

Inspection of Bernard Gilpin Primary School

Hall Lane, Houghton le Spring, Tyne and Wear DH5 8DA

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 September 2022

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Early years provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils receive exceptional education and care at this school. They are extremely proud of the school virtues, which include justice, integrity, positive attitudes and wisdom. Adults have the highest expectations of what pupils can achieve. Pupils respond with exemplary behaviour and a strong work ethic. Pupils work together with adults and with their peers as a strong family community. Pupils recognise that bullying is always a possibility, but they say that it does not happen. If it did, they trust that adults would deal with problems promptly. Pupils feel safe, and they are.

Leaders have created a culture of mutual respect and exemplary attitudes to learning. Pupils are exceptionally proud of their high achievements. They develop their leadership skills as sports leaders, breaktime buddies or school councillors. Staff celebrate, and value, pupils' talents inside and outside of school. Many pupils excel in art, dancing, singing or sports, reaching high standards at regional and national events.

Pupils are incredibly supportive of one another. They learn what makes a true friend and put that knowledge into practice. Pupils understand the importance of equalities. They celebrate individual differences in people and different cultures. Pupils enjoy baking, yoga or crafts in after-school clubs. They relish the educational visits to the Lake District, London or Paris.

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

Over time, leaders at all levels have developed exceptional leadership qualities. All staff are determined to provide the best education and care for every pupil. Curriculum subject leaders have designed an ambitious, creative curriculum which is accessible to all pupils. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

The curriculum content exceeds the expectations of the national curriculum. Leaders identify the precise knowledge they want pupils to learn across all curriculum subjects. Teachers check on how well pupils understand their learning. They set subsequent tasks to help pupils build on their existing knowledge. Pupils move on to more complex learning term by term and year by year. Ultimately, pupils achieve highly.

Teachers and teaching assistants access high-quality professional development. They have excellent subject knowledge across all curriculum subjects. Curriculum subject leaders work with other teaching staff in 'triads'. This results in staff continually developing their leadership skills and knowledge through leaders sharing their expertise.

In mathematics, children in Reception learn about shape, space, measures and numbers in engaging ways. From Year 1 onwards, pupils develop strong knowledge of calculating, reasoning and problem-solving. They learn the importance of

practising and applying mathematical concepts in lessons to real-life situations. For example, on a residential visit to Kielder Forest, pupils had a financial budget. They applied their addition, subtraction and multiplication skills to purchase nutritional ingredients for meals.

Pupils develop their scientific skills through managing experiments and investigations. They use scientific terminology accurately when they record their findings. They learn how to reach conclusions, and consider pertinent questions to explore in the next lesson. In the wider curriculum subjects, such as art, physical education (PE) and history, pupils build up their knowledge and understanding over time. In art, they build on the practical techniques. They also learn an appreciation of different artists over time and of the influence they had on art history. In history, pupils learn about how historical figures and events have a positive and negative impact on the historical timeline. In PE, pupils develop refined physical skills. This supports pupils to compete to a high standard in competitions and festivals.

Children in Reception, and Year 1 pupils, make rapid gains in their reading and writing because of high-quality phonics teaching. Current pupils in Year 2 use their phonic knowledge to read a wide range of books fluently and with intonation. Teachers have carefully agreed on classic novels as core reading texts across the school. Teachers use these books in English lessons to develop pupils' reading comprehension, love of reading, and writing skills.

In Reception, children access a language-rich environment both indoors and outside. Children develop early mathematical knowledge, creativity and physical dexterity. They develop their vocabulary through captivating stories, songs and rhymes. Children are prepared well for key stage 1.

Pupils with SEND access the same curriculum as their peers. Teachers provide bespoke and practical resources where pupils need them. Pupils partake in emotional, sensory or therapy sessions to support with their well-being.

Pupils' personal development is woven through all aspects of the curriculum. Pupils have an extensive knowledge of different beliefs and faiths. They learn about healthy and unhealthy relationships. Pupils learn to be respectful, tolerant and fair with each other. They know that it is unlawful to discriminate against different groups of people. This prepares them well for their future life at secondary school and in the wider world.

Governors bring a wide range of expertise to their roles and make pertinent decisions linked to school development. Staff, including those early in their career, feel valued and supported with their workload. Parents and carers are highly positive about their child's education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders at all levels have established a strong culture of vigilance. Staff recognise every child as a unique individual. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputy DSLs work in unison with the external professionals, such as the police force and children's social care. Together they identify the dangers that children and families may face in the local area. This reduces the risk factor for pupils in the wider community.

Training linked to safeguarding is extensive. Staff apply what they learn in training to keep children safe from harm. The DSL ensures that families receive the right support at the earliest stages of identified concern.

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.

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	108830
Local authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	10227449
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	412
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Alan Hennis
Headteacher	Andrew Bainbridge
Website	www.bernardgilpin.com
Date of previous inspection	14 May 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school runs a breakfast club, which is open to all pupils.
- The school does not use any alternative provisions to support pupils with specific needs.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science, PE, history and art. The inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, including those in the early stages of their career, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector listened to young pupils read to a familiar adult.

- The lead inspector met with three members of the governing body. The chairperson of the governing body joined the meeting virtually.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, in the dining hall, at breaktime and at lunchtime.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors spoke to staff, parents and governors. Safeguarding documentation was scrutinised, including the school's safeguarding policies and records. Inspectors spoke to pupils and observed relationships between pupils and adults. The lead inspector also met with the DSL.
- Inspectors gathered views of parents informally in person and formally through responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and free-text responses. The views of staff and pupils were considered through meetings, as well as considering their responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Alison Aitchison, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Julie McGrane	Ofsted Inspector
Anne Vernon	Ofsted Inspector

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