

# Inspection of a good school: Frosterley Primary School

Bridge End, Frosterley, Weardale, Bishop Auckland, County Durham DL13 2SN

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Inspection dates:

21 September 2022

## Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. Inspectors are recommending the next inspection to be a graded inspection.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and feel safe at Frosterley Primary School. They are respectful of each other and know each other well. The oldest pupils lead games on the yard for younger pupils, including children in Nursery. Pupils spoken to say that there is no bullying in school. They are confident that staff will help them if they ever have any concerns.

Leaders' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low. They are aware of this and bringing about change.

Pupils are polite and courteous. Relationships between staff and pupils are strong. Pupils enthusiastically take part in lessons such as music. However, in some other lessons, they are less interested. In Nursery, children listen well to rhymes and are keen to join in. They readily choose learning activities and access these independently.

Pupils take part in a number of community projects, including the 'River Fly' with the Wear Rivers Trust and British Science Week at Harehope Quarry. External speakers are a regular feature. For example, the fire brigade and the police speak about fire and personal safety.

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

Leaders make sure that phonics is a priority for pupils. Sounds that pupils are learning are recapped at the beginning of lessons and new sounds are introduced. Leaders are in the process of changing the phonics programme to be more ambitious. This will also ensure a consistent approach across all of the executive headteacher's schools. Reading books are appropriate for mixed-age pupils and these are changed every year to ensure pupils have material they enjoy. Some Year 1 readers, however, are behind where they

should be in phonics. In key stage 2, pupils who need further support with their reading receive this through interventions.

In other curriculum subjects, including mathematics, there is some variability in how well the curriculum has been planned. Key knowledge that pupils need to know is clearly identified but the order in which it is taught has not been fully thought through. This means that pupils struggle to connect their learning. Leaders recognise this and are in the process of bringing about change.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified quickly and receive additional support. Leaders are aware that individual pupil support plans vary in the level of detail about next steps that should be taken. Training is underway to improve the specific planning for pupils with SEND.

Staff routinely check on what pupils know in their daily lessons. However, sometimes, assessment is not always accurate enough. This leads to a mismatch between pupils' abilities and some of the work they are given.

Leaders ensure that the early years provision is appropriately staffed and resourced. Children have a wealth of learning activities to choose from. They love playing in the outdoor area and develop good social skills. Children learn to listen well. They readily join in with nursery rhymes and stories that are familiar to them. Staff provide workshops to show parents how to support their child in early reading.

Leaders involve pupils in many community initiatives to extend their understanding of the world. This includes a joint venture with the Bowes Museum based on shared artwork with Japan. Pupils contribute to village life through their performances and articles in the local magazine. By working with industrial partners, leaders highlight potential future careers in the area. The connection with the County Durham Faith Network helps pupils to understand there are people of different faiths and cultures.

There has been a period of considerable staff absence. There is a shared headship, brokered and supported by the local authority. Some staff members and parents do not feel confident that this provides sufficient support. They perceive a 'void in leadership'. The governing body has an overly optimistic view of the standards achieved in school, but recognises the need to build leadership capacity. A new federation has been formed with two other schools. The intention is to further develop all staff.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that staff have regular training in safeguarding so that they know what signs to look for that might show a pupil is at risk of harm. Staff know the procedure for reporting any concerns. Leaders make appropriate referrals to partner agencies to support those in need.

The curriculum covers aspects on keeping safe online. Pupils are also taught about some of the risks they may face offline. Police and fire brigade officers visit regularly to speak about personal safety.

The single central record is up to date. However, some minor corrections were made during the course of the inspection.

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

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

- Leaders, including governors, have an overly positive view of the school's effectiveness. As a result, they have not identified some key areas that need to improve. Nor have they tackled the issues they are aware of quickly enough. Leaders should strengthen their processes to evaluate the school's effectiveness and to plan for improvement. The local authority and the governing body should take suitable steps to assure themselves that leaders' actions are successful in improving the school.
- Leaders are aware of the limitations of the current phonics scheme. Pupils do not learn phonics quickly enough. Leaders should implement a coherent, whole-school approach to teaching phonics which is accessible for all pupils, including those with SEND.
- Leaders have not ensured that the curriculum or assessment is ambitious and fit for purpose in all subject areas. This means that pupils do not have the necessary grounding in some key knowledge and skills to equip them well for their next phase of education. Leaders should ensure that staff, including subject leaders, receive appropriate training to develop the curriculum and assessment.

## **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 an ungraded inspection and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in June 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.

## 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>	114062
<b>Local authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	10240345
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	46
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Joy Bellis
<b>Headteacher</b>	Clare Carr
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.frosterleycommunity.durham.sch.uk/">www.frosterleycommunity.durham.sch.uk/</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	15 June 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The governing body have recently formed a federation with Butterknowle Primary School and Woodland Primary School.
- The executive headteacher leads across all three schools.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the executive headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the special educational needs coordinator.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in three subjects: reading, mathematics and music. To do this, they met with curriculum leaders, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work, listened to pupils read and met with teachers and pupils. Inspectors also looked at curriculum documentation for these and other subjects.

- To inspect safeguarding, the inspectors scrutinised the single central record and reviewed safeguarding paperwork and systems. The inspectors spoke to leaders, teachers, support staff and pupils. The lead inspector met representatives of the local governing body.
- The lead inspector met with the education adviser who supports the school.
- Responses to the pupil, parent and staff surveys were also taken into consideration.

### **Inspection team**

Mary Cook, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Roger Ward

Ofsted Inspector

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