Pittington Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are rightly proud of their school, and of themselves. They respond positively to the high expectations that leaders have of them. Pupils' conduct is superb. They look after their environment, tuck in chairs behind them and tidy away after themselves. They are polite to visitors, adults and each other. Only a handful of pupils remember any bullying occurring. Pupils know that all adults in school, not just their own teacher, would sort out bullying straight away.

The school's curriculum captures pupils' imagination. They work diligently in lessons and take pride in their work. They adore reading. At lunchtime, pupils visit the 'hedgehog room' to swap their books. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about the books that they read individually and the books that they read together as a whole class.

At breaktime and lunchtime, pupils play together respectfully. Older pupils are proud of the work that they do to help pupils to feel welcomed and make friends. Year 6 sports leaders organise games for younger pupils to play. They are excellent role models.

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

Senior leaders have ensured that subject leaders have the expertise to lead their subjects well. As a result, the curriculum for all subjects is ambitious and well designed. Subject leaders are given time to monitor how well their subjects are taught. They work with staff to further improve how the curriculum is implemented. Subject leaders have collaborated with staff in Nursery and Reception to ensure that the curriculum in the early years gives children strong foundations. This prepares children well for the learning to come later in their school journey.

Staff are highly skilled. Teachers ensure that the curriculum is well taught to all pupils. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers receive valuable information and support from leaders to help them understand and meet the needs of pupils with SEND. They achieve well. Regular opportunities are in place for

pupils to revisit what they have learned in the past. Pupils recall knowledge from previous years with ease.

Staff use assessment effectively in order to check that pupils know and remember important knowledge. In the early years, adults carefully check children's understanding and step in where children need extra help. Senior leaders use assessment shrewdly. This helps them to identify who needs something extra, and how to improve the curriculum moving forward.

Reading is well taught. Leaders have recently introduced a new phonics programme. This has further strengthened the already effective approach to teaching reading. Pupils at the early stages of learning to read benefit from the skilled support of adults. The weakest readers are catching up quickly because they get regular additional reading practice. The curriculum also builds pupils' enthusiasm for reading across their time in the school.

Leaders have identified that the curriculum did not support pupils to develop a deep enough understanding of subject-specific knowledge in a small minority of subjects. For example, in the past, the curriculum has not given pupils enough opportunities to develop certain geographical skills. Leaders have developed stronger curriculum plans so that this can be addressed. From September 2022, the curriculum has more opportunities to develop this type of knowledge. However, some teachers need further support to ensure that they have the right subject knowledge to teach these aspects of the curriculum well.

Pupils' behaviour is impressive. Lessons are calm and productive. Pupils are fully focused on their learning. The curriculum inspires them to concentrate and work hard.

Leaders place great importance on pupils' personal development. The curriculum broadens pupils' understanding of the world beyond their community. Pupils benefit from faith leaders visiting the school to teach them about different religions and cultures. Leaders have carefully selected books that help pupils to develop a strong moral compass. This, along with the work of teachers in a weekly lesson on personal, social and health education (PSHE) effectively supports pupils' wider development.

Governors understand the school well and have an eye for detail. They, like other leaders, are highly skilled and knowledgeable. The governing body holds leaders to account. Governors ask probing questions and offer appropriate challenge to leaders. Governors take steps to assure themselves that what leaders tell them in meetings is happening in practice. Leaders, including governors, are considerate of staff workload and well-being. Staff across the school feel well supported by leadership.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have built a strong culture of safeguarding. There is a well-established attitude of 'It could happen here' among staff. When staff have a concern, they pass it on to safeguarding leads. Safeguarding leaders are tenacious in their approach to safeguarding. Records and logs are detailed. Leaders are forthright and direct if they feel that external

support is not timely or sufficient. As a result, pupils who need extra support get the help that they need.

Pupils are taught how to stay safe in the community and online. The school engages with external agencies to develop pupils' knowledge of safeguarding. For example, pupils benefited from a recent police visit discussing road and water safety.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have strengthened the curriculum in subjects such as geography so that pupils develop stronger disciplinary knowledge. However, staff have not been trained in some aspects of the new curriculum. This means that, in a minority of subjects, staff do not have sufficient expertise to teach some of the disciplinary knowledge, including in new curriculum plans. Leaders need to ensure that staff have the necessary subject knowledge to teach new curriculum effectively.

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 the school to be good in September 2011.

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	114125
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10200464
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community School
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	216
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Denise Harland
Headteacher	Catherine Lee
Website	www.pittington.durham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 December 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, several members of the governing body have left. New governors have joined. A new chair of the governing body took up post in March 2021. The previous chair of governors is now the vice-chair of governors.

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 this into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) and subject leaders. The inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair and vice-chair of governors, and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics and physical education. 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 samples of pupils' work. The inspector also listened to some pupils reading to a familiar adult.

- The inspector also spoke to leaders to discuss other subjects, including meeting with the geography leaders.
- The inspector visited the Nursery and Reception classes and spoke with teachers of children in the early years. They also visited lessons accompanied by the SENCo and considered support plans for pupils with SEND.
- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector met with the headteacher, who acts as the designated safeguarding lead. The inspector reviewed safeguarding logs, including referrals made to the local authority. They also checked the compliance of the school's single central record. Safeguarding was also discussed with staff and pupils throughout the inspection.
- The inspector met with leaders to discuss aspects of behaviour and pupils' wider personal development.
- The inspector spoke with pupils, formally and informally, throughout the inspection. The views of pupils, parents and staff that were received through Ofsted's surveys and emailed were also considered.
- A range of school documentation was considered, such as the school improvement plan, leaders' self-evaluation of the school and external reports commissioned by leaders and governors. Minutes from meetings of the local governing body were considered, as well as a letter written to the inspector from a governor.

Inspection team

Graham Findlay, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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